

## Musicals, Cinderella, and the Fairy Tale

*Laurie Bailey*

### Introduction

Once upon a time, in a decade where movies could only be watched on television when the major networks decided to show them, I eagerly waited for the movie, *Cinderella*, to be shown. I loved watching how Cinderella transformed from a humble servant into a beautiful princess. I loved the actors, Lesley Ann Warren in particular, costumes and the sets. But most of all, I loved how the music made me feel like I could be a part of the cast as I sang and danced around my living room.

Movie musicals like *Cinderella* and *Oklahoma!*, both of which were written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Each year I anticipated being able to live, through dialog and music, the adventures of many characters, such as Cinderella in *Cinderella*, Laurey and Curley in *Oklahoma!*, and Maria Von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*, which is also written by Rodgers and Hammerstein. Once I had children of my own I couldn't wait to introduce them to the musicals I loved from my childhood. Today they love musicals as much as I do, performing in high school productions, community theater, and in directing and producing.

Why are musicals, live on Broadway, in high school and Community Theater, and film so popular? I think the answer lies in the fact that musicals are magical. They are a form of entertainment that allows the audience to step outside of their everyday lives through story-telling, drama, music, dance, costumes and scenery into an experience that satisfies the human need to explore the "what ifs" in life.

Musicals combine drama with music and dance. Music and expressive dance can deepen the emotional impact of a scene because each has the ability to bypass the head and go straight to the heart. Critics who cite the implausibility of breaking into song and dance in the middle of a conversation miss the point; musicals are not supposed to imitate real life. Musicals use libretto, music, dance, and stage elements to tease the senses and convey an emotional message that goes deeper than dialog alone.

Musicals are also enjoyed in community. Going to the theater with friends and family creates memories for a lifetime as each member first enjoys the event as an individual, and then together discusses and dissects the event afterward. Broadway draws millions of spectators every year who want to enjoy a good story through the talented actors, costumers, set design, and the magic of special effects. Then these visitors go home and

talk about their experience with people they know, repeatedly living the event as a memory with others.

Modern musicals are based on story-telling. Story-telling has been a form of entertainment for thousands of years. History has given us the myths of the Greeks, the fables of Aesop, and the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm that prove how much humans love to tell and listen to stories. Some of our first experiences with language as children consist of story-telling. There is an innate love of listening to stories that has not changed in thousands of years. When drama, costumes, sets, music and dance are included, a story comes to life, providing an opportunity for the audience to live vicariously through a fictitious character.

In general, most people have the ability to decide when to attend a live theater event or go to the movies. There is a population of people, however, who are not able to decide this for themselves. This describes most of the students at the John G. Leach School in New Castle, Delaware.

## **Rationale**

The John G. Leach School was originally called the Delaware Day School. It was founded by the Easter Seals Society as a day school for students with physical disabilities. In 1953, the school was renamed for John G. Leach, “a prominent educator, humanitarian, and advocate for the disabled.”<sup>1</sup> Leach School accepts students from all parts of New Castle County, Delaware based on the school’s ability to provide services that other school districts cannot. The students’ age range is from 3 years to 21 years of age. A limited number of typically developing peer students participate in the preschool program, providing excellent interaction between those with disabilities and those without disabilities. There is no peer on-site academic integration in elementary and upper school classrooms. Helper assistants are bussed from William Penn High School, the only high school in the Colonial School District, to provide typical peer interaction. Recently some students from Eisenberg Elementary School have come to Leach to provide integration for elementary age students.

In the 2013-14 school year, the student population was 42% African American, 40% Caucasian, 16% Hispanic and 2% Asian. 95% of the students are considered to be “low income.” The largest number of students is classified as “Orthopedically Impaired” which accounts for the fact that many of the students are wheelchair bound. Only a handful of students are able to walk without assistance. The next largest group is “Other Health Impaired” which is often used to classify students with “undiagnosed educational ability;” in other words, there is uncertainty as to what the student can actually see, hear, and how he or she processes information. Other categories used to classify students are Educable Mental Disability, Learning Disability, Trainable Mental Disability, Autism, Deaf/Blind, Cerebral Palsy, and Traumatic Brain Injury. Many students have 24-hour

nursing needs, in which case a nurse is required to attend school with the student. These nurses have primary responsibility for their student's care during the school day. The medical needs of students without full-time nurses are met by the three nurses assigned to the school. Elementary and Upper School class sizes are limited to about eight students in order to accommodate all the different needs of the students' daily living and learning challenges.

