

PLAYS FOR
New Audiences

A Division of Children's Theatre Company

Cinderella

by Charles Way

The license issued in connection with PNA perusal scripts is a limited license and is issued for the sole purpose of reviewing the script for a potential future performance. All other rights regarding perusal scripts are expressly reserved by Plays for New Audiences, including, but not limited to, the rights to distribute, perform, copy, or alter scripts. This limited license does not convey any performance rights of any kind with this material. By accepting any perusal script(s), Licensee agrees to and is bound by these terms.

Character List:

- Cinderella
- Prince Sebastian
- Aloysia
- Constanze
- Maria
- Sigmund
- Wolfgang
- Fairy Godmother/Bird
- King Leopold

Additional dancers/soldiers/princesses (real or plastic). Actors may double roles.

Setting:

The play is set in a fictional representation of Mannheim, Germany, where Mozart vainly tried to become Court composer in 1777. Mozart's music should accompany the play.

NOT LICENSED FOR PRODUCTION

Act One: Scene 1

Music. A dance with masks. Lights fade. A heavy tick-tock of a pendulum clock can be heard. A light rises on a figure dressed in 'ghostly' white – this is Cinderella's Fairy Godmother. She carries a cage inside which is a white dove.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/COMPANY

Tick tock, tick tock
Time slips by,
Sometimes it jumps.
Sometimes it flies,
Sometimes it waits,
As if for ever,
Sometimes it stops,
Altogether.

(The ticking stops)

Ah – this is one of those times.

(A bell tolls distantly)

A sad time

An in between time,

A time of tears.

Enter Cinderella, she rushes from one side of the stage to another as if trying to get out of a cage. Eventually she rushes into the arms of her father.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/COMPANY

Oh yes, once upon such a time

There was a Clockmaker.

(Cinderella pulls away from her father)

And the Clockmaker had a daughter.

They lived in a beautiful town

On the banks of a flowing river

In the shadow of a fine castle.

The bell tolls.

FAIRY GODMOTHER

But all is not well.

The town lay in the grip of a terrible sickness

For which there seemed to be no cure.

The sickness was so bad that many people died.

One of these was the young girl's mother.

Cinderella kneels. Exit Father. The lights rise slowly. It becomes morning and the air is full of birdsong but the grief-stricken Cinderella barely notices.

The child was struck down by grief,

She felt as if her tears would never end

And would flood the world.

The Fairy Godmother takes the white Bird from the cage. The Bird is obviously not real. It's a beautiful artifact and the Fairy Godmother is its voice. At this stage, the Fairy Godmother is invisible to Cinderella. She takes the Bird to the girl and flies around her head, until it annoys her.

CINDERELLA

It's you again. The same bird every day, spying on me, flying around my head, like a – like a wasp. Have you no respect? Go away wasp – go away.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

There's no need to be rude.

Cinderella looks around, startled.

CINDERELLA

Who's there? Is there anyone there?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Yes – me.

CINDERELLA

Where are you? Why do you hide?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I'm not hiding. I'm in full view. It's me – that's right.

CINDERELLA

You?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

A wasp am I?

Cinderella backs away.

Don't be frightened. I won't sting you. I'm a bird.

CINDERELLA

A talking bird.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Stranger things have happened, and will again, I assure you.

The Bird flies onto her arm.

Close you mouth, and stop staring. It's rude and makes you look like a fish.

CINDERELLA

Why haven't you talked before?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I was waiting, for the right time. I've been waiting for the past year. I have something to ask you. May I?

CINDERELLA

Yes.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I need your help.

CINDERELLA

How can I help you?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

This garden used to be so beautiful. Your Mother was happy here.

CINDERELLA

My mother?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

She and I were good friends. She used to look after the garden – not like you. Look how bare it is. It's not a Garden anymore – it's a graveyard.

CINDERELLA

(Chases the bird) How dare you talk about my mother. Go away you wicked creature. Go away.

(She cannot catch the Bird and she collapses in tears)

What would you have me do? Bury her in one of those big pits along with everyone else who died of the sickness? No. This was her garden – she belongs here, with me.

Silence.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I understand.

CINDERELLA

You're a bird what do you know, about anything?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I k now one thing. This garden needs a tree.

CINDERELLA

A tree? What for?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

It's a bird thing. Somewhere for me to sit of course.

CINDERELLA

Why should I help you?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

For your mother. It's what she wanted. Plant it in her memory – plant it here. It will give us all shade in the summer and shelter in the winter. Please.

The Bird fetches a hazel twig.

