

## A Grimm tale of kids and cookies

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By SARA BURROWS Staff Writer

Gingerbread goes so well with the holidays... that warm, spicy scent, wafting from the woods... The woods?

Maybe it's time to pay a visit to the crone with the green face and pointy hat who spends so much time baking. Just what is that secret ingredient in her gingery treats?

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Kids can find out with "Hansel und Gretel," a new children's show based on the classic Brothers Grimm tale, at the new Gorilla Tango Theatre in Wicker Park.

Because the show is aimed at theater-goers, ages 4-8, "we try to keep it light and humorous," says Jonathan Thomas of Lake View, the director. "That is, as much as you can be light and humorous about a

witch trying to eat children. But we kind of skim right over that, though there is a small fear factor left."

It's a play-within-a-play. The story begins with the Kerplunk Players, a troupe hailing from, coincidentally, the same small town in Liechtenstein as Hansel and Gretel, who intend to perform "The History of the Pretzel."

However they soon find themselves in the middle of the fairy tale, telling it with a goofy, good-natured attitude and a few digressions from the original. For instance, in this show the kids are not left in the woods by their parents because they're poor. "Hey, the kids are a bit irresponsible, so it's their own fault," says Thomas. "They don't listen to mom and in the end, they tell her how sorry they are that they didn't. We wanted to send some positive messages to the audience."

Music and dance will also keep the mood bright. Playing Hansel (Blake Williams) and Gretel (Annie Passanisi), who, Thomas explains are two strong actors who are also good singers and dancers. "So it won't be just songs and dances. It will be really good singing and dancing."

'HANSEL UND GRETEL'

1 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, Dec. 1-17. \$10. Gorilla Tango Theatre, 1919 N. Milwaukee Ave. (773) 598-4549. [www.gorillatango.com](http://www.gorillatango.com).