The students receive academic instruction from classroom teachers. Speech, physical and occupational therapists work with students on walking, standing, feeding themselves, using Voice Output Devices, etc. A Voice Output Device, or VOD, is like a personalized computer to help students communicate. Not all students use a VOD but it is a wonderful tool for those who can learn how to use them. Leach School is also the United States first M.O.V.E. (Mobile Opportunities Via Education) model site, which means that the therapists and teachers have been trained by M.O.V.E. to teach the students how to sit, stand, and walk. Students also have classes of adapted physical education, swimming, and music, complemented with assistive technology. Students have access to community parks, shopping, etc. weekly. Students are exposed to language, math, science, history, and art in addition to practicing daily living strategies. The overall goal of all staff members is to individually assess each student's learning capabilities and provide instruction that will maximize their abilities in education and daily living.

The students at Leach are welcomed each morning with cheerful "hellos" from staff members and individual needs are addressed throughout the day with thoughtfulness and respect. In general, students at Leach enjoy coming to school to learn, socialize and interact. Music is a favorite class of many because music, as a leisure activity, is something almost everyone enjoys.

One of the most difficult things for people who meet my students for the first time is to see their individual personalities. It is so easy to look at the obvious health issues and miss the treasure of the person inside. One of the significant, life-changing events that helped me understand how precious these students are occurred when a student with a Voice Output Device asked me, "What is on your iPod?" Until that moment I had no clue the student had achieved that level of comprehension. He completely hijacked my lesson plan that day as I learned how to relate to him as a person and a student. I hope he learned as much from me that day as I did from him!

It is difficult for my students to participate actively in story telling because of their unique disabilities. However my experience has shown that many students not only love to listen to stories, they also seek the limelight as do many of their typical peers. By taking "Stories in Performance: Drama, Fable, Story and the Oral Tradition," I learned the significance of fables and fairy tales in aiding self-discovery, and have thought of ways to engage my students in performance using the techniques learned through the seminar. I chose the fairy tale *Cinderella* because it is familiar and the storyline can be

explored through other cultures as well as our own. There are a variety musical genres to discuss between opera, Broadway, and TV versions of the story that will expose my students to new experiences. After the students become familiar with the story of *Cinderella* through video clips, I hope to identify students who would like to actually be able to perform parts of the musical. Performance would be possible through the use of computer technology. Students would activate switch interface devices in order to speak the dialog or sing the music.

Most of the Leach students have experience with TV, movies, and videos but have not been exposed to live theater of any kind. It is my hope to integrate fourth and/or fifth grade students from Eisenberg Elementary in a combined performance opportunity so my students can experience live theater. Cecilia Hann, the music teacher at Eisenberg, is also taking “Stories in Performance: Drama, Fable, Story and the Oral Tradition” and we are working together to develop unique lesson plans that will be interrelated so our students will be able to interact. Interaction with students from Eisenberg Elementary is a crucial element to this lesson because my students need to be exposed to live performances. Eisenberg students as performers will help my students have a very personal experience in a close environment.

Living out someone else’ life story in live theater is the experience I hope will change the lives of my students. The lessons in my unit will have to contain extremely simple concepts with very creative, engaging activities. It will be worth it, however, when I get to see the joy of participation on their faces!

## **The Fairy Tale**

Stories in general are a part of all cultures and they take many forms; myths, folk lore, fables, and fairy tales. Stories found a purpose as both entertainment and instructions on how to live in society. Myths, fables and legends grew from the culture and probably contained elements of truth. A New Yorker magazine article from the year 2012 indicated that scholars tend to ascribe the origins of fairy tales to women who told stories to alleviate the boredom of their work in the home. The details would change as suited the story-teller and so were passed from generation to generation.<sup>2</sup> These old tales were a way of sharing life’s basic problems of birth, death, familial conflict, and other fundamental discords in life by looking at the problems through the eyes of someone else. The listeners lived vicariously through the characters in the story and so learned about themselves and how to live their lives. Stories helped them feel better about themselves because they realized that they were not alone in how they felt; others feel the same way and may choose a path to resolution that they would like to follow.<sup>3</sup>

Fairy tales tend to deal with childhood concerns, on a conscious and unconscious level, and help a child deal with problems of separation anxiety, sibling rivalry, loneliness, abandonment, and other universal feelings. The characters are drawn very

simply to help a child figure out who is the “good guy” and who is the “bad guy.” As the child matures, he or she will learn to understand that people are neither all good nor all bad, but some of each. The simplicity of the fairy tale is a starting point for children to begin to figure that out for themselves.<sup>4</sup>

Fairy tales seem to be less exaggerated and closer to real life than the epic journeys and monsters told about in myths. Fairy tales take the characters from a bad situation to a good one through perseverance and steadfast faith. The challenges are symbolic and therefore safely imagined by a child.<sup>5</sup> Fairy tales have fallen out of vogue with parents and educators because of their often violent nature. Author and child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim disagrees with this decision. He says that fairy tales address the primal fears of children in a way that allows them to process their feelings through their imagination and a feeling of kinship with the main character. Some of these fears cannot be articulated by a child yet can be experienced subconsciously through a fairy tale.<sup>6</sup>

Fairy tales address problems head-on and give children a chance to experience good and bad examples of behavior without them having to go through the problem. For example, in Germany where the Grimm brothers lived, wolves were a very real concern and therefore took a prominent place as the villain in many of the stories. Generally the heroes overcame the wolf and gave the reader a sense of victory over circumstances.

