

A Laundry List of Rossini *Quotes* and Facts

Gathered by Jill Leahy



1813

1816

1817

1817

1829

Give me a laundry list and I'll set it to music.

Rossini was 18 years old when he wrote his first opera in Venice.

Answer critics with silence and indifference. It works better, I assure you, than anger and argument.

Though his overtures are famous, Rossini didn't compose a new one for every opera.

Wait until the evening before opening night. Nothing primes inspiration more than necessity, whether it be the presence of a copyist waiting for your work or the prodding of an impresario tearing his hair. I wrote the overture of La gazza ladra the day before the opening night under the roof of the Scala Theatre, where I had been imprisoned by the director and secured by four stagehands. For the Barbiere, I did better: I did not even compose an overture, I just took one already destined for an opera called Elisabetta. Public was very pleased.

Rossini was nicknamed "Signor Crescendo" because of his characteristic habit of scoring a long, steady increase of sound over an *ostinato* figure. Music that began as a whisper rose to a monstrous roar.

Every kind of music is good, except the boring kind.

When he was 37, Rossini stopped writing music, except for a few works. For the rest of his years, he spent his time cooking and eating.

Eating, loving, singing, and digesting are, in truth, the four acts of the comic opera known as life, and they pass like bubbles of a bottle of champagne. Whoever lets them break without having enjoyed them is a complete fool.

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PITTSBURGH OPERA
EDUCATION

La cenerentola
(Cinderella)

Music by Gioachino Rossini • Libretto by Jacopo Ferretti

Study Guide to the Opera

Afrikaans	Aspoestertjie
Albanian	Hirushja
Arabic	سندريلا
Bulgarian	Пепеляшка
Catalan	Ventafocs
Chinese	灰姑娘
Croatian	Pepeljuga
Czech	Popelka
Danish	Askepot
Dutch	Assepoester
English	Cinderella
Estonian	Tuhkatriinu
Filipino	Sinderela
Finnish	Tuhkimo
French	Cendrillon
Georgian	კნძრელა
German	Aschenputtel
Greek	Σταχτοπούτα
Hebrew	סנדרלה/לכלוכית
Hindi	सिंडरैला
Hungarian	Hamupipőke
Indonesian	Cinderella
Irish	Cinderella
Icelandic	Öskubuska
Italian	Cenerentola
Japanese	シンデレラ
Korean	신데렐라
Latvian	Pelnrušķīte
Lithuanian	Pelenė
Macedonian	Пепелашка
Malay	Cinderella
Norwegian	Askepott
Persian	سیندرلا
Polish	Kopciuszek
Portuguese	Cinderela
Romanian	Cenușăreasă
Russian	Золушка
Serbian	Пепељуга
Slovak	Popoluška
Slovenian	Pepelka
Soqotri	Meħazelo
Swedish	Askungen
Spanish	Cenicienta
Thai	ซินเดอเรลล่า
Turkish	Külkedisi
Vietnamese	Công Chúa Lọ Lem
Ukrainian	Попелюшка

And They Lived Happily
Ever After . . .

by Jill Leahy



Oliver Herford illustrated the fairy godmother inspired by the Perrault version.

The story of Cinderella is so well known that it appears in the folklore of many cultures around the world: Asian, Indian, North and South American, Native American, and European. Although scholars can't agree on an exact number, there may be 340 to 3000 different versions of this story in the world today! While each culture spins the tale in its own unique way, the common theme remains: a

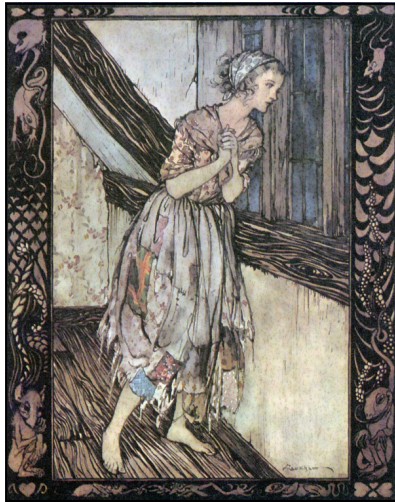
kind young woman is oppressed by her step-family, only to triumph in the end through her goodness—with the help of a magical creature and frequently including a matching article of clothing.

