

OPERAS FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

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Notes on the Operas

Franz von Suppé

Boccaccio

Franz von Suppé or Francesco Suppé Demelli was born in 1819 in what is today Split in Croatia. Christened Francesco Ezechiele Ermenegildo Cavaliere di Suppé-Demelli, he grew up in what is today Zadar on the Dalmation coast and simplified his name when he settled in Vienna as a composer of some 30 light operas and over 180 farces, ballets and other stage works; much of which were later lost. Nevertheless, some of his overtures have entered popular culture as soundtracks for cartoons and advertisements. Boccaccio [1879] is his finest operetta.

“Boccaccio,” or the “Prince of Palermo,” is a comic opera in three acts with music by Franz von Suppé and text by Zell and Genée. It was first produced at the Carl Theatre, Vienna, Feb. 1, 1879.

CHARACTERS

Boccaccio, a novelist and poet.

Leonetto, his student friend.

Pietro, Prince of Palermo.

Lotteringhi, a cooper.

Lambertuccio, a grocer.

Scalza, a barber.

Fiammetta, Lambertuccio's adopted daughter.

Beatrice, Scalzi's daughter.

Isabella, Lotteringhi's wife.

Peronella, Lambertuccio's wife.

Checco, a beggar.

Fratelli, a bookseller.

Fresco, the cooper's apprentice.

Florentine students, journeymen, girls, beggars, servants.

Act 1

This is set in Florence.

Boccaccio, the hero of this tale, is a novelist and poet whose virile pen deals with truth not romance, and who has brought down upon his head the hatred of many of the Florentines, who are portrayed in his novels with really embarrassing fidelity. They vow vengeance upon him and his life, or at least his safety, is in peril. Boccaccio has found time in the midst of his literary labours to fall in love with Fiammetta, the adopted daughter of Lambertuccio, the grocer. He, as well as Lambertuccio, is unaware of the fact that the girl is the daughter of the Duke of Tuscany, who for political reasons has had her brought up in this humble fashion.

Her father has destined her for a fitting marriage and he sends to Florence at this time for Pietro, the Prince of Palermo, who is the intended husband of Fiammetta, who was betrothed to him in infancy. Pietro is acting in accordance with the wishes of his father and not because he desires to assume marital ties, for, as he himself confesses, he is far too fond of wine and flirting to care to take on the role of husband.

Boccaccio has learned that Fiammetta is to marry and succeeds in stealing interviews with her in the disguises of a beggar and a simpleton, and finds that his love is returned.

Pietro has arrived in the city and joins in several amorous adventures with the students and meets Boccaccio, for whom he has had, for some time, a profound admiration. He fancies that by his adventures he may gain such experience that he, too, may write of life as Boccaccio does. But his literary ardour is somewhat cooled when, on account of his resemblance to Boccaccio, he is seized by Florentine citizens who have figured unpleasantly in the novels of "the miserable scribbler" and given a sound drubbing. Act 1 ends when the men of Florence knock over the book-seller's cart and set alight his books. They think that they have ended Boccaccio's writings about Florence which disparage them and their wives.

Act 2. Pietro, the Prince of Palermo's adventures go on merrily. He is introduced to Isabella, the wife of the drunken cooper, Lotteringhi, and proceeds to fall in love with her because the students tell him that she is the cooper's niece. When Lotteringhi returns before he is expected, the lady hides her princely lover in a barrel and when he is discovered, glibly explains his presence by saying that he had purchased the barrel and had gone in to examine it. Boccaccio persuades the grocer Lambertuccio that there is a magic spell on a tree in the square and he climbs the tree. This gives him an excellent viewpoint of what is really going on in Florence. He sees Boccaccio kissing his adopted daughter Fiammetta; he sees Isabella the cooper's wife dallying with Pietro the Prince while her husband is checking his barrel's for leaks and then his wife Peronella appears and pounces on Pietro to whom she has taken a liking. The watchman sounds the alarm that a stranger has arrived and he is set upon but turns out to be the bearer of money for Fiammetta's board who has come to collect her and take her back to Palermo for her marriage to Pietro. Boccaccio creeps near the horrified girl and tells her that he will follow her to Palermo and satisfied, she happily enters the sedan chair brought for her and departs for Palermo. Boccaccio puts on a devil's mask and makes his getaway as the crowd shrink back in fear. Act 2.

