Minnesota Sinfonia Music in the Schools Legacy Curriculum Guide

Music Tells a Story

Dear Teachers,

I am very excited to work with you and present ***Music Tells a Story***, the Minnesota Sinfonia's Music in the Schools offering for 2024.

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 relate the music we will play to stories your students will read and study as part of their classroom literature assignments. This curriculum guide was created using Minnesota state academic literature standards for grade levels K-8 and includes age-appropriate activities to help meet those standards.

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*
- Jose Nunes Garcia - *Overture*
- Paul Schulz - *I'm Comin' Home*
- Jay Fishman and Bernie Fishman - *Cinderella Updated!*
- Franz von Suppe - *Light Cavalry Overture*

Songs for students to sing with Sinfonia on concert day:

- *O Maiden* from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*
- *Papageno's* [bird catcher's song] from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

Music for orchestra students to play with Sinfonia on concert day:

- *March of the Penguins*

Enclosed in this packet are copies of sheet music for the two Mozart songs student choirs will sing and perform with the Sinfonia on concert day, along with a piano accompaniment for teachers to use to help prepare their students for the performances. For the schools without choirs, students in one or two grades can/should serve as the choir. Also included are sheet music copies of the conductor's score and parts for *March of the Penguins* – a work for elementary-aged string students to perform with Sinfonia on concert day.

Sinfonia will play excerpts from Mozart's *Overture to the Magic Flute,* Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet,* Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice,* and complete renditions of the other works on this program. YouTube links for full performances of the works to be performed are listed with the composers' bios. Unfortunately, there are no recordings for *Overture, I'm Comin Home*, *Cinderella Updated!* and *March of the Penguins*.

It is imperative that your students hear this music played in class <u>every day</u>, so they are familiar with it when the Sinfonia comes to your school.

A word of caution. *Some YouTube links have advertisements following the performances, so try to stop the video before they appear. I hope your students enjoy our program and that it will be beneficial for their classroom activities*.

Because we have included short overviews of the various stories, this guide is a bit longer than our norm. Please use them in your classrooms with your students.

The music selections include overtures by three different composers who were composing during the same time frame - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart who was white, Joseph Bologne (Le chevalier de Saint-Georges) who was of black African descent, and Afro-Brazilian composer, Jose Nunes Garcia. Comparing the music (similar styles, sounds, etc.) can lead to some very interesting and illuminating discussions about race, typecasting and expectations. Hopefully when all is said and done, the takeaway will be that music is universal, and the composers' color and/or ethnicity are irrelevant.

I hope your students enjoy our program and that it will be beneficial for their classroom activities.

Jay Fishman,
Minnesota Sinfonia Artistic Director

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).

Choir/Orchestra Rehearsal

- **Instead of meeting their musician in their classroom, c**hoir 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, eight 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.

During the Pandemic when Music in the Schools could not be taken into the public schools, Sinfonia musicians created short “how to” instructional videos which for wind instruments explain basics such as proper embouchures, how to hold the instruments, etc. and for string instruments, use of the bow, hand position, holding the instruments, etc. Please make sure to make these available to your students.

See Folder: **Instructional Videos from the Musicians of the Minnesota Sinfonia**

Sinfonia Needs for the Concert Day

- 30 straight back (folding chairs)
- 1 speaking pa system for Mr. Fishman to talk to the students
- Choral risers (optional) for the student choirs
- 22 music stands for the Sinfonia’s use (if available)

MN STATE MANDATED LITERATURE STANDARDS:

Kindergarten (with prompting and support) **Standards:**

- 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 Standards:

- 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 Standards:

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 Standards:

- 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 Standards:

- 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 Standards:

- 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 Standards:

- 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.

Grade 7 Standards:

- 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 Standards:

- 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.

Composers, their Music and Classroom Activities

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)- Overture to *The Magic Flute* [excerpt]

YouTube link: [complete performance]
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2Gedb05J5M&t=72s

- Austrian composer who was born in Salzburg and died in Vienna.
- Known as the "boy genius," who started music lessons at age 3, and performing at age 5.
- Composed over 600 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.
- Discuss magic, its current influences and its past influences on early societies.
- Discuss how a silly story can be commentary on other more serious subjects – give modern day examples (i.e. 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; Cornicle 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

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. Astrifiamenti, 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 Fantasy Overture* [edited arrangement]

YouTube link: [full orchestra performance]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6qZUCi7ToQ

- Peter Tchaikovsky was a 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* ***Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*** 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 survived; 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 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.
- 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 and 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.

