

Kirill Petrenko Conducts Humperdinck's Hänsel und Gretel

Thursday, May 27, 2027 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin

Kirill Petrenko, conductor · Samantha Hankey, Hänsel · Elena Villalón, Gretel
· Alexandra Ionis, Gertrud · Wolfgang Koch, Peter · Gerhard Siegel, Ginger-
bread Witch · Serafina Starke, Dew Fairy · Shannon Keegan, Sandman · Vokal-
helden, children's choir

approximately 120 minutes

Engelbert Humperdinck

120 minutes

1854–1921

Hänsel und Gretel (complete opera, staged)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The prelude. It opens with four horns playing the melody of the children's evening prayer, and it ends with the same music. In between come several of the opera's other themes, woven together with great skill.

Folk songs, real and invented. The first song of the opera, "Suse, liebe Suse", is a genuine German nursery song, and Humperdinck treats it as Wagner would a leitmotif, developing it in the orchestra. Most of the other tunes that sound traditional are his own, among them the dance duet "Brüderchen, komm tanz mit mir" and the father's drinking song with its "Ral-la-la-la" refrain. The second act opens with the score's other authentic folk song, Gretel's "Ein Männlein steht im Walde", which is a riddle: the little man in the wood with the red coat and black cap is a rosehip.

The Witch's Ride. The orchestral interlude between the first two acts, based on the broomstick music from the father's account of the witch. This is Humperdinck at his most Wagnerian, and its wild string writing owes something to the "Ride of the Valkyries".

Evening Prayer and Dream Pantomime. The children's duet "Abends will ich schlafen gehn" is the best-known music in the opera. The orchestra then takes up the tune alone and builds it into a long, radiant interlude as the angels descend.

The witch. Listen for her galloping broomstick song, "Hurr hopp hopp".

The ending. The children dance their jig from the first act, and in the closing bars everyone joins the father in his motto, that when need is greatest God stretches out his hand, sung to the melody of the Evening Prayer with which the prelude began.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

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