

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

# LA CENERENTOLA

Composer: **Gioachino Rossini**  
Librettist: **Jacopo Ferretti**

Premiere Date:  
**Jan 25, 1817, Teatro Valle, Rome**

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT ONE

In a hall of Don Magnifico's castle, his vain and demanding daughters Clorinda and Tisbe are busy primping. Their stepsister, Angelina (known as Cenerentola), consoles herself with a song about a king who chose a kind-hearted bride rather than a rich one. A beggar (actually Prince Ramiro's tutor Alidoro) comes in; Angelina gives him some coffee and bread, angering the stepsisters. The prince's courtiers enter, announcing the imminent arrival of the prince himself — that evening at a palace ball, he will choose the most beautiful woman among the guests as his wife. The ensuing excitement generates great confusion. The knights leave and so does the "beggar," foretelling that Angelina will be happy the next day.

Quarreling for the privilege of telling their father the good news, Clorinda and Tisbe accidentally awaken him. Don Magnifico interprets a dream he was just having as a prediction of his fortune: the impoverished baron's vision of himself as grandfather of kings is apparently confirmed by his daughters' announcement.

Prince Ramiro, having decided to explore the situation incognito, has exchanged clothing with his servant, Dandini. Alidoro has advised him that kindness, truth and virtue can be found in this home. When the disguised prince enters the house, he and Angelina instantly fall in love. Dandini arrives, awkwardly playing the prince, and Clorinda and Tisbe are introduced to him. Angelina begs her stepfather to take her to the ball, but Magnifico orders her to stay at home. Alidoro, with a list of the unmarried women in the city, asks Don Magnifico about a third daughter, but Magnifico quickly covers his tracks, stating that she is dead. After everyone has left, Alidoro returns in finer apparel and invites Angelina to the ball, alluding to a change in her fortunes. He supplies an elegant dress and jewelry so that she may be appropriately attired.

At the palace Dandini, still disguised as the prince, appoints Magnifico his wine steward if he can successfully taste all the wines in the cellar and still remain sober. Magnifico rises to the challenge and proclaims new drinking laws: wine shall no longer be mixed with water. Clorinda and Tisbe each vie for the prince's attention — Clorinda is the eldest, therefore, more suitable for marriage, but Tisbe counters that she, as the younger one, shall not age as quickly. Ramiro confers with Dandini — Alidoro said that a daughter of Magnifico would be the one, yet both girls are equally repellent. Dandini further tests them — he shall select one sister to be his queen, the other shall marry his valet (that is, Ramiro). Both Clorinda and Tisbe are disgusted by the mere suggestion of marrying beneath their station, should they not win the prince, and rebuke the offer. All are enchanted by the sudden arrival of a mysterious lady. When she unveils herself, they are struck by her uncanny resemblance to someone very familiar.



Photos by Brett Croomer/Houston Grand Opera.

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## ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE *(continued)*

### ACT TWO

From a discreet distance the courtiers laugh at the sisters' distress. Magnifico imagines himself in the privileged position as the prince's father-in-law, making money in exchange for granting favors. Angelina enters, with Dandini in an amorous pursuit. Hiding nearby Ramiro overhears her refusal of the poseur's attentions because she loves his valet. Overjoyed, Ramiro asks her to be his, but departing, she gives him one of her bracelets, stating that if he can find her wearing its twin, she will marry him. Ramiro reassumes his princely role, and gathering his courtiers, determines to look for Angelina at once. Dandini encourages Magnifico's fantasies, and then reveals his real identity, much to the baron's ire. He blusters out of the room.

Returning home, the sisters find Angelina by the fire and berate her incessantly for looking like the beautiful lady at the ball. Alidoro arranges an accident for the prince's carriage, which overturns in front of the house during rather serendipitously inclement weather. Angelina and Ramiro recognize one another, and he matches the bracelet to its mate, proclaiming her as his bride. Angelina goes to embrace her awestruck family but is rebuked. Angered, Ramiro whisks Angelina away, while Alidoro convinces the sisters to ask forgiveness to avoid ruin. Tisbe is the first to see reason.

At the wedding banquet, Angelina intercedes with the prince for Magnifico and her stepsisters, offering as her "vendetta" their pardon. She revels in her newly found happiness.



Photos by Brett Croomer/Houston Grand Opera.

Courtesy of Minnesota Opera

## La Cenerentola

### CHARACTER MAP

