

Opera San Luis Obispo Presents

HANSEL & GRETEL

by Engelbert Humperdinck

OCTOBER 18 & 19, 2025

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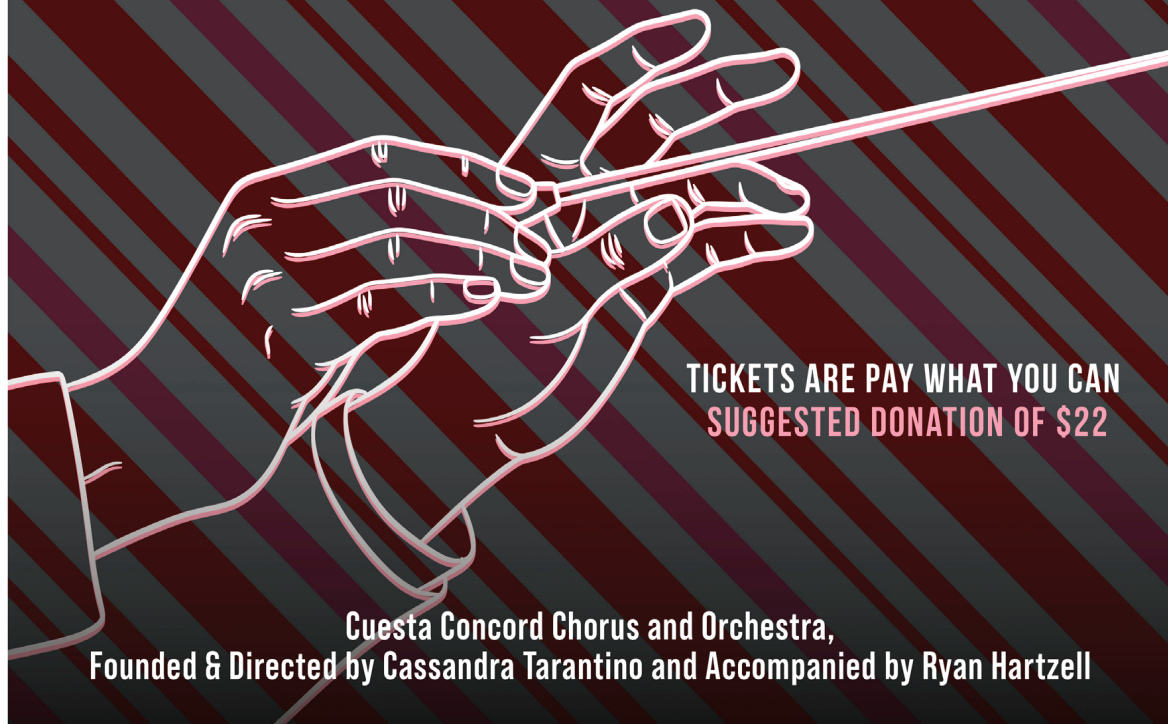
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HANSEL & GRETEL by Engelbert Humperdinck

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



Welcome to Opera San Luis Obispo and the close of our 40th season as the only professional opera company on California's Central Coast, and the only "grand opera producing" company between Los Angeles and San Francisco!

For those of you who are new to an OperaSLO production, I say with great love and affection "put on your seat belts and get ready for an amazing experience you'll remember for the rest of your lives!"

At Opera San Luis Obispo, we are all about creating life-long memories. For those of you that have come with friends and family, I promise you will be saying for quite some time, "remember when we saw *Hansel and Gretel* at the PAC?" Please join me in thanking Opera San Luis Obispo's amazing dedicated Board of Directors that enable me to develop innovative programming for you year-round. I am also so proud and grateful for the more than 150 artists from all over the country that have assembled for this weekend's production. And my highest appreciation goes to each of you for choosing OperaSLO.

When I step on to the podium to conduct the performance that is just moments away, know that I'm thinking about our shared connection with life in San Luis Obispo county. I care deeply about each and every one of you and the future of arts in our county. OperaSLO need your help too. The production you are experiencing today represents an almost \$160,000 investment in art and artists. Next month that energy will be directed to *The Peter and the Wolf Project* which will bring the performance to every 6th grader in our county free of charge. We need your support. Should you wish to reach out, my mobile/text is (714) 856-5663. I'd love to hear your ideas, hopes, and inspirations. Now sit back and have a blast!

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "B Alhadeff".

Brian Asher Alhadeff | OSLO General & Artistic Director



When Engelbert Humperdinck first composed *Hansel and Gretel*, he gave us more than a fairy tale set to music—he gave us a mirror to our most human struggles. Beneath the familiar story of children lost in the woods lies a darker meditation on hunger, fear, and resilience.

This production explores the tension between temptation and survival: a world where every decision carries weight, where a gingerbread house is not simply a wonder but a trap born of desperate longing. The opera also speaks to the loss of innocence - the moment children realize that the world can be dangerous yet discover their own strength to confront it. We cannot overlook the shadow of poverty in this tale. It is the hunger of the family that drives the children into the forest; it is desperation that lures them toward temptation. In that sense, the Witch is not only a figure of malice but also a haunting symbol of how deprivation warps morality, offering false abundance in exchange for freedom. Yet out of darkness comes light. This tale is also one of child empowerment - of two young souls who, though small and afraid, find within themselves a courage greater than any spell. Their triumph is not just in defeating the Witch, but in proving that even the most vulnerable among us can rise, resist, and transform despair into hope.