CINDERELLA

What kind of tree will it be?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Hazel.

Next to her mother's grave, Cinderella plants a twig of hazel.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Close your eyes.

Cinderella closes her eyes. Music. The Fairy Godmother removes the twig and magically a tree replaces it.

You can open your eyes now.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Ah! It's – it's so beautiful.

CINDERELLA

(proudly) Isn't it just?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

But how – who – what – did it?

CINDERELLA

Oh don't ask me, I'm a bird. What do I know about anything?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

The bird perches on the tree.

What are you – exactly?

CINDERELLA

A friend. I think your mother would have liked it.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Yes, yes she would. Will it flower?

CINDERELLA

Perhaps, one day, if –

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

If-?

CINDERELLA

If time moves on. It generally does.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

A boy in rags [Prince Sebastian in disguise] has entered.

We have a visitor.

Who are you? What are you doing? Get out. Get out.

CINDERELLA

Are you talking to me or the bird?

PRINCE/BOY

Go away, go away.

CINDERELLA

She chases the boy, he laughs and runs away.

So you want to play?

PRINCE/BOY

No. Get out – please.

CINDERELLA

I didn't mean to upset you. **PRINCE/BOY**

Well, you have. Now go – this is a private place – private. **CINDERELLA**

And you were talking to that bird, in private of course. **PRINCE/BOY**

No I wasn't. **CINDERELLA**

It looked like it from a distance. **PRINCE/BOY**

You've been spying? **CINDERELLA**

You've been lying. Is this your tree? **PRINCE/BOY**

Yes, now get out. **CINDERELLA**

This tree wasn't here yesterday. **PRINCE/BOY**

You were here yesterday? **CINDERELLA**

And the day before, and the day before that. Every day I hear crying from the other side of the wall, so today I climbed the wall and came in. Why do you cry like that? **PRINCE/BOY**

Leave the tree alone. **CINDERELLA**

Did you plant it? **PRINCE/BOY**

Yes. **CINDERELLA**

No, this tree is older than you. **PRINCE/BOY**

Please stop – **CINDERELLA**

You couldn't have planted this tree. **PRINCE/BOY**

I did plant it. **CINDERELLA**

When? PRINCE/BOY

Just now. CINDERELLA

And, it just grew...just now? PRINCE/BOY

Yes. CINDERELLA

I like tall trees – and tall stories too. PRINCE/BOY

I don't care what you like, or dislike I just want you to – CINDERELLA

The Bird flies to him and settles on his arm.

It's beautiful. PRINCE/BOY

Don't harm it. CINDERELLA

Why would I harm it? PRINCE/BOY

How should I know? There isn't always a reason, is there? CINDERELLA

Can it really talk? PRINCE/BOY

Why are you so persistent? Have you no one else in the world to talk to? CINDERELLA

Silence

No, not really. My father is confined to his bed... PRINCE/BOY

Your mother? CINDERELLA

She died, four years ago. She liked trees too. She liked gardening...she like dancing...she liked all kinds of – PRINCE/BOY

Please, leave me alone. CINDERELLA

Shall I come back tomorrow? PRINCE/BOY

No. CINDERELLA

Perhaps the bird will talk to me tomorrow. PRINCE/BOY

Don't be silly, birds don't talk. CINDERELLA

You really don't want to be friends? PRINCE/BOY

No. CINDERELLA

I'll go then – but only if you tell me your name. PRINCE/BOY

You promise? CINDERELLA

Cross my heart. PRINCE/BOY

My name – *(music)* – is Cinderella. CINDERELLA

He exits.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

(Aside) The very next day the boy returned, and again Cinderella chased him and turned him away. But the boy would not give up. Why, he did not know. He came every day for a month.

Go away, go away. CINDERELLA

One of these days Cinderella...I will make you laugh – I promise you. PRINCE/BOY

You must go – really. CINDERELLA

What's the reason today? PRINCE/BOY

And one day she could not think of a reason. FAIRY GODMOTHER

I'll stay then. PRINCE/BOY

If you want. CINDERELLA

Do you want me to? PRINCE/BOY

Cinderella nods, she is still not smiling. An awkward silence follows.

