Cinderella

CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY

Peter C. Brosius, DIRECTOR: Our *Cinderella*, for whom the wonderful designer Eduardo Sicangco did both sets and costumes, existed in a multitude of aesthetic universes. First of all, as you can tell from the photo on the left, it was a gorgeous, lush, romantic love story. At the same time, as the other picture indicates, it was a brazen, wild and audience-participatory piece of physical theatre and low comedy. It also had a framing device as a story being told at a Victorian house party, where a family is entertaining itself with Christmas carols and storytelling. What you can't see is that in preparation for the carriage scene, the Fairy Godmother's pumpkin lifts off the ground and flies off the stage on a diagonal—then the magically transformed, and now gorgeous, sleigh flies in at the same angle, manned by mouse coachmen in full livery and pulled by prancing, reindeer-headed creatures. Bird puppets bring Cinderella her gown down from the heavens. For the Stepsisters, we researched pantos and other extravagant costuming practices to create delightfully tacky, over-the-top costumes to suit our great physical actors. There was a huge amount of spectator interaction as the Stepsisters charged into the audience and brought people onto the stage—these scenes were a celebration of spontaneity and anarchy.

Eduardo Sicangco, SCENIC AND COSTUME DESIGN: As a designer, you always have to juggle several balls in the air to get a unified design, and the first goal of this design was to *enchant*—to come up with beauty and spectacle, especially in the transformation and ballroom scenes. A great thing about this version of the story is that the garden scene, when the Fairy Godmother appears, is set in winter, which presented the opportunity for a snowy wonderland, all in whites and blues. The coach became a pumpkin sleigh, pulled by reindeer. The next move was to break that mood completely—to abandon enchantment for these bawdy, crazy characters, the Stepmother and the two Stepsisters (who are performed in drag). The taste-free clothes they're wearing—you might say they're so bad they're good!—are not my usual style, but I'm glad I went there.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN NORMAN

Peter's mandate was "more, more, more!" So we dove in with vinyl and tassels and gaudy trim—the Stepsisters are wearing painted tennis shoes! Happily, these incredibly funny physical actors were able to use those costumes to death.

Paul Whitaker, LIGHTING DESIGN: The lighting in *Cinderella* bounced between three contrasting styles—the mundane reality of Cinderella's everyday life; the garish, panto-influenced, anything-goes world of the Stepmother and Stepsisters; and the lush, magical feel of the forest and the palace. In the picture on the left, the internally illuminated pumpkin carriage glowed like a silver moon through the fog and the rich dappled-blue lighting of the forest. On the right, the vivid colors of both the boudoir set and the Stepsisters' ball costumes allowed for bright, boldly colored lighting to reinforce their hilarious antics.

Cinderella, adapted by John B. Davidson from the fairy tale, played Nov. 10, 2009—Jan. 2, 2010, at Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis under Peter C. Brosius's direction. The production featured scenic and costume design by Eduardo Sicangco; lighting design by Paul Whitaker; music direction, composition and orchestration by Victor Zupanc; sound design by Zupanc and Sean Healey; and puppet design by Eric J. Van Wyk. Elissa Adams was dramaturg and Chris Schweiger was stage manager. Opposite page, Maeve Moynihan in coach as Cinderella; above, from left, Dean Holt, Autumn Ness and Reed Sigmund.

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