In staging this opera, my hope is that audiences will see both the magic and the menace of the story. *Hansel and Gretel* is not merely a bedtime tale, but a story of survival against overwhelming odds—one that asks us to consider the forces that imperil childhood, and the extraordinary resilience children can summon in response. This is the spell of *Hansel and Gretel*: a fairytale that is at once enchanting and unsettling, a story that begins with loss but ends with survival, with fire, and with freedom.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justine Prado Manro".

Justine Prado Manro | *Hansel & Gretel* Stage Director



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MISSION STATEMENT

Opera San Luis Obispo's mission is to positively affect our community through the power and beauty of opera by using a diverse, innovative, and balanced program of excellent performances, relevant events, and inclusive educational experiences.

VISION

Our vision is for San Luis Obispo County to become a destination for opera and musical theater patrons from around the world, that will attract and build future audiences, in strong partnership with our County Office of Education.

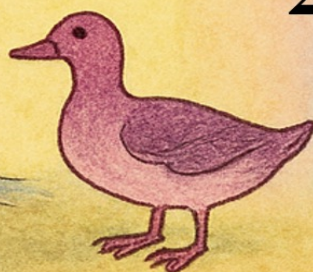
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HANSEL & GRETEL *by Engelbert Humperdinck* SPECIAL NOTES

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PRODUCTION NOTES

The running time is approximately 150 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission. Any video or audio recording including photography is strictly prohibited. Your ticket acknowledges your willingness to appear in photographs taken in public areas of the PAC and releases the PAC and its lessees and others from liability resulting from use of such photographs.



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HANSEL & GRETEL

by Engelbert Humperdinck

ABOUT THE COMPOSER



Engelbert

Humperdinck (born September 1, 1854, Siegburg, Prussia [Germany]—died September 27, 1921, Neustrelitz, Germany) was a German composer known for his opera *Hänsel und Gretel*. Humperdinck studied at Cologne and at Munich. In 1879 a Mendelssohn scholarship enabled him to go to Italy, where he met Richard Wagner, who invited him to assist in the production of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth. He taught at the Barcelona Conservatory (1885–87) and at Frankfurt am Main (1890–96), where he was also a music critic for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. His early works include the choral ballads *Die Wallfahrt nach*

Kevlaar (1878; *The Pilgrimage to Kevlaar*), *Das Glück von Edenhall* (1884; “The Luck of Edenhall”), and the *Humoreske* (1879) for orchestra. *Hänsel und Gretel*, was premiered at Weimar on December 23, 1893 and conducted by Richard Strauss. The libretto, by the composer’s sister Adelheid Wette, was based on the folktale made familiar by the Brothers Grimm. In this work Humperdinck showed an understanding of a child’s mind and a sense of poetry, notably in the atmosphere of the woodland scene at twilight, and in the realistic effects in the episode of the broken milk jug. The Wagnerian harmonies, the simple tunes, and the resourceful orchestration maintain the musical interest on a high level.

Between 1895 and 1919 Humperdinck produced six more operas, including *Dornröschen* (1902; “Sleeping Beauty”) and *Königskinder* (1910; “Royal Children”), but neither they nor the spectacle *Das Mirakel* (1911; “The Miracle”) enhanced his prestige. He also wrote incidental music for plays by Aristophanes, William Shakespeare, and Maurice Maeterlinck; *Maurische Rhapsodie* (1898; “Moorish Rhapsody”) for orchestra; in addition to works for piano, songs, and a string quartet.

In Opera San Luis Obispo’s 40-year history, it has produced *Hansel and Gretel* once before: in 2006. That production was conducted by David Sloss, staged directed by Ross Halper, and took place in this very hall at Performing Arts Center San Luis Obispo.



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HANSEL & GRETEL

by Engelbert Humperdinck



SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Deep in a cottage at the edge of the forest, hunger gnaws louder than the children's laughter. Hansel and Gretel try to chase away their empty stomachs with games and dancing, but their Mother, worn thin and tired by poverty, scolds them bitterly. In anger, she sends them into the forest to gather food - never imagining what terrors lurk in the gathering dusk. In a whirlwind of drunken song, the Father bursts into the cottage, arms laden with food and drink. But his cheer curdles when he learns the children are lost in the forest, for he knows too well the dark legends of the Witch who dwells there - a hag who fattens children before baking them in her oven and devouring them!

ACT II

As night falls, the children lose their way among the gnarled trees. The forest shifts and whispers, full of shadows that seem to breathe. A spectral Sandman drifts in, sprinkling sleep upon their eyes, and the siblings dream of angelic forest faeries who protect them as they slumber beneath the moon.