The earliest recorded version of the Cinderella tale comes from China and was written down by Tuan Ch'eng-shih in the middle of the 9th century. The heroine, Yeh-shen, is helped by a magical fish, and a golden shoe leads the prince to her.

In 1697, the Frenchman Charles Perrault wrote a version of the Cinderella tale that he called *Cendrillon, ou La petite Pantoufle de Verre* (*Cinderella, or The little glass slipper*). In his tale, he introduced the pumpkin carriage, the animals that are turned into footman, and the glass slipper.

Jacopo Ferretti, the librettist for Rossini's opera *La cenerentola*, used Perrault's version of the fairy tale for his inspiration. However, in order to fit the restrictions of the stage and the sensibilities of the audiences of his day, he omitted references to the fairy godmother and the "wicked" stepmother.

Walt Disney also used Perrault's version of the fairy tale for his animated musical film in 1950. Disney's *Cinderella* is arguably the most well-known film adaptation of the *Cendrillon* fairy tale, although 27 movies were based on the Cinderella storyline between 1899 and 2004. The common threads through every telling of the story? In each “rags to riches” story, her true nature and worth are rewarded and they all live happily ever after.



Cinderella at the Window by Arthur Rackham

La cenerentola Synopsis

ACT I. **The fairy-tale past.** In the rundown castle of Don Magnifico, his daughters Clorinda and Tisbe are in the middle of one of their usual arguments. Their stepsister Angelina, called Cenerentola, who serves as the family maid, sings her favorite song about a king who married a common girl (**Una volta c'era un re**). There is a knock on the door and Alidoro, tutor to the prince Don Ramiro, enters, dressed as a beggar. The stepsisters want to send him away, but Cenerentola gives him bread and coffee. Courtiers arrive to announce that Ramiro will soon pay a visit: he is looking for the most beautiful girl in the land and will hold a ball to choose his bride. Magnifico hopes that it will be one of the stepsisters: marriage to a wealthy man is the only way to save the family fortune (**Miei rampolli femminini**). When the room is empty, Ramiro enters alone, dressed in his servant's clothes so he can freely observe the

prospective brides. Alidoro has told him that there is a girl in the house worthy to be a princess, and Ramiro is determined to find out who she is. Cenerentola returns and is startled by the presence of a stranger. The two are immediately attracted to each other (**Duet: Un soave non so che**). He asks her who she is, and Cenerentola stammers a confused explanation, then runs away. Finally, the "prince" arrives—in fact Ramiro's valet, Dandini, in disguise (**Come un'ape ne'giorni d'aprile**). To Ramiro's amusement, Magnifico, Clorinda, and Tisbe fall over themselves flattering this prince, who invites them to the ball. Cenerentola asks to be taken along but Magnifico refuses. Ramiro notes how badly Cenerentola is treated. Alidoro reenters with information that there is a third daughter in the house but Magnifico claims she has died. Left alone with Cenerentola, Alidoro tells her he will take her to the ball and explains that God will reward her good heart (**Là del ciel nell'arcano profondo**).

At Ramiro's country house, Dandini shares with the prince his negative opinion of the two sisters (**Zitto zitto, piano piano**). But both men are confused, since Alidoro has spoken well of one of Magnifico's daughters. Clorinda and Tisbe appear again, having followed Dandini, who still poses as the prince. When he offers Ramiro as a husband to the sister the prince does not marry, they are outraged at the idea of marrying a servant. Alidoro enters with a beautiful unknown lady who strangely resembles Cenerentola. Unable to make sense of the situation, they all sit down to supper, feeling as if they are in a dream (**Signor, Altezza è in tavola**).

Intermission

ACT II. Magnifico fears that the arrival of the stranger could ruin his daughters' chances to marry the prince. Cenerentola, tired of being pursued by Dandini, tells him that she is in love with his servant. Overhearing this, Ramiro is overjoyed and steps forward. Cenerentola, however, tells him that she will return home and doesn't want him to follow her. If he really cares for her, she says, he will find her. The prince resolves to win the mysterious girl (**Sì, ritrovarla io giuro**). Meanwhile, Magnifico, who still thinks that Dandini is the prince, confronts him, insisting that he decide which of his daughters he will marry. Dandini first advises him to be patient, then reveals that he is in fact the prince's servant (**Duet: Un segreto d'importanza**). Magnifico is furious.

