

THE SNOW QUEEN

from the story
by Hans Christian Andersen

Adapted by Julia Flood
Music and Lyrics by Lee Ahlin

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PUBLISHED BY
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STORY OF THE PLAY

This musical retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's **The Snow Queen** is an enduring tale of faith, devotion and the magic of friendship. Kay and his best friend Gerda each have a rose tree in a pot; and as their friendship grows, the rose trees grow as well and intertwine. One winter evening, Gerda's grandmother tells them the story of an evil troll whose magic mirror shattered into a million pieces. When a sliver from that mirror lodges in Kay's heart and in his eye, he becomes mean and ugly, and is carried off in the Snow Queen's sleigh.

Gerda sets out all alone to search for Kay. The river carries Gerda to the garden of an Old Woman who casts a spell of forgetfulness on her. Gerda talks to the pretty flowers, but when she notices that there are no roses in the garden, she thinks of Kay and the spell is broken. Continuing on her journey, she encounters a sassy crow, who thinks he saw Kay marry a princess and leads her to a castle. And she is captured in the woods by a lonely Robber Girl. She hears from two pigeons that Kay has been captured by the Snow Queen. The Robber Girl, touched by her devotion to her friend, has a change of heart, releases Gerda and gives her a reindeer, Bo, for her journey.

As Bo and Gerda battle wind and ice on their way north, they meet the Wise Woman of Finnmark who tells Bo that he can take Gerda as far as the Snow Queen's gardens, but that Gerda will have to rescue Kay by herself. Gerda enters the icy palace alone and battles through a blizzard until the Snow Queen gives up, defeated. Gerda's tears melt the slivers in Kay's eye and heart, and he wakes as from a dream, his true self again. Gerda and Kay return home and enjoy a long, warm, glorious summer.

***The Snow Queen** was originally produced by the Eckerd Theater Company, Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater, Florida*

Performance time: About 50 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Approx. 9m, 14w, plus chorus/extras)

GERDA: a little girl.

GRANDMA: Gerda's grandmother, narrator.

KAY: a little boy, Gerda's best friend.

BIRDS: at least two who speak, an unlimited number who sing;
on a stick or wire, manipulated by the Puppeteers.

TROLLS: two, three or more; if a puppet is used, can be done
by one person with one hand puppet.

THE SNOW QUEEN: beautiful and ice cold.

OLD WOMAN IN THE GARDEN: warm, but controlling.

TALKING FLOWERS: three or more.

CROW: quite a character; somewhere between Danny Devito
and Barney Fife.

PRINCE

PRINCESS

ROBBER GIRL: fierce but lonely.

BO: a reindeer.

LOU and COO: two talking pigeons in a cage.

LAPP WOMAN

WISE WOMAN OF FINNMARK

SNOWFLAKES: an unlimited number, to create a blizzard.

Doubling for production with a minimum of 2 m, 3 w
(requires some voiceovers)

ACTOR 1 – Gerda.

ACTOR 2 – Kay, Crow, Pigeon, Puppeteer.

ACTOR 3 – Grandma, Old Woman in the Garden, Princess
Pigeon, Wise Woman.

ACTOR 4 – Bird, Talking Flower, Robber Girl, Lapp Woman,
Snowflake, Puppeteer.

ACTOR 5 – Bird, Snow Queen, Trolls, Talking Flower, Prince, Bo,
Puppeteer.

NOTE: *A rehearsal/performance CD is available for this show.
Contact Eldridge Publishing at 1-800-HISTAGE to order.*

PRODUCTION NOTES

The original professional touring production of THE SNOW QUEEN by the Eckerd Theater Company used five actors and a variety of puppets to portray all the characters and change all the scenery. The set consisted of three stationary frames approximately seven feet tall, each with a double-sided panel inside that would turn on a pivot point in the center. These were used as doors by the actors and flipped to show different “scenes.” Both sides of the panels were covered with velcro cloth. Soft fabric panels for each scene were then attached with velcro out of sight of the audience and flipped to reveal the next scene at the appropriate time. Between the center frame and each outer frame was a soft curtain through which actors could enter and exit. A cube, suitable for sitting or standing, was the only other moveable set piece. A shimmering drop was used behind as masking. The frames, curtains, velcro cloth and all other basic scenic elements were chroma key blue. The actors/puppeteers who operated puppets, manipulated birds or moved scenery sometimes wore masks and were costumed in blue tunics and slacks that matched the set color. They moved in plain sight of the audience.

