

SING A STORY



Illustration: Bill Burgard

A Teacher's Guide to Opera with Young Students

San Francisco Opera Guild

2011 Hansel and Gretel

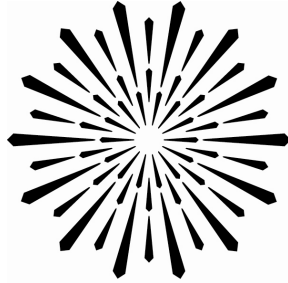
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Introduction: Sing a Story in Your Classroom

Hello, and welcome to the *Sing a Story Teacher's Guide*. *Sing a Story* is an in-class program designed to introduce your students to opera through storytelling. In the process of learning the story of *Hansel and Gretel*, your students will hear music and participate in a dramatic retelling of the story using props and costumes.

This *Teacher's Guide* is meant to help you continue using art, music, drama and writing in activities with your students after the in-class performance.

We hope that this guide will be useful to you in your continuing exploration of arts in the classroom, and we welcome your feedback.

You may give us your feedback on this program by completing and returning the *Teacher's Evaluation Form* at the end of this guide. We look forward to reading your comments, and integrating your ideas into upcoming incarnations of *Sing a Story*.

Thank you and enjoy!
Sincerely,

Susan Malott
Managing Director
San Francisco Opera Guild

Caroline Altman
Director of Education
San Francisco Opera Guild

The Story of Hansel and Gretel

Our story begins in a cottage nestled deep in the woods. Two children, Hansel and Gretel are working at their chores—Gretel stitches a stocking, while Hansel makes a broom. Gretel sings to herself as she works, but Hansel complains that he is hungry and wishes that Mother would come home with food. As they begin to think of the food that Mother will make for them tonight, they become very happy and put down their work and begin to dance around!

Mother returns home and is furious to find that Hansel and Gretel are not working at their chores. She sends the children into the Ilsenstein Forest to look for strawberries, for she was unable to find food to make for dinner. Once the children are gone, she expresses her sorrow that she is unable to feed her children, and asks God for help.

Father bursts into the house very happily! He surprises Mother by bringing home a feast! Bacon, butter, flour, sausages, eggs, beans, onions, and coffee! Father asks Mother where the children are. When she tells him they are in the forest, he becomes frightened, for he knows that the forest is where the evil Gingerbread Witch lives. She is known to lure children in with sweets, then push them into her oven, turn them into gingerbread, and then eat them! Oh no! Father and Mother rush into the forest to search for Hansel and Gretel.

Deep in the forest, we see Gretel singing to herself while Hansel fills their basket with strawberries. The children begin to eat the strawberries, and as the basket empties, they fight over the last few. Hansel grabs the basket and dumps the leftover berries into his mouth. Gretel tells him that Mother will be angry, and she looks for more strawberries, but it is now too dark to find any. In fact, it is now so dark, that the children can't find their way home and become very scared!

At that moment, a strange little man comes toward them in the forest. He is the Sandman and he tells the children that he is there to put them to sleep. He puts grains of sand on their eyes and they find that they cannot keep their eyes open, and they drift off to sleep on the forest floor. Fourteen angels surround the children and protect them as they sleep.

The magical Dew Fairy comes to wake the children. Gretel wakes first, and wakes the sleepy Hansel. Suddenly they notice behind them an enormous gingerbread house (Uh-oh! Who do you think lives there?) Inside the house, the children see many little gingerbread children, but they do not realize that these are real children that the witch has turned into gingerbread!

The gingerbread house looks so delicious that Hansel and Gretel cannot help but have a little nibble of it. As the children nibble, a voice calls out, "Who's nibbling on my house?" Hansel and Gretel ignore the voice and continue eating. The witch comes out of the house and catches Hansel with a rope. The children try to escape, but the witch freezes them with her wand. She puts Hansel in a cage and begins to fatten him up. Gretel secretly steals the witch's wand and uses it to free Hansel while the witch isn't looking. When the witch looks into the oven to see if it is hot enough to cook the children, Hansel and Gretel shove her into the oven and shut the door! When the witch burns up, all the captured gingerbread children turn back into real children!