Act 3. The Duke's palace in Palermo.

A major-domo, who is actually the Duke himself in disguise, brings in Fiammetta's foster parents wanting to thank them for raising Fiammetta. Fearing punishment, Lambertuccio tries to get his wife Peronella to take any blame accruing.

Fiammetta comes in, about to be solemnly betrothed to Pietro. Boccaccio, for whom the Prince has a profound liking, comes has arrived as a guest to the festivities. He knows well that his love is reciprocated, and he has Pietro's own admission that he feels only indifference for Fiammetta, so he decides to help fate to a more gallant role. He is asked to arrange a play for the evening and, in the impromptu affair he illustrates the situation with such fidelity and shows up the follies of Pietro so vividly, that the young man who had looked over the story prior to its performance decides not to have it played and instead surrenders the hand of Fiammetta to the one who truly loves her, Boccaccio. Boccaccio has been made a Member of the Court and appointed as a Professor to the University of Florence. Fiammetta is pleased to

wed a professor of the University of Florence rather than to be Princess of Palermo and the happy Boccaccio promises that from now on all his stories will be made up and not the retelling of what is going on. But he also tells the assembled gathering that husbands should ensure that their wives are entertained and have something to laugh about from time to time. The opera is full of genuine comedy which is generously furnished by the superstitious Lambertucci, who sees dreadful signs and portents in every occurrence; by Checco the beggar and by Peronella, the elderly sister of Lambertucci, who is engaged in hunting a rich husband.

There is a brief biography here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_von_Supp%C3%A9

L'Étoile is an opéra bouffe in three acts by Emmanuel Chabrier with a libretto by Eugène Leterrier and Albert Vanloo.

Chabrier met his librettists at the home of a mutual friend, the painter Gaston Hirsh, in 1875. Chabrier played to them early versions of the romance "O petite étoile" and the ensemble "Le pal, est de tous les supplices..." (with words by Verlaine which Leterrier and Vanloo found too bold and toned down). They agreed to collaborate and Chabrier set about composition with enthusiasm. The story echoes some of the characters and situations of Chabrier's Fisch-Ton-Kan [French slang for 'clear-off', a popular phrase after the exile of Napoleon III].

For a performance history see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%27%C3%A9toile_\(opera\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%27%C3%A9toile_(opera))

Roles

Ouf 1er, King of the 36 realms	tenor
Siroco, astrologer	bass
Prince Hérisson de Porc-Epic, Ambassador of the court of Mataquin	baritone
Tapioca, Hérisson's secretary	tenor
Lazuli	mezzo-soprano
La Princesse Laoula	soprano
Aloès, Hérisson's wife	mezzo-soprano
Oasis, Maid of honour	soprano
Asphodèle, Youca, Adza, Zinnia, Koukouli, Maids of honour	sopranos, mezzos
Chief of police	spoken
Chorus: People, guards, courtiers	

Synopsis

Act 1

King Ouf 1er roams his city, in disguise, searching for a suitable subject to execute as a birthday treat. Hérisson de Porc-Epic, an ambassador, and his wife, Aloès, arrive, accompanied by his secretary, Tapioca, and Laoula, the daughter of a neighbouring monarch. They are traveling incognito, and the princess is being passed off as Hérisson's wife. Their mission, of which Laoula is unaware, is to marry her to Ouf. Complications arise when Laoula and a poor pedlar, Lazuli, fall in love at first sight. Scolded for flirting, Lazuli insults the disguised king and thus becomes a desired candidate for death by impalement. But Siroco, the king's astrologer, reveals that the fates of the king and the pedlar are inextricably linked; the stars predict that they will die within 24 hours of each other. Fortunes change again, and Lazuli is escorted with honours into the palace.

Act 2

Lazuli, feted and well fed, grows bored with luxury and longs for Laoula. Ouf, still unaware of the disguises, furthers the lovers' hopes of marriage by imprisoning the supposed husband, Hérissou. The lovers depart but Hérissou escapes and orders the pedlar to be shot. Gunfire is heard, but although Laoula is brought in there is no sign of Lazuli. Ouf bemoans his impending death.

