

Minnesota Sinfonia Music in the Schools, 2023-2024

Music Tells a Story

Dear Teachers,

I am very excited to work with you for this year's Music in the Schools presentation, *Music Tells a Story*. This program focuses on literature, and how we as musicians help tell stories through our music.

Following are materials that I hope you will find helpful when preparing your students for our visit:

- **Lesson plans/activities** that will relate the music we will play to stories your students will read and study as part of their classroom literature assignments.
 - We have listed two state-mandated literature standards for each grade level that you can satisfy by using our materials.
 - The Sinfonia welcomes new ideas, so please send us any materials or suggestions you think we could include next time we use this curriculum.
 - Links to complete renditions (The Sinfonia will perform selected excerpts) of the music The Sinfonia will perform and the songs your students should learn to sing with the orchestra on concert day are provided as part of this package.
 - Please play the recordings in your classroom daily.
 - Feel free to use other classical recordings, too.
- **Music for student choirs to sing:** *O Maiden*, and *Papageno's Song* from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (choir sings) Page 260 in Music and You – 4th grade volume – piano accompaniment on page 174 PA.
 - These are songs that your school choir will perform on concert day with the orchestra (for schools without choirs, the children in one or two grades can serve as the choir).
 - If you cannot play the accompaniments on a piano, then please use the enclosed computer-generated accompaniments when teaching the music.
 - For school orchestras, please contact Jay directly for the parts for the student orchestra piece to learn.
- **Teacher surveys** are available online via our website. We will use your suggestions to improve the program for next year.
 - After the concert day, please complete the survey and if you use hard copies, mail them to:

The Minnesota Sinfonia
901 N. 3rd St, #112
Minneapolis, MN 55401

If at any time you have questions about the curriculum, the music, or how to get started with the activities, please call or e-mail me, and I will be happy to help you. I can be reached through The Sinfonia office (612-871-1701), cell (614-440-7661) or email (jfishmanmusic@gmail.com).

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Please notice that this guide is a bit longer than the norm. This is because we have included short overviews of the various stories, which you can use for your classes, as you desire.

It is imperative that your students hear this music played in class every day. Although the state mandated requirements are about reading and understanding, please be aware that we have provided several different types of activities for some of the music. Some of these may be applicable to other social studies requirements.

I want to say a very special thank you to St. Paul Public School teacher Wendi Storhoff, who has been extremely helpful in organizing and editing this curriculum. Also, a special thank SPPS teacher Alyssa Pollack for her help in editing, and to Ann Ogg from the Franklin County Library, Columbus, Ohio for her research of additional educational resources. And finally to The Sinfonia's administrators who do so much to make The Sinfonia's Music in the Schools program so successful.

Jay Fishman

Minnesota Sinfonia Artistic Director

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Concert Day Activities – What to Expect

Musician Visits

When the orchestra arrives, please send one or two students from each classroom to the auditorium/gym to escort a musician back to their classroom for a 10–15-minute visit. This visit is an opportunity for the students to ask questions and get to know their musician. Generally, we can send 22 musicians to the classrooms (see next section for exception). During this time, choir and/or orchestra student should report to the gym/auditorium or performance space to rehearse with Mr. Fishman.

Choir/Orchestra Rehearsal

Choir students should report to the gym/auditorium to rehearse for the concert with Mr. Fishman.

Orchestra students should also report to the performance space during the classroom visits, so they can rehearse with Mr. Fishman and The Sinfonia string players. In this case, the 8 Sinfonia wind players will do the classroom visits while string players rehearse with students.

Concerts

After classroom visits, the orchestra will perform two times—once for each half of the student body.

If possible, students should be grouped by age, with the younger students in one group and older students in the second.

Evaluations

During the concert, please remember to keep notes on the reactions of your students, for the follow-up evaluation. Gather feedback from them after the concert as well, and then, please fill out the survey included as part of this packet or online at The Sinfonia website: www.mnsinfonia.org.

Sinfonia Needs for the Concert Day

- 30 straight back (folding chairs)
- 1 speaking pa system for Jay to talk to the students
- Choral risers (optional) for the student choirs
- 22 music stands for The Sinfonia's use (if available)
- For morning performances – good strong coffee and treats.....