In Cinderella’s case, the problem was that life as she knew it was ruined by the death of her beloved mother and her father marrying a woman with two girls of approximately the same age. Marrying again after a spouse died was, and is still, very common. Getting a parent, brothers and/or sisters that you don’t get along with is also a very real problem, even today. Through imagination, fairy tales can help a child work through fears by identifying with the characters in the stories, and through the actions of those characters he or she can possibly find a way to live and improve his or her own life.<sup>7</sup>

Fairy tales also present birds, animals, and trees as characters that help the main character because of some kindness shown by him or her. Children can relate to these characters because animals do not have much control over the circumstances in their lives, as children do not. Consequently, children find hope for their own lives by identifying with the hero and the animals in the stories.<sup>8</sup> According to the seminar leader, fairy tales give us a unique blend of dramatic elements that bring the characters and the readers out of the darkness and into the light!

### **The Grimm Brothers**

Jacob (1785) and Wilhelm (1786) Grimm were born as the number two son and three son of eight boys and one girl. Their father died when Jacob was 11. The brothers already had lost three of their siblings by that time. The boys were sent to Kassel, Germany to live with an aunt while they went to secondary school. Both Jacob and Wilhelm studied law at

the University of Marburg and somehow became acquainted with a collection of folk poetry which inspired them to collect German folktales. The Grimms really wanted to preserve the stories they heard so they published their first collection of stories with 86 folktales. By the time two volumes had been published, the Grimm Brothers had collected and preserved 585 stories! Jacob and Wilhelm became well-known university professors and political activists. They published books and articles on various literary subjects, including publishing a dictionary. Their two volumes of folktales not only became Germany's best known books but their most influential books as well. Both brothers died well into their 70s, Wilhelm at 73 and Jacob at the age of 78.<sup>9</sup> One of their stories, *Cinderella*, called *Ashputtel* by the Grimm Brothers, is one of the most famous fairy tales in the world.

### **Charles Perrault**

Americans are perhaps more familiar with Charles Perrault's version of *Cinderella* from 1690 than the Grimm Brothers version called *Ashputtel*. Perrault was a lawyer and a poet. He is best known for writing a book for children that we now call *Mother Goose Tales*. The Disney version of *Cinderella* is based on Perrault's version of *Cendrillon*. The Brothers Grimm version, however, relies less on a fairy godmother that can turn pumpkins into carriages and mice into men and more on the moral of doing the right thing despite how you are treated.

### **History of Musicals**

Generally speaking, theater was an activity that was frowned upon by the public during America's early years. Singing in particular was considered to be a frivolous activity in the early years of our country because so much effort was needed to simply survive. Soon the public's ability to sing was in such decline that Singing Schools were formed to teach the skill of singing. Aside from the fact that people were learning to sing again, Singing Schools became a form of wholesome entertainment where men and women could meet and, ultimately, engage in courting.<sup>10</sup> Gradually singing improved and survival became less of a full-time effort, changing the attitudes toward entertainment of all kinds.

The first professional musical to be performed in America was an opera that enjoyed fame in England. *Flora* (or *The Hob on the Wall*) was performed in Charleston, SC in 1735. Then the pendulum swung the other way again. Because much of all theater in America was based on British works, the Continental Congress passed a ban on theatrical entertainments in 1774 and many states followed suit by banning all forms of theater. This forced drama companies to disband or leave the country. George Washington's attendance at theatrical events in New York and Philadelphia led to a gradual lifting of the bans. In 1796 *The Archers* (or *The Mountaineers of Switzerland*) became the first truly American production, based on the story of William Tell. There were a total of three performances!<sup>11</sup>

During the 1800s, musical genres other than those imported from Europe began to develop. Pantomimes were shows that substituted mime for dialogue and interpretive dance for the singing. Vaudeville was a variety show, and minstrel shows were dramatic interpretations of the lives of slaves by white men in black face. Extravaganzas featured girls in fancy costumes and were very big productions in terms of scenery, costumes and melodrama. The ubiquitous element among these theater genres is the way they did not tell a continuous story. The shows merely strung songs, dances, and acts together with no cohesive elements or identifiable plot. Their main purpose was enjoyable entertainment. By the 1900s these disparate genres essentially blended together and had no distinct differences.<sup>12</sup>

