

LA CENERENTOLA Salt Marsh Opera May 5, 2013

This English libretto was adapted by Nathaniel Merchant from the Kalmus edition translation by Paul Csonka and Ariane Theslof, with additions by Shawn Jeffery.

Sinfonia

“Una volta c’era un re”

CENERENTOLA

Many years ago a king
who was lonely, oh so lonely for a wife
so he sought to find a queen
someone to share his joys in life.
Who to choose?
He disdained all vain displays
and in the end chose for his own
not a princess fine
but a maiden kind
with whom to share all his days. La-la-la....etc.

CLORINDA & TISBE

Cenerentola, enough of that
Your old song is so unending!

CENERENTOLA

By the fireside I am tending,

By the fireside I am tending.

Go and leave me be, singing.

Many years ago a king,

Many years a --

CLORINDA & TISBE

And still she must sing!

Will you stop it, yes or no?

If you don't, then out you go! Out you go! Out you go!

CENERENTOLA

Many years a--

ALL THREE

Who is there? Who is there?

Alidoro [from offstage] : A messenger from the prince of Salerno with an announcement to all eligible maidens! At the grand ball tonight, Prince Ramiro will choose his bride!

Clorinda and Tisbe [pushing Cenerentola towards the door]: Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! Open!

ALIDORO [handing over a scroll]

A command: the prince must wed!

Can you spare a bit of bread?

CLORINDA & TISBE

Dusty beggar, go away! Go away!, etc.

CENERENTOLA

This is all that I can offer.

They don't mean to be so hateful.

ALIDORO

For your charity I'm grateful.

I'll pay sooner than you know.

CLORINDA & TISBE

Burning glances that are fateful,

We can kindle to a glow, yes!

CENERENTOLA

Ah, to those each day with plates full,

The truly poor are mired in woe.

CLORINDA & TISBE

What an outrage, are you still here?

With our coffee and breakfast, too?

Since we're giving, here's for you!

CENERENTOLA

Oh, am I to never rest?

ALIDORO

Stop, unhand her, I protest!

Alidoro: Hold! Is that the prince's carriage I hear outside? [the sisters squeal and run towards their rooms]

CLORINDA & TISBE

Cenerentola, come here!, etc.

Bring my bonnet and my shoes!

Now, which necklace should I choose?

CENERENTOLA

Cenerentola, come here!

Cenerentola, go there!

Cenerentola, come up!

Cenerentola, go down!

Every evening, every morning

Racing up and down the hall

While with jewels they are adorning,
I must weep and miss the ball.

CLORINDA & TISBE

Dreaming, scheming, calculating
Face and figure will enthrall
Smiling, flirting, captivating
Don Ramiro's bound to fall!

ALIDORO

I'm the spy that's in their ointment,
Not a messenger at all.
They will have a disappointment,
Now they prance, but soon they'll crawl. Yes, yes, they'll crawl!

[Cenerentola helps Alidoro out the door, then exits into the house as the two sisters read the royal notice]

Clorinda: A notice to the noble maidens of Salerno:...

Tisbe: ...Due to the death of our most gracious King...

Clorinda: ...His son, Prince Ramiro,...

.

Tisbe: ...must choose a wife immediately...

Clorinda: ...and is even now...

Tisbe: ...visiting all nearby households and manors--

Clorinda: Give it here, you hussy!

Tisbe: Hands off, little minx! [they are about to fight when Magnifico enters]

Magnifico: Clorinda! Tisbe! Bickering again! What is it this time?

Clorinda & Tisbe: Papa! Papa! Don Ramiro will be here soon to select a bride!

Magnifico: At last! I knew my luck would turn! You both know that we are knee-deep in debt, despite my spending all of Cenerentola's inheritance. This is your chance to put me back on my feet again. Prince Ramiro is young and unsophisticated: he won't escape from the likes of you two. I have two cards in my hand, and one of them is bound to win! Ah, I can see the throngs of people, with lines around the block...!

Clorinda: For the wedding?

Magnifico: Nothing of the sort! To see *me*, Don Magnifico, father to a queen!