INTERMISSION

ACT III

As dawn breaks over the haunted forest, the Dew Fairy arrives, shimmering like morning frost on a gravestone. With a sprinkle of dew, she awakens Hansel and Gretel from their enchanted sleep, her presence both delicate and otherworldly - a reminder that even in the darkest of woods, morning light can feel like a spell of salvation. With morning comes temptation: a house made of gingerbread, dripping with sweets and glowing like a jack-o'-lantern in the dark woods! But the candy walls hide horror. From within emerges the Witch, a figure equal parts grandmother and ghoul, luring the children closer with a sugar-sweet smile. She captures Hansel and fattens him up like a holiday feast, while Gretel is forced into servitude. But innocence does not mean weakness. Gretel, quick and clever, turns the Witch's magic against her. In a fiery blaze, the oven becomes the Witch's tomb, and the children's terror transforms into triumph. The Witch's death releases the spellbound children who were trapped as sugary statues - souls freed at last. When Hansel and Gretel's parents stumble into the clearing, reunited at the edge of ruin and relief, the family embraces in the glow of the burning house. What began as a tale of hunger and fear ends as one of survival and empowerment - a chilling reminder that even in the darkest woods, light can return. (Synopsis by Justine Prado Manro)



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HANSEL & GRETEL
by Engelbert Humperdinck

CREATIVE COMPANY



CREATIVE TEAM:

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Sherry Sparks, Costume Designer
Kristina Prozesky, Director of Choruses
Andrew Silvaggio, Choreographer
Laura Weston, Stage Manager
Paul Woodring, Company Pianist
Rouvaishyana, Assistant Conductor
Jason Jaramillo, Assistant Stage Manager #1
Melissa Graff, Assistant Stage Manager #2
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Larry Bolef, Set Construction
Tim Seawell, Set Construction
Buffy Doran, Scenic Painter
Luana Gerardis, Children's Chorus Manager
Daniel Smith, Artist Housing Manager
Jessica Hostetter, Supertitle Operator
Jayne Cohen, Company Manager
Melanie McWilliams, Graphic Designer of
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Clint Bryson, Production Manager
Nate Deack, Lighting designer
Robb Albrecht, Sound Engineer
Mark Robertshaw, Stage Manager

LEADING ROLES:

HANSEL – **Mandi Barrus**, Mezzo
GRETEL – **Amy Goymerac**, Soprano
WITCH – **Jessica Gonzalez-Rodriguez**, Mezzo
MOTHER – **Kaitrin Cunningham**, Soprano
FATHER – **Gabriel Manro**, Baritone
SANDMAN – **Katelan Bowden**, Soprano
DEW FAIRY – **Alba Franco-Cancel**, Soprano

CHORUS OF ECHOS:

Danielle Bailey, Alba Franco-Cancel,
Kaitrin Cunningham, Jessica Gonzalez-Rodriguez,
Kristina Horacek Prozesky, Jaydn Voss

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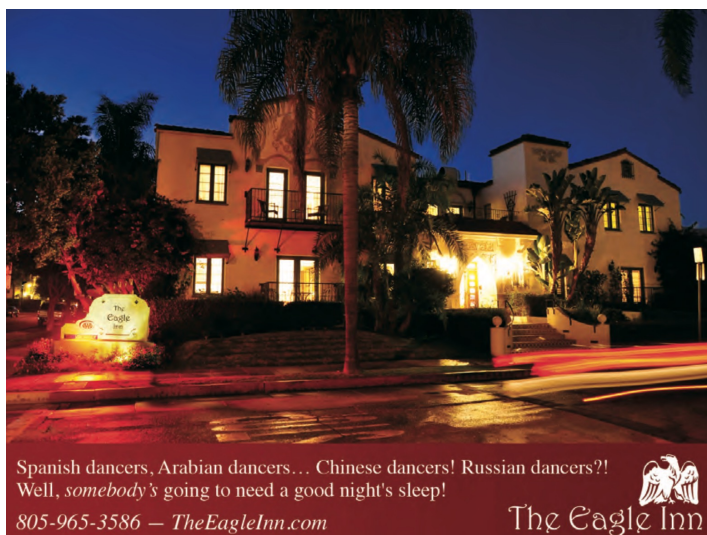
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HANSEL & GRETEL

by Engelbert Humperdinck

LEADING CAST



Mezzo-soprano Mandi Barrus (HANSEL), is a musician and opera producer from Salt Lake City, UT. With her "impressive technique and clear tone", Barrus' "warm and cozy mezzo-soprano voice" is described as "a breath of fresh air". She is known for her versatility of performance, with credits in musical theater, concerts, and opera in the US and abroad. Barrus made her OperaSLO debut in 2023 in the role of Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*). She then returned last year to perform the roles of Mrs. Potts (*Beauty and the Beast*), and Mercedes (*Carmen*). Her 2025 season has already included the role the The Witch (*Hansel and Gretel*) with Rimrock Opera; and the alto solos in Vivaldi's Gloria with St Paul's Episcopal Church. She sang Madam Peep in PDQ Bach's *Oedipus Tex*, and will premiere the role of Artemis, written specifically for her voice by Jessica Rudman in the world premiere of her new opera *Protectress* with Opera Contempo this Fall. In addition to multiple *Messiah* performances with orchestras throughout Utah, Barrus' new opera adaptation of *The Velveteen Rabbit* will receive a preview concert this Christmas. Barrus holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Utah and is the Artistic Director and co-founder of Opera Contempo, a chamber opera company promoting new voices, commissioning new works, and producing new opera settings. She lives with her three children and her partner, composer David Campbell, in Salt Lake City.

