

# La Cenerentola

by Gioachino Rossini

Application for the European Opera-Directing Prize  
2005 at the Opera Ireland

submitted by Leo Krischke  
*February 2005*



# Concept

## *A dream of happiness*

The opera as a surrealistic, intimate play about dreams and longings, which is performed in one flow without a break between the single scenes. Fast changing pictures, simple, conscious, clear and absurd. A mixture of realistic and traumatic situations, like the music of Rossini: fast, mechanic, artificial.

## *A fairy tale? An Opera Buffa? A lyric comedy? A farce?*

All kinds of intelligent entertainment are connected by Rossini in his “Cenerentola”. With irony and wit it shows the way of a young woman from a suppressed and used servant to an emancipated, free and happy human being. Or isn't she free and happy in the end? This sounds very moralic, isn't it? But it is not. Rossini's sparkling, ingenious music, full of humour tells a quick, coloured farce with depth. The characters swirl through a panopticum of absurd situations and sometimes they loose themselves, they take off from their stage reality into a world without time and space, full of dreams and wishes. Because they all do have their dreams and wishes:

*Magnifico*, who wants to become rich and considerable,  
*Tisbe* and *Clorinda*, who wish to be beautiful and loved (and of course rich, too),  
*Dandini*, who would like to be one time in his life the master, not the servant.  
They are all much more typus then real human beings

Cenerentola is different. Her sad canzone in the beginning already shows her as she really is: a sensitive, deeply feeling human being made of flesh and blood. Also Ramiro is different, he really feels with Cenerentola, he knows the sound of heart.

And over all of them there soars Alidoro like a good spirit (is he really one?)  
Who is this man?  
A philosopher in service of Ramiro? A magician?  
A “deus ex machina”?

## *Following story will be told:*

A man appears. Who is he? What does he want? It is Alidoro, who starts an experiment. A young woman, Cenerentola, comes in, sitting at her work. Sadly she dreams. She dreams of love and happiness. He creates a world for Cenerentola. He and his helpful servants, the chorus, lead her through this world, he is the master of this magic, artistic world. And really, the experiment succeeds in the end, the woman finds her prince Charming and she will live a life full of love. A happy end. Really? Is life that easy? Do we all get what we want? Is there a good spirit outthere, anywhere? No. The romantic ideal of a prosperous world doesn't work anymore.

The scenery is an astronomic place for experiments, a special kind of laboratory. A room completely closed. Only Cenerentola and Alidoro (and his helpers, the chorus) move on the floor of this room. Like in a puppetworld, six little podiums come into this hermetic room, always by a sign of Alidoro. These podiums are the space for the characters of Alidoros experiment, they only move on these podiums. Alidoro and the chorus watch their experiment from little windows in the horizon as spectators. Cenerentola never leaves this scenery until the end.



# SCENARIO

## Sinfonia

At the End of the Sinfonia the curtain raises. A landscape of blue sky and stars. Slowly Alidoro comes out of the sinking. The room of stars glows. The Chorus comes in and builds a circle. Over his arm Alidoro carries a blue coat with stars like a magician. He looks around and puts on the coat mysteriously. Angiolina comes in sitting at a sewing machine and sews a blue dress with stars (podium 4).

She works on her dream of a different and better life. Angiolina sees Alidoro and runs to him. They turn around each other carefully. Alidoro gives a sign and the light changes. Like a unrealistic dream Ramiro, Dandini, Magnifico, Clorinda and Tisbe appear (podium 6 from the left). Angiolina, first frightend, then fascinated, runs to the group, then to Alidoro, who takes her in his arms. The dreamfigures disappear (pod. 6 to the right).

Alidoro leads Angiolina with her sewing machine forward to the left side next the portal, he kisses her forehead and goes backwards to the horizon. Angiolina hides herself under the dress of stars (stays there visible)..

