

ROSSINI'S LA GENERENTOLA

Cinderella

THE CLASSIC TALE OF LOVE,
KINDNESS & DREAMS COMING TRUE

OCTOBER 6 & 8, 2023



Audience Preview Guide

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 -

Student Night at the Opera

Friday, October 6, 2023

Sunday, October 8, 2023

Valentine Theatre

TOLEDO OPERA

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The Setting

Setting: The run down castle of Don Magnifico and Prince Ramiro's Palace
Time: Late 18th Century, Italy

Characters

CINDERELLA

By Gioachino Rossini
Libretto by Jacopo Ferretti

- Angelina (Cinderella), stepdaughter of Don Magnifico
- Prince Ramiro, Prince of Salerno
- Don Magnifico, Clorinda and Tisbe's father
- Dandini, the Prince's valet
- Alidoro, the Prince's philosopher
- Clorinda, Angelina's step sister
- Tisbe, Angelina's step sister
- Male Courtiers



Synopsis

Setting: The run down castle of Don Magnifico and Prince Ramiro's Palace
Time: Late 18th Century, Italy

ACT I

Clorinda and Tisbe, daughters of Don Magnifico, are in the middle of one of their usual arguments. Their stepsister Angelina, who is called Cenerentola (Cinderella) and serves as the family maid, sings her favorite song, about a king who married a common girl. Suddenly Alidoro, tutor to Prince Ramiro, enters, dressed as a beggar. The stepsisters want to send him away, but Cenerentola gives him bread and coffee. Courtiers announce that Prince Ramiro will soon pay a visit: he is looking for the most beautiful girl in the land and will hold a ball to choose his bride. Don Magnifico hopes that it will be one of the stepsisters: marriage to a wealthy man is the only way to save the family fortune. When everyone has left, Prince Ramiro enters alone, dressed in his servant's clothes so he can freely observe the prospective brides. Cenerentola returns, and the two are immediately attracted to each other. He asks her who she is, and Cenerentola, confused, tries to explain, then runs away. Finally, the "Prince" arrives—in fact Ramiro's valet, Dandini, in disguise. Don Magnifico, Clorinda, and Tisbe fall over themselves flattering him, and he invites them to the ball. Cenerentola asks to be taken along but Don Magnifico refuses. Prince Ramiro notes how badly Cenerentola is treated. Alidoro says there should be a third daughter in the house but Don Magnifico claims she has died. Left alone with Cenerentola, Alidoro tells her he will take her to the ball and explains that God will reward her for her good heart.

Dandini shares his negative opinion of the two sisters with the Prince, but both men are confused because Alidoro has spoken well of one of Magnifico's daughters. Clorinda and Tisbe appear again, following Dandini, who still pretends to be the Prince. When he offers Ramiro as a husband to the sister the prince does not marry, they are outraged at the idea of marrying a servant. Alidoro enters with a beautiful unknown lady who, strangely, resembles Cenerentola. Unable to make sense of the situation, they all sit down to supper, feeling as if in a dream.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Don Magnifico fears that the arrival of the stranger could ruin his daughters' chances to marry the Prince. Cenerentola, tired of being pursued by Dandini, tells him that she is in love with his servant. Overhearing this, Prince Ramiro is overjoyed and steps forward. Cenerentola, however, tells him that she will return home and does not want him to follow her. If he really cares for her, she says he will find her. The Prince resolves to win the mysterious girl.

Meanwhile Don Magnifico, who still thinks that Dandini is the prince, confronts him, insisting that he decide which of his daughters he will marry. When Dandini reveals that he is in fact the Prince's servant, Don Magnifico is furious.

Don Magnifico and the sisters return home in a bad mood and order Cenerentola, again in rags, to prepare supper. During a thunderstorm, Alidoro arranges for Prince Ramiro's carriage to break down in front of Don Magnifico's mansion so that the Prince has to take refuge inside. Cenerentola and Prince Ramiro recognize each other, as everybody comments on the situation. Ramiro threatens Magnifico and his daughters, who are unwilling to accept defeat, but Cenerentola asks him to forgive them.

At the prince's palace, Ramiro and Cenerentola celebrate their wedding. Magnifico tries to win the favor of the new princess, but she asks only to be acknowledged at last as his daughter. Born to misfortune, she has seen her life change and declares that the days of sitting by the fire are over.