Music to be performed will be selected from:

- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Overture to *The Magic Flute*
- Peter Tchaikovsky: *Romeo and Juliet*
- Paul Dukas: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*
- Joseph Bologne (Chevalier de Saint-Georges): Overture to *L'Amant Anonyme (Anonymous Lover)*
- Engelbert Humperdinck: *Evening Prayer* from *Hansel and Gretel*
- Manuel Ponce: *Balada Mexicana*
- Jay Fishman and Bernie Fishman: *Cinderella – Updated!*

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- Franz von Suppe: *Light Cavalry Overture*

Songs for students to sing:

O Maiden and *Catching Birds* [the Bird Catcher's Song] from *The Magic Flute* - Page 260 in Music and You – 4th grade volume – piano accompaniment on page 174 PA

Please remember that The Sinfonia will play excerpts from the above music – not the entire pieces. That being said, students should hear the entire pieces which are included as part of this packet.

Please remember to ask your PTOs to help support Music in the Schools in your schools with a financial contribution.

Each school presentation costs **\$7,000**.

Although the Minnesota Sinfonia provides this service without charge to the schools or the students, the money to pay for these programs must be raised.

Contributions of any amount help to defray some of the costs.

THANK YOU.

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STATE MANDATED STANDARDS

Kindergarten (With prompting and support)

- Describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story does the specific illustration depict).
- Identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

Grade 1

- Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting or events.
- Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

Grade 2

- Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

Grade 3

- Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

Grade 4

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

Grade 5

- Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

Grade 6

- Describe how the plot of a particular story or drama unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details, provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

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- **Grade 7**

- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

- **Grade 8**

- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

THE CURRICULUM GUIDE

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART: *THE MAGIC FLUTE*

- Austrian composer who was born in Salzburg in 1756, and died in Vienna in 1791.
- Known as the “boy genius,” who started music lessons at age 3, and performing at age 5.
- Composed over 400 works including 41 symphonies, chamber music, concertos and operas (in both German and Italian styles).
- His life had many ups and downs, and when he died, the family was so poor that he was buried in a pauper’s unmarked grave.

Classroom Activities

- Read some of the books below.
- Have a discussion about magic, its influences and its influences on early societies.
- Have a discussion about how a silly story can be commentary on other more serious subjects – give modern day examples (ie cartoons making fun of real live situations).

Additional Resources

The Magic Flute; Kyra Teis, Illustrated by Peter Maloe, Star Bright Books, NY. © 2010
[<http://www.kyrateis.com/magicfluteteach.html>]

The Magic Flute; Anne Gatti; Cronicle Books; San Francisco; © 1997 (includes CD)

The Magic Flute; Margaret Greaves; Henry Holt & Company; NY; © 1989

The Magic Flute; W. A. Mozart; Curt-Rainer Books Franklin Watts Inc; NY; ©1970

Mozart’s Magic Fantasy (a CD); series by Classical Kids creator Susan Hammond, distributed commercially by New Sounds, 1990

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Brief Synopsis:

The story takes place in Egypt. Sarastro, the high priest of Isis, had Pamina abducted from her mother Astrifiamenti, and brought to his palace to learn the ways of virtue and righteousness. Astgrifiamenti, who is the Queen of the Night, represents the spirit of evil. As the story begins, the Queen is trying to figure out how to get her daughter back and punish Sarastro. Tamino, who is an Egyptian prince, is being chased by a serpent, and is rescued by the evil Queen's attendants. Because her attendants saved him, the Queen demands that Tamino rescue her daughter. In exchange for his successful rescue, Tamino is promised the Queen's daughter (Pamina) in marriage. He agrees. To aide and protect Tamino during the rescue, the Queen gives him a magical flute, and to his sidekick and mountain guide, Papageno (who really is a silly bird-catcher), she gives a set of magical bells.

