

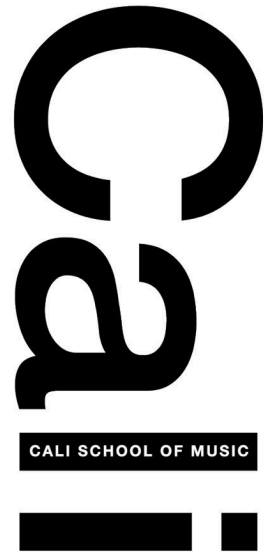
**FALL 2024
MSU OPERA PRESENTS**

Hansel & Gretel
By: Engelbert Humperdinck

**MSU Chamber Opera of the
John J. Cali School of Music**
Karen Driscoll, *director*
William Hobbs, *conductor*

ALEXANDER KASSER THEATER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2024
3:00 PM and 6:00 PM



**John J. Cali
School of Music**

MONTCLAIR
STATE UNIVERSITY

CALI CHAMBER OPERA PRESENTS

HANSEL & GRETEL

Engelbert Humperdinck, *composer*
William Hobbs, *conductor*
Karen Driscoll, *director*
Chamber Orchestra:
Virginia Stephens, *accompanying*

DECEMBER 7, 2024
3PM & 6PM
ALEXANDER KASSER THEATER

CASTS

(in order of appearance)

ROLE

Gretel
Hansel
Gertrude
Peter
Sandman
Dew Fairy
Witch
Ensemble

Children's Chorus

3:00 PM

Hailey Hyein Ji
Inhye Choi
Arianna Joseph
Deiniol McGovern
Annabelle Kempf
Chloe Stavis
Hojung Choi
Arian Araya, Sean Johnson,
Julio Santiago
Sadie Boyd, Emily Ten Broek,
Lia Marchese, Zoe Popielarz

6:00 PM

Litha Ashforth
Mia Grizzuti
Camryn Dewar
Clinton Garrison
Hanbyeol Min
Emma Mason
Jeffrey Castellano
Arian Araya, Sean Johnson,
Julio Santiago
Sadie Boyd, Emily Ten Broek,
Lia Marchese, Zoe Popielarz

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA*

Carlos Santamaria, violin
Chelsea Xuereb, violin
Jasmine Tunac, viola
Cecilia Grossman, cello

Virginia Stephens, piano
Tristan Shafran, clarinet
Anaya Torrence, flute
Susan LaFever, french horn

*Kathleen Kelly, orchestral adaptation

SYNOPSIS

This fairy tale opera follows brother and sister-, Hansel and Gretel, as they are sent away to gather strawberries after frustrating their exhausted mother. While on their quest, the children get lost in the haunted woods where the renowned evil Witch of Ilsenstein dwells. After encountering some other magical characters, the children come upon a beautiful and delicious gingerbread house, where a kind old woman lives. They are invited inside to enjoy sweets and treats, only to be captured by the evil Witch! She puts a spell on the children, making them eat until they are plump so that she can cook them to perfection. The children manage to overcome the Witch, and their parents find them, all celebrating their freedom.

Approximately 1 hour (no intermission)

Sung in ENGLISH

BIOGRAPHIES

CREATIVE TEAM

Karen Driscoll (Director) is John J. Cali School of Music's Head of Artistic Operations/Opera as well as a Assistant Teaching Professor of Voice. Karen has previously directed, *The Ghosts of Gatsby*, *The Beautiful Bridegroom* and led multiple scenes programs for MSU's Opera Workshop classes, as well as role preparation productions including *Sweeney Todd* (directed by James Conrad Smith) and *La Bohème* to name a few. She has also enjoyed collaborating on many occasions as not only a soprano soloist with MSU Singers and Chorale choirs but also as director of *Considering Matthew Shepard*. As a soprano, Ms. Driscoll has sung leading roles with Seattle Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Florentine Opera, L'Opéra de Montréal, Vancouver Opera, Virginia Opera, Baltimore Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, National Lyric Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera Columbus, Toledo Opera, Opera Carolina, Hawaii Opera Theater, New Jersey State Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Long Beach Opera, Worcester Chorus and Masterwork Chorus to name a few. She is a native of Ohio where she began her music studies at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and also where she holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and Master of Music Degree in Vocal Performance.

