



West Bay Opera Association  
The Holt Building  
221 Lambert Avenue  
Palo Alto, Ca. 94306



# Cinderella

By Gioachino Rossini

## About the Composer

Gioachino Rossini was born in Pesaro, Italy in 1792 and died in 1868. He was considered the greatest opera composer of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Rossini was the son of two musicians. His father was a fine horn player and his mother an opera singer. Rossini is best known for his brilliant comic operas, but he made important contributions in the form of serious opera as well. A remarkable child prodigy, Rossini began composing at the age of ten and entered the conservatory in Bologna, Italy, at fourteen. His first great success as an opera composer came in 1812, at the age of eighteen. He produced an extraordinary string of ten operas over the next four years, culminating with his masterpiece, “The Barber of Seville,” in 1816. “La Cenerentola” (Cinderella) was written just a year later. Like “The Barber of Seville,” it has become a classic work and is performed all over the world every year.

Rossini had a great gift for creating melody and once bragged that he could set a laundry list to music.

In 1824 Rossini left his native Italy and settled in Paris, where he lived from then on. Five years later, his serious opera, “William Tell”, was not well received by the public, although it received praise from the music critics. He then gave up composing altogether, living out the rest of his long life as a distinguished “elder statesman” in the world.

## About the opera

The libretto for this opera was written by Giacomo Ferretti, based on the famous fairy tale by Charles Perrault. Rossini and Ferretti wrote this opera in a very short time. It took a little while for the public to get over the shock that Ferretti did not follow the fairy tale so well known to them. Rossini and Ferretti had taken the “magic” out of the opera, replacing the fairy godmother with Alidoro, the Prince’s tutor, and there is no pumpkin transformed into a coach.

Another difference is that, when Cinderella runs out of the palace at midnight, she leaves behind a bracelet, not a glass slipper. This may have been done to appease the censors who would not want to see a woman’s foot “exposed” on the stage?? In West Bay Opera’s school program, you’ll be happy to know that we’ve restored the glass slipper to the story.