Do you have any other friends? **PRINCE/BOY**

Do you? **CINDERELLA**

One – Wolfy. **PRINCE/BOY**

Wolfy? **CINDERELLA**

He’s a laugh. Likes music. Your question – if you want? **PRINCE/BOY**

Where do you live? **CINDERELLA**

In the castle, I work there. **PRINCE/BOY**

Really? What kind of work? **CINDERELLA**

Kitchen – work. **PRINCE/BOY**

What’s your name? **CINDERELLA**

They just call me Boy. Boy come here and clean the pot. Boy, stir the soup...Boy, sweep the floor...has anyone seen that good for nothing Boy? **PRINCE/BOY**

Have you ever seen one of the parties they hold, where they dance all night in the great hall? **CINDERELLA**

Loads of times – from a distance. **PRINCE/BOY**

Tell me, everything. **CINDERELLA**

Well...there are big lights. **PRINCE/BOY**

Chandeliers. **CINDERELLA**

And – **PRINCE/BOY**

And an orchestra?
CINDERELLA

Yes, and the men and women bow and curtsy – and dance.
PRINCE/BOY

How do they dance?
CINDERELLA

I don't really know. I'm a kitchen boy.
PRINCE/BOY

Well, try and remember, please.
CINDERELLA

Well, they put one hand here and the other here and they put their heads to one side like –
PRINCE/BOY

Like - ?
CINDERELLA

Yes, and they smile like their teeth are glued together. Yes, just so. And they start to dance as if they really did not care to dance at all.
PRINCE/BOY

They begin to dance. A magical moment – their eyes meet.

Now you really must go.
CINDERELLA

But there's something I have to tell you –
PRINCE/BOY

My Father! Go – Go!
CINDERELLA

The boy exits, as Sigmund enters.

Cinderella.
SIGMUND

What is it? What's happened? Why are you smiling?
CINDERELLA

News. Good news. It's about time we had some good news isn't it? What's this?
SIGMUND

It's a tree. What news?
CINDERELLA

It wasn't here before.
SIGMUND

It's been here for ages, Father. Perhaps if you visited more often, you'd have noticed. What news?
CINDERELLA

SIGMUND
It's time Cinderella.

CINDERELLA
Time?

SIGMUND
Time to move on. You are fast becoming a young woman. You'll need help...guidance. You need a mother. I need a wife.

CINDERELLA
What are you saying?

SIGMUND
I have met someone – who has agreed to be my wife.
Cinderella attacks him. He restrains her gently.

SIGMUND
Please, please try to understand. *(She pulls away)*

CINDERELLA
How could you? How could you?

SIGMUND
Cinderella, its time for us – for you, to stop crying.

CINDERELLA
Never.

SIGMUND
Life is too short –

CINDERELLA
How could you even think of marrying someone else? And so soon...

SIGMUND
It's been a year.

CINDERELLA
A year?

SIGMUND
Time has stopped for us, now we must progress, you need a mother.

CINDERELLA
I have a mother. A mother who loves me, go away, go away!
He is about to turn away, when the Bird flies to him. It lands on his arm, turns him back.

SIGMUND
You are very young Cinderella. You have time on your side. I am getting older and time seems to be slipping through my fingers faster than ever. I need company – friendship, love.

CINDERELLA
But father, I am your friend, your company –

SIGMUND

Of course you are. But you won't want to stay with me forever. You'll leave – make a life of your own.

CINDERELLA

Leave? No, I'll never leave. Please Father, don't marry again. I'll never leave you.

SIGMUND

Cinderella, I knew this would be your reaction...so...

CINDERELLA

So?

SIGMUND

So, I have already married – this woman. Her name is Maria and she's coming, to be with us.

CINDERELLA

How could you do this?

SIGMUND

I know this has come as a shock to you but perhaps a shock is what you need. You can't grieve forever.

CINDERELLA

I can grieve for as long as I want!

SIGMUND

Calm yourself. Listen to me, you spend so much time alone...Maria has daughters. They can be your friends, your new sisters.

CINDERELLA

Sisters? I don't want any ugly sisters!

SIGMUND

These girls are very nice. They come from Heidelberg. They are charming, friendly, Aloysia has a wonderful singing voice and Constanze dances. They will – occupy you.

CINDERELLA

I will never forgive you for this – never.

SIGMUND

Time will tell...but now you must come with me and meet them.

CINDERELLA

I will not.

SIGMUND

I am your Father.

CINDERELLA

In name only.

SIGMUND

(Losing his temper) Then in name only, follow me!

CINDERELLA

I won't betray you Mother. Not like him. I will never let you go.

The Bird flies around in an agitated way.

SIGMUND

Come.

FAIRYGODMOTHER/BIRD

Cinderella. Trust me – and do as your father asks.

Fairy Godmother makes a spell, which changes the scene.

PURCHASE PERUSAL FOR FULL SCRIPT

NOT LICENSED FOR PRODUCTION