Father and Mother find Hansel and Gretel and embrace them. The gingerbread children pull the ruins of the witch out of the oven. She has been turned into gingerbread! Father explains that this is the punishment for evil deeds...

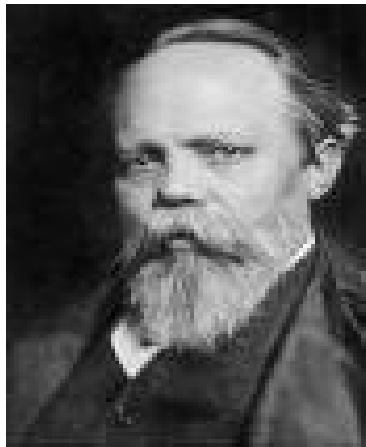
About the Composer

The German composer, Engelbert Humperdinck, produced his first composition after receiving piano lessons when he was only 7. His parents did not approve of his becoming a musician, but despite them encouraging him to study architecture, he studied music. He travelled through Europe, studying with many great composers and winning many awards.

While in Berlin, Humperdinck began work on *Hänsel und Gretel* after his sister asked him to compose music for a play for her children in 1890. A few months later, he presented his fiance Hedwig Taxer with *Hänsel und Gretel* as an engagement present.

Hänsel und Gretel was an instant and overwhelming success. It was such a success that in 1923 it became the first complete opera ever to be broadcast on radio (from Covent Garden, London), and eight years later it was the first to be transmitted live from the Metropolitan Opera. Tragically, it was at about the same time that Humperdinck developed a hearing affliction and remained partially deaf for the rest of his life.

Humperdinck died of a heart attack on September 27, 1921. *Hänsel und Gretel*, his greatest work, remains a worldwide favorite.



Engelbert Humperdinck, 1892
© The Metropolitan Opera Archives

Geography Lesson

Summary of Activity

Students will examine the map of Europe. Then they will trace the outline of the maps of Germany and California, learning different cities and features of each.

Time: 30 minutes

Setting: Classroom

Materials needed:

Maps (provided)

Tracing Paper

Pencils or Crayons

A Globe (optional)