Act 3

Lazuli, having escaped harm, overhears Ouf, Siroco and Hérissou discussing the situation, and eventually reveals himself to Laoula. They plan a second elopement. The king and Siroco try to raise their spirits with a large glass of green chartreuse. Ouf, desperate to produce an heir to the throne, plans to marry Laoula, even if for an hour, but finds that he has run out of time. However, when the clocks strike five and nothing happens, Ouf declares that the astrologer's predictions must have been wrong. The Chief of Police then appears with Lazuli, who was caught on his way out of the country. The King blesses Lazuli and Laoula's marriage. In a general final chorus Lazuli and Laoula address the audience to a reprise of act 1 finale.

Der Vampyr (The Vampire) is a Romantic opera in two acts by Heinrich Marschner. The German libretto by Wilhelm August Wohlbrück (Marschner's brother-in-law) is based on the play *Der Vampir oder die Totenbraut* (1821) by Heinrich Ludwig Ritter, which itself was based on the short story *The Vampyre* (1819) by John Polidori. The first performance took place on 29 March 1828 in Leipzig, where it was a hit. It is occasionally performed in Europe and in a serial form on English television where it was set in 20th century London.

Roles

Lord Ruthven, the vampire	baritone
Sir Humphrey Davenaut	bass
Malwina, his daughter	soprano
Sir Edgar Aubry	tenor
Sir John Berkley	bass
Janthe, his daughter	soprano
George Dibdin, a servant in Davenaut's house	tenor
Emmy Perth	soprano
Toms Blunt	baritone
Suse, his wife	mezzo-soprano
James Gadshill	tenor
Richard Scrop	tenor
Robert Green	bass
The Vampire Master	speaking part
John Perth	speaking part

Synopsis

Place: Scotland. Time: the eighteenth century.

Act 1

Scene 1: After midnight: At a Witches' Sabbath, the Vampire Master tells Lord Ruthven that if he cannot sacrifice three virgin brides within the next 24 hours, he will die. If he can, he will be granted another year of life. The clock strikes one, and Ruthven's first victim, Janthe, arrives for a clandestine meeting, although she is due to marry another on the following day. Berkley, having discovered that she is missing, is searching for her with his men, and Ruthven hides with her in a cave. Her screams alert the search-party, and the body and the Vampire are discovered. Berkley stabs Ruthven and leaves him to die, but he is discovered by Aubry, whose life had been saved by Ruthven in the past. Ruthven pleads with Aubry to drag him into the moonlight so that he can revive, and Aubry, while doing so, realises that Ruthven is a vampire. He has to swear not to reveal this secret for twenty-four hours, or he will become a vampire, too.

Scene 2: Next morning: The 18-year-old Malwina and Aubry, with whom she is in love, are told by Davenaut that she must marry the Earl of Marsden. Aubry recognises the Earl as Lord Ruthven, but is told that he is Ruthven's brother, who has been abroad for some time. Aubry, however, recognises a wound that proves that the Earl really is Ruthven, and is about to denounce him when Ruthven reminds him of his oath and the consequences that will follow if he breaks it. The preparations for Malwina's marriage to "Marsden" begin.

Act 2

Scene 1: Near Marsden castle: Emmy awaits her husband-to-be, George. News of Janthe's gruesome death emerges, and Emmy recounts the legend of the Vampire. Ruthven appears and impresses the villagers with his largesse. He flirts with Emmy until, interrupted by George, he departs - though by then he has extracted a promise from Emmy that she will dance with him later.

Scene 2: Aubry tries to persuade Ruthven to give up his claim to Malwina, but is again reminded of the fate that awaits if he breaks his oath. Ruthven, in a soliloquy, rails against the torments that a Vampire must face.

Scene 3: Aubry is torn by his choice between breaking his oath and saving Malwina, or keeping quiet and losing her to the Vampire. George asks Aubry to use his influence to stop "Marsden" from seducing Emmy. Aubry warns George that he must keep watch over Emmy - but already she is being led into the forest by Ruthven.