“Sia qualunque delle figlie”

MAGNIFICO

Now whichever one, my daughters,

Sits upon the throne tomorrow

Don't abandon, don't abandon, don't abandon, etc.

your magnificent Papa!

[spoken] When you're married to the prince, my dears, I'll be working very hard...to get rich!

I can see the man already

drawing me into a corner

cap in hand and voice unsteady.

He commences; "Please, your honor,

could you give your royal daughter

a petition I have brought her?"

And since in my uniqueness

he knows choc'late is my weakness

he knows choc'late is my weakness,

he pays off Magnifico.

he knows choc'late, he knows choc'late will pay off Magnifico.

I will answer; "Well, let us see now.

You say it's urgent? We'll agree now.

To the palace it shall go, yes, to the palace it shall go"

[spoken] They'll come from miles away: bowing, scraping, smiling...and flirting!

Then I turn and see a beauty

all perfume and impish glances

gives a curtsy very snooty,

and with words she tries her chances:

"Baron, darling, of that matter

we had discussed." But without money

she entreats one deaf to chatter,

therefore being no simpleton, she

gives some coins to her new beau.

I am gallant; "Your eyes bewitch me!

Even more so [voï], when you enrich me.

How you make my cup overflow, how my cup does overflow.

Overflowing with gold coins, yes, how my cup does overflow."

I awaken late each morning

and the bell's already ringing.

Through the doorway without warning

comes a troop of plaintiffs clinging:

this one seeking my protection
and another wants correction,
one who wants to be my flunky
but he is a stubborn donkey!
but he is a stubborn donkey!, etc.

One who wants a corporation,
one who wants a deputation,
one who wants an abbey founded,
on all sides I am surrounded:
by petitions that are urgent
here a chicken, there a sturgeon
vintage bottles, silk brocaded
candles, herring marinated
pastry, buns, and sugar candy,
fine confections, fruits in brandy,
English toffee, tea and coffee,
finest choc'late melted down.
I'm confronted with the fawners,
I'm confronted with the fakers,
I'm confronted with the fixers,
and the other money makers.
I'm enveloped by the moochers,
I'm enveloped by the takers,

I'm embarrassed by the smoochers
and I feel about to drown.

Stop it, stop it, stop it, stop it!

I can't take it, I can't take it!

Quit the kissing of my hand, sir,
all you have to do is shake it.

Nothing more, sir, nothing more, sir,
there's the door sir, there's the door!

Lock the gate and bar the windows!

Droning beggars, thieving swindlers!

Lock the gate and bar the windows!

Move it [fuori], move it, move it, move it, go away!

Move it, move it, move it, now go away!

Quickly [presto] quickly, go away! etc.

Tisbe: Don't worry, darlingest Papa, I'll ensure that you live happily ever after.

Clorinda: No, *I'll* ensure that he lives happily ever after. *You'll* die an old maid!

Tisbe: *I'm* the one marrying Don Ramiro, and you'll be lucky to be invited to the wedding.

Clorinda: Why, you--!

Magnifico: Clorindina! Tisbinetta! Hurry, go and finish dressing at once! The prince will be here soon! [calling] Cenerentola, my coffee! [exits]

Clorinda: [calling] Cenerentola, come here! [exits]

Tisbe: [calling] No, Cenerentola, come *here!* [exits]

“Tutto è deserto”

RAMIRO

All is deserted. [calling out] Hello, there!

Nobody answers. This costume
should disguise my intentions.

The ladies I will observe.
Is no one coming? Just now, I was
encouraged by the wise Alidoro:
that here a girl, bright and lovely,
most worthy of my blood, I'd find to marry.

To marry, and not for love!

Ah, most cruel decree, that condemns me
to this choice.

Just when my life has started, is it over?

Look here...a servant!

CENERENTOLA

Many years ago a--[drops her tray] Now, I've done it!

RAMIRO

What is wrong?

CENERENTOLA

My heart is pounding!

RAMIRO

Am I really so ugly?

CENERENTOLA

Yes...no...your pardon.

RAMIRO

I don't know what sparked and flashed
in her eyes. Now I am shy.

