

Cinderella

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Cinderella's stepmother is busily embroidering a scarf she will wear to the palace ball that evening. The father is also in the room, and the stepsisters tease him unmercifully. Cinderella enters and stops them. They turn on her furiously and the stepmother orders her to clean the room. The stepsisters drag the father from the room. Cinderella picks up the broom, commences to sweep, then takes a portrait of her dead mother from its hiding place and gazes at it longingly. Her father returns and is overcome with remorse when he sees the resemblance between Cinderella and his first wife. His daughter lovingly tries to reassure him, but the stepsisters, who also snatch away the picture, drag them apart. Suddenly, the door opens and an old woman enters, begging. The stepmother gives her the picture of Cinderella's mother to get rid of it, but the beggar woman sees the resemblance to Cinderella and hands it to her. Cinderella offers the old woman some bread, which she accepts and then departs. A dressmaker and a wigmaker arrive to adorn the stepsisters for the ball, followed by a dancing master, who attempts the impossible task of teaching the stepsisters the rudiments of dancing. The family departs for the ball, with the exception of Cinderella, who must remain behind. She tries to console herself by pretending that the kitchen broom is her partner at the ball, but the pretense is too much for her, and she bursts into tears. At this moment, the beggar woman returns and changes into a fairy godmother, who transforms the kitchen into a forest, complete with dragonflies swooping through the trees. The fairy godmother gives Cinderella a pair of glass slippers, and the fairies of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter perform for her, changing the seasons as they dance. Cinderella's rags become a beautiful gown, but the fairy godmother shows her a clock and warns her that at midnight the magic gown will change back into rags. She transforms a pumpkin and four mice into a coach and horses, and Cinderella is driven to the ball like a princess.

****20 MINUTE INTERMISSION****

ACT II

At the palace, a jester welcomes the arriving guests, who are somewhat taken aback by the stepsisters. The prince enters and greets the assembly, then gallantly invites each of the stepsisters, in turn, to dance for him, much to the amusement of the guests. At this moment, the ball is interrupted by the arrival of Cinderella in her coach, and the prince immediately falls in love with her. The guests are offered oranges - the rarest fruit in the land - and when one of the stepsisters is left without one, Cinderella gives up her own, without the stepsister realizing her identity. While the prince and Cinderella are dancing together, the clock strikes midnight. Cinderella's clothes turn into rags, and she rushes from the ballroom. The prince cannot restrain her, but finds one of her glass slippers, which she has lost in her haste.

****20 MINUTE INTERMISSION****

ACT III

Back in the kitchen, Cinderella remembers that ball as if it were a beautiful dream, but finds the remaining glass slipper in one of her pockets. She quickly hides it as the stepsisters return, proudly displaying the oranges the prince gave them. The stepmother announces the arrival of the prince - with his jester and courtiers - in search of the owner of the glass slipper they bear with them. Each of the stepsisters in turn vainly tries to squeeze an oversized foot into the tiny slipper. When the prince notices Cinderella standing shyly by the fire he asks her father if she may try it on. As she moves to do so, the second slipper falls from her pocket. The prince is overjoyed in spite of Cinderella's ragged appearance, and asks her to marry him. Cinderella forgives her stepmother and sisters for their previous cruelty to her. As the prince returns the glass slipper to the fairy godmother, the kitchen is transformed into a magic glade, where Cinderella and her prince dance a romantic pas de deux. The guests return to acclaim their new princess at her betrothal.