Soprano Amy Goymerac (GRETEL) has performed both internationally and throughout the US, with companies such as Opera San Jose, Mid America Productions, Pocket Opera, and Amherst Early Music Festival among others. A Resident Artist at Opera San Luis Obispo, she has been featured in the opening episode of Arts Safari: Season 1 Episode 1: Meet The Soprano, in addition to performing the roles of Gertie (*Oklahoma!*), Pamina (*Der Zauberflöte*), Julie Jordan (*Carousel*), Micaëla (*Carmen*), in addition recitals, outreach performances, and large galas. Goymerac has also appeared in concert with the Athens Philharmonia, San Luis Obispo Symphony, Redwood Symphony, the SLO Master Chorale, and at the Berkeley Festival. Highlight repertoire includes, Suzanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*), Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Michaëla (*La Tragédie de Carmen*), Knoxville: Summer of 1915 (Barber), *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Vaughan Williams), *Messiah* (Handel), and as the soprano soloist in Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 4. Goymerac also premiered the role of Charlotte in Kirke Mechem's latest opera, *Pride and Prejudice*. Earlier this year was featured on the album *To All Women Everywhere*, performing works by living composer Deon Nielsen Price (Cambria Records). In 2025 she will premiere the work *La Cita* by Douglas Cuomo with legendary Romero Guitar Quartet in the Herbst Theatre in San Francisco. Goymerac is a lecturer of voice at Cal Poly, SLO and is a certified vocologist. She lives on the central coast with her husband, two daughters, and rescue dog. Her happy place is the garden!



GRETEL

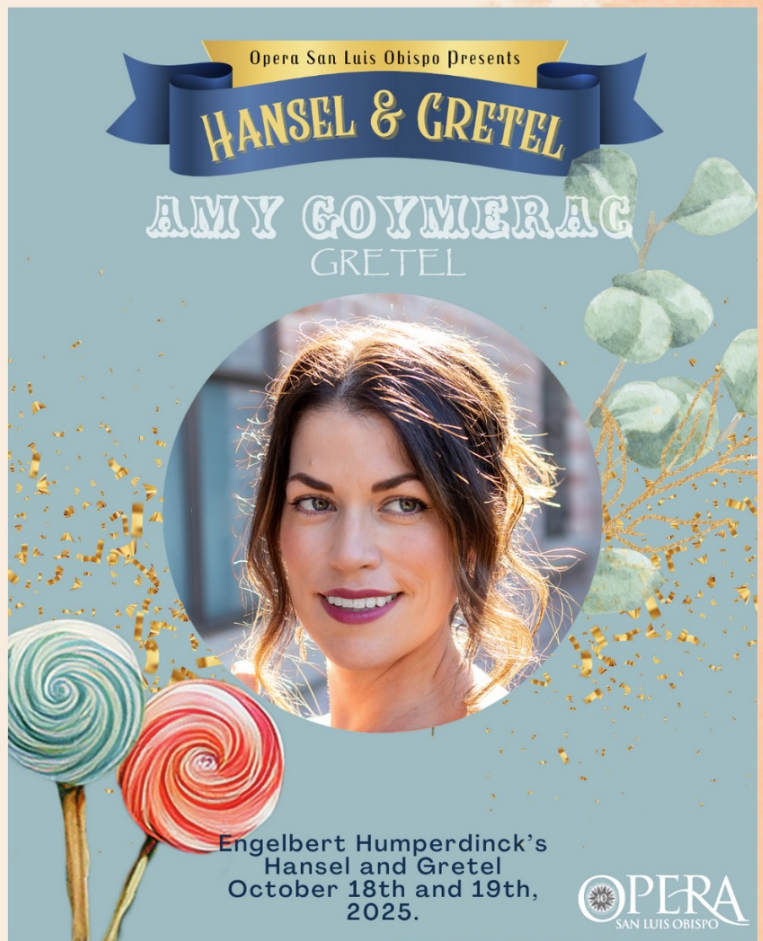
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HANSEL & GRETEL

by Engelbert Humperdinck

LEADING CAST



Mezzo-soprano, Jessica Gonzalez-Rodriguez (THE WITCH), makes her Opera San Luis Obispo debut in the role of The Witch. She has been acknowledged as "A particular highlight" (Operawire), "Both strong of technique and elegant of presence" (New City Stage). Gonzalez-Rodriguez recently made her Opera San Jose mainstage debut in the role of Toypurina and as the Dancer Choreographer in Hector Armienta's *Zorro*. She made her Carnegie Hall debut last season performing selections from *Carmen* and *Madama Butterfly* with the Vincerò Academy and is a multiple Opera Buffs grant recipient. Gonzalez-Rodriguez was a semi-finalist in the 2022 Loren L. Zachary competition and is an alumnus of the 2021-2022 Opera Santa Barbara Chrisman Studio Artist program. She made her Opera Santa Barbara mainstage debut in October of 2021 as Renata in *Cruzar la cara de la Luna*. She reprised her role in October of 2023, in collaboration with the Grupo de Danza Folklorico Quetzacoatl. Gonzalez-Rodriguez has also worked with the International Summer Opera Festival of Morelia, Pacific Opera Project, Opera Steamboat Summer Intensive, Palm Springs Opera, and Los Angeles Opera Connects, and Chicago Summer Opera Program to name a few. Last month she performed with the Lompoc Pops Orchestra and excited return to OSLO in December for the company's New Year's Eve Gala.