CENERENTOLA

I can't speak, I'm mute, abashed.

My heart beats, I wonder why.

RAMIRO

I would tell her, but I dare not.

CENERENTOLA

I would speak now, but I am silent

RAMIRO & CENERENTOLA

There's an [63/1/1 on the tied eighth notes of "Un-] "enchantment, a graceful allure,
that shines in her/his face, sincerely.

And her/his smile is so endearing,
sparking my soul with hope and yearning.

63/4/2 CEN: "There's an[on the tied eighth notes of "Un-"] enchantment..." RAM: "A
graceful allure..." CEN: "...shining[on the tied eighth notes of "par"] in his face", RAM:
"Shining sincerely"

64/3/1 CEN: "Sparking my soul..." BOTH: "Sparking my soul" RAM: "Sparking my
soul" BOTH: "With year-ning" [in this last case, the "spe" syllable is silent.]

RAMIRO

I am seeking the Baron's daughters.

Do they sleep still? I do not see them.

CENERENTOLA

They are in their rooms now, dressing

They are in their rooms now, dressing

Soon, they'll be here. (Oh, how depressing!)

RAMIRO

But, excuse me, who are you, then?

CENERENTOLA

Who am I, then? Eh, I don't know.

RAMIRO

You do not know?

CENERENTOLA

Hardly, no.

RAMIRO

You do not know?

CENERENTOLA

Barely so.

For my father's not my father,

But my sisters' father, rather

Then there was my widowed mother,

She, the mother of the others

But this father is refusing

But this father is refusing

to accept me as his daughter

He's my sister's father rather

And there was my widowed mother

And my father is refusing...

(This whole tale is so confusing, this whole tale is so confusing.)

Oh, pardon me, pardon me,

For my candor and simplicity.

RAMIRO

I'm enchanted...

I'm enchanted, I'm transported by this girl's simplicity.

I'm enchanted, I'm enchanted by this wonder,

by her candor and her sweet simplicity.

CLORINDA & TISBE

Cenerentola! Come here! etc.

RAMIRO

What loud voices do I hear?

What loud voices echo here?

CENERENTOLA

With the bickering and brawling,
Summer day or stormy weather,
there is always someone calling
I have not a moment's rest.

RAMIRO

Her predicament's appalling.
She's entrancing altogether.
All at once it seems I'm falling,
With this girl I am obsessed!

CENERENTOLA

Farewell, your lordship, you hear I'm needed.
Coming! etc.

Ah, my heart is mine no longer!
I am lost from this day on.

RAMIRO

I'm enchanted and transported, etc.

Ah, my heart is mine no longer!

I am lost from this day on.

[Cenerentola exits]

Magnifico [from offstage, calling out]: Daughters! Daughters!

Ramiro: That must be the Baron. He's seen the royal coach, which means Dandini must nearly be here! I hope that nitwit can act like a prince instead of something that escaped from the zoo.

Magnifico: [entering, calling out] Daughters! Hurry! [notices Ramiro] Ah! Who are you, sir?

Ramiro: Prince Ramiro's valet. We wanted to be sure that the household was prepared for the prince's arrival. [a crash offstage]

Magnifico: But what was that?

Ramiro: The prince's arrival.

Magnifico: How peculiar! Are you sure?

Ramiro: Oh, I'm sure.

Magnifico: Daughters! Daughters! The prince is here! Come, come! Women and children first! Alea iacta est! Carpe diem! etc. [The sisters and Cenerentola enter hurriedly.]

Alidoro, in formal court garb, enters first, then Dandini. All bow/curtsey. Magnifico waves Cenerentola off.]

“Come un'ape ne' giorni d'aprile”

DANDINI

As a bee in the spring days of April,
lightly flying, so playful, excited,
skims from lilies to roses, delighted,
till [on “dol”, missing from the Ricordi at 76/2/1] one fragrant blossom changes his mind.

Wand'ring free among thousands of beauties,
I search and seek with great perseverance.
But my blossom never made an appearance.
Not one girl for me could I find, etc.

CLORINDA & TISBE

Highness! What favor you show us!

MAGNIFICO

Such honor as yours quite overflows us!