Subjects: World Geography

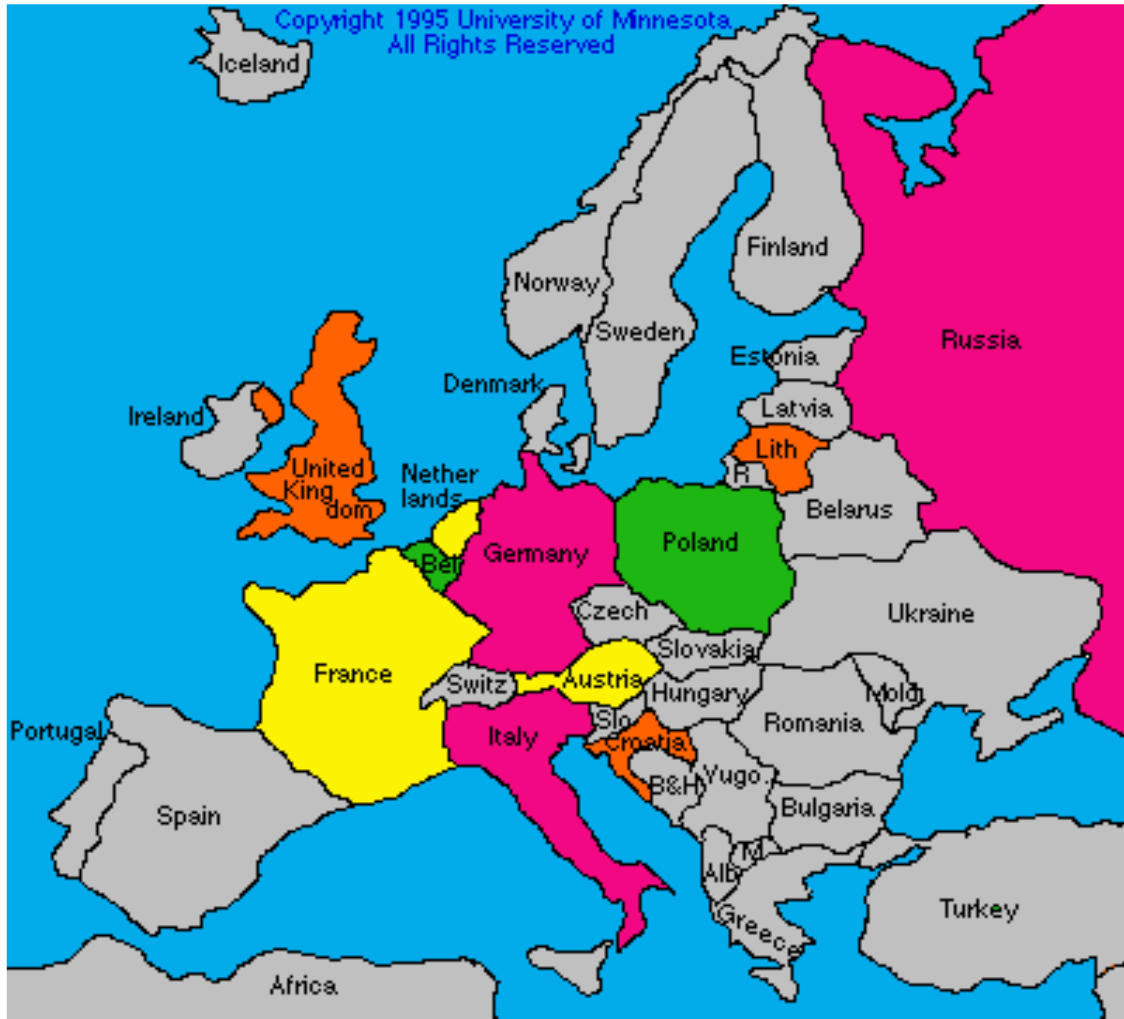
Objective:

Teach the children about different cities and countries in Europe using the birthplaces of great composers to start. Teach the children about the map of the state where they live.

Procedure:

- Make photocopies of the maps provided and explain different features (e.g. the border is the line between countries)
- Using tracing paper, have children trace the border of the map of Germany to create a map of their own.
- Using tracing paper, have children trace the border of the map of California to create a map of their own.
- On the map of California, teach children to find the city where they live, and other important features (the state capitol, mountains, etc.)
- If there is a globe or a large world map in the classroom, find different countries or cities around the world.