Soprano Kaitrin Cunningham (THE MOTHER) hails from Spokane, Washington. A member of the Grammy Award-winning Arnold Schoenberg Chor, she has performed concerts and operas throughout Europe and Asia, including L'opéra royal de Versailles, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, the Tonhalle in Düsseldorf, and the Musiikkitalo in Helsinki. Over the course of eight seasons in the Theater an der Wien opera chorus, she premiered 14 new opera productions and performed numerous roles, including Drittes Mädchen in Werner Egk's *Peer Gynt*, Annette in Gottfried von Einem's *Der Besuch der alten Dame*, and Une Femme in Donizetti's *Les Martyrs*. She sang Bianca in *La Rondine* as part of La Musica Lirica in Novafeltria (Italy). Cunningham made her Viennese debut in the role of Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*. She has also been a soloist with Sound of Austria, Oper in der Krypta, and the St. Stephen's Vocal Ensemble. Last month Cunningham was a featured soloist with the Lompoc Pops Orchestra, and she will return to OperaSLO this December as a featured soloist in the company's New Year's Eve Gala. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Seattle University and a Master of Music from the University of Arizona. Cunningham is currently on the vocal faculty of Cal Poly and Cuesta College.



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LEADING CAST



Multiple Grammy Award winning **baritone Gabriel Manro (THE FATHER)** has been called “a new kind of baritone...a knock-down baritone.”—SF Classical Voice. A favorite artist at Opera San Luis Obispo, Manro has performed the role of Tonio and Alfio (*Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*), Curley (*Oklahoma!*), Emile de Becque (*South Pacific*), and Escamillo (*Carmen*), in addition to several recitals and large galas. Manro made his operatic debut as Third Inmate in Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (Opera Pacific) with Frederica von Stade. He has also created roles in several contemporary and world-premiere operas and musicals including Muscovite Trader in LA Opera's *The Ghosts of Versailles*; the Mousling in the LA Philharmonic's *Alice in Wonderland*; the Computer in LA Opera's *The Fly*; Original Cast of *Séance on a Wet Afternoon* by Stephen Schwartz; Original Cast of LA Opera's *Il Postino* (Sony Classical DVD); the Commentator in the West Coast Premiere of Derrick Wang's *Scalia/Ginsburg*; President Lincoln in Golden Gate Opera's world-premiere: *Lincoln and Booth*; Original Off-Broadway cast of *Line Tjørnhøj's Orations*; Joel Lynch/Father Jackson in the European premiere telecast of Mayer's: *A Death in the Family*; and Jafar in Walt Disney Company's original production of *Aladdin*. In the 2023/24 season Manro highlights included Scarpia in a German National Tour of *Tosca*, and Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with the Berlin Philharmonic. He resides in Los Angeles with his screenwriter/opera directing wife, Justine Prado, and his beautiful children, Mays and Bernadette.

No stranger to OperaSLO, **coloratura soprano Katelan Bowden (SANDMAN)** hails from Davis, California. Her thrilling 2023 debut with OperaSLO began in the role of Adele in *Die Fledermaus*. She then went on as a featured soloist with the company's Best of Opera and Broadway Central Coast Tour, and finished the year as a featured soloist in our 2023 New Year's Eve Gala. Bowden has also performed the roles of Susanna in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Queen of the Night, Papagena, and 1st Lady in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Poppea in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Musica in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, and Cinderella in Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, among others. Bowden has performed at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center; with New York Lyric Opera, Opera San José, and Phoenix Opera. She sings a wide variety of Baroque and Symphonic works as well; having been the featured soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Vesperae Solennus de Dominica* and Mass in C Major, Haydn's *Missa in Angustiis*, Faure's Requiem, and Vivaldi's *Gloria* and *Magnificat*, among others. She can be found singing with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus as well as indie folk duo, Katalysst.





HANSEL & GRETEL

by Engelbert Humperdinck



LEADING CAST



Puerto Rican **soprano Alba Franco-Cancel (DEW FAIRY)** has established herself as a versatile and dynamic artist with a “pure,” “silvery,” and “bell-like” sound delivered with a magnetic stage presence. At Opera San Luis Obispo Alba has performed the role of Queen of the Night (*Der Zauberflöte*), Frasquita (*Carmen*), and in many recitals, outreach events, and large galas. She has appeared in more than thirty operatic productions across the United States, Latin America, and Europe. Notable roles include Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Despina in *Così fan tutte*, La Fée in *Cendrillon*, and the title role in *La Calisto*. Dedicated as well to contemporary repertoire, she has performed in acclaimed works such as Nico Muhly’s *Dark Sisters*, Mark Adamo’s *Little Women*, the mariachi opera *Cruzar la cara de la luna* by Pepe Martínez, and Héctor Armienta’s *La Llorona*. Her concert work spans oratorio, and chamber music including solos in Mozart’s Mass in C Minor and Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. Beyond the operatic stage, Franco-Cancel is co-founder of Duo Matices, a voice and piano ensemble committed to promoting Latin American art song. She is also a founding faculty member of the Colchagua Vocal Institute, which will launch in January 2026 as an intensive winter program devoted to Latin American art song. Franco-Cancel currently serves as Director of Vocal Studies at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice Performance from the University of Missouri and a Vocology Certificate from the University of Utah/NCVS.



