

PARAMOUNT THEATRE PRESENTS

GREYVELL!



WORLD PREMIERE
PARAMOUNT THEATRE

A Theatre Heroes Production
Musical by Jason Tremblay with Suzan Zeder
Music and Lyrics by Jenn Hartmann Luck
Cello Arrangements by Nora Karakousoglou

JANUARY 7-9, 2019
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Gretel!

A New Musical

By Jason Tremblay with Suzan Zeder

Music & Lyrics: Jenn Hartmann Luck

Cello Arrangements: Nora Karakousoglou

Director: Noel Gaulin

Stage Manager: Rachel Dendy

Sound & Media Design: K. Eliot Haynes

Media Design: Chris Owen

Silhouette Design: Julia M. Smith

Costume Design: Kelli Bland



www.theatreheroes.org



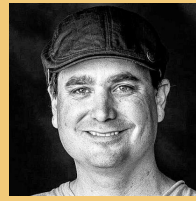
Gretel:
Estrella Saldana



Woman:
Veronica C. Williams



Man:
Jason Phelps



Playright:
Jason Tremblay



Script Collaborator:
Suzan Zeder



Music & Lyrics:
Jenn Hartmann Luck



Director:
Noel Gaulin



Cello:
Nora Karakousoglou



Guitar:
Adam Sultan

Following the Breadcrumbs

A story of community, collaboration, and commitment

Theatre Heroes is an Austin-based company of artists who create high quality touring performances for young audiences and those young at heart.

The story of Theatre Heroes began in our Austin community where a friendship of over 10 years gave birth to an idea: to inspire young audiences and those young at heart through the power of storytelling.

Jason Tremblay (Playwright) and Noel Gaulin (Director) met on the University of Texas at Austin campus under the dim lights of the Monday night lab sessions curated by Suzan Zeder (Script Collaborator). At these informal meets, playwrights were encouraged to have their scripts read aloud to inspire a devotion to the development of their new work. It was there that Jason and Noel discovered their kinship that would evolve into a creative partnership. They quickly collaborated on more than seven artistic projects over ten years honing their shared aesthetic as members of Austin's dynamic theatre community.

"They could read each other's minds," Sheila Tremblay, Managing Director of Theatre Heroes often reflects. Jason and Noel shared in more than just theatre: they each started new families within six months of each other and were beginning to yearn for something more sustainable. This desire quickly became urgent when it was discovered that Jason had been diagnosed with cancer.

Jason was on a mission to create a legacy for his family and inspired Noel to join him. And thus, Theatre Heroes was born: a company designed to create touring shows for young audiences

to inspire the next generation of creators and arts advocates by telling stories that celebrate adventure, classic tales, and diversity.

Jason adapted a Jack London classic and directed Noel in their award nominated inaugural production, *Call of the Wild: Illustrated Edition* (part of the Paramount's 2016-2017 Discovery Series season), which is currently on a North American tour under representation of Holden & Arts Associates.

Through his battle with cancer, Jason retained his commitment to developing new work. Jason and Noel worked for over two years building *Call of the Wild* through workshop showings allowing the show to evolve.

And yet, Jason kept looking ahead. He continued to work towards furthering the legacy of Theatre Heroes by writing a draft of the next production: *Gretel!*

Jason did not get to finish *Gretel!* but we can.

Theatre Heroes has brought together an award winning local team of devoted collaborators which includes you: the audience. And that is what is truly special about the opportunity Jason has presented us with: a collaboration - in that we are all coming together to pick up where Jason left off and, through our collaboration, let *Gretel!* become herself.

Thank you for participating in this special community event as we launch *Gretel!* on tour. Jason would be showing his sly smile of gratitude at all our efforts.

A Statement from Sheila Tremblay

The process of making *Gretel!* has been filled with lots of emotions. Jason started writing this play towards the end of his life and worked on it until the very end. It is both exciting and heartbreaking to produce *Gretel!* After he was gone, Suzan Zeder offered to help finish writing *Gretel!* Suzan was one of Jason's biggest mentors and supporters in his playwriting career, so it felt right to have her finish the play. Jenn Hartmann Luck and Jason worked on the song "Survive" from *Gretel!* weeks before his death, so it was great to have her on board as well.