## Act 1

### Scene 1

**Introduzione** - By a sign of Alidoro Clorinda and Tisbe come in (pod. 1+2). They both do homage to their beauty (shaving legs, bathing, taking a lot of parfume, doing make-up, mask of cucumber, etc.). Angiolina sings dreaming her song under the dress. Suddenly it knocks! (artificial strengthened - the fate at the door) - the blue star-room glows. From the background comes Alidoro (as a modern clochard with plasticbags and a supermarket-truck), behind him the chorus is coming in. Angiolina leads him to her sewing machine and gives him something to eat and to drink. Clorinda and Tisbe try to expell Alidoro by throwing their soaps and cucumber (from the mask).

Alidoro gives a sign, the light changes and the chorus is coming up to the front of the stage to announce the entrance of the prince (and bringing props for the following action). Clorinda and Tisbe are totally nervous and treat Angiolina to bring jewelery, shoes, wigs, fans, etc. (the chorus helps Angiolina). *Great hectic.*



**Recitativo** - Angiolina gives Alidoro some money, he kisses her forehead (like in the Sinfonia) and leaves at the back (the chorus follows). Angiolina is confused - Who is this beggar?- Clorinda and Tisbe are calling for daddy.

### Scene 2

**Cavatina** - Don Magnifico is coming in, sitting on the toilet and reading the newspaper (pod. 3). He starts his morning toilet, shaving his face and telling his dream, jumping on the toilet and the washing-machine (as the top of the steeple), playing the donkey with the newspaper (as the ears and the wings).

**Recitativo** - Clorinda and Tisbe tell their father, that the prince will come to visit them. Very excited Magnifico, Clorinda and Tisbe start to search for their cloths, taking them out of the washing-machine and leaving the stage (pod. 2+3). Angiolina runs to the backdoor and gets coffee from Alidoro.

### Scene 3

**Recitativo** - Ramiro comes in slowly (pod 4), looking around searching for people.

### Scene 4

Alidoro leads Angiolina to the podium, she sees Ramiro. The coffee falls to the floor.

**Duetto** - Magic light, the stars are gleaming, the first moment of love, out of time and space Angiolina and Ramiro are completely fascinated of each other, they are unable to move, the podests start to drive from one side to the other. Alidoro observes them - his plan starts to work.

### Scene 5

**Recitativo** - (pod. 4 leaves) Angiolina flees, confused by the strong and new feelings to her sewing machine and sews like possessed her dress (~ her dream). Ramiro, also confused stays at the wash-basin. Alidoro behind Angiolina, calming her.

Magnifico comes in (pod. 2) with a bottle of champagne and some glasses, an absurd scene of welcome and bowing with Ramiro





*Scene 6*

**Chorus** - Entrance of the Chorus (with cheerleader-tufts), Clorinda and Tisbe (with flowers) (pod 3 with toilet), a static picture of homage

**Cavatina** - Dandini comes in a "toycar" as the great, unattainable idol of the youth (and the women), the chorus moves and dances as cheerleaders with their tufts. A big disco ball comes from the sky. Dandini leaves the toycar and comes down the golden step, through a trellis of cheerleaders, Clorinda, Tisbe and Magnifico, throwing flowers, bow, knee and curtsy, Dandini loves his role as - the king. A scene of glamour and splendour.

**Recitativo** - Magnifico, Dandini and the sisters drinking champagne and make conversation. Because there is no chair, Dandini has to sit on the toilet (absurd action of sitting down and standing up), simultaneous Alidoro brings Angiolina to the others and leaves in the back. The chorus leads Tisbe and Clorinda on pod. 1 and 2 and they leave beckoning, to go to the ball. The disco ball disappears.

**Quintetto** - Alidoro tells the others, that there has to be a third daughter in the house. Alidoro and the Chorus (all with haloes)-deus ex machina- appear in the "round of stars" in windows and present the absent daughter - where and who is she? They show a picture of her without a face. Ramiro, Dandini, Magnifico and Angiolina stiffen, time and space are out of order. At the end of Quintetto Dandini (in the toycar), Ramiro and Magnifico leave the stage to go to the ball (pod 6).