Scene 4: Outside the inn: Blunt, Gadshill, Scrop and Green sing of the pleasures of drink. Blunt's wife Suse upbraids the men, to the delight of the onlookers, but a dishevelled George arrives, recounting how he followed Emmy and "Marsden", only to find him standing over her dead body. He had shot the Earl immediately, leaving him to die in the moonlight. The villagers express their sympathy and sorrow.

Scene 5: In Davenaut's castle: Malwina is to be married to "Marsden" before midnight. Aubry warns her that she is in danger, and she puts her trust in God. The wedding-guests arrive, followed by Ruthven, who apologises for his lateness. Malwina and Aubry make one last appeal to Davenaut, who throws Aubry out and orders the wedding to proceed. A thunderstorm approaches, and Aubry returns, having decided to reveal Ruthven's secret at no matter what cost to himself. Suddenly, the clock strikes one, and Aubry, released from his oath, reveals that "Marsden" is Lord Ruthven, the Vampire. Ruthven, having failed in his

task, is struck by lightning and descends into Hell. Now Davenaut asks Malwina to forgive him and consents to her marriage to Aubry, to general rejoicing.

The Italian Girl in Algiers

PART I

In Algiers, at the seaside palace of the bey Mustafà, his wife, Elvira, complains that her husband no longer loves her; her attendants reply there is nothing she can do. Mustafà himself bursts in. Asserting he will not let women get the better of him, he sends Elvira away when she complains. Mustafà says he has tired of his wife and will give her to Lindoro, a young Italian at the court, to marry. Then he orders Haly, a captain in his service, to provide an Italian woman for himself-someone more interesting than the girls in his harem, all of whom bore him. Lindoro longs for his own sweetheart, Isabella, whom he lost when pirates captured him. Mustafà tells him he can have Elvira, insisting she possesses every virtue that Lindoro, in his attempt to escape Mustafà's connubial trap, has listed.

Elsewhere along the shore, a shipwreck is spotted in the distance, and Haly's pirates exult in the catch. Isabella arrives on shore, lamenting the cruelty of a fate that has interrupted her quest for her lost fiancé, Lindoro. Though in danger, she is confident of her skill in taming men. The pirates seize Taddeo, an aging admirer of Isabella's, and attempt to sell him into slavery, but he claims he is Isabella's uncle and cannot leave her. When the Turks learn that both captives are Italian, they rejoice in having found the new star for their leader's harem. Taddeo is aghast at the aplomb with which Isabella takes his news, but after a quarrel about his jealousy, they decide they had better face their predicament together.

Elvira's slave, Zulma, tries to reconcile Lindoro and her mistress to the fact that Mustafà has ordered them to marry. Mustafà promises Lindoro he may return to Italy -- if he will take Elvira. Seeing no other way, Lindoro accepts, making it clear he might not marry Elvira until after they reach Italy. Elvira, however, loves her husband and sees no advantage in aiding Lindoro's escape. When Haly announces the capture of an Italian woman, Mustafà gloats in anticipation of conquest, then leaves to meet her. Lindoro tries to tell Elvira she has no choice but to leave her heartless husband.

In the main hall of his palace, hailed by eunuchs as "the scourge of women," Mustafà welcomes Isabella with ceremony. Aside, she remarks that he looks ridiculous and feels certain that she will be able to deal with him; he, on the other hand, finds her enchanting. As she seemingly throws herself on his mercy, the jealous Taddeo starts to make a scene and is saved only when she declares that he is her "uncle." Elvira and Lindoro, about to leave for Italy, come to say good-bye to the bey, and Lindoro and Isabella are stunned to recognize each other. To prevent Lindoro's departure, Isabella insists that Mustafà cannot banish his wife, adding that Lindoro must stay as her own personal servant. Between the frustration of Mustafà's plans and the happy but confused excitement of the lovers, everyone's head reels.

PART II

Elvira and various members of the court are discussing how easily the Italian woman has cowed Mustafà, giving Elvira hope of regaining his love. When Mustafà enters, however, it is to declare he will visit Isabella in her room for coffee. She comes out of her room, upset because Lindoro apparently broke faith with her by agreeing to escape with Elvira. Lindoro appears and reassures her of his loyalty. Promising a scheme for their freedom, Isabella

leaves him to his rapturous feelings. After he too leaves, Mustafà reappears, followed by attendants with the terrified Taddeo, who is to be honoured as the bey's Kaimakan, or personal bodyguard, in exchange for helping secure Isabella's affections. Dressed in Turkish garb, he sees no choice but to accept the compulsory honour.