William Hobbs (Conductor) received his Bachelor's in Piano Performance summa cum laude from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and a Master of Music in Piano Performance, Research and Literature from the Eastman School of Music. He has been heard worldwide in solo and song recitals, chamber music and orchestra appearances in over a dozen countries, including the United States, England, Korea, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Malta and Poland. He has collaborated with many of today's top performers, including Yo-Yo Ma, James Galway, Renee Fleming, Joyce DiDonato, and many others. Mr. Hobbs began his Academic career at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey in 2010, followed by appointments at the Juilliard School and the City University of New York. He currently serves on the faculties of the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University, and the Peabody Institute (Baltimore, Maryland). Mr. Hobbs works at many of the world's major opera houses as pianist and conductor, including the Opéra National de Paris, the Salzburg Festival, San Francisco Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Seattle Opera, Washington Opera and the Opéra de Monte-Carlo. He can be heard in recordings of music by Lowell Liebermann, Xavier Montsalvage, Dave Soldier, Christos Hatzis, and Kaikhosru Sorabji.

Ginny Stephens (Musical Preparation, pianist) is a native of West Chester, Pennsylvania. Her education includes a Bachelor of Music Degree in Piano Performance from Bob Jones University and a Master of Music Degree in Piano Performance from Colorado State University. She has had the privilege of accompanying a wide variety of high school, college and professional musicians. She has previously served as accompanist at Colorado State University for choirs, musical theater productions, Opera Workshop and faculty recitals, and as the rehearsal accompanist for the Virginia Opera Chorus. She is on the accompanying staff of Montclair State University and she enjoys teaching private piano at her home studio.

Deborah Caney (Costume Designer & Coordinator) has been designing costumes for over 25 years. She is delighted to return to Montclair State University's John J. Cali School of Music, where she last designed costumes for *The Ghosts of Gatsby* & *The Beautiful Bridegroom* both directed by Karen Driscoll. She has designed costumes at regional theaters around the country and has worked at Broadway and off-Broadway theaters. She has been designing costumes at The Luna Stage Theatre Co. in West Orange, NJ since 2008. Recently at Luna Stage, she designed *Rift*, written by Gabriel Jason Dean and directed by Ari Laura Kreith; *Torn Asunder*, written by Obie Award & Outer Critics Circle Award winning playwright Nikkole Salter and directed by Kennedy Center Award winning director Lisa Strum. Other recent credits include: *Mrs. Stern Wanders the State Prussian Library*, directed by Ari Laura Kreith at 59E29; *Ain't Misbehavin'* directed by 2019 TONY Award Winner André DeShields at NJPAC and The Crossroads Theatre Co.

James Conrad Smith (Scenic Designer) is an alum of the John J. Cali School of Music having graduated in 2014 with a BM in Voice Performance. James then earned his Masters from Indiana University and has gone on to perform mostly musical theatre across the country while also building his portfolio as both director and scenic designer for both musical theatre and light opera. Select performance credits include NY Gilbert and Sullivan Players (*Ruddigore*), The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey (*Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*), Light Opera of NJ (*Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*), White Plains PAC (*Jekyll & Hyde*, *Newsies*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*), Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theatre (*Pirates of Penzance*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Music Man*), The Princeton Festival (*She Loves Me*), Oregon Cabaret Theatre (*Sweeney Todd*), Sierra Repertory Theatre (*Camelot*), and he originated the role of Prince Charles in *My Princess Diana* which premiered at the Alvin Ailey Theatre in 2019. As a director and scenic designer, James has worked with all ages from summer theatre camps to high schools, and with young artists with NJ Vocal Arts Collaborative and The Young Artists' Initiative. Most recently, James directed Light Opera of New Jersey's summer production of *Seussical*. @downtonjimmy / JamesConradSmith.com

CAST

Arian Araya, a student of Peter Stewart, is pursuing a bachelor's degree in theory and composition. Recipient of the Award of Excellence in Juilliard's Music Advancement Program, Arian's goal is to inspire and effect his future students the way that his mentor's have impacted him! Arian is also the costume/props assistant for *Hansel & Gretel*!

Litha Ashforth, from Santa Barbara, CA, is a soprano studying with Beth Roberts. She is a recipient of the Top Prize Performing Arts Scholarship at the Music Academy of the West, the Maestro Award at the World Strides Heritage Festival, and the Top Prize New England Conservatory Grant Winner.