I'm so grateful for the Austin Theatre Alliance and the Paramount Theatre for supporting Theatre Heroes and my family for years. (Both Jason and I had worked almost every Moontower Comedy Festival - Jason as Festival Manager for many years - until his passing.) This will be the second show they will premiere for Theatre Heroes. They also so generously donated the Paramount Theatre for Jason's Celebration of Life in April 2017.

Gretel! will be Jason's last play, but Theatre Heroes will continue to honor his memory by producing quality theatre for young audiences into the future.

—Sheila Tremblay
Jason's Wife
Owner and Managing Director of Theatre Heroes



A Gretel for Modern Audiences

Q&A with with Suzan Zeder, Jenn Hartmann Luck, and Noel Gaulin

What appeals to you about the story of *Gretel*? Why is this a story that today's young audience should experience?

JENN HARTMANN LUCK (Music & Lyrics): I think it is so important for young people to know that they have the strength and the power within themselves to overcome all the challenges in their lives. I also love the connection between Gretel and her mother. Maybe that's just because I am a mother myself now, but I love the way this story celebrates womanhood and our connection to our past. Women are strong, they have been strong throughout the ages, and I'm excited for the young audiences of today being exposed to more stories celebrating the strength and power of girls and women.

NOEL GAULIN (Director): We want to tell an adventure from a girl's perspective; to champion the determination, perseverance, and voice of girls; to find a girl's adventure that boys also get excited about.

SUZAN ZEDER (Script Collaborator): Audiences old and young need stories about survivors. Now, perhaps more than ever before, we all need to know that kindness and courage can overcome fear, loneliness and loss. On the surface *Gretel!* is the story about a fairy-tale heroine facing one of the greatest witches in legend or lore, but any child who has ever felt the loss of a loved one, felt abandoned or alone, or faced the fear of someone or something much more powerful will identify with Gretel. I also love the humor in this story. On her journey Gretel is helped by a magic doll, a mysterious knight, a garrulous Goose and ultimately by the very witch who haunts her dreams.

Why are we drawn to myths and fairy tales?

JENN: I think we love connecting with characters and situations we are familiar with. I also believe there is something to the fact that these are the stories that our ancestors have been reading and retelling for ages.

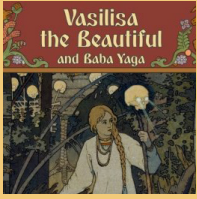
NOEL: There is something special about fairy tales. Fairy tales allow our imaginations to burst wide open and invite in more possibilities. Fairy tales have everything that a great story wants: humor, tragedy, suspense, sadness, and joy.

SUZAN: Most fairy tales are about a young powerless person surviving seemingly impossible odds: they bring us comfort and hope. They speak to different ages in different ways. Originally these tales were not created for children, but for families and communities, old and young gathered around the hearth. A grandmother experiences the story differently than her grandchild, but no less powerfully. Even today, many of us remember fairy tales from our own childhoods, whether we were read them, saw them in films and animated features, or experienced them in live theatre; they are a part of our DNA. From my own childhood I remember being terrified at the witch in *Snow White*, and thrilled by the vision of Sleeping Beauty's castle swallowed up by impenetrable thorns. These visions are as fresh in my mind as they were more than 65 years ago! I think we are drawn to these stories because they live IN us.

Read the full interview at:
www.austintheatre.org/gretelmusical



The Inspiration for Gretel!



Vasilisa the Beautiful is a Russian fairy tale that was first recorded by renowned folklorist Alexander Afanasyev between 1855-67. Although Afanasyev was the first to record the story, it's origin is much older and part of traditional Slavic myths and folklore.



Hansel and Gretel is a German tale, first recorded by the Brothers Grimm in 1812. To pay homage to both origins, *Gretel!* is set a long time ago in a small village near a forest at the foot of the Baltic Sea. Both Russia and Germany have coast lines on the Baltic Sea.

Though *Gretel!* takes its name from *Hansel and Gretel* by the Brothers Grimm, its main inspiration is *Vasilisa the Beautiful*.



Vasilisa is from the Greek, "Basilissa," a title like "queen," or "empress." In most tellings of the story, Vasilisa rises in status from peasant to princess. However, unlike many other fairy-tale princesses who wait to be rescued, Vasilisa accomplishes a series of tasks that help her defeat the villain of the story.