In her apartment, Isabella dons Turkish clothes herself and prepares for Mustafà's visit, telling Elvira that the way to keep her husband is to be more assertive. As she completes her toilette, Isabella, knowing she is overheard by Mustafà in the background, sings a half-mocking invocation to Venus to help conquer her victim. To make him impatient, she keeps him waiting, as her "servant" Lindoro acts as go-between. At length she presents herself to the bey, who introduces Taddeo as his Kaimakan. Mustafà sneezes -- a signal for Taddeo to leave-but Taddeo stays, and Isabella invites Elvira to stay for coffee, to Mustafà's displeasure. When Isabella insists that he treat his wife gently, Mustafà bursts out in annoyance, while the others wonder what to make of his fulminations.

Elsewhere in the palace, Haly predicts that his master is no match for an Italian woman. As Lindoro and Taddeo plan their escape, Taddeo says he is Isabella's true love. Lindoro is amused but realizes he needs Taddeo's help in dealing with Mustafà, who enters, still furious. Lindoro says Isabella actually cares very much for the bey and wants him to prove his worthiness by entering the Italian order of Pappataci. Believing this to be an honor, Mustafà asks what he has to do. Simple, says Lindoro: eat, drink, and sleep all you like, oblivious to anything around you. Aside, Haly and Zulma wonder what Isabella is up to.

In her apartment, Isabella readies a feast of initiation for the Bey, exhorting her fellow Italians to be confident. Mustafà arrives, and Lindoro reminds him of the initiation procedure. After he is pronounced a Pappataci, food is brought in, and he is tested by Isabella and Lindoro, who pretend to make love while Taddeo reminds Mustafà to ignore them. A ship draws up in the background, and the lovers prepare to embark with other Italian captives, but Taddeo realizes that he too is being tricked and tries to rally Mustafà, who persists in keeping his vow of paying no attention. When Mustafà finally responds, the Italians have the situation under control and bid a courteous farewell. Mustafà, his lesson learned, takes Elvira back, and everyone sings the praises of the resourceful Italian woman.

Hänsel und Gretel

Engelbert Humperdinck Librettist Adelheid Wette

Language German

Premiere 23 December 1893

Hansel and Gretel (German: Hänsel und Gretel) is an opera by nineteenth-century composer Engelbert Humperdinck, who described it as a Märchenoper (fairy-tale opera). The libretto was written by Humperdinck's sister, Adelheid Wette, based on the Grimm brothers' fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel". It is much admired for its folk music-inspired themes, one of the most famous being the "Abendsegen" ("Evening Benediction") from act 2.

The idea for the opera was proposed to Humperdinck by his sister, who approached him about writing music for songs that she had written for her children for Christmas based on "Hansel and Gretel". After several revisions, the musical sketches and the songs were turned into a full-scale opera.

Humperdinck composed *Hansel and Gretel* in Frankfurt in 1891 and 1892. The opera was first performed in the Hoftheater in Weimar on 23 December 1893, conducted by Richard Strauss. It has been associated with Christmas since its earliest performances and today it is still most often performed at Christmas time.

Performance history

Hansel and Gretel was first conducted in Weimar by Richard Strauss in 1893, followed by its Hamburg premiere on 25 September 1894, conducted by Gustav Mahler.

Its first performance outside Germany was in Basel, Switzerland, on 16 November 1894.

The first performance in England was in London on 26 December 1894, at Daly's Theatre and its first United States performance was on 8 October 1895 in New York.

The first performance in Australia was on 6 April 1907, at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne.

In English-speaking countries *Hansel and Gretel* is most often performed in English. The long-time standard English translation was by Constance Bache. In the United States the opera was often performed in a translation by Norman Kelley written for the Metropolitan Opera's 1967 production by Nathaniel Merrill and Robert O'Hearn. In 1987 a darkly comic new production with English translation by David Pountney was created for the English National Opera in London. Since 2007, the Met has performed the work in a production originally created for the Welsh National Opera using Pountney's translation.

