Hansel and Gretel, the Little Brother and the Little Sister

Rebeca Wallin
This version of Hansel and Gretel stays true to the original story as far as possible. The playwright even went so far as to base his script on the first manuscript of *Grimms Fairy Tales*, not the first published version. The father and mother (not a step-mother) have decided that they must leave the children in the woods so that they will have enough food to survive themselves. The children overhear their plan and leave a trail of white stones so that they can find their way home again. When the parents try to leave them again Hansel leaves a trail of breadcrumbs which are eaten by a bird. This symbolic bird later leads them to the witch's gingerbread house. Once there, Hansel is captured by the witch to be fattened and eaten while Gretel is made a slave to her. They eventually escape by pushing the witch into the oven.

This is a refreshing bare-bones approach to a story that has been morphed into hundreds of different versions. The story is simple and straightforward, as are the characters, leaving room for the story's themes to shine through. The dialogue is also flowing and clear and allows for character development. Although the story line might seem harsh and frightening, the hope and joy in the script make it suitable for young children. The set requirements are not overblown, making it possible to tour this show.

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