LA CENERENTOLA

Opera at Western | Don Wright Faculty of Music | November 16-20, 2023
Paul Davenport Theatre, Western University

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Act 1

Angelina, known to her stepfather and stepsisters as "Cenerentola," serves as the maid in her own home. She sings of a king who married a common girl chosen for her kindness. A beggar arrives; her stepsisters, Clorinda and Tisbe, want to send him away, but Cenerentola gives him bread and coffee. Courtiers announce that Prince Ramiro will visit while he searches for the most beautiful girl to wed. Cenerentola's stepfather, Don Magnifico, hopes to use this as an opportunity to save his failing fortune.

When the room is empty Ramiro enters disguised as a valet. The "beggar" – in fact, Alidoro – has informed him of a goodhearted young woman spotted here. Ramiro intends to find her incognito. Cenerentola returns, and she and Ramiro are attracted to each other but when he asks who she is, she is overwhelmed and flees.

Finally, the "prince" arrives – the real valet, Dandini, who has taken his master's place – and Magnifico, Clorinda, and Tisbe fall over themselves to flatter him. He invites the family to a ball that evening, where he plans to find his bride; Cenerentola asks to join them, but Magnifico refuses. Alidoro returns to inquire after a third daughter in the house; Magnifico claims she has died and stealthily threatens to murder Cenerentola if she reveals herself. Left alone with Cenerentola, Alidoro promises to take her to the ball himself and that God will reward her kindness.

The prince and his valet have retired to Ramiro's estate, as neither of Magnifico's daughters resembled the worthy bride Alidoro had described. When Clorinda and Tisbe arrive, Dandini gives them a little test: he offers his "valet" to whichever sister the "prince" does not marry. The ladies are outraged at the idea of marrying a servant. Alidoro then arrives with a beautiful, unknown lady who strangely resembles Cenerentola. Unable to make sense of the situation, they all go to supper, feeling like they are in a dream.

Act 2

Cenerentola isn't interested in the "prince," saying she's fallen in love with his servant. An overjoyed Ramiro steps forward; however, Cenerentola tells him that she's going home and doesn't want him to follow her. If he really cares for her, she says, he will find her, giving him one of a matching pair of bracelets. The prince determines to do exactly that!

Magnifico confronts the disguised Dandini, insisting that he choose one of his daughters to marry. Dandini tries to stall but is forced to admit that he's actually the valet and not the prince at all.

Magnifico and his daughters return home, where they order Cenerentola, back in rags, to serve them. A storm is thundering outside. Ramiro's carriage breaks down in front of Magnifico's manor, forcing the prince to take refuge within. Ramiro recognizes Cenerentola's bracelet on her right arm. When Ramiro threatens Cenerentola's recalcitrant family, she asks him to forgive them.

Ramiro and Cenerentola celebrate their wedding at the palace. Magnifico tries to win the new princess's favor, but she asks only to be acknowledged, at last, as his daughter. She reflects on the misfortune to which she was born, then forgives her family for all her past unhappiness, adding that her days of sitting sadly by the fire are over. Everyone present acknowledges that she truly is worthy of the throne.

Prepared by Prof. Theodore Baerg. Thanks to Wikipedia with some additions and corrections.