Roles

Peter broom-maker	baritone
Gertrud, his wife	mezzo-soprano
Hansel, their son	mezzo-soprano
Gretel, their daughter	soprano
The Gingerbread Witch	mezzo-soprano
Sandman, the Sleep Fairy	soprano
Dewman, the Dew Fairy	soprano
Chorus of echoes	three sopranos, two altos
Children's chorus	
Ballet (14 angels)	

While the father and mother are given names in the score, their names are never said on stage. Instead they are always referred to as "Father" and "Mother", even when they speak to each other.

The role of the Witch is sometimes sung by a tenor, or the roles of Mother/Witch by the same singer.

Synopsis

Act 1

Scene 1: At home

Gretel stitches a stocking, and Hansel is making a broom. Gretel sings to herself as she works. Hänsel mocks her, singing to the same tune a song about how hungry he is. He wishes for mother to come home. Gretel tells him to be quiet and reminds him of what father always says: "When the need is greatest, God the Lord puts out His hand." Hansel complains that one cannot eat words, and Gretel cheers him up by telling him a secret: A neighbour has given mother a jug of milk, and tonight she will make a rice pudding for them to eat. Hansel,

excited, tastes the cream on the top of the milk. Gretel scolds him and tells him he should get back to work. Hansel says that he does not want to work, he would rather dance. Gretel agrees, and they begin to dance around.

Scene 2

Mother enters, and she is furious when she finds that Hansel and Gretel have not been working. As she threatens to beat them with a stick, she knocks over the jug of milk. Mother sends Hansel and Gretel to the haunted Ilsenstein forest to look for strawberries. Alone, she expresses her sorrow that she is unable to feed her children, and asks God for help.

Scene 3

From far off, father sings about how hungry he is. He bursts into the house, roaring drunk, and kisses mother roughly. She pushes him away and scolds him for being drunk. He surprises her by taking from his pack a feast: Bacon, butter, flour, sausages, fourteen eggs, beans, onions, and a quarter pound of coffee. He explains to her that beyond the forest, it is almost time for a festival, and everyone is cleaning in preparation. He went from house to house and sold his brooms at the highest prices. As father and mother celebrate, he suddenly stops and asks where the children are. Mother changes the subject to the broken jug, and after she finishes telling him the story, he laughs, then asks again after the children. She tells him that they are in the Ilsenstein forest. Suddenly scared, father tells her that the forest is where the evil Gingerbread Witch (literally, "Nibbling Witch") dwells. She lures children with cakes and sweets, pushes them into her oven, where they turn to gingerbread, and then eats them. Father and mother rush to the forest to search for their children.

Act 2

Here there is a prelude which begins the act, called the "Witch-ride". Sometimes, the two acts are linked to each other, and the prelude is treated as an interlude.

Scene 1: In the forest. Sunset.

Gretel weaves a crown of flowers as she sings to herself. Hansel searches for strawberries. As Gretel finishes her crown, Hansel fills his basket. Gretel tries to put the crown on Hansel, but, saying that boys do not play with things like these, he puts it on her head instead. He tells her that she looks like the Queen of the Wood, and she says that if that's so, then he should give her a bouquet, too. He offers her the strawberries. They hear a cuckoo calling, and they begin to eat the strawberries. As the basket empties, they fight for the remaining strawberries, and finally, Hansel grabs the basket and dumps the leftovers in his mouth. Gretel scolds him and tells him that mother will be upset. She tries to look for more, but it is too dark for her to see. Hansel tries to find the way back, but he cannot. As the forest darkens, Hansel and Gretel become scared, and think they see something coming closer. Hansel calls out, "Who's there?" and a chorus of echoes calls back, "He's there!" Gretel calls, "Is someone there?" and the echoes reply, "There!" Hansel tries to comfort Gretel, but as a little man walks out of the forest, she screams.

Scene 2

The Sandman, who has just walked out of the forest, tells the children that he loves them dearly, and that he has come to put them to sleep. He puts grains of sand into their eyes, and as he leaves they can barely keep their eyes open. Gretel reminds Hansel to say their evening prayer, and after they pray, they fall asleep on the forest floor.