Map of Europe



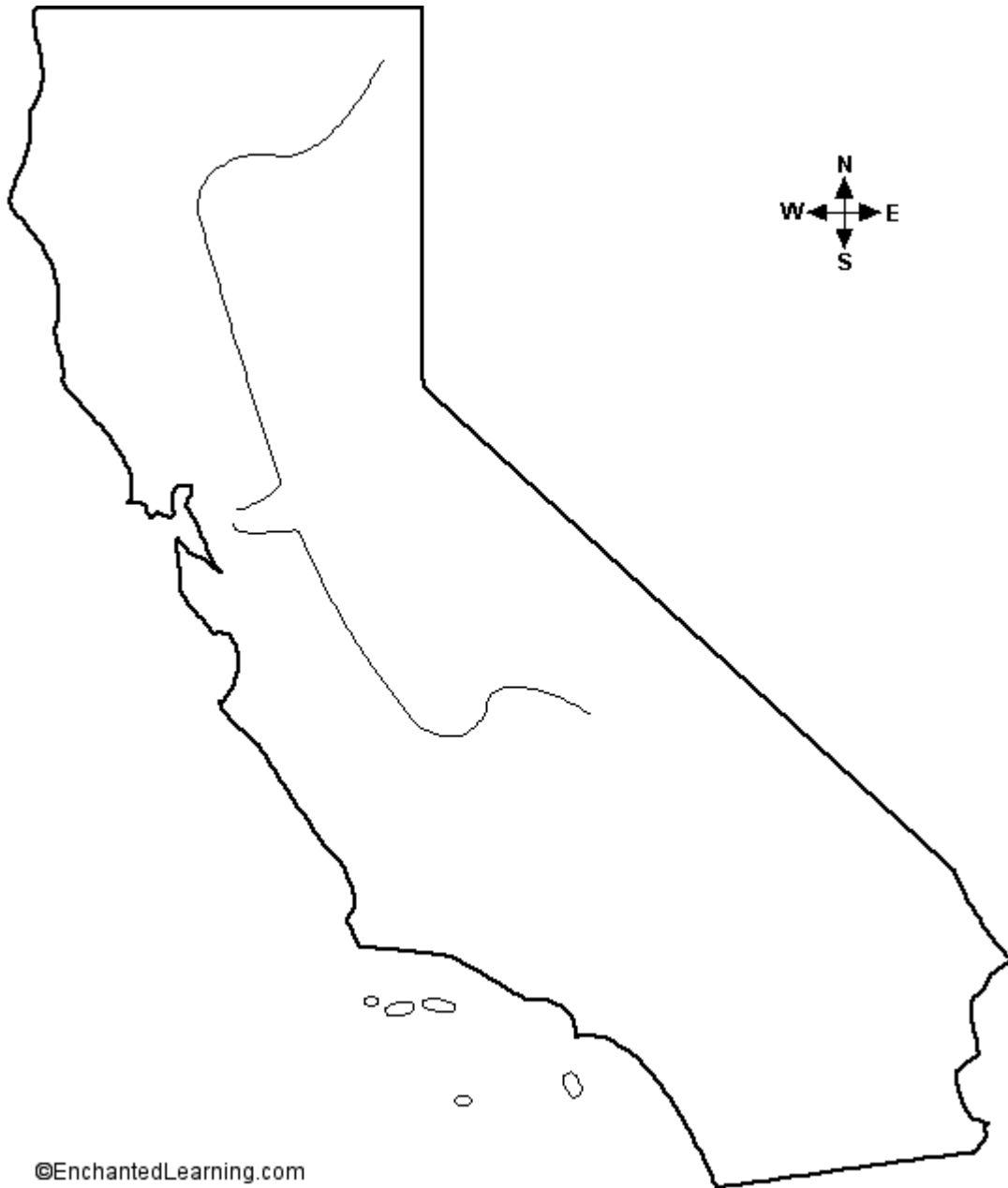
This is a map of Europe. Europe is another continent, like North America, where *you* live. Most of the great composers of opera were born in Europe and traveled through many of the different countries there. How many countries are there in Europe? Do you know what different languages are spoken there?

Map of Germany



This is a map of *Germany*. *Germany* is the country where Engelbert Humperdinck was born! Use a piece of paper and a crayon or pencil to trace the **border** of the map to make a map of your own! Then ask your teacher to show you where the capitol city of Berlin is. If Hansel and Gretel had a map like this, they would never have gotten lost!

Map of California



This is a map of California. California is the state where you live! Use a piece of paper and a crayon or pencil to trace the **border** of the map to make a map of your own! Then ask your teacher to show you where you live in California, and put a dot there. Now if you're ever lost like Hansel and Gretel, you can find your way home!

Hansel and Gretel

Multi - Lingual Vocabulary Chart

German	English	Spanish	French	Italian	Chinese
Bruder	Brother	Hermano	Frere	Fratello	
Schwester	Sister	Hermana	Soeur	Sorella	
Mutter	Mother	Madre	Mere	Madre	
Vater	Father	Padre	Pere	Padre	
Hexe	Witch	Bruja	Sorciere	Strega	
Wald	Forest	Bosque	Foret	Foresta	
Zu tanzen	To Dance	Bailar	A la danse	Di danza	
Zu singen	To Sing	Cantar	A chanter	A cantare	
Backofen	Oven	Horno	Four	Forno	
Zu Kochen	To Cook	Cocinar	A cuire	Per cucinare	
Schlafen	To Sleep	Dormir	Dormir	Dormire	
Erdbeeren	Strawberries	Fresas	Fraises	Fragole	
Brot	Bread	Pan	Pain	Pane	

Interesting note: Most “w”s in German are pronounced like “v”s!