Jeffrey Castellano is a composition major from Ramsey, NJ. A student of Jeffrey Gall, he is a recipient of the New Jersey Governor's Award in Vocal Music. His dream role is Pierre from *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* ... or Ursula from the *Little Mermaid* to keep up his streak of playing gender bending witches!

Ho Jung Choi is a second year artist diploma student from South Korea. A student of Beth Roberts, his goal is to be a member of the Metropolitan Opera chorus.

Inhye Choi is a mezzo-soprano from South Korea. A student of Beth Roberts, she is excited to see where her career takes her after completing her performance certificate! She is planning to go back to Korea and continue performing in operas and concert settings.

Camryn Dewar takes great pride in her Indigenous (Red River Métis Nation) heritage, and she is currently a Fulbright Scholar for her research in Indigenous opera and equal representation. Committed to using her artistry to uplift and amplify diverse voices, in February 2025, she will perform at Jazz at Lincoln Centre in the new social justice opera *Blind Injustice* by Scott Davenport Richards and David Cote.

Clinton Garrison is a first-year artist diploma student studying with Beth Roberts and is from Laurel, MD. He was featured as the baritone soloist in Lera Auerbach's *Symphony No.6 "Vessels of Light"* with Festival Napa Valley, Clinton's dream role is Rodrigo in Verdi's *Don Carlos*. Additionally, he was a Study Grant Artist with the Savannah Voice Festival, as well as a finalist in the Alltech Vocal Scholarship Competition.

Mia Grizzuti is a junior musical theatre student from West Milford, NJ. A student of Jan Prokop, she had the honor of playing Martha in *Spring Awakening* at MSU and sang in the chorus of *Blind Injustice*, a new social justice opera composed by MSU's very own Scott Richards. She aims to bridge classical, jazz, and music theater worlds, hoping to one day sing with an international tour.

Hailey Hyein Ji is a first-year artist diploma student studying with Anya Fidelia. From Seoul, South Korea, she is excited to grow as an artist during her time here at the Cali School. Her dream role is Gilda from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, as she loves the complexity and humanity of the character.

CAST (continued)

Sean Johnson is a senior music education major from New Milford, NJ. He was recently in a regional production of *The Color Purple* and he hopes to be a music director for a regional company or national tour! Sean is also the assistant conductor for *Hansel & Gretel!*

Arianna Joseph, is a junior music education major studying with Dr. Lori McCann. From Woobury Heights, NJ, Arianna is thrilled to teach in a classroom of amazing kids and create musical opportunities for future students.

Annabelle Kempf is a junior music therapy major from Lower Merion, PA. She studies with Peter Gillis, and is a proud member of the Broadway community. Her dream role is Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl* the musical!

Emma Mason is senior vocal performance major from Mendham, NJ. Emma studies with Dr. Lori McCann, and her dream is to play Glinda in the musical, *Wicked*.

Deiniol McGovern, a baritone from Long Valley, New Jersey, is a second year graduate student studying with Beth Roberts. Proudly Welsh, he is passionate about sharing and performing Welsh music. Recent roles include The Father in Humperdinck's *Hansel & Gretel*, Marquis de la Force in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and F. Scott. Fitzgerald in Evan Mack's *The Ghosts of Gatsby*.

Hanbyeol Min is a second year artist diploma student from South Korea studying with Beth Roberts. In the next few years, she hopes to join an opera company! She is also very excited to soon be a mother of two.

Julio Santiago is a senior music education major studying with George Spitzer. From Belleville, NJ, Julio plans to be a public school music teacher, eventually hoping to work professionally as a conductor. Julio is also the assistant director for *Hansel & Gretel*.

Chloe Stavis is a junior musical theatre major from Santa Monica, CA. A student of Jan Prokop, her dream role is Christine Daaé in *Phantom of the Opera*, a role that's been special to her since age 7.

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Cecilia Grossman began playing cello at age eight. She and her two brothers formed the Grossman Trio, performing piano trios around the country and internationally. Cecilia had the opportunity to play in the pit for the first time in 2024 in the Cali Opera Programs production of Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*. She is a student of Tomoko Fujita at the Cali School of Music.