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Featuring Mitch Latting

HANSEL & GRETEL

by Engelbert Humperdinck

CREATIVE TEAM



Stage Director Justine Prado Manro made her OSLO mainstage directing debut last May in our grand production of *The Wizard of Oz*, following her successful direction of OSLO's world premiere production of *Behind Barbed Wire* at the Clark Center in Arroyo Grande last January. Since 2015, she had been the company's longest-serving Stage Manager: with credits that include *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* (2015), *La Bohème* (2016), *South Pacific* (2019), *Carousel* (2022), *Die Fledermaus* (2023), and *Beauty and the Beast* (2024). In addition to Stage Manager, she also served as Assistant Director for OSLO's productions of *Madama Butterfly* (2017), *Oklahoma!* (2018), and *Carmen* (2024). Her training in stage directing was shaped under the mentorship of Heather Mathews, whom Justine was assistant director for at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. It was there she developed a deep respect for collaborative storytelling, precision in visual composition, and the emotional truth of a performance. Most recently she directed *Tosca* for Mission Opera in Los Angeles. Justine will return to OSLO later this year to direct the company's 2025 New Year's Eve Gala, in addition to our 2026 revival production of *Behind Barbed Wire*. Justine lives in Los Angeles with her husband, baritone Gabriel Manro and their two children, Mays and Bernadette. Beyond opera and musical theatre, Justine is an award-winning screenwriter, playwright, and critically acclaimed comic book author. A Bay Area native, she holds a BFA from the Academy of Art University and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Music Director and Conductor Brian Asher Alhadeff was hailed by *805 Living Magazine* as the "Maestro of the Central Coast". He is an internationally acclaimed conductor with the unique focus of both producing and conducting large-scale theatrical productions. Alhadeff has been the General and Artistic Director of Opera San Luis Obispo since 2011. He is also the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Lompoc Pops Orchestra, and Principal Conductor of Ventura County Ballet, State Street Ballet Santa Barbara, and Civic Ballet San Luis Obispo. Equally dedicated to arts education, Alhadeff consults for the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education producing outreach year-round, while also teaching part-time for music department at Cuesta College. In 2018 Alhadeff developed the Mobile Opera House for OSLO: a miniature opera stage that unfolds from a 26-foot box truck that brings music outreach to schools without regular arts education. Next month he will fulfill one of his life's goals in bringing *Peter and the Wolf* to every sixth-grader in San Luis Obispo County free of charge through performances in South County, SLO, and North County with the OSLO Grand Orchestra. Alhadeff studied conducting at the Peabody Conservatory and Janacek Academy of Music. His conducting degrees include a Bachelor of Arts from Loyola Marymount (Los Angeles), Masters of Music from Cal State University Los Angeles, and a Doctorate of Music from the Herp Alpert Conservatory of Music at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He resides in Templeton with his wife Luana, two children Éva and Noah, and their Australian Labradoodle Wookie.



HANSEL & GRETEL

by Engelbert Humperdinck

CREATIVE TEAM

Set Designer and Technical Director Erik Mario Austin is a true “theatrical renaissance man” shifting from stage director, to actor, set designer, author, and teacher. An important figure at OSLO, in 2014 Erik stage directed the company’s first grand musical, *Show Boat*. He is excited to return to OperaSLO after playing the Scarecrow in last May’s grand production of *Wizard of Oz*. Originally from Portage, Indiana, Erik began staging “basement shows” at age five. Erik is the Artistic Director of Kelrik Productions, where he has directed, designed, and toured numerous productions throughout California. Erik is an Entertainment Coordinator at SeaWorld San Diego, where he recently curated their Halloween themed Howl-O-Scream. He also consults as a Christmas design specialist for private homes. Erik is the author of *Stripped: A Memoir* and creator of The Straight T blog, blending storytelling and accountability coaching. He also enjoys touring his private art collection, Austin’s Artwork. Erik teaches a variety of workshops and is a graduate of AMDA New York. Follow his work at www.TheStraightT.com and on Instagram @erikmarioaustin.



Director of Choruses, Kristina Prozesky is a vocologist and choral director with extensive training in technique and vocal health from some of the greatest coaches in the world. She studied for two summers in Salzburg, Austria with Metropolitan opera tenor William Lewis, and many of her voice students have gone on to successful musical careers. Prozesky held a two-year intensive teaching fellowship with the prestigious Boston Children’s Chorus and went on to direct choirs and musicals in schools from the Cayman Islands to here on the Central Coast. In 2024 she helped develop the OSLO Children’s Chorus which debuted in the company’s grand production of *Carmen*. Soon after the ensemble was invited to guest at the Clark Center in Arroyo Grande with David Benoit. The group then went on to star as “The Munchkins” in OSLO’s grand production of *The Wizard of Oz* last May. Prozesky then prepared ensemble to guest appear in *Carmina Burana* under the direction of Cassandra Tarrantino. Prozesky holds a BA from the University of Texas at Austin, a Master’s in teaching from Boston University, Orff music teaching certificates from BU, and a Kodaly certificate from New England Conservatory.

