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Winner of the Cunningham Commission Award for Youth Theatre

The Kingdom of Grimm

Musical

**Book, music and lyrics by
Douglas Post**

**Based on three stories by
the Brothers Grimm**



The Kingdom of Grimm

“A new musical from DePaul’s Chicago Playworks enchants theatergoers.” —*Time Out Chicago*

“An A+ for kids and an A for parents.” —*Chicago Parent*

“There’s nothing grim about *Grimm* and the DePaul play’s lessons are positively positive.” —*The Catholic New World*

*Musical. Book, music and lyrics by Douglas Post. Based on three stories by the Brothers Grimm. Cast: 7m., 5w., extras. This winner of the first Cunningham Commission Award for Youth Theatre is an inspiring musical about the magic of storytelling. One winter’s day, Hans, a farm boy who has lost his way in the woods, stumbles across a golden key. It unlocks an enchanted chest that holds the imprisoned Gerhardt the Great and his troupe of traveling players. To show their thanks, the players perform three tales for Hans: *The Golden Goose*, *The Three Huntsmen* and *The Four Skillful Brothers*. Their theatrical antics are underscored by a collection of songs that range in style from ballads to blues to rock. Finally, the players depart, leaving Hans with some valuable lessons about generosity, loyalty and hard work. Unit set. Approximate running time: 75 minutes.*

Front cover photo: Chicago Playworks’ world premier production featuring John Smythe (Hans) and Talon Beeson (Gerhardt the Great). Photo: John Bridges.

13 ISBN: 978-1-58342-416-2

10 ISBN: 1-58342-416-4

Code: K04



Cover design: Jeanette Alig-Sergel

www.dramaticpublishing.com



Printed on Recycled Paper

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The Kingdom of Grimm

A musical based on three stories by the
Brothers Grimm

Book, music and lyrics

by

DOUGLAS POST



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM)

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Ronald Gwiazda, Abrams Artists Agency,
275 Seventh Avenue, 26th Floor,
New York NY 10001 • Phone: (646) 461-9325

ISBN: 978-1-58342-416-2

This musical is dedicated to my sons,
Walker and Jamison.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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“*The Kingdom of Grimm* was originally commissioned by the
Cunningham Endowment Fund of The Theatre School,
DePaul University.”

“*The Kingdom of Grimm* was originally produced by Chicago
Playworks of The Theatre School, DePaul University.”

The Kingdom of Grimm was first produced by Chicago Playworks of The Theatre School at DePaul University's Merle Reskin Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, on March 28, 2006. It was directed by Barry Brunetti and choreographed by Julia Neary; the scenic design was by Wendy Sanabria; the costume design was by Christine Conley; the lighting design was by Chris Prezas; the sound design was by Ray Nardelli; and the production stage manager was Laura E. Scales. The cast was as follows:

Hans	John Smythe
Gerhardt/Abelard/Gatekeeper/Father.	Talon Beeson
First Player/First Son/First Laborer/Konrad	Ben Rovner
Second Player/Matilda/Astronomer/Dragon.	L'Oreal Jackson
Third Player/Simpleton/Theodore	Kyle A. Gibson
Fourth Player/Mother/Third Daughter/Charyl/Swordsman/ Dragon	Kristen Lynn Looper
Fifth Player/Second Son/Caretaker/Messenger/Page/Mog.	Jay Michael Sevilla
Sixth Player/Tree/Second Daughter/Lamia	Logan Walters
Seventh Player/Tavern Keeper/Second Laborer/Lionel/Tog	Luke Johanson
Eighth Player/First Daughter/Berit/Adalia	Briana Rose DeGuilio
Ninth Player/Rigby Diggs/Minister/Priest/Max	Nathan Boren
Tenth Player/Golden Goose/Nixie Pix/Thief/Tailor/Dragon	Laura Mahler

The Kingdom of Grimm was the winner of the first Cunningham Commission Award for Youth Theatre.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

- “The Kingdom of Grimm” Gerhardt and Company
- “Goose on the Loose” Golden Goose and Company
- “Sad” Princess Matilda
- “Goose on the Loose” (Reprise) Company
- “To the Ends of the Earth” Charyl, Berit and Lamia
- “Something Wrong” Lionel
- “To the Ends of the Earth” (Reprise). King Konrad,
Lamia, Lionel, Berit, Charyl and Company
- “Doing My Best” Mog, Tog, Theodore, Max,
Gerhardt and Company
- “Universe” Adalia and Company
- “The Kingdom Of Grimm” (Bows). Company

THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM

CHARACTERS

HANS
GERHARDT THE GREAT
FIRST SON
SECOND SON
SIMPLETON
MOTHER
TREE
RIGBY DIGGS
GOLDEN GOOSE
TAVERN KEEPER
FIRST DAUGHTER
SECOND DAUGHTER
THIRD DAUGHTER
MINISTER
CARETAKER
FIRST LABORER
SECOND LABORER
PRINCESS MATILDA, LATER QUEEN
KING ABELARD
PRINCE KONRAD, LATER KING
LAMIA, LATER QUEEN
MESSENGER
PRINCESS NIXIE PIX, LATER QUEEN
PRIEST
BERIT

CHARYL
GATEKEEPER
LIONEL
PAGE
PRINCESS ADALIA
MOG
TOG
THEODORE
MAX
FATHER
THIEF
ASTRONOMER
SWORDSMAN
TAILOR
DRAGON

and TEN PLAYERS (five men and five women) who play all of the above except for GERHARDT who also plays KING ABELARD, GATEKEEPER and FATHER and HANS who plays himself.

TIME: Winter.

PLACE: The woods.

THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM

(Winter. The woods. A barren day on a bleak horizon. The trees are white and the wind is howling. A moment. Then HANS, a poor boy in peasant clothing, appears against the landscape. His arms are full of broken branches. He moves slowly, struggling with his load. He is hungry and tired and talking to himself.)

HANS. “Get the wood, boy. Run into the forest right now and fetch us something for the fire. We’re cold!” Well, I’m cold, too. Bitter cold. My coat is ripped. My boots are ruined. And, besides that— *(He looks around.)* I’m lost! *(He throws down his sticks.)* Oh, life. Miserable life. It’s mean and ugly working ten hours a day. Not that I’d know anything about it. I leave that sort of thing to my brothers and sisters. *(He laughs.)* When they’re working in the fields, I’m fishing in the river. When they’re feeding the cows and cleaning out the stalls, I’m sleeping in the tall grass. Why? Because I’m too clever for hard labor. Too smart for tough work. Except today. *(He sighs.)* What to do? Well, I suppose I could make a fire. Find something to eat. Unless I can figure out a way to get someone to do it for me. But there’s no one else here. I’m alone. What rotten luck! How really unfair! *(He kicks at the snow. He stops. He sees something on the ground.)* What’s this? *(He reaches down and*

picks up a golden key.) A key. A golden key. Out here. In the middle of nowhere. Why? (He scratches his head.) Seems to me where there's a key, there's usually a lock. On something. But what? (He takes in his surroundings.) A door. A chamber. A— (And then sees a large chest in the clearing.) Chest. (He approaches it.) An iron chest. It's old. Rusted. I wonder if the key fits. Well, one way to find out. (He inserts the key and turns it.) Click. I heard a click. So what's inside? Probably nothing. Dirt. Dust. A waste of my time. So why bother? (He starts to walk away and then stops.) Still, I don't suppose it'd hurt to have a look.

(Carefully, he lifts the lid. A melody leaks out. He slams the lid shut. He looks around. He tries it again. Lifts the lid. More melody. Slams it shut. Looks around. Lifts the lid a third time and now the melody is heard in full. Suddenly the lid springs entirely open and a man's head pokes out. He is GERHARDT THE GREAT and he is dressed in a colorful array of garments. He smiles at HANS. Then he pulls himself up out of the trunk. HANS backs away from him. GERHARDT starts to sing "THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM.")

GERHARDT.

MAYBE YOUR ARMS ARE WEARY.

MAYBE YOUR ATTITUDE IS BAD.

MAYBE YOU'RE NOT SO CHEERY.

I KNOW A WAY TO MAKE YOU GLAD

YOU'RE A LAD

WHO'S ALIVE IN EV'RY LIMB,

THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM.

(Another figure climbs out of the trunk.)

FIRST PLAYER.

MAYBE YOUR POCKET'S EMPTY.

(And then another.)

SECOND PLAYER.

MAYBE YOU'RE PENNILESS AND POOR.

(And then there are many more.)

THIRD PLAYER.

RIDDLED WITH SELF-CONTEMPT.

THIRD & FOURTH PLAYER.

WE DON'T REALLY CARE.

THIRD, FOURTH & FIFTH PLAYER.

WE KNOW A CURE,

ALL PLAYERS.

A DETOUR.

YOU CAN TAKE IT ON A WHIM,

THE KINGDOM OF—

(Now an entire troupe of troubadours, minstrels and motley PLAYERS has come out of the trunk and surrounded HANS. They, too, are dressed in all the colors of the rainbow.)

GERHARDT & HIS PLAYERS.

GRIMM

**IS A PLACE
TO ERASE
ANYTHING THAT LINGERS
FROM YOUR WORRYING.
GRIMM
CAN ACHIEVE
MAKE BELIEVE
WITH A SNAP OF FINGERS.**

(Simultaneously, the company snaps their fingers, runs back to the trunk, and starts to pull out a collection of props, costumes and pieces of scenery. They find a crown. They place it on HANS' head.)