Later in the story, after an attempt to save Pamina from the persecutions of a slave named Monostatos, Tamino, Papageno and Pamina are brought before Sarastro. Sarastro explains that he abducted Pamina from the evil queen only to save her for Tamino, as the couple was predestined by the gods to be together. To prove his worth for Pamina, Tamino is urged by Sarastro to go through various purification rights. Tamino agrees to undergo these rituals and sets out on his course. Meanwhile, the Queen of the Night has not given up her attempts to get her daughter back. She appears to Pamina in a dream, gives her daughter a dagger and orders her to kill Sarastro. Pamina does not do her mother's bidding and continues her faith in Sarastro. Both Tamino and Pamina remain faithful to their vows. After a final march through a burning lake to the temple (all to the sounds of the magic flute), and one last unsuccessful attempt by the evil Queen, all ends well. Sarastro allows the sun to shine, the evil spirits vanish, and Papageno found love and is married to Papagena. Tamino and Pamina are united as the reward for their fidelity. "Strength has triumphed, rewarding Beauty and Wisdom with an everlasting crown!"

PETER TCHAIKOVSKY & WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *ROMEO AND JULIET*

- Russian composer born in 1840 and died in 1893.
- Considered one of the greatest "romantic" (lush, beautiful melodies) and nationalistic (incorporated some of his native folk songs and harmonies in his music) composers.
- Famous for symphonies, concertos chamber music, music that tell stories including *Fantasy Overture on Romeo and Juliet*, and the ballets *The Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty* (used by Walt Disney in a very good full length animated film).
- The *Fantasy Overture on Romeo and Juliet* is one of Tchaikovsky's most romantic and popular works. It has a great sense of drama (just like the play), and the melodies are so enduring that they have even been used for pop tunes. The work went through many changes, and eventually three versions; the last of which is the one we know today.

Classroom Activities

The biggest challenge to the story of *Romeo and Juliet* is of course Shakespeare's (old) English. To get around this, I suggest that the students read updated translations similar to what is listed below.

- For the youngest children, perhaps you can first tell them the story, and then read sections of the translated versions to them.

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- For the older students, first read the translated versions. Then take sections of the original, and let the students do class readings.

Following is one of the most famous soliloquies in all of the Shakespeare's writings. Let the students first study it, and then ask them how they would change it to make it appropriate to their own situations.

Juliet is talking (she assumes) to herself, of her love for Romeo, who is of course a member of the family that is her family's sworn enemy who have fought for countless generations. For both families, this fighting has resulted in anguish, death and genuine despair. Romeo and Juliet met quite by accident, and now they are struggling with how to fulfill their love in spite of their families' fight.

*Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name,
Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.
Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.*

*Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
and for that name - which is no part of thee-
Take all myself.*

*What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part*

More Classroom Activities

From a specific discussion of how to make this speech relevant to individuals, generalize to the overall theme of the play and discuss fighting between individuals and groups, getting along with one another, etc

- Let the discussions center around "what ifs": What if instead of the names of the two feuding families, we changed them to other groups, gangs, religions, skin colors, places of origins, accents? Leonard Bernstein did this with *West Side Story*

Resource

Teachers.Net Lesson Exchange.#53. Themes in "**Romeo and Juliet**". Literature, level: Middle Posted by Kathy Schwanfelder (kschwan@connix.com). ... <http://www.teachers.net/lessons/posts/53.html>

Books

Favorite Tales from Shakespeare, Bernard Miles, Rand McNally & Company, NY ©1976

Tales from Shakespeare, Charles and Mary Lamb (New Children's Classics), Macmillan and Company, NY ©1950

Tales from Shakespeare, Tina Packer, Scholastic, Inc. NY ©2004

Shakespeare Stories, Leon Garfield, Schocken Books, NY ©1985

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(younger kids) *Romeo and Juliet*, retold by Charles and Mary Lamb, Franklin Watts, NY ©1971

Romeo and Juliet, retold by Leon Garfield (HBO animated tales series), Alfred A Knoph, NY ©1992

(older kids) *Romeo and Juliet TOGETHER (AND ALIVE!) AT LAST*, by Avi, Orchard Books (a division of Franklin Watts), NY ©1987

Brief Synopsis:

Romeo and Juliet is a story about two families (the Montagues and the Capulets) hating and fighting each other, and the consequences of those actions. The story takes place in Verona, Italy, where we find that Romeo from the Montague family has fallen in love with and secretly marries Juliet from the Capulet family. Of course their love was doomed from the start, and in fact in one scene, Romeo battles Juliet's cousin Tybalt and kills him in a duel. Romeo must leave the city, lest he be put to death. During that time, Juliet's parents insist that she marry Count Paris, not knowing that she and Romeo are already secretly married. Juliet agrees, thinking that she would fake her death with a special magical potion to get out of the marriage, while she waits for her Romeo to return. She takes the potion, after which Romeo return, finding what he thinks is his dead Juliet. He is in such despair that he kills himself. Juliet eventually wakes up to find her dead Romeo, after which she also kills herself.