*Scene 7*

**Recitativo** - Angiolina stays alone, Alidoro (as clochard) comes in.

**Aria** - Alidoro puts on his magiciancoat and leads Angiolina from the podium (pod 3 leaves), he takes her under his coat, from the (schnürboden???) a "sky of weddingdresses" is coming down, Angiolina climbs into one of the dresses, Alidoro spreads his coat and disappears with Angiolina in the sinking.

*Scene 8 "The ball"*

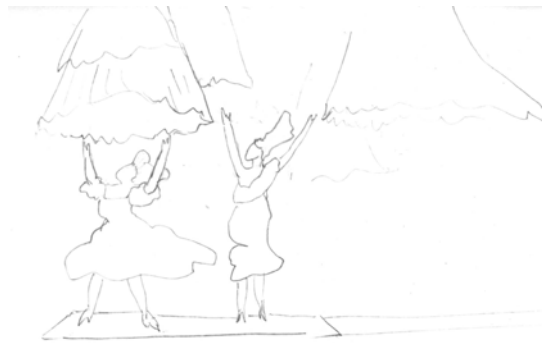
**Recitativo** - the 6 podiums come in, the dresses coming completely (pod 1+3 free) down, Dandini with Tisbe and Clorinda on the sofa, Magnifico on the armchair.

Tisbe-Clorinda-Dandini: the dresses come all down, Clorinda and Tisbe try to outdo each other and want to seduce Dandini, a fast scene of persuit in a wood of dresses, in the end Clorinda, Tisbe, Dandini to the back (they stay, hidden behind the dresses on pod 6)

*Scene 10*

**Coro ed aria** - the dresses in the middle raise up, under the dresses the sofa with Magnifico, he is already drunk, his wig is nearly falling from his head, empty bottles all over the sofa and on the floor, Magnifico dreams of a world of fame and bureaucracy, the chorus writes on portable writing desks with huge rolls of paper, the stage is filled with paper more and more, Magnifico dances with the chorus, they wrap Magnifico in the paper, Magnifico is staggering full of joy and happiness about his triumph through a sea of paper and bottles - an intoxication - until he ends exhausted on the sofa and falls asleep blessed and happy. The chorus takes the sofa with Magnifico away behind the dresses.





## Finale Act 1

### Scene 11

Ramiro and Dandini enter, a short scene of conspiracy under and between the dresses

### Scene 12

Clorinda-Tisbe-Ramiro-Dandini: the dresses go up into half-high, in the background Magnifico on the sofa, sleeping, Tisbe and Clorinda try to catch the dresses (~the marriage)

### Scene 13

The windows in the “round of stars” open, Alidoro and the chorus appear and announce the arrival of “La Cenerentola”, great excitement

### Scene 14

Pod. 1 and 2 open to the left and right side, Ramiro, Dandini, Magnifico, Tisbe and Clorinda together in the middle are frightened (“who is this?”), Angiolina appears out from the sinking in the white wedding dress covered by a big veil, all are enchanted by the foreign woman, Angiolina unveils herself and goes on the podium (pod 1+2 into position 1), the others circle like hypnotic around Angiolina

### Scene 15

Magnifico awakes and comes forward excited, Angiolina and Ramiro leave the podium, they are magnetically attracted to each other, they forget everything around, when the “Tutti” begins the situation overturns into irreality, the stars are gleaming, the podiums leave to left and right, the dresses disappear into the stage-roof, 4 swings coming down, Magnifico, Dandini, Clorinda and Tisbe sit on the swings, going up like dreaming and swing, Ramiro and Angiolina circle around each other like flying in the sky, all are lost in their dreams.