**GERHARDT & HIS PLAYERS (con't).
THERE YOU CAN BE KING!**

**GERHARDT.
AND ONCE YOU WEAR THE CROWN,
YOU'LL NEVER EVER SET IT DOWN.**

**GERHARDT & HIS PLAYERS.
MAYBE THE DAY IS NASTY.
MAYBE THE WEATHER'S NOT TOO GRAND.
YOU THINK YOUR FATE IS CAST.
WE WILL SIMPLY TAKE YOU BY THE HAND
TO A LAND
WHERE THE SKY IS NOT SO DIM.
YOU KNOW THERE'S NOTHING TRAGIC
WHEN YOU CAN REACH FOR MAGIC
IN THE AIR.
SO LET'S GO THERE,
THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM.**

GERHRADT.

**WHERE YOU CAN CHASE THE LIGHTNING
WITH FLASHING SWORDS,**

PLAYERS.

THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM.

GERHARDT.

**FACE DOWN WHAT MAY BE FRIGHT'NING
AND FIND REWARDS,**

PLAYERS.

THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM.

GERHARDT.

EMBRACE THE DAY THAT'S BRIGHT'NING

GERHARDT & HIS PLAYERS.

**AND SET IT SOARING TOWARDS
THE KINGDOM OF GRIMM!**

(HANS knocks the crown off of his head. He stands staring at this display. And, even though the woods have brightened considerably with the emergence of this ensemble, he is wary of GERHARDT and his PLAYERS.)

HANS. Who are you?

GERHARDT. Gerhardt the Great. *(He bows.)*

HANS. The great *what?*

GERHARDT. Why, the great storyteller, of course. Some people recite from memory. Others read from books. Me, I have my own troupe of traveling players.

(The PLAYERS also bow.)

HANS. How did you get in that trunk?

GERHARDT. Well, through the door, of course.

FIRST PLAYER. How'd we get *out*?

SECOND PLAYER. Yeah, that's what I'd like to know.

HANS. I found a key. *(He holds it up.)*

SECOND PLAYER. And not a moment too soon. He snores.

FIRST PLAYER. She walks in her sleep.

GERHARDT. You're both full of noise. And it's a tiny box. We were on our way from here to there— *(He looks at the others.)* Or was it there to here? *(They shake their heads and shrug.)* Anyway, we had some place to be, an engagement before a grand duke and duchess, when we came into these woods and met this incredibly foul witch who created a great stink about one of our stories.

THIRD PLAYER. She cast a spell.

FOURTH PLAYER. Shrunk us.

FIFTH PLAYER. Put us in that trunk.

HANS. All because of a story?

SIXTH PLAYER. Tell him what it was called.

GERHARDT. What?

SEVENTH PLAYER. The story.

GERHARDT. Oh. *(He clears his throat.)* "The Incredibly Foul Witch. Nobody Likes Her. Nobody Ever Will."

HANS. I can see why she locked you up.

EIGHTH PLAYER. I told you it was a bad title.

NINTH PLAYER. Bad story.

GERHARDT. I consider it to be a work-in-progress.

TENTH PLAYER. So what's his name?

GERHARDT. Yes, what's your name, lad?

HANS. Hans.

GERHARDT. And do you reside in this forest, Hans?

HANS. Here? (*He laughs.*) No, I live on the farm over the hills. With my father and mother. And five brothers and sisters who do all the work while I take it easy.

GERHARDT. What do you mean?

HANS. Like today. The whole family has to go into town to run some errands, but I look out the window. The weather is awful! Horrible! So what do I do?

GERHARDT. Help them?

HANS. Hide under the bed. Then, when they're gone, I help myself to a great meal. Take a good nap.

GERHARDT. Oh.

HANS. But when I woke up, I was cold, so I used all the wood in the house to make a huge fire. I was toasty, all right. Till they came home.

FIFTH PLAYER. What happened?

HANS. Father was furious! "There's no wood for anyone else, you lazy, good-for-nothing, greedy, little nit!" "Father!" I said, "I'm not so little!" He threw me out of the house. Told me to go into the forest and fetch twenty-five stacks of sticks. And if I returned without the wood, there'd be no supper!

FOURTH PLAYER. How many have you collected so far?

HANS. Let's see, um... (*He counts on his fingers.*) Yeah...uh-huh...and, uh... (*He points to the fallen sticks.*) This is my first pile.

THIRD PLAYER. You really *are* lazy.

SECOND PLAYER. And good-for-nothing.

FIRST PLAYER. And don't forget about the greedy part.

(The PLAYERS all laugh. HANS only shrugs. GERHARDT interrupts their fun.)