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

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
- (For 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
- *Romeo and Juliet TOGETHER (AND ALIVE!) AT LAST,* (for older students) 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 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 Dukas and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe - *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* [edited arrangement]

YouTube link: [full orchestra performance]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axHYJ41yhDk

- Paul Dukas was a 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

• ***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)

• ***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 thou 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 (1745-1799) - *L'Amant Anonyme* (The Anonymous Lover)

[uses the same music as the first movement of Symphony no.1]

YouTube link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBqzFbgDsoA

- 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.
- 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 actuality 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 (1854-1921) – Evening Prayer from *Hansel and Gretel*

YouTube: **[2 versions – choral and vocal duet]**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEU0QzjA0wY

- Engelbert Humperdinck was born in Siegburg, Germany and died in Neustrelitz, Germany.
- 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. Act One 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 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 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.

Jose Nunes Garcia (1767-1830) – *Overture*
[No YouTube link]

- Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and was the son of two bi-racial parents.
- His grandmother was a slave.
- He showed interest and promise in music, and despite the prejudice caused by his bi-racial background, his family was able to secure music lessons.
- After passing the prerequisites of proof of Catholic faith, and being free from "any color defect," (he had to request this relief, and it was granted), he began his quest to become a priest.
- He was well versed in the classical music traditions of Mozart and Haydn which had a profound influence on his musical output.
- Of his known output, approximately 240 of his compositions survive, with another 170 known to have been lost.
- Jose Nunes Garcia is now recognized as one of the leading "classical composers" of his day.

Franz von Suppe (1819-1895) – *Light Cavalry Overture*

YouTube link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aF5nhMIyeqI

- Austrian composer and conductor.
- Primarily composed lighter stage works – 30 operettas and 180 farces 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.

Jay and Bernard (Bernie) Fishman - Cinderella *Updated!*

Jay Fishman (b.1947)

- Conductor, composer and arranger was born and raised on the north side of Minneapolis.
- Founded the Minnesota Sinfonia in 1989 with the expressed purpose of serving audiences with limited financial means and inner-city children.
- Created the Sinfonia's Music in the Schools that works with 18-22 public schools and up to 10,000 children every year.
- Has been conducting in the region for 48 years and has conducted approximately 1,800 performances.
- As a composer and arranger, he has published over 330 works which include original compositions and arrangements for small orchestra.

Bernard (Bernie) Fishman (b.1982)

- Bernie 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 of which 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 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 Knoph, NY ©1965
- *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

Cinderella Updated! by Bernie Fishman

Once upon a time. Actually, it was just a few weeks ago, a young girl named Cindy was not very happy. Her mother had died several years ago, and her new stepmom had two daughters and 6 cats, all who despised her. Cindy was not treated very well. She was forced to wash all of the dishes, do all of the laundry, scrub the floors, cook everyone's food, and even clean out the cat litter boxes. The cats were especially bad. When Cindy walked around the house, they would hide behind their litter boxes. and then they would jump out and claw viciously at her ankles.

To pass the time and make the most of her horrible situation, Cindy would sing. She had a beautiful voice, which her stepsisters never heard because they were too busy jabbering about their own lives.

Cindy's stepsisters dreamed of becoming singing stars, but instead of practicing, they spent all their time gossiping and shopping for clothes and makeup. One day, they 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 served up the hits, so they weren't going to argue.

For days, the stepsisters talked about what outfits they were going to wear but never spent any time practicing. Cindy listened to their chatter and started getting more and more irritated. There was no way she would ever be allowed to go to the audition, but she knew in her heart that she could sing circles around her stepsisters.

