

# Fairytales with a twist

Into the woods we go with a modern retelling of two famous fairy tales by the University of Toledo Opera Ensemble. The group will bring the story of Grimm's fairytales into the 21st century.

In the two one-act operas April 21-23, UT students will present "The Brothers Grimm" by Dean Burry and "Little Red Riding Hood" by Seymour Barab in the UT Center for Performing Arts Recital Hall. The performance is directed by Denise Ritter-Bernardini, an associate professor of voice in the Department of Music.

"Our students have worked very hard as they always do," Ritter-Bernardini said in an email interview. "The opera students have a very high work ethic. The music is pretty difficult in the Dean Burry, but they have really pulled through."

The ensemble's performance of "The Brothers Grimm" is the Ohio premiere of the opera. The opera tells an engaging tale of how the siblings took oral German folk stories and immortalized their characters in writing. Rumpelstiltskin, Rapunzel and Little Red Cap all come to life anew by pens of brothers Wilhelm and Jacob.

William Floss, a fourth-year vocal performance major, has two roles in the performance. He plays Rumpelstiltskin in "The Brothers Grimm" and the Woodsman in "Little Red Riding Hood."

"For Rumpelstiltskin, I really get to have some fun," Floss said in an email interview. "He is very creepy and cynical, so I really just get to drop everything and hop into this character and creep around the stage."

The UT Opera Ensemble will then present one of the most famous of the Grimm's stories, "Little Red Riding Hood." The recital hall will be transformed into the forest before Red makes her

famous trek to Grandma's house.

"I really think this is a great starter opera," Floss said. "It's wonderful and fun music that engages the audience, it's in English, the stories are funny and each of the two operas are only 45 minutes long."

A surprise element is brought to the performances through spoken poetry, rap and modern dance moves.

"'Little Red Riding Hood' already had some spoken dialogue that was in rhythm, and we just added a rap style to it to make it more modern in its feel," Ritter-Bernardini said. "We also have added some hip-hop dance styles to some of the choreography because there's a particular character within the Little Red story that is clearly a hip-hop fan."

Floss said Ritter-Bernardini's direction has been nothing short of great for the past four years he's known her.

"What I love most about her directing is that she is always pushing me outside of my comfort zone," Floss said. "She has absolutely made me the actor I am today."

"The Brothers Grimm" and "Little Red Riding Hood" will be performed Friday and Saturday, April 21 and 22 at 7:30 p.m., as well as Sunday, April 23 at 3 p.m. Performances will be held in the UT Center for Performing Arts Recital Hall. Parking is free in the lot directly across from the building. Tickets are \$10-\$15 and are available through the Center for Performing Arts Box Office online at [www.utoledo.tix.com](http://www.utoledo.tix.com) or by calling 419.530.ARTS (2787).