An interesting event brought together two professional companies to create the first American musical. A ballet company from Paris was scheduled to perform in a theater that burned down. A theater company planned a show called *The Black Crook* which had a drama but no music. The producers of the two companies combined forces, located a performance theater called Niblos' Garden, and performed what became America's first "book" musical. In other words, there was a storyline to the musical drama. It became a huge production: the stage had to be reconfigured to allow scenery and props to move; the lighting and scenery was elaborate; and more than 100 ballerinas were featured. The first showing of this musical was 5.5 hours long! Critics didn't care for the melodrama but loved all the female beauty. The women caused a sensation because they wore flesh colored tights on their "limbs!"<sup>13</sup>

While some musical entertainments began to enjoy a large following, like *The Black Crook*, vaudeville went from the music stage to private salons which catered to rich male customers and featured scantily clad young women. Seeing a money making opportunity, Tony Pastor was the first saloon operator to open a music hall dedicated to vaudeville where women and children were welcome. By the 1900s vaudeville was separated into two types: vaudeville became family-oriented and burlesque became male-oriented.<sup>14</sup>

European composers and performers left Europe to train and mentor American composers. Victor Herbert was a European composer who really became a bridge from the European style of music to the American style. When World War I cut America off from all forms of European musical tradition, American musical theater transitioned from the strict forms of Europe to less restrictive forms and required less vocal technique from the performers.<sup>15</sup> Around this time the styles of ragtime, blues, and jazz were developing and gaining popularity around the country. The seminar leader observed that with the absence of Europe's influence and the development of new musical styles that originated with the slaves from Africa, musicals became very different from European operas, operettas, and *opera comica*.

Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the *Ziegfeld Follies* became very popular in New York City and held pre-eminence in the field for twenty-two years! The revue, a catch all type show similar to vaudeville, was popular from 1900 – 1925. It featured comedy sketches, elaborate costumes and sets, many popular performers, and pretty girls. The revue also allowed new composers to develop their skills. Because the revue combined many different songs and actors, a new composer could try out a song or two within the show's context without ever affecting the show's bottom line. If a song didn't work or was unpopular with an audience, it could easily be replaced by a well-known song or even a new song from another composer. Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, and George Gershwin are three examples of composers who got their start with *Ziegfeld Follies*. Famous performers like W.C. Fields, Gypsy Lee Rose, and Fred Astaire also got their start in the revue.<sup>16</sup>

Eventually audiences began to crave more continuity in the story line of a show. Librettos, or the essential script of a show, became more realistic and believable. Gradually shows transitioned from the general formula of girls dressed in extravagant costumes and theme of "boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl in the end" to embrace more serious topics. *Show Boat*, in 1927, became the first musical to address the problems African Americans were experiencing, and is considered to be the first solid link between the old style of musicals and the new. By 1940 the standards for musical theater required librettos that integrated music with the drama, and the characters needed to be believable, unlike the silly caricatures of the past.<sup>17</sup>

During the depression years, the lack of money forced producers to cut back on the extravagances they enjoyed during the early years of the 1900s. Many composers, lyricists, and producers moved to Hollywood to try their hands in movie musicals. Broadway literally competed with "Off Broadway," a place where the audiences were smaller, the casts were smaller, and the shows made fun of Broadway's lavish style. It was here that the music of the show became subordinate to the dialogue.<sup>18</sup>

Gradually the revue disappeared, probably due to the prevalence of radio, television, and movies. The Milton Berle Show, on television in 1948, caused an economic downturn. So many people went home to watch Milton Berle on TV that businesses actually closed down on Tuesday nights! No one went to the theater, and businesses suffered so much that the business men's association complained! The entertainment habits of the American people significantly changed with the Milton Berle Show.<sup>19</sup> In the 1960s and 70s variety shows similar to Milton Berle's continued in popularity. However these shows often based their comedy material on current events and politics, so they went out of style almost as soon as they were produced.<sup>20</sup>

Broadway still entertains today. It was once nicknamed "The Great White Way" because so many theaters used white light bulbs to tout their shows. From the musical, *Showboat*, to today's popular shows of *Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Miserables*, *Rent*, and

Disney films come to life, there are a variety of musical theater shows from which to choose. America's tastes run the gambit from humor to tragedy and from silly to sublime. The producers in the early 1900s who took chances on hiring composers without a long track record set history into motion. "They were, in fact, unwittingly fathering the true American theater."<sup>21</sup> Musicals, whether live or filmed for television or theater, continue to provide millions of people entertainment to this day.