DANDINI

Nothing, merely. Merely nothing.

How charming! Disarming!

(How'm I doing? How's it going?)

Just like their Papa! Just like their Papa!

(When our little comedy has ended

I predict tragedy will begin.

As a valet I can size people up:

these are prizes I don't want to win.)

[sing entire verse twice followed by first two lines again bottom of p. 80]

87/1/4 The line should read "I predict that trage-dy [on the run], I [on the run] predict
tragedy will begin, [88/1/3.5] yes, it will begin, yes, it will, yes, it will begin."

Ah, such gazes of yours do amaze me!

Pray, take purple pity on my raving!

Such a cannonade here I am braving,

even though the two cannons are twin!

[To RAMIRO] (How'm I doing? Thank you!)

RAMIRO

(Ah, I pine for the other to appear.

So different, graceful, and genuine.)

[To DANDINI] (Idiot!)

CLORINDA & TISBE

He is staring, admiring, desiring,

Now, Prince: when does the wedding begin?

MAGNIFICO

He is frantic, romantic, and panting.

Slave to just a hint of crinoline.

ALIDORO [to DANDINI]

(Manners, you dolt, remember them!

Stop making such a din!

Don't go too far with the flirting!

Please show some discipline, some discipline.)

[88/1/1 "No, no, no! Stop making a din, stop making a din, etc."]

Dandini: Delightful to meet you all! Now, then, continuing that speech which I haven't begun yet, on returning from my long travels abroad, and finding that dear old Dad had kicked the proverbial bucket, and discovering, meanwhile, that I was forced by posthumous decree to get hitched at once or die trying, under the threat of being disinherited, I sent out invitations to the entire neighborhood for all eligible, nubile, and blossoming young ladies to attend a fancy ball that I shall be hosting this evening, at which event I shall at last pick my bride, the future Princess of Salerno! [all applaud] And now that that's over, I'll take a breather. [sits]

Magnifico [to his daughters]: What mangled eloquence! [aloud, to Dandini] You do us great honor to visit us in our humble mansion. If there is anything your Excellency requires--

Dandini: Now that you mention it, I am a bit peckish...

Alidoro: Ahem!

Dandini: [jumping up] Ah, yes, what my court philosopher Alidoro means to say is that we will feast at the ball. If you ladies would honor me by riding in my carriage...?

Clorinda and Tisbe: We would indeed!

Alidoro [to the sisters]: Allow me.

Tisbe: Don't be long, now, dear Prince.

Dandini [to Tisbe]: Only in longing for you, my climbing kudzu! [to Magnifico] Let us follow them, Baron.

Magnifico: At once, Highness. Cenerentola, my hat and cloak! [Music. Cenerentola enters with Magnifico's hat and cloak.]

“Signor, una parola”

CENERENTOLA

Oh, sir, one word, I beg you only listen!

Oh, sir, in that most royal prince's residence:

One hour, one hour only

Please, allow me to dance in the prince's grand residence.

Please allow me to dance!

Please, sir, allow me to dance!

Please allow me to dance!, etc.

MAGNIFICO

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

DANDINI

What's wrong?

MAGNIFICO

How you'd embarrass us!

DANDINI

This sounds quite natural.

MAGNIFICO

How charming...how presumptuous!

Disgusting and impertinent, impertinent!

RAMIRO [to DANDINI]

Be quiet! Do you not hear this?

MAGNIFICO

Off with you! Off with you! I must go!

Away with you! What impertinence!

Oh, leave me be, I must go!!

Yes, I must go!,etc.

DANDINI

Let's go now [to RAMIRO] (or don't we go now?)

RAMIRO

My heart is torn in two

CENERENTOLA

Just half an ho-ur... a quarter

MAGNIFICO

Let go of me, I say again,

Let go of me, I say again!

RAMIRO, DANDINI

Oh, stop sir!

MAGNIFICO

Yes, your Majesty.

“Nel volto estatico”

Nel volto estatico

Di questo e quello

Si legge il vortice

Del lor cervello,

Che ondeggia e dubita

E incerto sta.

