



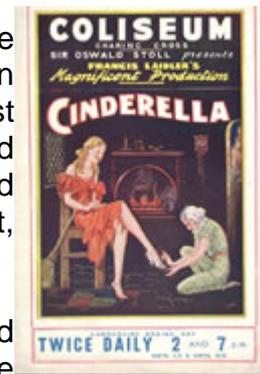
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THE MAGIC OF PANTOMIME

Cinderella



It was in 1820 that the first real pantomime version of 'Cinderella' opened at Covent Garden. Entitled 'Harlequin and Cinderella, or the little glass slipper' it featured Grimaldi as the Baron's wife. In the same year the Rossini opera 'La Cenerentola' had premiered in London, introducing the characters of the Baron and the Prince's servant, Dandini.

The character of Buttons emerges from page boys, who were nicknamed 'Buttons' from the close-sewn rows of buttons on their uniforms. The character first appeared in 1860, given the Italian name of 'Buttoni', and underwent many changes of name from Chips, Alfonso, and Pedro, before settling down as the Baron's trusty servant, Buttons.



The 1860 production at the Strand Theatre also developed the characters of the Ugly Sisters. As in Rossini's opera, the first character names for the 'Uglies' were Clorinda and Thisbe, and their names have constantly changed to accommodate the fashions of passing times. Other names include Buttercup and Daisy, Euthanasia and Asphyxia, Alexia and Krystle, up to the Spice Girls - Posh and Scary.



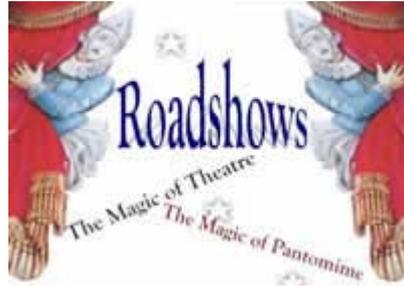
During the 19th Century over 90 productions of 'Cinderella' were staged. It has long been recognised that this pantomime will attract larger audiences than any other. In 1958 the Rogers and Hammerstein 'Cinderella' was staged at the London Coliseum as a pantomime with Yana as Cinderella, Tommy Steele as Buttons, Jimmy Edwards as the Baron, and Kenneth Williams and Ted Durante as the Ugly Sisters.

Pantomimes have always adapted to changing times, and survived. As the millennium approaches 'Cinderella' remains the most popular pantomime subject in the country, closely followed by 'Aladdin'.

Popular trends have dictated that the Prince, usually called Prince Charming and his valet, Dandini have been played originally by women, and more popularly in recent times by men. Among the famous female Princes have been Dorothy Ward, Evelyn Laye and Pat Kirkwood.



The popularity of Cinderella in the new millennium is also reinforced by the symbol of the clock as it strikes midnight in the most magical of pantomimes.



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