### **Rodgers and Hammerstein**

Oscar Hammerstein was born in 1895 to a family already established in theater. Oscar's father managed a theater and his uncle, Arthur Hammerstein, was a successful Broadway producer. His grandfather, for whom he was named, was 'the colorful, eccentric theatre and opera impresario.'<sup>22</sup> Oscar and his grandfather did not share a middle name, but because the first and last names were the same, Oscar the younger eventually added "II" to his name to distinguish himself from his famous grandfather. Theater was not in the family plans for Oscar, however; the family felt he should go into law and was sent to the appropriate schools. This was not Oscar's heart; he was fascinated by theater and wrote librettos and lyrics for various college musical shows even when he was supposed to be studying law.<sup>23</sup>

Hammerstein collaborated with various composers, including Jerome Kern and George Gershwin. Over the years before collaborating with Richard Rodgers, he had as many failures as successes, including a failed marriage. A significant success for him was *Show Boat*, for which he wrote the libretto and lyrics in collaboration with Jerome Kern. As was mentioned above, *Show Boat* is considered to be a dramatic turning point for musical theater in America and Hammerstein played a huge part in the change.<sup>24</sup>

Also mentioned previously, the Great Depression had a negative effect on Broadway and many composers and lyricists moved to Hollywood to produce movies. Hammerstein got married for the second time during this period, which was very beneficial to him personally but professionally, the time in Hollywood provided him with much less success. By the early 1940s Hammerstein was considered to be a wash-out and a has-been. Then Richard Rodgers entered his life and everything changed with the show *Oklahoma!*<sup>25</sup>

Richard Rodgers could be described as living a charmed life early in his career. He wrote many scores for musicals in his late teens, even collaborating with Lorenz Hart to compose a song for a Broadway show at age 17! The next few years yielded little success, however, and Rodgers almost quit writing music altogether to sell children's clothing. A Broadway playhouse needed to raise money for a new curtain so the Theatre Guild asked Rodgers and Hart to write the score for a revue that was to run one weekend. It paid very little money but the team accepted. That show, *The Garrick Gaieties*, ended up running for 211 performances and launched Rodgers and Hart's careers.<sup>26</sup>

The team of Rodgers and Hart lasted about a decade. Even though they were a great team, the Great Depression managed to also dampen the prospects of this amazing duo and they went to Hollywood as did so many others. Though they had some success in Hollywood, both Rodgers and Hart yearned to go back to Broadway. Rodgers got married and achieved a stable home life but Hart became increasingly difficult to work with as he often went on drinking binges and lost hope in life. Hart's unpredictability became a liability to Rodgers and he looked for someone else with whom to collaborate. At this time Oscar Hammerstein came into Roger's life and they successfully produced the Broadway show *Oklahoma!*

Despite the huge success of *Oklahoma!*, people did not expect Rodgers and Hammerstein to last as a team. Some thought Rodgers would eventually get back together with Hart. Others predicted that Hammerstein was a wash-out. Hart continued to binge drink and eventually died after one such episode in 1943, thus forcing Rodgers to continue to work with Hammerstein.<sup>27</sup>

The musicals *State Fair*, *Carousel*, *The King and I*, and *South Pacific* were hugely successful musicals. *Cinderella* in 1957 is the only musical written specifically for television. It was this musical that made the names of Rodgers and Hammerstein<sup>28</sup>

Hammerstein eventually was diagnosed with cancer in 1959 and died within a year of diagnosis. Rodgers continued to work, writing lyrics for some of his own music and collaborating with others such as Stephen Sondheim, a protégé of Hammerstein. Rodgers died in 1979 at the age of 77. During their career as a musical duo, they earned 15 Oscars, 35 Tonys, two Grammys, two Emmys, and two Pulizers.<sup>29</sup>

## **Cinderella**

Many cultures have a variation of the fairy tale American's know as *Cinderella*. There are over 500 versions of the story! The Egyptians called her Rhodopis, a girl who had been kidnapped by pirates and sold as a slave. The slave master rewarded her with golden slippers, one of which was stolen by a bird and taken to Pharaoh himself. The Pharaoh concluded the gods had sent the slipper as a sign of the wife he was to marry. He went through the land, trying to find the girl who could wear the beautiful slipper. He finally found her and married her.<sup>30</sup>

China calls Cinderella Yeh-Shen. Yeh-Shen lived with her father, his two wives, and a step-sister. Her father and mother die, leaving Yeh-Shen with the stepmother and the step-sister. The two made Yeh-Shen do everything for them. Yeh-Shen's only friend was a fish who she fed daily from her own meager scraps of food. When Yeh-Shen's stepmother learned of the fish, she disguised herself as Yeh-Shen and tricked the fish into revealing itself. The stepmother stabbed the fish, cooked it, and ate it. Yeh-Shen was

devastated. An old man appeared and told Yeh-Shen to hide the bones because they would give her the desires of her heart, but do not waste the gift. Presently it became time for the young people to meet and find spouses. Yeh-Shen wanted to go to the festival but stepmother was afraid Yeh-Shen's beauty would usurp that of her own daughter so Yeh-Shen was forced to stay home. Yeh-Shen went to the bones and asked for clothes to wear for the festival. The bones complied by giving her a gorgeous gown of blue with feathers. Yeh-Shen was the most beautiful girl there. The stepmother and her daughter drew near to Yeh-Shen, thinking they might know her. This frightened Yeh-Shen and she ran, losing a slipper in the process. The slipper made its way to the king who was determined to find the one who owned it. Eventually the king found Yeh-Shen and married her.<sup>31</sup>