Options for language activities:

- Post words and their translations in strips in your classroom.
- Add words (starting with any of the languages) as the semester progresses.

Other Options for language activities:

- Write a SHORT (three line) scene using just English or just Spanish (or just Italian if you are fluent in Italian)

Write the scene again using more than one language.

CD Track list and listening examples

1. Overture
2. *Goosey, Goosey, Gander*
3. Witches Ride
4. The Evening Prayer
5. The Dead Advise but Cannot See
6. Finale

The Music Lesson

Vocal and Rhythm Exercises

Relaxation

- ✿ Stand in a circle with your students.
- ✿ Everyone scrunches up their face as though sucking on a lemon.
- ✿ Let your face relax. Shake it out, like a wet dog.
- ✿ Scrunch up your shoulders as though they were hooked to your ears.
- ✿ Let your shoulders relax. Shake them out.
- ✿ Tense up your arms and squeeze your hands into fists.
- ✿ Let your arms and hands relax. Shake them out.
- ✿ Tense up your legs and crunch your toes.
- ✿ Let your legs and toes relax. Shake them out.
- ✿ Scrunch your whole body into a ball.
- ✿ Stand up and stretch TALL. Shake out your whole body.

Breathing

- ✿ Take in the BIGGEST breath that you can
- ✿ Let it out
- ✿ Take in another HUGE breath and let it go a little at a time, counting out loud from 1 to 5
- ✿ Repeat again, counting on one breath: 1 - 10; 1 - 20, 1 - 50! Or higher . . .

Singing!

- ✿ Everyone yawn! Feel how the back of your throat stretches wide open
- ✿ Take a very deep breath, yawn, and sing "LAAAA!"

Music and Action

Summary of Activity

Students will listen to *Hansel and Gretel* and develop the beginnings for physical characterization of specific characters.

Time:	30-45 minutes
Setting:	classroom
Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Hansel and Gretel</i> CD• CD player• Chairs
Subjects:	Drama/ Physical Theatre, Music

Objective:

Students will be able to identify characters and musical themes in *Hansel and Gretel*

Procedure:

Musical chairs

- ◆ Review the story of *Hansel and Gretel* briefly with the students.
- ◆ Musical Chairs:
 - Set up chairs in a circle for every student in the class.
 - Take away one chair.
 - Play a selection from the CD and have students move around chairs as it plays.
 - When you stop the CD, they have to sit in the nearest chair.
 - The student who is left standing can play again or be "out" if you are having a competitive game.

Funny character walks

- ◆ Pick a character in the story
- ◆ Create a funny walk for that character
- ◆ Students can show their walk and the others can guess which character they are walking as
- ◆ Everyone show their walks *while* playing music from preview CD.

The Journey of Hansel and Gretel

Summary of Activity

Follow up from the Sing a Story performance. Students will be able to demonstrate through drawing and movement the tempo, mood and style of a given piece.

Time: 45 - 90 minutes/in multiple sessions

Setting: classroom

Materials:

- Butcher paper
- pencils
- crayons
- *Hansel and Gretel* CD

Subjects: literacy, music and visual arts

Objective:

Students will visually represent episodic plot, characters and relationships in *Hansel and Gretel*, in the form of a large "map."

Procedures:

- On a long (six foot+) piece of butcher paper, draw in a "path" winding along the sheet, from one end to the other.
- Review the story of *Hansel and Gretel* with the students, emphasizing characters, place, and the foods in the story.
- Hand out crayons and pencils.
- Students may either draw in their favorite characters or events onto the map. Try to help them place the events generally - at either beginning, middle or end of the sheet. Promote the use of the entire sheet of paper.
- Help the students write the names of their characters onto the map next to each character's picture. Have the students sign their works and display it on the wall (s).

