World Premiere
10/13/1963
New York, NY
Company: Music Theatre for Children

Roles
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD Soprano
MOTHER (also GRANDMOTHER) Mezzo-Soprano
WOLF (also WOODSMAN) Baritone
Synopsis

Time and Place
Any time period. A rural, wooded area

*Little Red Riding Hood* begins with an overtune (an musical introduction to the opera, played by instruments, or simply a piano), and a prologue (a short narrative before the opera begins that gives some background to the show).

Scene 1: The Big Bad Wolf is very hungry.

The Wolf begins the opera by singing:

*When I meet somebody in the woods, I most politely greet him; I tip my hat; we have a chat, but after that I eat him!*

He is looking for Little Red Riding Hood, whom he heard about from a little boy he ate for lunch. We learn many things about the Wolf as he begins the opera:

*Right now I’m so hungry, I could almost eat grass- but alas-- Anything that grows on the ground or a bush or a tree is sure to poison me!*

*And what’s worse is the way I get a tummy-ache at the mere mention of candy (ugh) or ice cream (ech) or cake (ooooh)!*

His mother taught him to not overeat, to brush his teeth twice a day and never to eat anything but people.

Scene 2: Little Red’s House

Little Red Riding Hood’s Mother receives a phone call from Grandma and is saddened to hear that she is not feeling well. Mother decides to allow Little Red to walk to Grandmother’s house to deliver some food. Before she can leave though her Mother warns her to hurry and not waste time by admiring the sunset, picking flowers, or chasing little animals and her Mother tells her to be very careful because there are wild beasts. She also admonishes Little Red to never talk to strangers. But Little Red Riding Hood quickly ignores every bit of her Mother’s advice.
Scene 2: The Forest

No one should ever break a promise. I haven’t broken one in months. That’s why I think it will be all right if I break my promise just this once.

On her way to her Grandmother’s house Little Red Riding Hood is greeted by the Wolf. He convinces Little Red that he isn’t a stranger, because although she doesn’t recognize him, he knows who *she* is! After finding out that Little Red is on her way to her Grandmother’s house, the Wolf decides to find out where Grandma lives - after all, he’s very hungry and could have a grand meal with two humans.

She not only tells him where her Grandmother’s house is, she asked him to go ahead to let Grandmother know she is not far behind. She wants to surprise her Grandmother with fresh strawberries that she plans to pick. Little Red Riding Hood then begins to describe the goodies she is carrying in her basket. With every word he hears (cinnamon bun, cake, soda, a marshmallow puff, Bavarian ice cream, a cherry tart) the Wolf feels sicker and sicker.

*Curses! You’ve gone and ruined my appetite! Now I can’t eat a single bit!*

He runs off to Grandmother’s house as she stays to pick strawberries in the forest.

Scene 3: Grandmother’s House.

The scene opens with Grandma sick in bed. She sings about how she is not feeling well and therefore she cannot do the things she does when she is well like singing and dancing and visiting with company. Then, the Wolf knocks on the door. He tells her that he is Little Red Riding Hood so that she will let him in. She doesn’t recognize the voice, but he tricks her by saying he has a cold. She opens the door and immediately realizes her mistake. She escapes being eaten by locking herself into a closet.

Little Red Riding Hood finally arrives at her Grandmother’s house and she knocks on the door. The Wolf leaps into the bed and pretends to be her Grandma.

Just as the Wolf is about to eat Little Red Riding Hood, her Grandmother comes out of the closet to save her. Now he has both of them and can have a tasty meal. Little Red Riding Hood realizes that she made a mistake by not listening to her mother. She
shouldn’t have talked to a stranger and stopped to pick strawberries. The moment he hears the word “strawberries”, the Wolf starts to get sick to his stomach.

A Woodsman working nearby comes to the rescue and puts an end to the Wolf. Grandmother realizes that all the excitement has cured her. The Woodsman joins them as they sing:

*So sing and dance and celebrate for we are meal that the Wolf never ate!*

Little Red Riding Hood has learned her lesson -- Always obey your Mother, because, *Mother Knows Best!*

THE END