Baba Yaga is one of the best-known characters from Slavic folklore. She is a supernatural being (frequently a witch). She flies around in a mortar, wields a pestle, and lives in a forest hut that stands on chicken legs. Depending on the teller, Baba Yaga is either benevolent, a villain, or somewhere in between. She is rumored to eat people. In old Russian, "Baba" means "sorceress" or "fortune teller." In modern Russian, "babushka" is a word for grandmother. The origin of "yaga" is less clear. Afanasyev believed it originated from a Sanskrit word for "snake." "Grandmother snake" is a fitting name for a character as mysterious as Baba Yaga.

1 Vasilisa the Beautiful begins much the same way as Cinderella. Vasilisa is a young girl who is heartbroken when her mother dies and her father remarries. Vasilisa's stepmother and two step-sisters mistreat her.

2 While her father is away, Vasilisa's stepmother demands that she travel into the forest to fetch light from Baba Yaga's hut.

3 When Vasilisa arrives at Baba Yaga's hut, she asks for fire. Baba Yaga will only give the fire to Vasilisa if she accomplishes three impossible tasks.

4 On her deathbed, Vasilisa's mother gave her a magic doll. When Vasilisa uses the magic doll to complete the tasks, Baba Yaga relents and gives her a skull lantern.

5 Vasilisa takes the lantern back to her house where it burns her step-mother and step-sisters to ashes. Vasilisa buries the skull so that no person will ever be harmed by it.

6 Later Vasilisa moves to the city where she lives with an old lady. One day Vasilisa weaves some cloth and gives it to the old lady to sell. Seeing how beautiful the cloth is, the old lady decides to bring to the palace as a gift for the Tsar.

7 The tale ends happily, with the Tsar and Vasilisa marrying. When Vasilisa's father returns he is invited to live in the place. Vasilisa keeps her magical doll safely in her pocket.

Designing the Look of Gretel!



George and Martha Washington silhouettes, created between 1810-1830

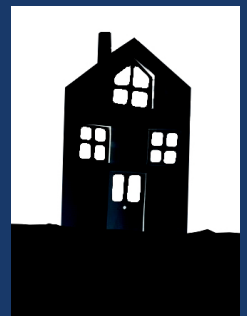
This production of *Gretel!* uses projected silhouettes in the set design. A silhouette is the image of a person, animal, object or scene represented as a solid shape in a single color, with its edges matching the outline of the subject. The interior of a silhouette is featureless, and is typically presented on a contrasting background. The designers for *Gretel!* were inspired by classic silhouette portraits that often feature families. Prior to the advent of photography, silhouette profiles cut from black card were the cheapest way of recording a person's appearance.

The art of silhouette is still widely practiced today. While many computer programs and phone applications can assist with creating silhouettes, the ones used in *Gretel!* were created by hand by Julia Smith.



Create Your Own Silhouette

1. Tape a large sheet of white paper to the wall.
2. Have your subject sit facing sideways on a stool or low-back chair.
3. Using a strong mobile light source, like a desk lamp, position your subject so that their profile creates a shadow on the paper.
4. Trace the outline of their shadow onto the paper.
5. Remove the paper from the wall. Use scissors to cut out your subject's shape, creating a template for your silhouette.
6. Using your template, trace the silhouette onto solid black paper or card stock using a pencil.
7. Carefully cut around your outline, removing the paper from around the outside of the silhouette.
8. Glue your finished silhouette to white paper and frame.



Change it up!

Take a photo of your house, pet, favorite tree or toy, and use tracing paper over the printed photo to create your silhouette template.

Once you have your template, jump to #6 on the left.

Anatomy of a Cello

The score for *Gretel!* includes guitar, ukulele, and percussion, but the cello is the featured instrument

In *Gretel!* the cello becomes another character as important as Gretel or Baba Yaga. Why the cello? Jenn Hartmann Luck explains, "Cello was very important to Jason, not only did he play cello, but he had handwritten notes on his script about having cello in the piece, so I knew that was a non-negotiable."

Gretel!'s cellist, Nora Karakousoglou, helped us learn more about this unique instrument.