Costume Designer Sherry Sparks made her OSLO debut in our grand production of *The Wizard of Oz* last May which involved more than 200 costumes! Prior to that, over the last 15 years, she has been the first assistant to just about every OSLO Costume Designer, in addition to assisting in the costume departments of several other Central Coast theatrical and dance companies. Her networking allegiances throughout California allow her to excel in developing successful collaborative scenarios for all productions she is affiliated. Sherry comes to costume design and coordination from a diverse range of experience from restoring vintage Jaguar interiors, to art restoration, to skilled millinery work. Sherry has even had the unique opportunity of having restored textiles that date back more than 2000 years! Last month Sherry created authentic Wagnerian helmets and mythical weapons for four soloists that joined Maestro Alhadeff in the Central Coast premiere of Wagner’s *Ride of the Valkyries* with the Lompoc Pops Orchestra. She is excited to expand this to eight helmets and weapons for OperaSLO’s New Year’s Eve gala when the work will be repeated with the OperaSLO Grand Orchestra.





HANSEL & GRETEL

by Engelbert Humperdinck

CREATIVE TEAM



Choreographer Andrew Silvaggio has been the Principal Choreographer of OSLO since 2013; having successfully choreographed the company's largest productions that include *Carmen*, *Oklahoma!*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Showboat*, *Aida*, *The Magic Flute*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Wizard of Oz*. Silvaggio is owner/operator of the Academy of Dance, and has held the position of Artistic Director and Principal Choreographer of the Civic Ballet of San Luis Obispo since 2003, in addition to directing *All Things Dance Company*. At CBSLO, Silvaggio has premiered *Alice in Wonderland*, *Sidewalk Stories*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Crucible*, *Julia Caesar*, *The Scarlet Ibis*, and *Our Town*, among others, in addition to the annual recreation of Lorilee Silvaggio's *The Nutcracker* every December. On the east coast he has been involved with many productions including: *A Chorus Line*, *Edmond*, *Carousel*, *Weird Romance*, and *On the Town*, while also performing as a feature dancer for the Barrymore Awards and Philadelphia Fringe Festival. Silvaggio holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theater from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

Stage Manager Laura Weston makes her OSLO debut with *Hansel and Gretel*. She is a free-lance Stage Manager who recently completed the summer season at Chenango River Theatre in Greene, NY. Laura's opera experience includes work with Pittsburgh Opera as an Assistant Stage Manager, three productions with the Livermore Valley Opera as Stage Manager, and six seasons with the Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera as Stage Manager. She has also worked with choral groups, state fairs, and arts festivals. Retired from the IATSE (stagehands union) during the pandemic after 25 years, she's thrilled to be returned to her theatrical roots which take her back to Children's Theatre, near Chicago in the seventh grade, that made a lifelong career impact. She holds a BFA from Stephens College in Missouri and a MBA in Arts/Non-Profit Administration from SUNY-Binghamton (now Binghamton University).



HANSEL & GRETEL
by Engelbert Humperdinck

OPERASLO GRAND ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

Lorenz Gama, Concertmaster
Alejandra Gonzalez, Associate Concertmaster
Anna Papikian, Assistant Concertmaster
Roman Selezinka
Steve Chiu
Julissa Bozman
Felicit McKellar
Elizabeth Rowins
Lyn Bertles
Ginette Reitz

VIOLIN II

Araksia Nazlikian, Principal
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Paris Draghici
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Margaret Whitson
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Jennifer Wu

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Lyubov Solovyova, Assistant Principal
Olivia Holvik
Ben Williams

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Ian Sharp, Principal
Anastasia Preston
Ed Harris

FLUTES:

I. Suzanne Duffy
II. Carol Houchens
III. Miriam Grisso (Piccolo)

OBOES:

I. Heidi Butterfied-Yi
II. Kelly Leu (English Horn)

CLARINETS:

I. Ryan Glass
II. Richard Dobeck
III. Nancy Mathison (Bass Clarinet)

BASSOONS:

I. Lisa Nauful
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III. Andrew Arensman
IV. Elizabeth Larsen

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II. Andrew Chermak

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II. David Landers
III. Ty Rust (+Bass)

TUBA:

Zachary Zeman

HARP:

Alaina Stark

TIMPANI:

Marshall Granger

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John Astaire
Gena Laird
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Jayne Cohen, Orchestra Manager