Option:

- Board game:
 - ◆ Create a life-sized Board game from the map created in the previous exercise. Use masking tape on the classroom floor to create a "map" or Game Board of events in the story.
 - ◆ Students in-role: Students can use the "board" as their playing area in re-enacting scenes from *Hansel and Gretel*.

Combining Art with Music

Summary of Activity

Students will be able to demonstrate through drawing and movement the tempo, mood and style of a given piece.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Setting: classroom

Materials:

- white paper
- newspaper
- crayons
- pencils
- *Hansel and Gretel* CD
- CD player

Subjects: music and visual arts

Objectives:

Students will visually represent changes in musical moods, tempos and style.

Procedures:

- Have the students place the white piece of paper in the middle of a sheet of newspaper (to protect the desks).
- Hand out crayons and/or pencils.
- Students may either draw with their eyes open or closed, though closed eyes tend to yield more interesting drawings. Explain to the students that they are to respond to the changes in the music. For example, when the music is fast they may draw quickly, when it is slow, they may be more slowly and deliberately.
- Promote the use of the entire sheet of paper.
- Play the piece for a few minutes simply for listening.
- Play the entire piece of music again, this time asking the students to draw while it plays.
- After you turn off the music, have the students discuss with you why they drew certain ways.
- You will probably want to play the whole piece again at this point, giving them several minutes to complete their works of art, then display them!

Discussion Questions:

- What do certain colors signify?
- How are different emotions brought out in music (i.e in loud or soft sound, high or low pitches, fast or short notes)?
- Does changing a tempo (speed of the music) or style change the feelings in a piece of music?

Evaluation:

Have the students repeat this exercise listening to a popular piece of music and a classical piece of music. Discuss the differences and similarities.

New Endings

Summary of Activity

Follow up from the Sing a Story performance. Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of plot, and use of imagination through writing, art and/or dramatic play.

Time: 45 - 90 minutes/in multiple sessions
Setting: classroom
GRADE LEVEL: Kindergarten
Materials:

- Butcher paper
- pencils
- crayons

Subjects: art, drama and literacy

Objective:

Students will verbally, physically and visually re-interpret the ending of *Hansel and Gretel*.

Procedures:

❖ **Drama/ Storytelling:**

- **Making a Scene**
 - Pick a scene from the story.
 - Choose one student to portray each character
 - Reread/ paraphrase the scene as the narrator.
 - Encourage the students to act out their part of the scene as it comes.

❖ **Art and/or Writing:**

- **Option 1: Ask the children what happens after the very end of the story? How would they continue the story? Will the family adopt the gingerbread children? Will everyone have a feast? What else might happen?**
 - Ask them to:
 - Tell their ending and/or
 - Write down their ending and/or
 - Make a picture for it and/or
 - Act out the ending
- **Option 2: Ask the children how they would change the ending of the story. Should they eat the gingerbread witch? Should the Sandman or the Dew Fairy come back?**
 - Ask them to:
 - Tell their ending and/or
 - Write down their ending and/or
 - Make a picture for it and/or
 - Act out the ending!

DRAW AND DESCRIBE THE FOREST!!

Hansel and Gretel are lost in the most dark and mysterious forest.