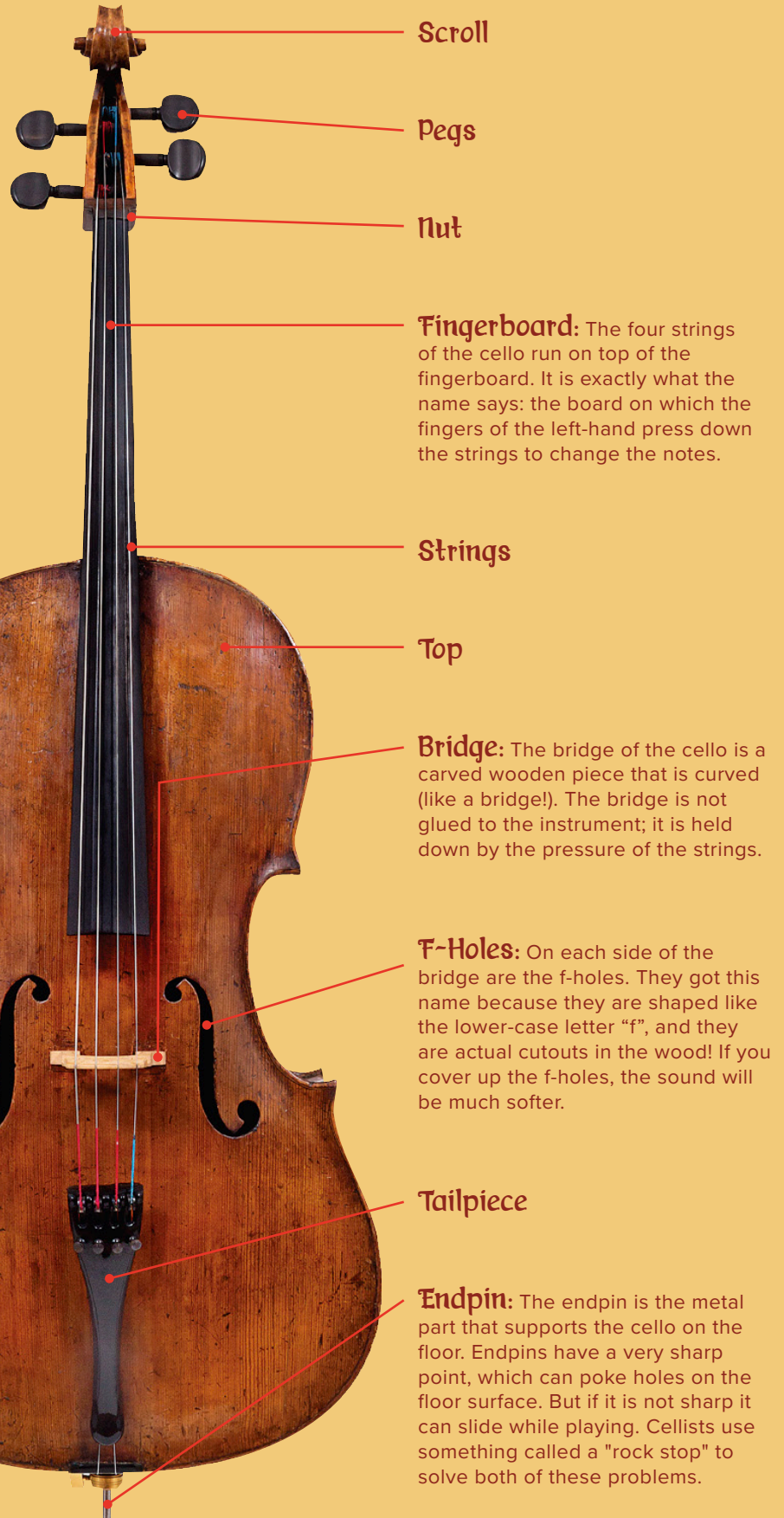
The cello is a string instrument that is played by plucking or bowing its four strings, which are tuned to A, D, G, C. The range of the cello overlaps with that of the guitar, but a big difference is that the guitar has six strings, instead of four. Also, guitarists do not use a bow on the strings, they pluck them instead. The cello is typically made from carved wood, although other materials such as carbon fiber or aluminum may be used.

Special Effects

Tremolo: related to the word "tremor", this is a technique for the bow: very fast and short bow strokes. When played softly, tremolo sounds creepy and suspenseful. A soft tremolo is used when Gretel embarks on her trip to Baba Yaga. When played loud, it's very intense and has a lot of energy. Strong tremolo is used during "Make Way for the Witch" and parts of "Fuel."