## 2. Act

### Scene 1

A picture of emptiness after the ball. All (Dandini, Angiolina, Ramiro, Magnifico, Clorinda, Tisbe) are sitting at the round tables and sipping an imaginary soup (empty plates), mechanic choreography

**Recitativo** - Magnifico, Tisbe and Clorinda creep around between the tables and observe the mechanically sipping others

**Aria** - “Aria of anger” Magnifico wants to flee, hides under the tables, fighting with spoon and plate against imaginary enemies, the sisters try to calm him down, all 5 leaving the stage (pod 1 + 2)

### Scene 2

**Recitativo** - a persuasion of Dandini and Angiolina between the tables, Ramiro hides himself under a table, Alidoro and the Chorus come from the back with big alarm-clocks (2 min before 12- quotation of fairy tale) and drive Angiolina away from Ramiro, she gives Ramiro a ring (wedding ring given by Alidoro) and disappears into the sinking

Ramiro takes away the wig of Dandini (degrades him), Alidoro demands for a decision of heart (Alidoro and chorus turn around the alarm-clocks, on their backs side big red hearts - the whole stage a huge sea of hearts), Ramiro, full of emotion and love, becomes a “heaty stag”



INTERVAL

**Aria** - Ramiro rides on the stag to his bride, the chorus (with hearts) drives him on, Alidoro watches with pleasure the enthusiasm of the prince from the window in the “sky of stars”

*Scene 3*

**Recitativo** - Alidoro in the window

*Scene 4*

Dandini on the arm-chair, Magnifico on the sofa, Dandini reveals himself and takes off the costume of the prince, Magnifico is depressed, a scene of disillusionment

Alidoro in the window. He gives a big sign for the dresses (they raise up) and for the sinking

*Scene 5*

**Canzone and Recitativo** - Angiolina comes out of the sinking, goes to the sewing-machine, looking at the “dress of stars” and the ring

*Scene 6*

**Recitativo** - Magnifico, Clorinda and Tisbe come in with the washing-machine, pointing at Angiolina and taking off their wigs

Suddenly flashes, Magnifico, Tisbe, Clorinda put up umbrellas, looking for protection on the washing-machine, Angiolina covers with the “dress of stars”

**Temporale** - the “sky of stars” flashes threatening, the light changes from all sides, the window in the middle opens and Alidoro with a remote control is visible, from the right side comes in the “toycar” (Act 1 scene 6) turns around the podium and disappears at the left, a big detonation and smoke

*Scene 7*

**Recitativo** - Dandini with a tyre and Ramiro with a steering-wheel (podium 6), Ramiro recognizes Angiolina and leaves the podium

**Sestetto** - an unreal moment of confusion, the podium starts to gleam (as it would fly) and like magic the washing-machine starts (and gleams too), all turn looking at Angiolina and Ramiro, who dance around the podium and forget the reality

Ramiro sticks the ring on Angiolinas finger and she sticks hers on his finger, takes her “dress of stars” and leaves with Ramiro, Dandini and Magnifico (Podium 6)

**Recitativo** - Tisbe and Clorinda absolutely depressed on the washing-machine, Alidoro comes from the back with the plasticbags of the clochard and instructs the sisters, they give up and take off their costumes, putting them into the washing-machine and leaving (podium 5), Alidoro goes to the center of the ramp and sits down, he is happy, the plan succeeded

**Finale 2**

All come into the magic “room of stars”, which gleams in magic light, chorus opens the windows, Angiolina forgives everybody, all do homage to “La Cenerentola” and take her up, the chorus throughs coloured confetti - it seems to be a real HAPPY END!

**Orchestra-epilogue** - The chorus shuts the windows, cold, prosaic light, Ramiro lies on the sofa reading the newspaper, a lot of children rage and jump around, Angiolina has to wipe and to nurse (a babypuppet)