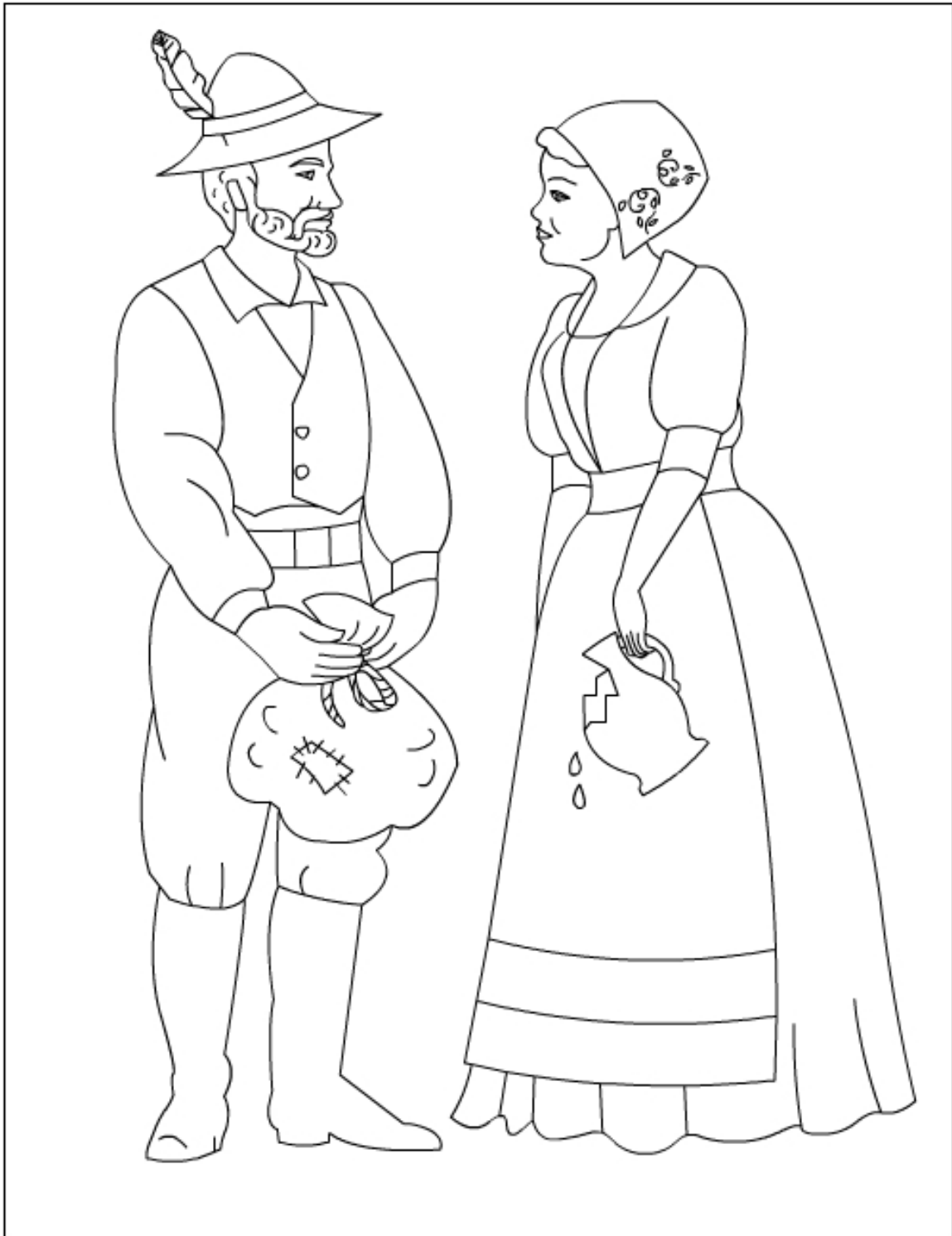
What do you think it looks like? How big are the trees? Are there fruits and flowers? Are there any animals? Are there houses? What else?

NOW...You and your brother or sister (or best friend) are wandering in the forest. What will you do while you are there? How will you find your way home? What will you do if you find the Witch's gingerbread house? Will you have a nibble? Go ahead and draw the forest and draw the gingerbread house. Show as many details as you can and use lots of colors. Don't forget the gingerbread house is covered in candy! Yum!