PAUL DUCAS & JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE: *THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE*

- French composer who was born in Paris in 1865 and died there in 1935.
- His most famous work, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, was based on a poem by the great German poet, Johann Wolfgang Goethe.
- His music tended to give musical impressions to help tell the story.
- *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* is included in the excellent classic animated film, "Fantasia," by Walt Disney starring Mickey Mouse.

A translated condensation of the Goethe poem, in the form of a "dramatic monologue," written by R. A. Barnet is in the synopsis section at the end of this guide.

Classroom Activities

- Study and then read the poem aloud in a dramatic fashion.
- Discuss the implications of not analyzing a situation and acting without thinking of potential consequences.
- Create an updated version of the poem, both as a story and as a poem.

Books on the story of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*:

The Sorcerer's Apprentice and Other Stories by John Hosier, Henry Z. Wack, Inc. New York, © 1961
(This is a good source for other stories that have famous music attached to them)

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The Sorcerer's Apprentice by Marianna Mayer, Bantam Skylark, New York, © 1989 (longer, more advanced reading version)

The Sorcerer's Apprentice by Inga Moore, Macmillan Publishing Company, © 1989

The Sorcerer's Apprentice by Ted Dewan, A Double Day Book for Young Readers, New York © 1997 (updated version)

Fantasia, directed by Samuel Armstrong, et al. Walt Disney Productions, 1940 (DVD)

Following is a condensation of the Goethe poem, in the form of a “dramatic monologue,” written by R. A. Barnet:

They call him “the Great Magician!” “Great?” Bah!
I too am great - as great as he, for I, too, can call up imps and sprites to do whate'er I bid!
Now will I call some uncanny sprite to fetch me water from the pool.
The broom! Come, broom! Thou worn-out battered thing --
Be a sprite! Stand up! Tis well! Two elfin legs now I give thee!
Good! What's more, a head! There! Now broom!
Take thou a pail and fetch me water from the pool!
Go quickly and draw water for me, for me, your Master!
Bravo! Thou faithful broom! Thou bustling broom!
What? Back again? And -- again?
And __ yet again? Stop!
Stop, Stop! I say I Command!
Thou diabolic damned thing, stop!
Be a broom once more! What? Wilt not obey?
O thou cub of hell!
Then, Will I with my hatchet cut thee in two!
There!...
Ye demons! Now thou art two and double thy hellish work!
The flood increases -- the water engulfs me -- Master!
Master of Masters! Come! I am a poor helpless creature, the sprite I called will not obey!
The master came and said:
“Broom! To thy corner as of old!

JOSEPH BOLOGNE, CHEVALIER DE SAINT-GEORGES: L'AMANT ANONYME (ANONYMOUS LOVER)

- Born on the Caribbean Island of Guadeloupe in 1745 and died in France in 1799.
- His father was a white wealthy planter, George de Bologne and his mother was his father's mistress and slave, Nanon,
- In 1753 the family moved to France, where the young Joseph was sent to a boarding school and excelled at fencing and horseback riding.
- Although little is known about his music education, he became a highly regarded and very famous solo violinist and composer.

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- He was the concert master of one of the leading French orchestras of his day and was responsible for commissioning and leading the premiere performances of Franz Joseph Haydn's six Paris Symphonies.
- Joseph is generally regarded as the first classical composer of African descent.
- He was a very popular soloist and composer, and created two symphonies, six comic operas, several chamber music works, and several violin concertos that he often performed.

Brief Synopsis:

The story for this two-act comic opera revolves around a wealthy young widow, Leontine, who after a disastrous marriage insists that she no longer had any interest in love and marriage. As time passes, she started receiving gifts and love letters from an anonymous admirer, who as it turns out was actually her good friend Valcour. Because he was born into a lower class, Valcour was afraid that Leontine could never love him, so he hid his feelings and tells her that he also was not interested in love or marriage. Being shy and afraid, he tried to interest Leontine through some of their mutual friends, and at the same time, Leontine became intrigued and was trying to figure out who the Anonymous Lover was. Eventually, everything came out into the open, and they found love and happiness together.