Alidoro stands up, takes off his starscoat and leaves laughing in the sinking

*“The dream of happiness has bursted”*

**FINE**



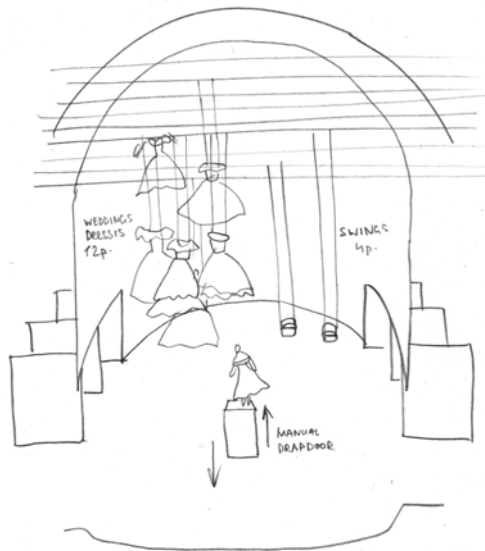
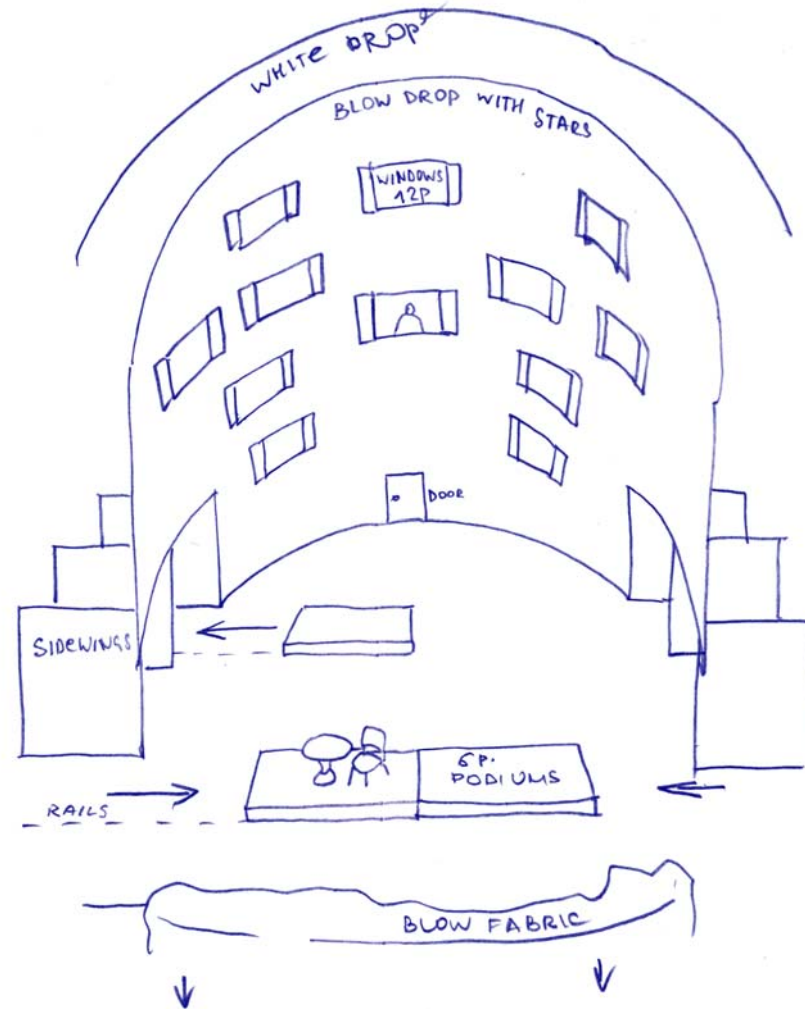