CENERENTOLA [MAGNIFICO p.106 tacet during Cenerentola's line], then ALIDORO, RAMIRO, DANDINI, and MAGNIFICO [DANDINI singing MAGNIFICO's vocal line until p. 118]

In their astonishment

and dazed expressions,

I see uncertainty

and mixed impressions.

They waver, wondering

in doubt and fear.

[RAMIRO & CENERENTOLA: 108/1/1 and 109/1/1 “waver in doubt and fear”]

[ALL: bottom p. 109 “*incerto sta*” is “and fear, yes, fear” into the *allegro vivace*, then resuming “in doubt and fear, in doubt and fear”]

MAGNIFICO [to CENERENTOLA]

If you are muttering even a syllable

into the wine cellar you will be thrown, you will be thrown, etc.

ALIDORO [To MAGNIFICO]

You must immediately stop this behavior

This impropriety I can't condone!

CENERENTOLA [to DANDINI]

Oh, sir, he's threatening and now he's bellowing,

I am so mis'erable all on my own, all on my own, etc.

DANDINI [to MAGNIFICO]

My dear Magnifico, you should be heeding my

royal authority. Leave her alone, leave her alone, etc.

RAMIRO [to MAGNIFICO]

Baron, your dignity! Think of your family!

(For this sheer cruelty you will atone) etc.

[Dandini exits with Magnifico and Ramiro. Alidoro helps Magnifico leave, then turns back]

Alidoro: Dry your tears, my child. A coach is waiting to take you to the royal ball.

Cenerentola: But...why would you do this for me?

Alidoro: When I came to your door this morning, incognito, you treated me kindly. Your compassion will be repaid. Come!

Cenerentola: In these rags?

Alidoro: You will change your costume just as I have.

ALIDORO

All of the world is a theater

And people are the actors

In but a single moment

We actors change our roles, we actors change our roles, we actors change our roles.

Who today is a clown

beaten by his master, yes, beaten by his master

tomorrow a lord shall be;

all he sees he controls, he controls.

The most profound of mysteries

no human eye can penetrate

it's the record of our actions in our hearts and our souls.

I hear the coach wheels clattering!

From the hearth you'll rise best of all [130/1/1 turn “-re” into two eighth notes]

I predict that at the festival [130/5/1 the “i” of “festival” lands on the eighth note of “core”]

your heart will be made whole, will be made whole, etc. [Alidoro leads Cenerentola off]

“Zitto, zitto, piano, piano”

[Danini promenades with Clorinda and Tisbe, with Ramiro following with a light. The four exit, and then Ramiro and Dandini race onstage together]

RAMIRO

Softly, softly, and on the quiet,
without noise and with discretion,
of the two, what's your impression?
Tell the truth and be exact.

DANDINI

I can whisper (at least I'll try it)
in a manner surreptitious
I can whisper (at least I'll try it)
so that no one is suspicious.
They are vacuous and vicious,
they are vain and lack all tact.

RAMIRO

Alidoro told me plainly
that the Baron had a daughter

DANDINI

Oh, his assumption won't hold water,
He's a goose and that's a fact!

[157/4/2] They are vicious...and ambitious...and capricious.

RAMIRO

Those who want to marry these two
can collect the girls right now.
We'll still pretend. [*“a recitar”*]
Those who want to...marry these two.
Softly, softly, quiet, quiet....come collect the girls right now, etc.

DANDINI

He'll only want to bury them;
but we must pretend somehow.
He will only...want to bury!
I can whisper. I can whisper. But we must pretend somehow.

[CLORINDA and TISBE enter hurriedly]

CLORINDA

Darling princy, now where are you?

TISBE

My Ramiro, don't go far, you!

CLORINDA & TISBE

Ah, but why, why did you leave me?

You will drive me, you will drive me to despair.

I adore you!, etc.

DANDINI

Ah, your zeal is rather scary,

Yes, your zeal is rather scary!

Both of you I cannot marry;

I must choose one in the end.

One I'll marry...

CLORINDA & TISBE

The other? The other?

DANDINI

The other? The other?

If she likes, she'll wed my friend.