Classroom activities

- Imagine and create situations that can arise from secrets – can they be harmful or beneficial?
- For older students, create and stories that are based on secrets.

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK: *EVENING PRAYER FROM HANSEL AND GRETEL*

- Engelbert Humperdinck was born in Siegburg on the Rhine in 1854 and died in Neustrelitz in 1921.
- His most famous and performed work is the opera, *Hansel and Gretel*.
- The opera was based on the Grimm's fairy tale – a short story that the composer "filled out" so to make it long enough for a full-fledged opera.
- The prayer heard in this program, is the piece that made Humperdinck famous.
- He is not related to the pop star, who simply liked the name and used it as a "stage name."

Additional resources

Hansel and Gretel; Brothers Grimm; Dial Books for Young Readers; NY; © 1980

Hansel and Gretel; (retold) James Marshall; Dial Books for Young Readers; NY; © 1990

Hansel and Gretel; Dom DeLuise; H & G Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers; NY; © 1997

Brief Synopsis:

The opera is based on the well-known story by Grimm. It begins with the children at home playing and chatting instead of doing their assigned knitting and making brooms. The family was poor, and so when

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the mother returned home, and accidentally spilt the milk that was meant for dinner, she became angry and sent the children into the forest to pick strawberries for their meal. Later, when the father returned, he became upset to learn that his children were sent alone into the forest. He was afraid that the witch who lived in the forest would entice his children with her gingerbread house, catch them, and then bake and eat them.

The second act is devoted to the children in the forest. They became lost and afraid, and finally the sleep fairy approached, sprinkled sand in their eyes, after which they fell asleep. The third act describes the children first finding, then admiring and tasting the witch's house, which was made of cakes and creams. On one side of the house was a cage, and on the other side an oven. Around the house was a fence made up of many gingerbread men. Little did the children realize that the evil witch resided in the house, and that the sweets were a lure to entice them. As the children began nibbling on the house, the witch appeared and captured them. She then tossed them into the cage. After several songs, the witch was about to bake Gretel. As she bent over and checked the oven, the children pushed her into the fire. While the witch was baking, the children rushed into the house and piled fruits, nuts and sweets into their pockets. Meanwhile, the oven fell apart, and crowds of children swarmed around Hansel and Gretel. The children were actually held captive as the gingerbread fence. As the scene ends, Hansel and Gretel's parents appeared. There is much joy and singing, as the opera and story end on a happy note.

MANUEL PONCE: MEXICANA BALADA

- Manuel Ponce, one of Mexico's great romantic composers, was born in Zacatecas in 1882, and died in 1948.
- As a student, he showed great promise, and was sent to Italy, Germany and Paris to study.
- He had strong interest in folk, popular and classical music, and was one of a few composers who could bridge all three genres.
- Mr. Ponce composed for all musical genres but was particularly well known for songs and works for guitar.
- The *Balada Mexicana* is a work for solo piano that starts by introducing one of the two folk songs used in the composition, and then evolves into big, romantic tour de force, which is similar in scope to the popular works of the famous Russian composer, Sergei Rachmaninoff.
- Although this music does not specifically tell a story like the other works in this program, it does paint a picture of life in Mexico by using familiar folk music and composing in a familiar and approachable style.

FRANZ VON SUPPE: LIGHT CAVALRY OVERTURE

- Austrian composer and conductor who was born in 1819 and died in 1895.
- Primarily composed lighter stage works – 30 operettas and 180 farce and ballets.
- Many of his operetta overtures are played separately and used as symphony concert overtures.
- Some of the overtures have also been used as background music for cartoons and movies.

This piece is the program's "marching out music," and is played as the students are leaving the auditorium to go back to class.

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JAY FISHMAN & BERNIE FISHMAN: *CINDERELLA UPDATED!*

JAY FISHMAN

- Is a conductor and composer who was born and raised on the north side of Minneapolis in 1947, and is still actively composing and conducting.
- As a composer and arranger, he has 350 published works in his catalog.
- For the past 35 years, he has been conducting the Minnesota Sinfonia.
- The Sinfonia works with up to 20 public schools and 10,000 children every year.
- Over his conducting career of 50+ years, Jay has conducted approximately 1750 performances.