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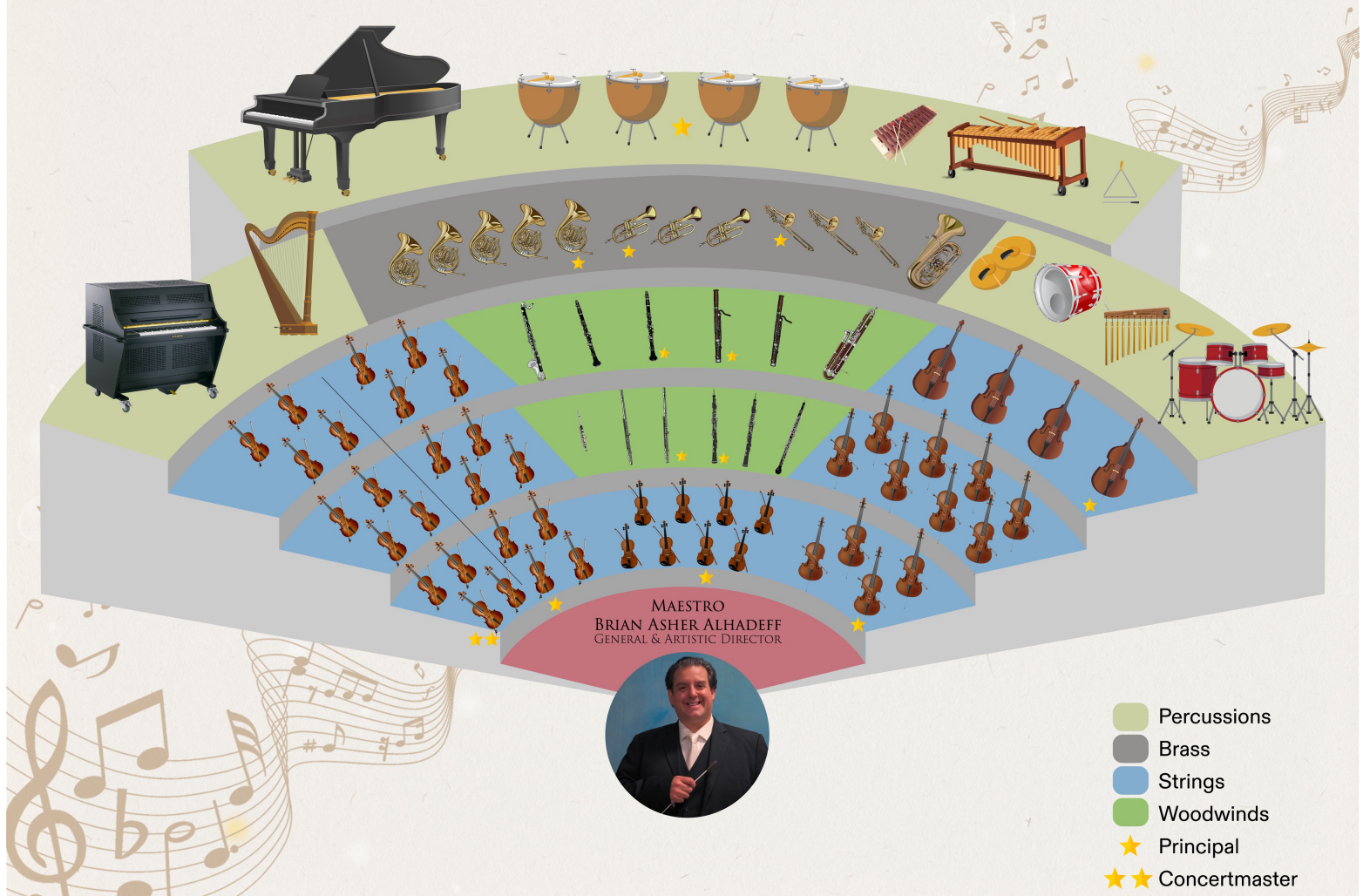
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SUNDAY: December 20, 2pm

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Bonnie and Jason Len

by Brian Asher Alhadeff

*Opera's grandest duet is
between passion
and philanthropy.*

True artists perform because of an unquenchable fire within them. We do what we do because we must. Just as the worker bee gathers pollen for the hive, the singer must sing, the violinist must play, the dancer must dance, the painter must paint, and the sculptor must create. On the receiving end, the audience's spirit is nourished by the artist's bounty.

For as long as I can remember, Bonnie and Jason Len have been a tremendous, driving force behind the scenes at Opera San Luis Obispo. Their generosity has taken many forms—financial, creative, and deeply personal—embodying the truest meaning of the words opera lover. Bonnie is a skilled artisan specializing in mosaics, and has served as a longtime and passionate member of our Board of Directors. Jason has brought his trademark energy to our fundraisers as an auctioneer who can make any room come alive, while moonlighting as a fantastic tour guide for his extensive vintage car and motorcycle museum. Together, they've opened their beautiful Arroyo Grande estate countless times to host events and provide housing for visiting artists associated with our productions. Their philanthropy has literally built the foundation of our company—underwriting our Set and Costume Shops, supporting operations, and ensuring that OperaSLO continues to grow and thrive for future generations.

It fills me with joy knowing that Bonnie and Jason not only attend our productions but invest their hearts into what fuels their passion: opera. You can see and feel their touch in nearly every aspect of our work. If you get the chance, give them a heartfelt thank-you—a pat on the back, a hug, or an email through me at brian@operaslo.org On behalf of Opera San Luis Obispo and everyone touched by their generosity: Bonnie and Jason, thank you for believing in what we do and helping us share it with the world. It is my great pleasure to honor you both as our Maestro Honorees for this production.



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Original Music by Deon Nielsen Price

with Chika Inoue, Kathryn Loomis, Eric McConnell, Jim Gregory, Russell Endo, testimonials from family survivors and historic video. This production is stage directed by Justine Prado Manro and accompanied by the Friendly Neighborhood Big Band (Mitch Latting, Director), and the Opera San Luis Obispo Grand Orchestra, conducted by Brian Asher Alhadeff.