In the story of *Billy Beg of Ireland*, Billy is a male "Cinderella." Billy had a bull that he loved and his stepmother hated. The stepmother was determined to have the bull killed so she set a plan in motion that ended with her death and Billy's exile from his country. This version ends after Billy fights some giants, a dragon, rescues a princess, and has to try on a boot instead of a slipper. The essential elements of the story remain the same, however.<sup>32</sup>

Africa has at least three variations of the story; and the Chinese and Native Americans also have variations. Clearly, the qualities of goodness (or doing the right thing) and hope are universal and touch the hearts of the people in many cultures.

The version of the story of *Cinderella* most familiar to me is Disney's version, which is based on Charles Perrault's version of *Cendrillion*. Cinderella in the Grimm's fairy tale as Ashputtel follows a similar path as Perrault's but with a good bit less magic and more hard work and thoughtfulness on Cinderella's part. The following is a breakdown of the dramatic structure of Grimm's *Ashputtel*, written as a seminar assignment and included as a guide to choosing the most important scenes to teach my students.

Intro: the mother is dying and she calls Ashputtel to her side. Mother tells Ashputtel to remain good and kind and God will help her. The mother dies.

Inciting Incident: The father marries again within a year. The stepmother and daughters are beautiful to look at but worthless as people. Ashputtel has everything taken from her and is forced to serve in the kitchen.

Rising action: The father visits a fair. The oldest step daughter asks for dresses, the younger asks for jewels, and Ashputtel asks for the first twig that knocks off her father's hat. Each daughter receives her request. Ashputtel takes her twig and plants it over her mother's grave. Watered by her tears, this twig eventually grows into a tree that is featured in the following scenes.

The King is giving a 3 day ball in order for the prince to find a wife. Ashputtel is not allowed to go because she has no clothes and doesn't know how to dance. Ashputtel begs to the point the stepmother throws some lentils into the ash and tells her that she can go to the ball if she is able to separate the lentils from the ash within two hours. Ashputtel is able to accomplish this feat by calling on the doves that ministered to her while crying over the loss of her mother. The birds find the lentils and Ashputtel presents the lentils to the stepmother within the allotted time.

The next test is to separate two dishes of lentils from the ashes in one hour. Again Ashputtel calls on the doves to help. However, the stepmother still refuses to allow Ashputtel to go as she had no clothes, could not dance, and would embarrass the family.

Ashputtel went to her mother's grave and called out for help from the hazel tree. The first night she was given a silver and gold dress and silk shoes. She danced with the prince and he was entranced. She left before midnight and he followed her home, only to have her escape from his presence. This happens a total of three times, the third time being the time when she loses her slipper.

Crisis: The prince needs to find Ashputtel and Ashputtel needs to be found. Justice must be served!

Climax: The Prince visits Ashputtel's home. The stepmother promotes her daughters to try on the shoe. The father of Ashputtel demonstrates that he doesn't recognize her worth as a human, let alone that she is his daughter, by saying, "There are no other young women here." The Prince leaves, but with the help of the doves, the prince learns of the falseness of the stepsisters and finds Ashputtel.

Resolution: The prince takes Ashputtel with him. One version says that when the prince and Ashputtel get married, the stepsisters are bridesmaids. The doves get their revenge; when entering the church, the doves poke each sister in an eye. Upon leaving the ceremony, the doves poke out the other eye, rendering the stepsisters blind forever.<sup>33</sup>

Using this outline I will choose scenes from various versions of the musical versions of Cinderella that are the most important to the storyline and have students act out the scenes and compare the music from the scenes.

## **Music Strategies**

As this information unfolds, it is important to restate that the students at the John G. Leach School have a variety of physical and cognitive abilities. While a few students demonstrate higher level thinking skills, most of my students demonstrate cognitive abilities like those of an average elementary school student. Some demonstrate cognitive skills of an infant. Therefore the use of video clips and audio clips will be the primary strategies used for examining the music of the plays. Teacher lecture in very simple terms will be the primary source of information for the unit and Smartboard activities will be the primary way students will participate.

### **Films**

Two or three versions of Cinderella on video will be the primary sources of libretto, music, and dance for my classes. I hope to obtain the 1957 version of Cinderella with Julie Andrews, the 1965 version with Lesley Ann Warren, and the 1997 version starring Brandy Norwood. Some YouTube video clips might also be used.

### **Smartboard**

Many of the unit's lessons will require Smartboard technology. Activities and assessments will include teacher-developed activities created with Smart Notebook technology. My students will be able to watch video clips of various Cinderella films, compare and contrast songs with a T chart, start and stop songs from the musicals, and access dialog from the show on the Smartboard.