BERNIE FISHMAN

- Bernie was born in 1982 and is a trained classical pianist who used his skills to become a DJ.
- He is also a skillful and clever author, who has written most of the stories for The Sinfonia's Music in the Schools.
- Owns a vinyl record store in San Diego, California, that was highlighted in the New York Times as one of the interesting places to visit while in San Diego.

Cinderella is a story that is claimed by nearly every culture and exists in over 300 different versions. Most of us are familiar with the classic version by French author, Charles Perrault. However, there are many other varieties. Some are quite ghastly, while others have been changed substantially to fit the norms of different cultures. Bernie created an updated and fun version especially for the Minnesota Sinfonia, and his father Jay composed the accompanying music.

Classroom activities:

Discuss the stepsisters bullying of Cinderella – is that relevant today???

- Discussions can center on the similarities and the differences between the different versions of Cinderella.
- Compare and contrast the French (standard), Korean, Irish, Algonquian and Egyptian stories.
- Have the students make up their own Cinderella story - a story that would be appropriate for them.

Suggested readings:

Cinderella, Marcia Brown, Charles Scribner's Sons, NY ©1954

Cinderella, Barbara Karlin, Little Brown and Company, Boston, ©1989

Cinderella (La Cenerentola) - Rossini's version for his opera, Alan Blyth, John MacRae Books, Franklin Watts Inc., ©1981

Cinderella, (from the opera by Gioacchino Rossini), Beni Montresor, Alfred A Knopf, NY ©1965

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Cinder-ely, Frances Minters, Viking Press (Penguin group), NY ©1994

The Korean Cinderella, Shirley Climo, Harper Collins Publishers, ©1993

The Egyptian Cinderella, Shirley Climo, Thomas Crowell, NY ©1989

The Irish Cinderlady, Shirley Climo, Harper Collins Publishers©1996

The Rough Girl, Rafe Masrtin, Penguin Group ©1998

Bernie Fishman's version of **Cinderella Updated!**

Once upon a time, which was actually a couple of weeks ago; a young girl named Cindy was not living very happily. Her dad had recently remarried, and this is where problems started happening for Cindy. Her stepmom had two daughters and 6 cats, all of whom despised Cindy and treated her like their slave. The cats were especially bad, when Cindy walked around the house they would hide in the little nooks and crannies and when she walked by, they would jump out and claw at her ankles. She had to do all the chores in the house, which included scrubbing toilets, doing the dishes, cleaning the cat litter boxes, and cooking all the food. She was not enjoying herself.

Cindy was a beautiful young woman, but most of the people around her did not notice. Her stepmom spent all the family's money on things for her own daughters and their cats, dressing them up in extravagant gowns, and buying specialty items for each individual cat. Cindy's stepsisters were especially obnoxious and were always spending extravagant money on clothes and make-up. They both wanted to be famous singers; the problem was that they never sang. They spent so much time talking about singing and buying the latest styles of clothing that they never developed their voices to sound good.

Cindy wanted to live a normal life but had no time because of her chore duties. To pass the time and make the most of her horrible situation, Cindy would sing. She had a beautiful voice, but her stepsisters couldn't hear it because they were so busy jabbering about their own lives.

One day the stepsisters heard about a big-time singing audition with Dirk "Burgertime" Henderson, one of the hottest music producers in the business. They didn't know why anyone would want a name like Burgertime, but he had a proven track record of serving up the hits, so they weren't going to argue. They talked for days about what clothing they would wear for the audition, and what make-up scheme would match best. They spent so much time on this that they didn't even bother to figure out what kind of song they were going to sing. Meanwhile, Cindy listened to their chatter and found herself getting more and more annoyed with it. She just had to ignore it, as there was no way she would be allowed to go to the audition.

Finally, the big day came. Cindy had resigned herself to a weekend of chores when suddenly her cell phone beeped. The only text messages she ever got were from her stepsisters telling her which clothes they needed washed, so she obviously wasn't that excited when she picked up the phone. The message was from an unknown number. It read: "Fairy text messenger- to accept incoming text please hit 1 and you will be charged \$0.99."