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Gioachino Rossini 1792-1868

Gioachino Rossini, an Italian composer, was the son of Giuseppe Rossini, an impoverished trumpeter who played in miscellaneous bands and orchestras, and Anna Guidarini, a singer of secondary roles. Thus, Rossini spent his entire childhood in the theatre. At age 14, he entered Bologna's Philharmonic School and at 15 he had learned the violin, horn, and harpsichord and had often sung in public, even in the theatre, to earn some money.

When his voice broke and he was unable to continue singing, Rossini became an accompanist and then a conductor. He had already realized the importance of the German school of composition, perceiving the new elements by which Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had enriched music. These influences can be found in his early work.



Gioachino Rossini
1792 - 1868

By taste, and soon by obligation, Rossini threw himself into the genre then fashionable: opera buffa (comic opera). His first opera buffa, *La cambiale di matrimonio* (1810; *The Bill of Marriage*), was performed in Venice and had a certain success, and the following year, two more of his comic operas were produced in Venice.

Rossini had already broken the traditional form of opera buffa: he embellished his melodies (he was the true creator of *bel canto*, a florid style of singing), animated his ensembles and finales, used unusual rhythms, restored to the orchestra its rightful place, and put the singer at the service of the music.

Venice, the most-refined city in Italy, was to offer Rossini his true glory. After the comic opera *Il signor Bruschino* (1813), he next wrote his first serious opera, *Tancredi* (1813), in which he tried to reform opera seria (the formula-ridden, serious operas of the 18th century), and he composed an authentically dramatic score. This work, spirited and melodious, was an instant success. The success of *L'Italiana in Algeri* (1813) followed, showing further refinements in his reforms of opera buffa. These two successes opened wide the doors of La Scala. He wrote *Il Turco in Italia* in 1814 while his next work, *Sigismundo* (1814), was a failure. As was, *Almaviva*, soon to become *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (1816). The Romans, who knew and loved Giovanni Paisiello's version of Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais's play, took a dislike to this new setting, but when it was given elsewhere in Italy it was received with unbounded success. Written in less than three weeks, the work is a piece of inspired inventiveness that has delighted opera lovers ever since. There followed *La Cenerentola* (1817) which like *Barbiere* uses a mezzo soprano for the heroine's role (though both roles are often sung by sopranos); it proved no less successful. In between these two comedies came *Otello* (1816), a setting of William Shakespeare's play that held the stage until superseded by Giuseppe Verdi's greater

opera of the same name. *La Gazza Ladra* (1817), a semi-serious work, was a triumph in Milan.

La Donna del Lago (based on Sir Walter Scott's poem "The Lady of the Lake") failed at its premiere in 1819 but soon came into favor. After several more-or-less successful works, he left Naples for Vienna, along with Isabella Colbran, a soprano (whom he had just married), anxious to meet Ludwig van Beethoven. Disappointed by the economic situation of the composer of *Fidelio*, he returned to Venice, where he attempted to crown his Italian career with *Semiramide* (1823). The old-fashioned Venetians, however, did not understand the astonishing work, his longest and most ambitious, and so he resolved not to write another note for his countrymen. Following his resolution, he decided to leave Italy.

Rich, married, unstable, and by nature an epicurean, Rossini arrived in Paris in November 1823 and was enthusiastically welcomed in the French capital. After some of his works had been staged, he composed *Il Viaggio a Reims*, a cantata improvised for the coronation of Charles X.

For a long while Rossini hoped to modify his style: to replace the comparative artificiality and coldness of florid opera coloratura with declamatory and lofty singing—that is, with truth and intensity. In order to do that, he also had to reform the orchestra and give more importance to the chorus. Thus appeared *Le Siège de Corinthe* (1826), a revision of the earlier *Maometto II* (1820), which was saluted by the prominent composer Hector Berlioz. *Le Siège* was followed by *Moïse* (1827) and *Le Comte Ory* (1828), an adaptation of opera buffa style to French opera.

Rossini's final opera, *Guglielmo Tell*, is on the noble themes of nationalism and liberty, and his music is worthy of the elevated subject. The Parisian public gave him an ovation, and, in a single work, he had responded to all the critics in the most elegant manner. Then he decided, at age 37, not to write again for the theatre.