In the original production, THE SNOW QUEEN was an 8-10 foot puppet worn by Actor 5. Her voice was pre-recorded. The **birds** were attached to stiff wire on the end of a stick operated by 2 puppeteers. The **trolls** were played by one actor and one hand puppet. The **talking flowers** were played by two actors, each with a flower headdress and 2 hand puppets (a total of 6 flowers). The **crow** wore an elaborate mask and wings. The **reindeer** wore a wool vest and a hat with antlers attached. **Gerda** “rode on his back” by standing on a cube behind him and placing her hands on his shoulders. The **boat** was a bow on wheels that Gerda could walk behind and steer with her hands. The **pigeons** sat in a cage perched on top of the Stage Left frame and operated with sticks from behind by two actors/puppeteers who also provided the voices. For the **blizzard**, Actor 4 wore a snowflake headdress and twirled two white ribbon wands.

MUSIC CUE#1 - Opening

(AT RISE: Summer. Two rose trees center in full bloom. They form an arbor between the doors of two houses. KAY and GERDA enter, Kay from his house SR, Gerda from her house SL. They run together laughing, singing, playing. BIRDS fly in and play, too.)

SONG: Opening

GERDA:

LOOK AT ALL THE ROSES
WHAT A PERFECT SUMMER DAY
LOOK AT THAT ONE THERE ABOUT TO BLOOM

KAY:

BETTER TAKE ADVANTAGE
AND ENJOY IT WHILE WE MAY
THE SNOW WILL COME BACK ALL TOO SOON

KAY: *(Spoken.)* Come on, Gerda, let's play hide and seek. You'll never be able to find me.

GERDA: *(Spoken.)* No, wait, let's play tag! I'll run and you must try to catch me.

(GRANDMA enters UL.)

KAY, GERDA, BIRDS AND GRANDMA: *(Singing.)*

SUMMER AUTUMN WINTER SPRING
HEAR THE SOUND
BIRDS WILL SING
THEY NEED NO REASON

SUMMER AUTUMN WINTER SPRING
ALL COME ROUND
FRIENDSHIP GROWS
THROUGH EVERY SEASON

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KAY:

GERDA, HAVE I TOLD YOU
YOU'RE THE BEST FRIEND THAT I HAVE

GERDA:

AND I FEEL THE SAME ABOUT YOU, KAY.

BOTH:

IF WE'RE EVER PARTED
LET'S AGREE RIGHT HERE AND NOW
WE'LL FIND EACH OTHER, COME WHAT MAY

GRANDMA: *(Crossing down to audience, narrating.)* This is the story of two friends. Best friends. They could not have been better friends if they were brother and sister. The boy was named Kay and the little girl was my granddaughter, Gerda. *(Pause.)* The two friends lived next door to each other in the big city where there was no room for gardens. But each of them had a rose tree in a pot and, as their friendship grew, the rose trees grew as well and twined together above their heads and filled the summer air with the sweet smell of roses.

ALL: *(In round.)*

SUMMER AUTUMN WINTER SPRING
HEAR THE SOUND
BIRDS WILL SING
THEY NEED NO REASON

SUMMER AUTUMN WINTER SPRING
ALL COME ROUND
FRIENDSHIP GROWS
THROUGH EVERY SEASON

(The scene shifts to winter, roses gone. Two SL panels reveal inside GRANDMA'S house. SR panel flips to blue/outside.)

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GRANDMA: *(Still narrating.)* And in the winter, when the icy winds began to blow and the snow to fall, the two best friends would sit cozily inside with me by the fire, looking at picture books and listening to stories.

(KAY and GERDA are sitting together on the floor looking at a big picture book. GRANDMOTHER sits on the block SL.)

KAY: *(Looking at picture book.)* Ugh, look at that horrible troll.

GERDA: Ugh! Oh, Grandmother, look.

KAY: He's so nasty and mean looking.

GERDA: And he was terrible to the princess who is so kind and good.

GRANDMA: Some people are like that, my dears.

KAY: They are?

GERDA: How awful!

GRANDMA: Have I never told you of the evil troll and his terrible mirror?

BOTH: NO!

GRANDMA: Oh, dear ... well, it all happened a long time ago, but our poor world is still suffering from that nasty troll's mischief.

MUSIC CUE #2 - Story of the Troll

(As GRANDMA tells the story, it is acted out silently over their heads above the top of the flats.)

GRANDMA: You see, he thought himself terrifically clever. He invented a special kind of mirror. Not a bit like the kind you might use to see if your hair was neat or your teeth were clean. No, this was a very odd sort of mirror. Everything good and beautiful, the mirror showed as horrible, while evil, worthless things looked attractive and useful. In the mirror, the most beautiful countryside looked just like boiled spinach and the dearest, kindest people would appear to be ridiculous – standing on their heads or without any stomachs. All the other mean little trolls thought the mirror was great fun and would fly all over the world to look at things in it. Well, of course, they

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