GERHARDT. Well, Hans, be that as it may, we still owe you our most sincere thanks. And a story. *Three* to be exact.

HANS. What?

GERHARDT. That's the bargain.

HANS. What are you talking about?

GERHARDT. "Whosoever releases Gerhardt and his ranks from this rusted trunk will receive three tales fresh from the Kingdom of Grimm."

HANS. Who said that?

GERHARDT. I did.

HANS. No, I mean, before you.

FIRST PLAYER. The witch.

SECOND PLAYER. While she was shutting the lid.

FIRST PLAYER. On my fingers. Ouch!

HANS. Grimm? Oh, right. Don't tell me. It's some magical place. Mystical.

GERHARDT. In fact, it is.

HANS. Inside your head!

GERHARDT. I take it you don't believe such a kingdom exists.

HANS. I don't believe in anyone or anything! And I am loyal to no one and nothing! So don't try filling me up with a bunch of stupid lies.

GERHARDT. Lies? *(Now he is outraged.)* Is it a lie that a golden key was found in a forest by a farm boy named Hans?

HANS. Well, no, but—

GERHARDT. Is it a lie that *that* same key unlocked an old trunk which had no business being there?

HANS. Again, no, but I—

GERHARDT. And is it a lie that *that* same trunk contained a collection of very cramped and very crabby thespians?

(HANS walks over to the trunk and looks inside.)

HANS. I suppose not. I mean, you had to come from somewhere. Right?

GERHARDT. Right!

(He claps his hands together. Immediately, the PLAYERS form a tableau. One of the PLAYERS locates a horn and blows a fanfare, adding a few flourishes and false endings. GERHARDT shakes his head. He clears his throat.)

GERHARDT. “The Story of the Golden Goose.”

(He points to one of the PLAYERS who assumes the role of MOTHER, and to three others who take on the parts of FIRST SON, SECOND SON and SIMPLETON.)

GERHARDT. There was once a woman who had three sons.

FIRST SON. First son.

SECOND SON. Second son.

SIMPLETON. And Simpleton.

MOTHER. I wasn’t too good at names.

GERHARDT. Now one fine day the first son wanted to go out into the forest to hew some wood.

FIRST SON. Please, Mother, may I hew some wood?

MOTHER. First tell me what “hew” means.

FIRST SON. “Hewed” have to ask. (*He laughs, but no one else does.*) It means chop.

MOTHER. Fine. But take some frosted cake. And ginger beer. And apples and oranges and garbanzo beans.

FIRST SON. Garbanzo beans?

MOTHER. Okay. Forget the beans. How about some rutabaga?

FIRST SON. My mother has an odd sense of diet. (*She tosses him a sack filled with food.*) Thanks.

MOTHER. Aren’t you forgetting something? (*She holds an ax.*)

FIRST SON. I’m glad you “axed.” (*Again, he laughs, but no one else does.*) “Axed.” It’s a—

MOTHER. Here. (*He takes the ax from her.*)

GERHARDT. And so he and his *ax* set off.

(The FIRST SON marches off to another area where another PLAYER now holds some wooden sticks with green trim out over his head.)

FIRST SON. What are you supposed to be?

TREE. A tree, of course!

FIRST SON. Oh. (*The FIRST SON pulls back his ax.*)

TREE. Careful with that thing. (*The FIRST SON hits the TREE with the ax.*) Ow!

GERHARDT. Now it so happened that in this forest there lived a little old man named Rigby Diggs. And when he heard the chopping—

FIRST SON. Hewing.

GERHARDT. Sorry. Hewing of trees—

TREE. Tree.

GERHARDT. Yes, the hewing of *tree*, he wanted to know who was making all the noise.

(Another PLAYER assumes the role of RIGBY DIGGS and steps forward.)

RIGBY DIGGS. What's all this racket? What do you think you're doing? I see you have a sack. Bet it's filled with food. Give me some.

FIRST SON. You are the rudest old man I ever met.

RIGBY DIGGS. Come on, what's inside?

FIRST SON. Ginger beer and cake.

RIGBY DIGGS. I want it.

FIRST SON. No.

RIGBY DIGGS. Why not?

FIRST SON. If I give you my food and drink, I'll have nothing left for myself.

RIGBY DIGGS. But I'm hungry.

FIRST SON. You can have the rutabaga.

RIGBY DIGGS. Don't like rutabaga.

FIRST SON. Neither do I. Now go away. I'm busy.

GERHARDT. And with that, Rigby Diggs, who had certain magical powers, cast a spell on the boy.

(RIGBY DIGGS raises his hands and casts a spell.)

RIGBY DIGGS. There!

(The FIRST SON hits himself in the foot with the ax.)

FIRST SON. Ouch!