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“Oh, no I couldn’t do that!” she exclaimed, and went back to the dishes. A few minutes later, another beep came out of her phone. This time, the message simply read “Fairy text messenger, do you want to sing for Burgertime or not! You drive a tough bargain, missy, but FINE. No charge.”

Another text came beeping in. “If you want to sing, tomorrow at 6:00, go to 523 Lilly St, suite 024, and tell them Bongo sent you. They’ll let you sing. Oh, and don’t stay past 9:00, or your throat will swell up and your voice will sound like a bullfrog.”

Cindy was so tired of washing dishes that trusting a stranger named Bongo who mysteriously texted her calling himself a “fairy text messenger” seemed like a reasonable idea. He also seemed like kind of a sleazy character, trying to charge her \$0.99. And she SERIOUSLY doubted his ability to turn her throat and vocal cords into a frog...but other than that he sounded completely fine.

The next day, Cindy busied herself with her chores as usual, but anyone could tell she was shaking with excitement. She didn’t know if she could trust Bongo, but she was going to give it a try. Cindy snuck away from her chores and took a taxi downtown to the address Bongo had given her. She arrived right on time, but was greeted by a snooty receptionist, who directed Cindy to a chair in the waiting room. She waited...and waited...and waited.... until finally at 8:53 she was called back to meet Burgertime. She didn’t really believe that her voice would sound like a bullfrog at 9:00, but she did wonder slightly. They talked for a minute, Burgertime, for his ridiculous name, actually seemed like a pretty nice guy. Cindy got ready to sing. After a slight moment of hesitation, she burst forth in glorious song. It was amazing! And then, she felt a lump in her throat. “Oh, no!” The next note she sang warbled a little bit, and then she coughed. “Do you need some water?” Burgertime asked? Cindy, not wanting to talk, held up a finger for a moment, then, humiliated, ran out of the room. In her haste, one of her shoes fell off. “Wait, wait!” Burgertime ran after her, but to no avail. Cindy ran out of the building and ran halfway home before she slowed to a walk. Sweaty, disheveled, and embarrassed, Cindy got home, and nobody had even noticed she was gone. The only thing waiting for her were more dishes.

The next day, there was a knock at the door. Burgertime, so impressed with Cindy’s performance the day before, had ordered his lowly interns to go to every singer’s house that they could find with the shoe that Cindy had left, and to try to find the match. They had come to Cindy’s house because the stepsisters had auditioned, unfortunately for them they failed to make any sort of lasting impact with Burgertime. When the intern asked them if any of them had lost a shoe, the stepsisters both immediately lied and said that yes, they did lose one, and the mystery singer was one of them. The first sister took the shoe the intern offered and tried to slide it onto her foot, but to her dismay found that she could not fit it over her toe ring on her left pinky toe, and she knew she could also not get the toe ring off, as her toe had grown bigger since she had put it on. She gave up, and passed the shoe to her sister, silently wishing her sister would fail as well. The second stepsister tried to slide the shoe on, and it seemed to be going well until she tried to put her foot down. She had a large pimple on her back ankle; so large in fact that it prevented her from sliding her foot in. She tried and tried, but to no avail. Giving up, the interns were about to leave when Cindy walked into the room.

“Can I try?” she asked. The stepsisters started laughing wildly, but the interns saw nothing to lose and passed Cindy the shoe. She took off her loafers and slid her foot effortlessly into the shoe. It was a perfect fit. She then reached into her apron pocket and pulled out the other shoe and slid it on to

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her other foot. The interns, thrilled that they had found the singer, immediately got on their phones to call Burgertime and tell him the good news. The stepsisters had fallen quiet and were sitting on the couch sullenly staring at Cindy, wondering how she could of have sung for Burgertime. Cindy, because of her good nature, immediately forgave them for the bad way they had treated her and vowed that she would never treat anyone the way she had been treated. Because this story only happened a couple of weeks ago, she's not a star yet, as those things take a long time. But she doesn't have to do everybody's dishes at home anymore, and her stepsisters didn't make fun of her either. The six cats they had, still hated her though, and scratched her every chance they got.