Glissando: this is a left-hand technique in which the hand literally slides on the fingerboard. This technique is sometimes used in combination with other ones. For example, in "Make Way for the Witch," Nora uses strong tremolo and glissando at the same time.

Bow: The bow is just as important as the cello. If you don't have a bow, all you can do is pluck the strings, a technique called "pizzicato". Bows are made of wood, metal, ebony, synthetic fibers, and horsetail hair! Yes, horse tail (the horses are not hurt in the process).



Scroll

Pegs

Nut

Fingerboard: The four strings of the cello run on top of the fingerboard. It is exactly what the name says: the board on which the fingers of the left-hand press down the strings to change the notes.

Strings

Top

Bridge: The bridge of the cello is a carved wooden piece that is curved (like a bridge!). The bridge is not glued to the instrument; it is held down by the pressure of the strings.

F-Holes: On each side of the bridge are the f-holes. They got this name because they are shaped like the lower-case letter "f", and they are actual cutouts in the wood! If you cover up the f-holes, the sound will be much softer.

Tailpiece

Endpin: The endpin is the metal part that supports the cello on the floor. Endpins have a very sharp point, which can poke holes on the floor surface. But if it is not sharp it can slide while playing. Cellists use something called a "rock stop" to solve both of these problems.

Gretel! Through Lyrics

Gretel! features 12 original songs, written by Jenn Hartmann Luck. Let's look at two songs and learn about how they were written.

FUEL, sung by Baba Yaga and Gretel

Magic or memory, the sheer force of will
 Anger, devastation - it all fits the bill
 The frenzy, the fury, the mess and the worry,
 Whatever the tool - you just need fuel.

PERFECT RHYMES are where the *final stressed vowel and all subsequent sounds are identical*. Find the perfect rhyme at the ends of the first two lines:

_____ and _____

SLANT RHYMES are formed between two words with *similar but not identical* sounds. Find the slant rhyme in the third line:

_____ and _____

INTERNAL RHYMES occur when a word in the *middle of a line* rhymes with a word at the *end of the line*. Find the internal rhyme in the fourth line:

_____ and _____

SURVIVE, sung by Gretel

I'm counting all the stars in the night sky
 Standing on my own, trying to survive
 The icy bitter wind, like laser beam eyes
 And my tears are falling like rain

A
 A
 A
 B

The first stanza uses an **AAAB RHYME SCHEME**. The first three lines use **SLANT RHYMES (A)**. Find them:

The final line (B) stands on its own.

So many stars in the night sky
 Overwhelmed by the sight, trying to get by
 Missing my Mother, I don't want to cry
 But my tears keep falling like rain

A
 A
 A
 B

The second stanza also uses an **AAAB RHYME SCHEME**. This time, the first three lines are **PERFECT RHYMES (A)**. Find them:

The final line (B) stands on its own.

Create Your Own Song!

Now that you've learned about rhyme schemes as well as perfect and slant rhymes you are ready to give songwriting a shot. Use the AAAB template below to create your own song!

Title: _____

By: _____

_____ A

_____ A

_____ A

_____ B

_____ A

_____ A

_____ A

_____ B

The Paramount Theatre

The Paramount Theatre was built 103 years ago in 1915. Austin is growing, but back then, Congress Avenue was a dirt road and the automobile was a new invention. As one of the first examples of early theatre architecture, the Paramount has been bringing Austin families together for generations.

This school year, we're thrilled to be celebrating Paramount Education's 10-year anniversary! We inspire the intellect and imagination of young people by providing opportunities to experience, perform, and learn through the arts. Whether it's in the theatre where you can make unforgettable memories at our world-class Discovery Series family shows, in our summer camps where kids grades 1-10 perform on our historic stage, or in Austin classrooms where we bring 3rd graders' original stories to life in front of an audience of their peers... we can't wait to see you again.

Education Staff

Jennifer Luck, *Director of Education*
 Brian C. Fahey, *Associate Director of Education*
 Mitch Harris, *Literacy to Life Program Director*
 Katie Moore, *Education Program Manager*
 Gale Valley, *Education Associate*
 Ammon Taylor, *Resident Music Director*
 Natalie Seeboth, *Associate Director of Education Giving*

Contact us at: education@austintheatre.org

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This project is supported in part by the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department.



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