Magnifico and the sisters return home in a bad mood and order Cenerentola, again in rags, to prepare supper. During a thunderstorm (**Temporale**), Ramiro's carriage breaks down in front of Magnifico's castle and the prince takes refuge inside. Cenerentola and Ramiro recognize each other as the various parties comment on the situation (**Sextet: Siete voi?**). When Ramiro threatens Magnifico and his daughters who are unwilling to accept defeat, Cenerentola asks him to forgive them.

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

Adapted from *The Metropolitan Opera Guild*

Characters of the Opera

Angelina (Cenerentola or Cinderella)

contralto

[ahn-jeh-LEE-nah]

[chen-eh-RENT-toh-lah]

Stepdaughter of Don Magnifico, who treats her like a maid.

Don Magnifico

bass

[dohn mah-NYEE-fee-koh]

Baron of Monte Fiascone, father of Tisbe and Clorinda, stepfather of Angelina. He forbids Angelina from attending the ball and announces that his third daughter is dead.

Don Ramiro

[dohn rah-MEE-roh]

tenor

Prince of Salerno. In search of a wife, he exchanges outfits with his valet, Dandini, in order to find true love with someone who loves him for the person he is, and not his royal status.

Dandini

[dahn-DEE-nee]

baritone

Don Ramiro's valet. Dandini swaps clothes with Don Ramiro, disguising himself as a prince, while Ramiro searches for love, dressed as the valet.

Clorinda

[kloh-REEN-dah]

soprano

Tisbe

[TEEZ-beh]

mezzo-soprano

Sisters who are Don Magnifico's daughters and Angelina's "Ugly Stepsisters". Dandini describes them as arrogant and simple-minded.

Alidoro

[ah-lee-DOH-roh]

bass

Don Ramiro's tutor. Disguised as a beggar, Don Magnifico and his daughters dismiss him, yet Angelina kindly feeds him. He helps her attend the ball.

Cavaliers of the Prince

Rossini: Great Composer and Great Gourmand

by Jill Leahy

Gioachino Antonio Rossini (29 February 1792 – 13 November 1868) was born into a family of musicians—his father played the trumpet and his mother was a soprano. Rossini was fortunate to live at a time when great composers, such as Haydn, Beethoven, and Wagner, were creating musical masterpieces. Rossini biographers point to the influence of Mozart and Haydn on him and how he studied their scores extensively—to the point that he was referred to as "il tedesco" (the little German). Later in his life, Rossini met both Beethoven and Wagner.

During the peak of his prolific career, Rossini wrote three or four operas a year; he completed his most famous surviving opera, *The Barber of Seville*, in just 14 days. Between the ages of 23 and 30, he composed 20 operas!

Rossini's operas, along with those of the composers Donizetti and Bellini, are described as the *bel canto* (beautiful singing) era, from approximately 1805 – 1840. Until Rossini's operas, singers dictated how they would show off their voices. Rossini was the first composer to mark the music exactly how he wanted singers to sing. His music requires great musical range, power, and flexibility on the part of the singer, and this difficulty may have contributed to the eventual shift away from *bel canto*-style opera.

Gioachino Rossini was one of the most important Italian opera composers of the first half of the 19th century, and according to the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, until he retired in 1829, he was the greatest Italian composer of his time. Rossini retired as a wealthy man who enjoyed giving lavish dinners attended by notable names in music.

Rossini also loved to cook! One of his inventions was called *Tournedos Rossini*. According to Ira Braus's book, *Classical Cooks*, and culinary historian J.F. Revel: "At the time it was said that the name of the dish was due to the fact that the composer's butler was obliged to *tourner le dos* (turn his back) on the diners so as to hide the secret of the final touches of this recipe created by a famous chef, Marie-Antoine Carême, with Rossini's supervision." A recipe from a gourmand!



Tournedos Rossini

4 center-cut filets mignons
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons clarified butter
4 foie gras terrine slices
4 slices white bread, fried in butter
¾ cup sauce *perigourdine*