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*The most popular fairy tale of all time serves as inspiration for
Rossini's **La Cenerentola**, airing on
Great Performances at the Met on PBS August 15*

This Cinderella story has no fairy godmother or glass slipper –
rather “bel canto,” or beautiful singing

Over the centuries, the story of Cinderella and her cruel stepmother and ugly stepsisters has been interpreted in countless ways across different genres. Gioachino Rossini's ***La Cenerentola*** is perhaps the most famous operatic version of the Cinderella story, and it is like no other interpretation. This opera has no fairy godmother, no pumpkin that turns into a carriage, and no glass slipper. However, unlike most other operas, it has a happy ending. The production is rated TV-PG and will air on ***Great Performances at the Met*** in HD on Saturday, August 15 at Noon on PBS (check local listings) and on WNET/THIRTEEN on Thursday, August 20 at 9 p.m.

Great Performances at the Met is a presentation of THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG – one of America's most prolific and respected public media providers.

Mezzo soprano Elina Garañca, who played Rosina in another one of Rossini's operas, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, now claims the role of the title heroine in ***La Cenerentola***; her Prince Charming is played by Lawrence Brownlee. "It's actually a coincidence that I'm returning in another of Rossini's works," admits Garañca. Of the opera's most memorable coloratura showpiece, "*Nacqui all'affanno*," Garañca says "for me it's the Olympics – adrenaline at its highest. To get through it, I must switch on all the buttons in the computer in my head and body."

Italian opera in the early 19th century focused heavily on the range, inflection, and tone of the human voice; this style became known as "bel canto," or "beautiful singing." While many opera singers tried to wow audiences by improvising with this technique and adding trills and lalts to their singing, Rossini's operas, especially ***La Cenerentola***, had bel canto already built right into the scores.

Great Performances at the Met: La Cenerentola is the tenth of 11 productions airing this season on the series. The performance is sung in Italian with English surtitles. Maestro Maurizio Benini conducts, as veteran baritone Alessandro Corbelli demonstrates his impeccable comic timing to match the gravitas of Met favorite John Relyea; the librettist is Jacopo Ferretti.

Great Performances is funded by the Irene Diamond Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, public television viewers, and PBS. Corporate support for ***Great Performances at the Met*** is provided by Toll Brothers.

Visit **Great Performances Online** at www.pbs.org/gperf for additional information on this and other **Great Performances** programs. For the Met, Mia Bongiovanni and Elena Park are Supervising Producers, and Louisa Briccetti and Victoria Warivonchik are Producers. Peter Gelb is Executive Producer. For **Great Performances**, Bill O'Donnell is Series Producer; David Horn is Executive Producer.

About WNET.ORG

New York public media company WNET.ORG is a pioneering provider of television and web content. The parent of Thirteen, WLIW21 and Creative News Group, WNET.ORG brings such acclaimed broadcast series and websites as Great Performances, Worldfocus, Nature, American Masters, Charlie Rose, Wide Angle, Secrets of the Dead, Religion & Ethics Newsweekly, Visions, Consuelo Mack WealthTrack, Wild Chronicles, Miffy and Friends, and Cyberchase to national and international audiences. Through its wide range of channels and platforms, WNET.ORG serves the entire New York City metro area with unique local productions, broadcasts, and innovative educational and cultural projects. In all that it does, WNET.ORG pursues a single, overarching goal – to create media experiences of lasting significance for New York, America, and the world. For more information, visit www.wnet.org.

About the Met

Under the leadership of General Manager Peter Gelb and Music Director James Levine, the Met has a series of bold initiatives underway that are designed to broaden its audience and revitalize the company's repertory. The Met has made a commitment to presenting modern masterpieces alongside the classic repertory, with highly theatrical productions featuring the greatest opera stars in the world.

The Met's 2009-10 season features eight new productions, four of which are Met premieres: Janáček's *From the House of the Dead*, Verdi's *Attila*, Shostakovich's *The Nose*, and Rossini's *Armida*. The other new productions are Puccini's *Tosca*, Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Bizet's *Carmen*, and Thomas's *Hamlet*.

Building on its 78-year-old international radio broadcast history – heard over the Toll Brothers-Metropolitan Opera International Radio Network – the Met uses advanced media distribution platforms and state-of-the-art technology to reach audiences around the world.

The Emmy and Peabody Award-winning *The Met: Live in HD* series returns for its fourth season in 2009-10 with nine transmissions, beginning October 10 with *Tosca* starring Karita Mattila and ending with *Armida* starring Renée Fleming on May 1. The Met recently introduced *Met Player*, a new subscription service that makes much of its extensive video and audio catalog of full-length performances available to the public for the first time online, and in exceptional, state-of-the-art quality. Metropolitan Opera Radio on SIRIUS XM Radio broadcasts both live and rare historical performances; the *Met on Rhapsody* on-demand service offers audio recordings; and the Met presents free live audio streaming of performances on its website once every week during the opera season with support from RealNetworks®.

The Met has launched several audience development initiatives, including Open House dress rehearsals, a popular rush ticket program, reduced ticket prices, Gallery Met, and an annual Holiday Series presentation for families. For more information, please visit: www.metopera.org.

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