### **Switches**

Many students demonstrate a desire to actively participate in storytelling and play music for their friends when offered a way to do so. Battery operated, recordable switches give my students a voice. These devices come in a variety of sizes but the ones I use most often are large with a colorful disc that marks the place the student pushes to activate the sound. They look very similar to the Staple's version of the "It's Easy" button! Switches have a built-in speaker and record button so voices or instruments can be recorded easily and quickly. These switches also come in a non-recordable version with cords that allows the students to connect to a computer which turns the switch into a large computer mouse. Most of my students use a variety of switch devices to help them communicate or

participate in activities. Some of the more amazing switches are the ones that students use near their eyes called an “eye-blink switch.” The eye-blink switch senses a blink which then sends an impulse to the switch to activate it. Another amazing switch is the “mercury switch” which operates by arm and/or finger movement. Through a computer interface device switches can be used with the Smartboard to help the student access dialog, music or virtually any activity.

Switch devices also help my students practice good classroom behavior. Students are invited to ask for a turn by raising their hands or making a noise. This requirement offers communication opportunities and reinforces IEP goals. Requiring and practicing good classroom behavior gives students another chance to learn how to communicate with the adults in the room about his or her personal preferences.

### Storyboard

Before I begin the unit, I will use the storyboard technique to diagram the dramatic structure of the fairy tale. This planning will help me identify the essential scenes I will cover. I will then transfer the storyboard to the Smartboard to give the students a focus while I tell the story.

### Compare/Contrast

I will show video clips of the different musical versions of Cinderella in order to be able to compare and contrast the singers, their interpretation of the song, and instruments used.

### Repetition

Repetition is essential for my students to learn. I have been told that it requires over 2,000 repetitions for students with disabilities to remember things. My lessons will have very simple learning goals and I will continually review.

### Assessments

Rather than traditional paper and pencil assessments, students will answer yes or no questions through the use of picture symbols, eye blinks, and other indicators unique to the individual student. Students will be asked to choose the character they like the most or a character they identify with by using picture symbols or pictures on the Smartboard.

Students are generally given three choices. If they choose incorrectly, one option is removed so the remaining options contain one correct answer and one incorrect answer. Students will communicate song choices through the use of picture symbols. Because most of my students are cognitively like young children, my teaching takes the form of exposure to information and expressing like and dislike rather than assessment of content knowledge. Information is given with the assumption that it does not hurt to expose the students to the facts. Some will understand; many will not. This current practice in working with those with special needs is called “the least dangerous assumption.”

### **Classroom Activities**

Lesson One – What is a musical? Introduction to *Cinderella*, the musical

This lesson acquaints the students with the story of *Cinderella* as told by Rodgers and Hammerstein.

Anticipatory Set: Play the scene of Cinderella singing “In My Own Little Corner” from 1997 version of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Cinderella*. I will ask each student if he or she has ever seen or heard this song before obtaining answers by using the students’ unique communication system.

Direct Instruction: The students will watch video clips from the 1997 version of *Cinderella*. I will choose the scenes that stay closest to the dramatic structure of *Ashputtel* I outlined previously. Students will use their switch devices to start the videos. I will verbally connect the scenes together so the story makes sense. I will select classroom instruments for the students to play with the music. I will draw the students’ attention to the elements of drama, music, dance and art to expose the framework of identifying a musical.

Assessment: I will observe which students are alert and attentive as well as which students volunteer to participate. I will give each student an opportunity to answer the question, “What is a musical?” by providing simple answers from which to choose.

Lesson Two – What is a fairy tale? Grimm’s Story of *Ashputtel* (*Cinderella*)

This lesson reviews the version of *Cinderella* introduced last week through iconic representation on the Smartboard and compares the similarities with *Ashputtel*.

Anticipatory Set: Students will use personal switches to re-tell the story using the Smartboard.

Direct Instruction: Students will listen as I read the Grimm Brother's story of *Ashputtel*. I will point out the different name, helping the students understand that Ashputtel and Cinderella are the same characters. In order to keep the students engaged during the reading of the story, students will be guided to place icons on the Smartboard to represent the essential elements of the story. I will create or find these icons so that the students create a type of story board. I will help the students discover the magic in the story and discuss the elements of good overcoming evil.

Assessment: I will ask students same and different questions and give opportunities to put their answers on the Smartboard.

Lesson Three – A look at the music of *Cinderella* and how it conveys the emotion of the actor(s) and continues the story.

Anticipatory Set: review the storyboards created in the previous lessons.

