

PuppetWorld Playhouse

*presents*

Bits N Pieces Puppet Theatre

*in*

# Hansel and Gretel

*by*

Engelbert Humperdinck



## Classroom Guide

This program is sponsored in part by the Florida Department of State Division of Arts and Culture, Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners, Florida Council on Arts and Culture, National Endowment for the Arts, presenters across the United States, and You!

# Hansel and Gretel

## **Family fun can become famous around the world.**

Long ago in 1893 Adelheid H. Wette asked her brother Engelbert Humperdinck to write some music for a group of verses she had written. The verses were based on the story by another family, the Brothers Grimm, who published a book of German folk tales. What began as fun for both families has become famous to audiences around the world.



## Our story of **Hansel and Gretel**

### *Act One*

Two children alone in the house. Two children supposed to do their chores. Two children too hungry to work. Two children who would rather have fun. Two children named Hansel and Gretel.

Mother entered the house and saw her children had done nothing to help the family. Her children had played with their pet and danced a jig. Upset, a pitcher of milk gets spilt...the only food for the house. Their father had gone to the city to try to sell brooms to buy food. Mother was sure he'd come back empty handed again. Mother sent Hansel and Gretel out into the forest to pick strawberries for supper.

Father came back overjoyed. He'd sold every broom he'd taken to the city. He'd bought food and treats. But joy turned to horror when Papa discovered his children had gone into the woods to look for food. A witch who gobbled children lived in the forest. Mama and Papa set out to find their children before it was too late.

### *Act Two*

Picking strawberries and not paying attention to the time of day, Hansel and Gretel are forced to sleep in the dark forest. When tomorrow's daylight comes they'll go home. The Sandman grants them a safe sleep. Early the next morning they arise hungry and find...a house made out of gingerbread!

Nibble, nibble, hungry for food they nibble at the house. Out pops an old woman who lives in the magic house. With a hocus pocus the witch captures the children. Hansel will be kept in a cage to be fattened up. Gretel will clean the witch's house. But Gretel is a clever girl. When the witch orders Gretel to build up the fire in the oven, she pretends she doesn't know how. When the witch shows her how to open the door and look inside, Gretel pushes the old witch into the fire. Flash! Out pops a Gingerbread Witch!

Magically, all the children the witch has caught turn from cookies back into children. Magically the day has been saved. And miraculously Mama and Papa arrive to find their children safe and sound.

## **What is Opera?**

Opera began in Italy in the 1600's for the Kings and Queens and their friends. It is a total art form that combines singing, orchestral music, drama, story telling, literature, painting and dance, all into a single great work of art. At it's most basic, an opera is a play that is sung instead of spoken. Opera uses the same art form as operettas and musicals. If you know what's happening without the words of the songs, the show is a play. If you can't tell what the shows about without the words of the songs, the show is a musical, or an opera, or an operetta. Our "Hansel and Gretel" is technically an operetta because it includes spoken dialogue.

## Vocabulary

Art-

The use of a variety of means to express ideas, entertain and enlighten.

Blocking-

The movement of characters on the stage as planned by the director.

Composer-

The artist who creates original music.

Dance-

The expressive use of the body to convey a story, emotion and or pleasing visual effect.

Libretto-

The written text for the opera.

Librettist.

The person who writes the words for the opera.

Marionette-

A string puppet operated from overhead.

Music-

The art of making sound tell a story or have a meaning.

Puppet-

An inanimate object made to seem alive by the puppeteer who performs the show.



## Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921)

Composer

At seven years old, Engelbert began his first piano lessons. At fourteen years old, he saw his first opera and began writing his own music. His father was not pleased but he was advised his son was talented and so sent him to a conservatory. While at school he won a Mozart Prize and a Mendelssohn Prize.

Upon graduating from school he was invited to work with world renowned Richard Wagner. Wagner was so creatively strong, Engelbert gave up writing music and became a lecturer at music conservatories. One day his sister asked him to write music for a series of songs for children. These songs became the opera “Hansel and Gretel”. It was such a success it played in seventy-two theaters the first year! The brother and sister tried to write other children’s operas as well, but none was as well loved as “Hansel and Gretel”.

## Adelheid Humperdinck Wette (1858-1916)

Librettist

Adelheid was the younger sister of Engelbert, but she would not remain in her brother’s shadow. She spent much of her time writing poems her brother would put to music. She had learned this hobby from their father who also liked to write. Her hobby continued throughout her life. She married a doctor who also wrote many things including two folk story librettos that were set to music by Arnold Mendelssohn.

# The Brothers Grimm

## Authors

Jacob Ludwig Grimm (1785-1863)

Wilhelm Carl Grimm (1786-1859)

Boyhood was fun for the Brothers Grimm. They grew up in Germany during the Napoleonic Wars. They were proud of their German heritage. Their father was a lawyer and their mother a housewife with nine children. They moved to the city so their papa could be a judge. They were schooled by tutors. When their father suddenly died they lost their youth to family responsibility. To support the family they went to school to become lawyers. Fatherless and poor they always were confronted by injustice. They were first in their class but last to find friends among their fellow students who taunted them and their ill-fortune.

While at university, the Grimms became interested in historical research studying how the origins of law and even literature define a nations culture. In order to support their family while at school they took jobs as librarians. When not reading books, they began to listen to stories told by nannies and farmers and common German citizens. They collected the stories into books and published them as the Grimm Fairy Tales. They often times retold the tales to make them more their own. We know their versions best of *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella*, *Hansel and Gretel* and oh so many more!