Finally, the big day came, and Cindy resigned herself to another day of chores. Suddenly, her cell phone beeped. There was a text message waiting for her. "This is Bongo, your Fairy Text Messenger. If you want to sing (and get out of your crummy situation), go to 523 Wilson Boulevard, suite 024 at 6pm on Thursday, and tell them Bongo sent you… Oh, and don't stay past 9:00pm, or your voice will croak like a bullfrog."

Cindy was so tired from washing dishes that having someone named Bongo mysteriously text her, calling himself a "fairy text messenger" seemed like a reasonable idea, and although she SERIOUSLY doubted his ability to make her voice sound like a frog, she thought she'd give it a try.

Finally, the big day came. Cindy was so excited that she didn't pay attention while she was washing the dishes. She had to wash them twice because just when she was about to finish, she

realized she had put pancake syrup instead of soap on the sponge! This was horrible. Earlier in the day she ruined her breakfast by doing just the opposite; she put dish soap on her pancakes!

Finally, it was time to leave. She quietly snuck out of the house and took a taxi downtown. It was a scary ride. The cab driver drove like a maniac! But she arrived right on time, and was greeted by a snooty receptionist, who directed her to a chair in the waiting room. She waited .... and waited... and waited some more. .... until finally at 8:53 she was called back to meet Burgertime.

She was so nervous, she forgot all about the 9:00o'clock deadline. She and Burgertime talked for a bit, and then after a moment's hesitation, she burst forth in glorious song. Cindy was amazing! Just then the clock on the wall started to signal that it was nine o'clock.

Cindy felt a lump in her throat; her next note warbled a bit. "Oh, no!" she thought, and then coughed. "Do you need some water?" Burgertime asked. Cindy, not wanting to talk and take a chance of her voice really turning into a bullfrog's croak, held up a finger, and then, humiliated, ran out of the room.

"Wait, wait!" Burgertime yelled and ran after her. But to no avail. Cindy quickly scrambled out of the building and ran all the way home. In her haste, one of her shoes fell off. When she arrived there, she was sweaty, disheveled, and embarrassed. Even worse, nobody even noticed she was gone. The only thing waiting to greet her were more dirty dishes.

Burgertime, so impressed with Cindy's performance, the next day ordered his lowly interns to go to every singer's house with the shoe that Cindy lost and find the singer whose foot was a perfect match. They ran from house to house... knocking on doors....and knocked.. and knocked and searched some more. Until finally they came to Cindy's house. They asked the stepsisters if either of them was the singer who had lost a shoe. "Yes, yes," they answered. Little did they know that Bongo, the Fairy Text messenger was listening outside the open window and was not going to let the stepsisters foil his plan. The first sister took the shoe and tried to slide it onto her foot. To her dismay, she could not fit it over the toe ring on her left pinky toe. She tried to get the ring off, but it was stuck on! Seeing this, the interns moved onto the next sister. She started to put the shoe on and tried to put her heel down. She pushed and pushed, but the back of her foot ballooned so big that the shoe would not go on.

Giving up, the interns were about to leave when Cindy walked into the room. "May I try?" she asked. The stepsisters started laughing hysterically. The interns saw that there was nothing to lose and passed the shoe to Cindy. Effortlessly, she slid her foot into the shoe. It was a perfect fit. She then reached into her apron pocket and pulled out the other shoe and put it on her other foot.

The stepsisters were shocked and sat sullenly on the couch staring at Cindy. With all the chores they made her do, they wondered how Cindy could have possibly had time to sing for Burgertime. But Cindy, because of her good nature, immediately forgave them for how badly they had treated her. She vowed then and there that she would never treat anyone the way she had been treated. Burgertime was thrilled when his interns told him the good news. He was so happy that he

promised to make Cindy the next singing sensation. Things started to get better at home for Cindy too. She doesn't have to do all the housework alone anymore, and her stepsisters no longer made fun of her. Even the cats changed their ways. They still surprise Cindy, but now, instead of clawing her ankles, they simply come out and nibble a little, as cats like to do.

Cindy never had a chance to meet her Fairy Text Messenger, Bongo to thank him for all of his help. And to this day, he still remains a mystery. Because this all happened just a few weeks ago, Cindy's not a star yet, as these things take a long time. But don't be surprised if someday soon, you hear her first big hit!

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