CLORINDA & TISBE

Nononononono! He's a servant, oh no! Oh no!

RAMIRO

I'll be gentle and attentive.

CLORINDA

Lowly servant! No, your highness,
not Clorinda, don't you dare!

RAMIRO

I'll be loving, very tender.

TISBE

Bass-born valet! No, your highness,
not for Tisbe, I declare!

CLORINDA

Such an obv-i-ous plebeian...

TISBE

From the lower ranks descended...

RAMIRO

I'll be gentle...loving, tender.

I'll be gentle...loving, tender.

CLORINDA & TISBE [to DANDINI]

It's outrageous, your presumption,

and your low account of me.

[pp. 167-168 When you find two "solamente"s together, the first becomes "It's outrageous!", the second is "and your low a--" as normal. When you find *three* together, the first two become "It's outrageous, your presumption" and the third is as normal. Additionally, the "-te" on 168/2/4 and 169/1/4 is now "yes".]

RAMIRO & DANDINI

(What a scene for our consumption.

What a jolly comedy!)

[166/2/2 "La scenetta" is now "...our consumption!"
169/1/1 "è da contar" is now "a comedy" for that entire page.]

[fanfare off]

RAMIRO

Dear enlightened Alidoro...

RAMIRO & DANDINI

What commotion's in the hall?

ALIDORO

Answer sadly, I have none.

She's unknown to ev'ryone.

CLORINDA & TISBE

It's a lady?

ALIDORO

Yes, indeed.

CLORINDA & TISBE

Who is she?

ALIDORO

We don't yet know.

CLORINDA & TISBE

Is she pretty?

ALIDORO

Yes and no.

RAMIRO & DANDINI

Tell us who!

ALIDORO

Perhaps she's new.

CLORINDA

Did she say?

ALIDORO

Tonight she may.

TISBE

Why's she here?

ALIDORO

She won't convey.

ALL (variously) [171/4/4]

Tell us who! Who's she? We'll see? We don't know. Let us go.

Tell us who! Who's she? We'll see? We don't know. Let us go.

CLORINDA & TISBE

(I'm already afire with jealousy.

It is burning in my brain, inside my brain.)

DANDINI

(I've been turned into a honeycomb

and the bees are buzzing, buzzing 'round again) [“-gain” rhymes with “brain”]

RAMIRO

(This arrival, it is a mystery,

what this is, oh what this is, I can't explain.)

ALIDORO

(They're already afire with jealousy.

It is burning in their brain, inside their brain.)

[MAGNIFICO scurries in just before CENERENTOLA, richly attired and veiled, enters]

CENERENTOLA

I scorn all fortune's favors,

capricious and so hollow.

He who I choose to follow

Must be kind, loving and true.

RAMIRO

(Somewhere I've heard that voice calling.

I wake to that recognition

in hope and sweet suspicion

that the myst'ry is you.)

DANDINI

Like stars your eyes are shining

How can you deny us mortals?

Reveal to us those portals

so we may worship, too.

CLORINDA & TISBE

Let's see if she's the miracle

that they must all pursue.

DANDINI

Reveal yourself!

ALL [save ALIDORO]

Ah!

“Ma ho timor che sotto terra”

Ma ho timor che sotto terra

Piano piano a poco a poco

Si sviluppi un certo foco.

E improvviso a tutti ignoto

**Balzi fuori un terremoto,
Che crollando, strepitando
Fracassando, sconvuolando
Poi mi venga a risvegliar.
E ho paura che il mio sogno
Vada in fumo a dileguar.**

ALL

Slowly, softly starts the quaking;

is it earth or my knees shaking?

Underground volcanoes rumble;

will my dreams all start to crumble?

Scorching fire and lava searing;

Could it be the end is nearing?

Smashing, crashing, boiling, bubbling

shooting stars are troubling here.

Like a phoenix new-erupting

my hopes burn and disappear.

[pp. 215-221 "**che** vada in fumo" is "**and** my hopes burn and..."]

[Dandini leads Cenerentola off, with Ramiro and Alidoro following. The sisters and Magnifico rush about the stage trying to make sense of the unfolding situation.]

End of sample