In 1845 Colbran died. In 1847 Rossini married Olympe Pélissier. During his retirement he had written, returning to his first love, some religious pieces: the *Stabat Mater* (1832) and *Petite messe solennelle* (1864). He also wrote a few songs and piano pieces but never agreed to their publication.

After a period in Italy, he returned to Paris in 1855, never again to leave it. His parents being deceased, his new wife less demanding than the preceding one, and he himself a wealthy man whose retirement was assured, Rossini gave way to the sweetness of life and to being a wise man who permitted himself to shine in society with a few clever expressions and witticisms. His *bons mots*, in fact, are legendary, as were his caustic wit and low humour.

Rossini suffered for years from physical and mental illness. His return to music was quite subtle and his later compositions were meant only for private performances. Of these, "Péchés de vieillesse" ("Sins of Old Age"), was notable. He succumbed to pneumonia at the age of 76, at his house in Passy, on November 13, 1868.

What to Listen For

The story of Cinderella has been around for hundreds of years. In fact, the first known telling of it shows up in Greece. Most fairy tales are much more dark and sinister than the Disney versions that we know. Although the magical elements were removed from Rossini's telling of this classic, this does not make any less enchanting. Rossini is well known for his opera buffo (comic opera) writing and only wrote three serious operas. Take a listen to these selections from Cinderella.

Una volta c'era un re

In Act I, Angelina laments her lot in life as her stepsisters mock her. Listen to the extraordinary mezzo soprano Cecilia Bartoli sing this aria.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzKWDMtZ-tI>

Signora è pronto in tavola (Act I Finale)

The rousing finale to Act I where all characters comment on different happenings, but it all comes together with the brilliant Rossini music. From the 1981 film version starring Frederica Von Stade.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJjsWplxt8&t=150s>

Si ritovaria io giuro

Angelina tells Ramiro that before she can marry him he must discover her identity. She gives him one of a pair of bracelets so that he may recognize her. Prince Ramiro embarks on his search with the aid of his courtiers. Juan Diego Florez sings Prince Ramiro in this production from Gran Teatro del Liceu, Barcelona.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06JPaO3pnOQ&t=31s>

Non piu mesta

Angelina has married her prince and sings of her joy. Cecilia Bartoli sings Angelina in this production for the Metropolitan Opera.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVZNx39xYiA>



Post-Opera Activities

Critical Response

Create Your Own Review of *Cinderella*

Choose one of the following aspects of the opera you saw: the costumes, the singing, the orchestra, or the set. Answer the questions with your honest review!

Aspect:	Your Response:
How did it help tell the story?	
What did you like about it?	
What could be better?	

Now, choose one of the following characters from *Cinderella*: Angelina, Prince Ramiro, Don Magnifico, Dandini, Alidoro, Tisbe, Clorinda. Fill in the following chart with your thoughts!

What did you like about this character?	
How would the story be different if they weren't in the opera?	
What advice would you give them?	

Fun Activity

Below is a list of words related to *La Cenerentola*. Can you find them hidden in the word search below? Look carefully: The words can be printed horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or even backwards.

M	F	L	O	P	E	R	A	E	M	V	C	M	C	O
S	C	A	T	E	R	O	T	N	A	B	U	S	F	P
C	V	B	N	A	V	R	C	L	G	E	B	I	I	C
X	R	O	S	S	I	N	I	C	I	E	E	U	L	M
I	Y	C	P	E	N	V	E	O	C	B	L	R	A	S
E	B	R	A	C	E	L	E	T	S	F	C	I	G	E
H	D	C	I	N	D	E	R	E	L	L	A	L	N	L
R	Q	E	R	A	M	A	Y	U	N	C	N	D	L	A
C	P	N	L	I	H	G	P	D	P	B	T	T	N	T
D	O	N	M	A	G	N	I	F	I	C	O	N	W	Y
F	T	H	U	U	C	I	A	O	O	N	M	E	B	R
E	W	A	G	M	S	F	B	L	H	T	S	C	A	I
A	O	I	O	I	R	I	E	T	V	D	C	O	T	A
R	R	A	F	S	U	M	C	S	E	N	H	P	N	F
K	C	O	L	O	R	A	T	U	R	A	J	L	P	T

MAGIC

ROSSINI

OPERA

MUSIC

BEL CANTO

ANGELINA

DUET

COLORATURA

BRACELET

DON MAGNIFICO

CINDERELLA

FAIRY TALE