## Questions to ask before the show...

1. What will the characters look like? Have the students draw their ideas.
2. What is music? Can music tell the emotions of the singer? Think of a happy song. Think of a sad song. Without the words is the song still happy or sad?
3. Who is Engelbert Humperdinck? Have you ever heard of him? There might be two! Do you expect the story to be scary or funny?

## Questions to ask after the show...

1. What did you like best about the show? What did you like the least?
2. Do you have to listen carefully to the words to understand the story?
3. Which character is your favorite? Why?
4. What was the mood of the show? Happy, scary, sad?



Answers to Crossword Puzzle:

1. Sting/Shadow
2. Finger
3. Shadow
4. Giant
5. Rod

This program is sponsored in part by the Hillsborough County Public Schools, Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners, Florida Department of State Division of Arts and Culture, Florida Council on Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts.

[www.puppetworld.com](http://www.puppetworld.com) or 813-659-0659

# Types of Puppets

Word Scramble Clues

NAHD

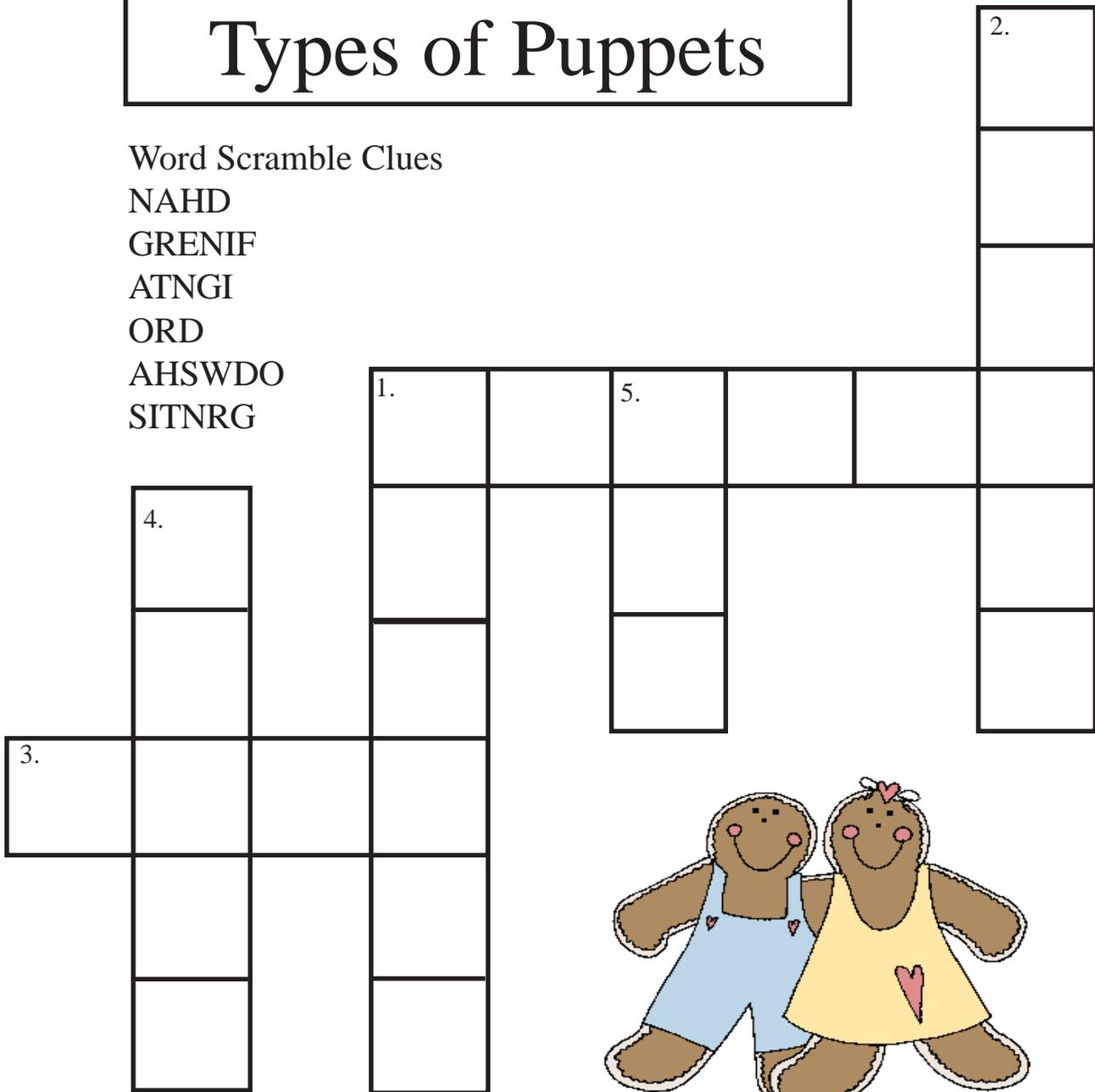
GRENIF

ATNGI

ORD

AHSWDO

SITNRG



## Clues

### ACROSS

- 1.) These puppets are worked from above and very good for flying. In France say "Marionette".
- 3.) Mr. Punch is one of these. It attaches to your arm.

### DOWN

- 1.) Even with a bright stage light you can't see this puppet, you just see it's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2.) You can put five of these puppets on one hand.
- 4.) Bits 'N Pieces' one and only, really big puppet.
- 5.) These European and Javanese puppets are worked from underneath with sticks.