Scene 3

Traumphantomime [dream pantomime]. Fourteen angels come out and arrange themselves around the children to protect them as they sleep. They are presented with a gift. The forest is filled with light as the curtain falls.

Act 3

Scene 1: In the forest.

The Dew Fairy comes to wake the children. She sprinkles dew on them, sings of how wonderful it is to be alive in the morning with the beauty of the forest surrounding her, and leaves as the children stir. Gretel wakes first, and wakes the sleepy Hansel. They tell each other of their mutual dream, of angels protecting them as they slept.

Scene 2

Suddenly they notice behind them a glorious gingerbread house. The roof is slated with cakes, the windows are of liquorice, and the walls are decorated with cookies. On the left side is an oven, on the right side is a cage, and around it is a fence of gingerbread children. Unable to resist temptation, they take a little bit of the house and nibble on it.

Scene 3

As the children nibble, a voice calls out, "Nibbling, nibbling, little mouse! Who's nibbling on my little house?" Hansel and Gretel decide that the voice must have been the wind, and they begin to eat the house. As Hansel breaks off another piece of the house, the voice again calls out, "Nibbling, nibbling, little mouse! Who's nibbling on my little house?" Hansel and Gretel ignore the voice, and continue eating. The witch comes out of the house and catches Hansel with a rope. As Hansel tries to escape, the witch explains that she is Rosine Leckermaul (literally, "Rosina Tastymuzzle"), and that she likes nothing better than to feed children sweets. Hansel and Gretel are suspicious of the witch, so Hansel frees himself from the rope and he and Gretel begin to run away.

The witch takes out her wand and calls out, "Stop!" Hansel and Gretel are frozen to the spot where they stand. Using the wand, the witch leads Hansel to the cage. The witch leaves him stiff and slow of movement. She tells Gretel to be reasonable, and then the witch goes inside to fetch raisins and almonds with which to fatten Hansel. Hansel whispers to Gretel to pretend to obey the witch. The witch returns, and waving her wand, says, "Hocus pocus, holderbush! Loosen, rigid muscles, hush!" Using the wand, the witch forces Gretel to dance, then tells her to go into the house and set the table. Hansel pretends to be asleep, and the witch, overcome with excitement, describes how she plans to cook and eat Gretel.

The witch wakes up Hansel and has him show her his finger. He puts out a bone instead, and she feels it instead. Disappointed that he is so thin, the witch calls for Gretel to bring out raisins and almonds. As the witch tries to feed Hansel, Gretel steals the wand from the witch's pocket. Waving it towards Hansel, Gretel whispers, "Hocus pocus, holderbush! Loosen rigid muscles, hush!" As the witch turns around and wonders at the noise, Hansel discovers that he can move freely again.

The witch tells Gretel to peek inside the oven to see if the gingerbread is done. Hansel softly calls out to her to be careful. Gretel pretends that she does not know what the witch means. The witch tells her to lift herself a little bit and bend her head forward. Gretel says that she is "a goose" and doesn't understand, then asks the witch to demonstrate. The witch, frustrated, opens the oven and leans forward. Hansel springs out of the cage, and he and Gretel shove

the witch into the oven. They dance. The oven begins to crackle and the flames burn fiercely, and with a loud crash it explodes.

Scene 4

Around Hansel and Gretel, the gingerbread children have turned back into humans. They are asleep and unable to move, but they sing to Hansel and Gretel, asking to be touched. Hansel is afraid, but Gretel strokes one on the cheek, and he wakes up, but is still unable to move. Hansel and Gretel touch all the children, then Hansel takes the witch's wand and, waving it, calls out the magic words, freeing the children from the spell.

Scene 5

Father is heard in the distance, calling for Hansel and Gretel. He and mother enter and embrace Hansel and Gretel. Meanwhile, the gingerbread children pull out from the ruins of the oven the witch, who has turned into gingerbread. Father gathers Hansel, Gretel and the other children around and tells them to look at this miracle. He explains that this is heaven's punishment for evil deeds and reminds them, "When the need is greatest, God the Lord puts out His hand."