University of Florida Performing Arts

presents

Salzburg Marionettes

in

Hansel and Gretel

Friday, November 23, 2007, 2 p.m.

THE SALZBURG MARIONETTE THEATER
Founded in 1913 by Professor Anton Aicher
Artistic Director: Professor Gretl Aicher
Managing Director: Barbara Heuberger

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK’S
Hansel and Gretel
Opera in Three Acts /Libretto by Adelheid Wette
Conductor: Andreas Schüller
Inboccallupo-Orchestra – The Inboccallupo-Children’s Choir
Performance Recorded for the Salzburg Marionette Theater

Sponsored by

THE Alan and Carol Squitieri
PERFORMING ARTS ENDOWMENT
PROGRAM

Hansel and Gretel
By Engelbert Humperdinck

Overture: In the forest of Ilsenstein lives a witch who catches children and bakes them for her gingerbread house.

Act I: The broom-maker’s hut. The parents have gone in search of food, leaving Hansel and Gretel alone, with the task of making brooms and darning stockings. The children are hungry, and upon seeing a jug of milk, they start dancing in anticipation of rice pudding, instead of working. Their mother comes home, tired and empty-handed, and in her anger at finding the children not hard at work, she upsets the milk. She sends the children into the forest to pick strawberries, saying they are not to come home until the basket is full. Meanwhile, their father returns, merry and laden with food, after a successful day. He is horrified to hear that the children are in the forest, where the witch of Ilsenstein will be lying in wait. Both parents rush off to the forest to look for them.

Act II: Gathering strawberries, the children have come near to Ilsenstein. Hansel’s basket is full, and Gretel has woven a garland of flowers. They start to play, and fail to notice that night is falling. Hansel has forgotten the way home; the friendly forest suddenly seems threatening and filled with danger. The Sandman appears and promises to protect the children, who say their prayers and settle down to sleep. Fourteen angels watch over them.

Act III: The Dew Fairy wakes the children. They are hungry – and what do they see? A little house, made all of gingerbread – just right for breakfast. As they nibble at it, the witch comes out and puts them under a spell. Hansel needs fattening up, but Gretel can be baked and eaten immediately. The witch tells her to look into the oven to see if the gingerbread is ready, but Gretel pretends not to understand. The witch demonstrates; Gretel pushes her into the oven and slams the door shut. The oven explodes, and gingerbread children appear, standing stiffly until Hansel breaks the spell on them with the witch’s juniper bush. The gingerbread children thank Hansel and Gretel, who in turn thank their 14 guardian angels. As they all sing a song making fun of the witch, the parents appear and the family is joyfully reunited.

CAST

**The Singer**
PETER (Vater) Jörg Gottschick
GERTRUD (Mutter) Martina Hamberg-Möbius
HÄNSEL Kristina Naudé
GRETEL Annette Dasch
THE WITCH Giedré Povilaitytė
SANDMAN Akiko Hayashida
THE DEW FAIRY Bini Lee

**The Puppeteer**
Vladimir Fediakov
Philippe Brunner/Ursula Winzer
Eva Wiener
Heide Hölz/Michaela Obermayr
Pavel Tikhonov
Pierre Dron
Vladimir Fediakov/Ursula Winzer

CHILDREN, ANGELS, ANIMALS: The Ensemble

Production, sets and costumes by: Hinrich Horstkotte
Marionette Sculptor: Pierre Monnerat
Light Engineer: Harald Alker
Sound Engineer: Gerhard Schönberger
The marionettes, sets, and costumes were constructed in the workshops of the Salzburg Marionette Theater. The Salzburg Marionette Theater is represented by Melvin Kaplan, Inc.

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History of the Salzburg Marionette Theater

A performance of Mozart’s *Bastien und Bastienne* marked the founding of the Salzburg Marionette Theater by sculptor Anton Aicher in 1913. Anton Aicher was so successful with his performances that in the autumn of the same year, he and his marionettes went on their first tour. The early performances in Salzburg were given in the archepiscopal Borromäum (now the Hochschule Mozarteum).

With time, the repertoire was extended and fairy tales featuring Kasperl (Punch) were staged for children. In 1926, Anton Aicher gave his son, Hermann Aicher, the marionette theater as a wedding present. Hermann Aicher used his technical expertise to turn the theater into a real miniature stage, which led to the production, in cooperation with the Mozarteum, of more elaborate operas. Soon Mozart’s “small” operas (including *Apollo and Hyacinth* and *The Impresario*) were on the regular program.

From 1927 to 1934, the theater went on tour to Hamburg, Vienna and Holland, as well as on a major tour through the Balkans and to Istanbul, Sofia and Athens. In 1936, performances were given in Moscow and Leningrad to audiences as large as 2,500. Between 1940 and 1944, performances were given at the front, until Hermann Aicher was called to the army and the theater was closed. After the end of World War Two, the Marionettes performed in Paris’ renowned Théâtre des Champs Élysées, and with that performance, the ensemble became the first group to stage a performance in German in the city following the war. An intensive period of tours and guest appearances followed, and new productions were staged – in particular Mozart’s five “great” operas.

The current theater, which was designed to suit the particular needs of the company, is situated in the Schwarzstrasse next to the Mozarteum. It opened in 1971 with a performance of Rossini’s *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Not long after his 75th birthday, Hermann Aicher died and his daughter, Gretl Aicher, took over the theater. Tours were undertaken throughout Europe, America, and Asia. The Marionettes were seen and admired in New York, Paris, Italy, Switzerland, Hong Kong and Japan. For the Mozart Year in 1991, Götz Friedrich directed a new production of Mozart’s *Cosi fan Tutte*.

In 1994 and 1995, five Mozart operas were recorded for television and video with Sir Peter Ustinov as the narrator. Between 1992 and 1997, several co-productions were created with the Salzburg Landestheater. In 1996, the Salzburg Marionette Theater participated for the first time in the Salzburg Festival, with a new production of Weber’s Oberon, staged in the Kleines Festspielhaus.

On January 27, 2006, the 250th anniversary of the birth of Mozart, the Salzburg Marionette Theater celebrated with a non-stop presentation of scenes from the four Mozart operas in the company’s repertoire. As part of the 2006 Salzburg Festival, the Marionettes participated in a production combining Mozart’s *Bastien und Bastienne* with *The Impresario*, which included a live orchestra and singers. An adaptation of the Rodgers & Hammerstein classic *The Sound of Music* premieres on the theater’s 2007 United States tour.