Susan LaFever, hornist, has had a long career in opera, having performed most of the major repertoire multiple times as well as being a part of presenting new and little-known works. Besides being Principal Horn for many small opera companies in the NYC metropolitan area such as Opera Northeast, Connecticut Grand Opera, Garden State Opera, and Opera at Florham, just to name a few, notable recurring engagements as principal have included Glimmerglass Opera, Sarasota Opera, and Martina Arroyo's Prelude to Performance. Some of Susan's favorite memories include touring Japan with the International Tour of Porgy and Bess, being called to play off-stage horn with the Metropolitan Opera, and playing Die Walkure with Manhattan Opera Studio

Carlos Santamaria, a violinist based in NYC, plays often at venues such as Lincoln Center and Manhattan School of Music, at which he was a pre-college student. A recent graduate of Laguardia High School for the Arts, he was nominated earlier this year to be the associate concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic's Youth Orchestra, conducted by Gustavo Dudamel. Carlos is a freshman violin performance major and is very excited to expose himself at this wonderful school!

Tristan Shafran is currently a second year master's student studying Woodwind Doubling under the direction of Chad Smith. A student of KeriAnn Dibari, he is a member of the Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, and Broadway Repertoire Orchestra. After completing his degree, Tristan aspires to perform in Broadway pit orchestras and other theatrical settings.

(Chamber Orchestra continued)

Anaya Torrence is a freshman flute performance major, studying with Alice Jones. She hopes to become a flute professor, excited to inspire future students. In addition to teaching, Anaya also hopes to work in professional performance settings.

Jasmine Tunac began playing the viola in her middle school's orchestra in Atlanta, Georgia. Jasmine earned her master's degree at Youngstown State University where she studied with Michael Isaac Strauss. She has performed with several regional orchestras around the Central Ohio and Cleveland Metropolitan areas. Jasmine enjoys teaching and sharing her passion for music.

Chelsea Xuereb, born in Malta, is a young violinist based in New York City. Currently a student of Ellen dePasquale, Chelsea has enjoyed diverse experience as an orchestral, solo and chamber player. She has formed part of four orchestras and performed in various concerts, most notably a collaborative performance with Time for Three at Merkin Hall. She has proudly recorded music with uprising Maltese artists, in particular, composer Dr. Veronique Vella. Chelsea is excited to collaborate and organize more concerts and projects to continue presenting stories, emotions and colors through music.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

Julio Santiago (Assistant Director)
Taryn Wolckenhauer (Assistant Costume Designer)
Hannah Bogard (Titles Caller)
Sean Johnson (Assistant Conductor, Children's Chorus preparation)
Izzy Ortiz & Anna Kodak (Hair & Make-up Assistants)
Hannah Bogard (Opera Program Graduate Assistant)
Arian Araya (Props & Costume Assistant)
Taryn Spoto (Children Wrangler)

MUSIC PREPARATION/COACHES

Michael Caldwell
Peiwen Chen
William Hobbs
Mory Ortman
LeAnn Overton
Mary Pinto
Vicatoria Schwartzman
Virginia Stephens
Grant Wenaus

Come join us for a sweet treat from Bromilow's Chocolate after the show!

*Thanks to **Prof. Tony Mazzocchi**, Director of the John J. Cali School of Music, **Dr. Lori McCann** and **Beth Roberts**, Co-Coordinators of the MSU Vocal Program and all of the Applied Voice teachers and coaches at MSU who aided in their students' preparation to make this such a successful program. AND-a special thanks to our ANGEL donor, **Marty Jeiven** whose support of our opera program has made a huge and important impact in producing our shows! THANK YOU ALL!*

UP NEXT....JOIN MSU OPERA and the MSU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
for Cavalli's LA CALISTO
in ALEXANDER KASSER THEATER!
Saturday, February 1, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Sunday, February 2, 2025 at 3:00 pm
Sung in Italian with English supertitles

The Cali School of Music
at Montclair State University
aims to create dynamic and
comprehensive pathways
to higher education
and careers in music

Cali seat project

goal

An opportunity for
School of Music
patrons **to name one
or more of the 180
permanent seats** in the
Leshowitz Recital Hall.



help fund
scholarships for
**under-resourced
backgrounds**



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