Direct Instruction: Students will listen to one or two of the following songs: “The Step Sister’s Lament,” “Ten Minutes Ago,” and “Impossible.” I will label the songs as Silly, Romantic, and Magical to give students focus for their choices. After listening and watching the scene, I will summarize the song lyrics to make sure the students understand what was sung. I will ask students to identify the scene to which the song belongs, giving them a choice of three scenes. If they choose incorrectly, it becomes an opportunity to further discuss the purpose of the song and to lead students to choosing the right answer based on lyrics, emotional content, and musical style. As time allows, I will help students identify the tempo as fast, medium, or slow; the rhythm as smooth or jerky; and to determine if a song is sung by a man, a woman, or both. An optional discussion could be about changing the style of the song: “If I change the tempo from fast to slow, will the song have the same emotion? Listen to this song sung slowly. Does it convey the same message?”

Assessment: Do the students choose the right scene for the music? Which of today’s songs do you like the most? If you could be any of the characters, which would you be?

It will take at least five weeks to cover the lessons in the unit because of the repetition required for my students to learn. A different musical could be covered each year by following the pattern in these lessons, thereby exposing my students to many different musical stories and styles.

## **Appendix A**

## Common Core Standards – English Language Arts

The state of Delaware, in conjunction with the University of Delaware, has devised adapted Common Core Standards for students with disabilities. The Delaware Content Standards, Grade Band Extensions for English Language Arts used for this seminar project are as follows:

5.2 - Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

5.3 - 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).

5.5 - Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

5.6 - Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

5.7 - Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

## Music Standards

Cr4-4.c – Demonstrate and explain understanding of how expressive qualities (such as dynamics, tempo, articulation) and their interpretive decisions convey the music's intent

Pr6-4.b – Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette appropriate for the context, venue, and genre

Re9-4.a – Evaluate music or performances, applying teacher-provided and class-developed criteria

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Colonial School District, New Castle, Delaware Website, 2011.

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- <sup>2</sup> New Yorker, paragraph 6.
- <sup>3</sup> Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*. 5.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid, 7-9.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid, 8.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid, 7.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, 12-19.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, 11.
- <sup>9</sup> Grimm Brothers' Home Page.
- <sup>10</sup> Edward Bailey Birge. *History of Public School Music in the United States*, 21.
- <sup>11</sup> <http://www.musicals101.com/>.
- <sup>12</sup> Lehman Engle, *The American Musical Theater/A Consideration*, 5.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, 4.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, 4.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, 28.
- <sup>16</sup> Engle, 46, 65.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, 38, 67.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, 67.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid, 71.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, 71.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid, 73.
- <sup>22</sup> [http://c250.columbia.edu/c250\\_celebrates/remarkable\\_columbians/rodgers\\_hammerstein.html](http://c250.columbia.edu/c250_celebrates/remarkable_columbians/rodgers_hammerstein.html).
- <sup>23</sup> <http://www.biography.com/people/oscar-hammerstein-ii-9326882#death-and-legacy>.
- <sup>24</sup> Engle, 38-39.
- <sup>25</sup> <http://www.biography.com/people/oscar-hammerstein-ii-9326882#death-and-legacy>.
- <sup>26</sup> Thomas S. Hirschak, *The Rodgers and Hammerstein Encyclopedia*, The Story of R&H Abridged.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> <http://www.rnh.com/bio/167/Rodgers%20&%20Hammerstein>.
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- <sup>31</sup> <http://www.lowvilleacademy.org/webpages/MBlow/cinderella.cfm?subpage=868111>.
- <sup>32</sup> <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/68/fairy-tales-and-other-traditional-stories/4857/billy-beg-and-his-bull/> - Billy Beg of Ireland.
- <sup>33</sup> Grimm's Fairy Tales, *Ashputtel*, 147.

Curriculum Unit  
Title

**Musical Theater, Cinderella, and the Fairy Tale**

Author

Laurie Bailey

**KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.**

Musical Theater combine elements of story, music, drama, dance and art to create an enduring entertainment style.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT**

What is a musical?  
What is a fairy tale?  
How does the music help tell the story?

**CONCEPT A**

Identify the elements of a musical

**CONCEPT B**

Identify the elements of a fairy tale

**CONCEPT C**

Different musical styles create  
different emotions in listeners

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A**

What elements make up a musical?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B**

What elements make up a fairy tale?  
Is this story fact or fiction?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS C**

How does the composer use the music to  
help us “feel” the emotions of the actors?

**VOCABULARY A**

Drama                      Music  
Dance                      Libretto  
Artistic design

**VOCABULARY B**

Magic                      fact  
Good versus evil        fiction  
~~Overcoming hardship~~

**VOCABULARY C**

Musical style  
Emotional content  
Variation

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES**

1957 Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Cinderella*, made for TV, video source, starring Julie Andrews

1965 Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Cinderella*, made for TV, video source, starring Leslie Ann Warren

1997 Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Cinderella*, made for TV, video source, starring Brandy Norwood and Whitney Houston

The Grimm’s Brothers fairy tales, *Ashputtel*

Smartboard activities created by the teacher using icons to tell the story; Smartboard activities created to give students switch access to “say” the dialog and to turn on/off music from the show