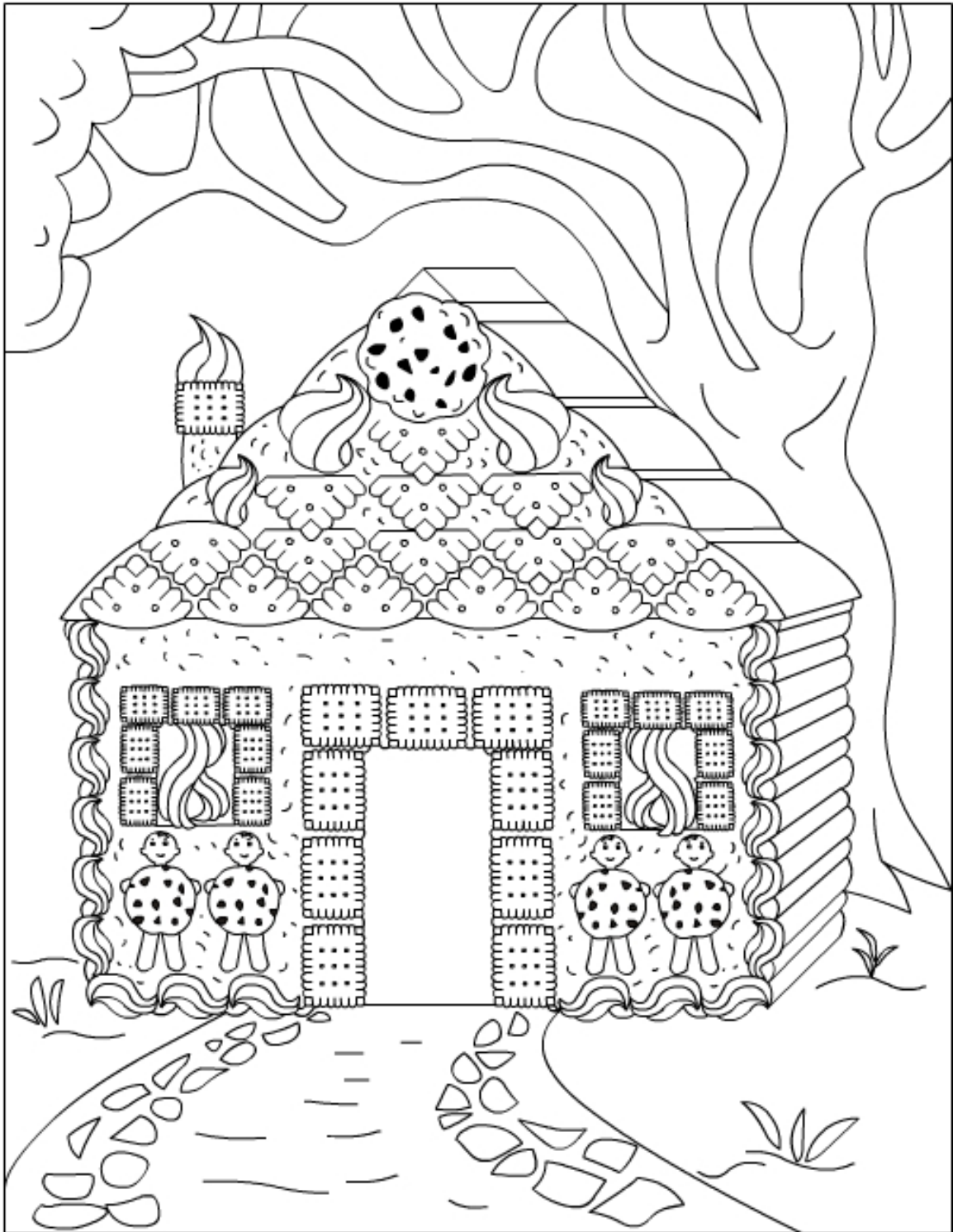
Hansel and Gretel



Father and Mother



The Gingerbread House



The Witch!!!



Teacher Evaluation
Sing a Story 2011: Hansel and Gretel

School _____ Participating Teacher _____

Grade _____ Years involved w/Sing a Story _____

1. Were you able to integrate *Hansel and Gretel* into your lesson plans?

2. If yes, how?

3. Did *Sing a Story* help your students understand more about how music helps convey a story? How?

4. Compare your students' attitude toward opera before the program and after the performance.

5. Did your students learn anything about history or culture by participating in this program?

6. Did you see any change in classroom morale, cooperation, or self-esteem during participation in this program?

7. What was the most important thing you feel your students learned while participating in Sing a Story?

8. Anything else we should know?

*Thank you so much. Please return this form to
San Francisco Opera Guild Education
301 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco CA 94102
Guidededucation@sfopera.com*