# THE STAGE

The stage is a scenery of dreams and irreality, the scenery for a naive, ironic fairy-tale. Like the universe it surrounds the characters. A high, round, blue night sky with stars, an association of the inside of a magic box and a circusround. It is the world of Alidoro's experiment and Cenerentola's dreams. In this room everything appears like magic. 6 podiums come in from the left and right side, so it's possible to change very fast from one scene to the other and the whole evening is played without a break (only one between Act 1 and 2). The podiums drive on rails, moved by a system of strings. They move the world, which Alidoro establishes for Cenerentola, the characters of Dandini, Magnifico, Tisbe, Clorinda and Ramiro are part of this artificial world, they only take place on these podiums, which bring them in and out. On these moving elements pieces of furniture (washing-machine, bath-tub, sofa, etc.) and special objects (toycar, popart plasticstag, weddingdresses) build new rooms for outer and inner action. In the backside of the mainroom ("room of stars") windows establish a kind of auditorium, from where the chorus (and Alidoro) watch and comment the action in the mainspace. The whole optic is determined by a mixture of realistic and artificial elements and moments of circus (like the floating dresses or the swings at the end of act 1). Corresponding to the concept the scenery sketches an atmosphere of a surrealist and comic fairy-tale.



The furniture and the props are important visual elements of the concept. Love of finery and the dream of beauty is represented by realistic elements of a bathroom (bathtub, toilet, washingmachine, wash-basin) in the place of Magnifico. Castle in the air and show are the catchwords for the inside-endovement and for the situation of light in the ballroom of the prince. His world consists of artificial blown-up sitting accomodation (made of plastic), which is able to burst at anytime, like in the end Cenerentolas dream is bursted. The prosaic mensa-situation with plastictables and -chairs stands for the prosaic inner situation of the characters after the entrance of Cenerentola at the ball. In the epilog, the situation is similar, when Cenerentola awakes of her dream, finding herself in middle-class reality, natriumsteamlight takes away all colours from the room and the figures.



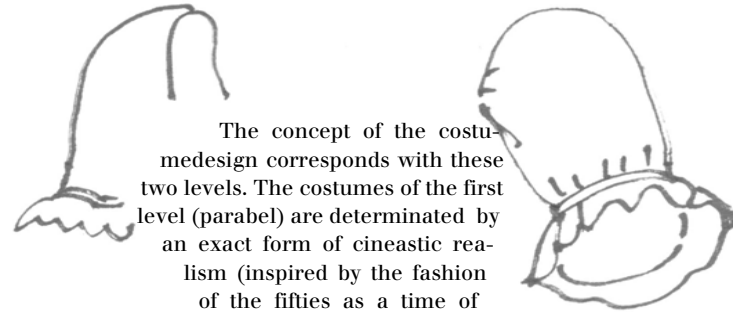


# THE COSTUMES

*Two dramaturgic levels:*

the parabel = the experiment of Alidoro

the fable = the story



The concept of the costume design corresponds with these two levels. The costumes of the first level (parabel) are determined by an exact form of cinematic realism (inspired by the fashion of the fifties as a time of great dreams and the illusion of prosperity). The dominating colour grey defines their formation, on the one hand it relates to the grey of cinder and therefore to the main character Cenerentola, on the other hand it is like a neutral foil for traumatic extensions (coat of stars of Alidoro, the two dresses of Cenerentola, Angiolina, Alidoro (and the chorus as his helping hands) and Ramiro (as servant) are the protagonists of this level. In contrast, the costumes for the second level (fable) are dominated by bright and glaring colours, which determine the look of Magnifico, Dandini, Clorinda and Tisbe. Their form relates to the artificiality of their function in the concept as figures created by Alidoro in an artificial world. The basic form (before the ball) associates dummies without hair (they are like puppets in Alidoros hands), which change more and more into bright colours and forms, the more the characters want to seem someone else then they are (during the ball), also inspired by the fifties fashion, combined with elements of baroque style. Similar to the concept for the costumes, the concept for the make-up is characterized by realism for the first and conscious placed artificiality for the second level. Corresponding with the grey colour of the costumes of Angiolina, Alidoro, the chorus and Ramiro, the make-up and haircuts are tender and natural, in contrary to the strong-coloured make-up and the grotesque, monstrous foamwigs of Magnifico, Dandini, Clorinda and Tisbe.

## CENERENTOLA

1. servant costume, grey workingdress, Dog Martens, apron (colour of the stage)

2. weddingdress

3. combined with the wedding dress, fine blow fabric, draped (development from apron to complete dress)

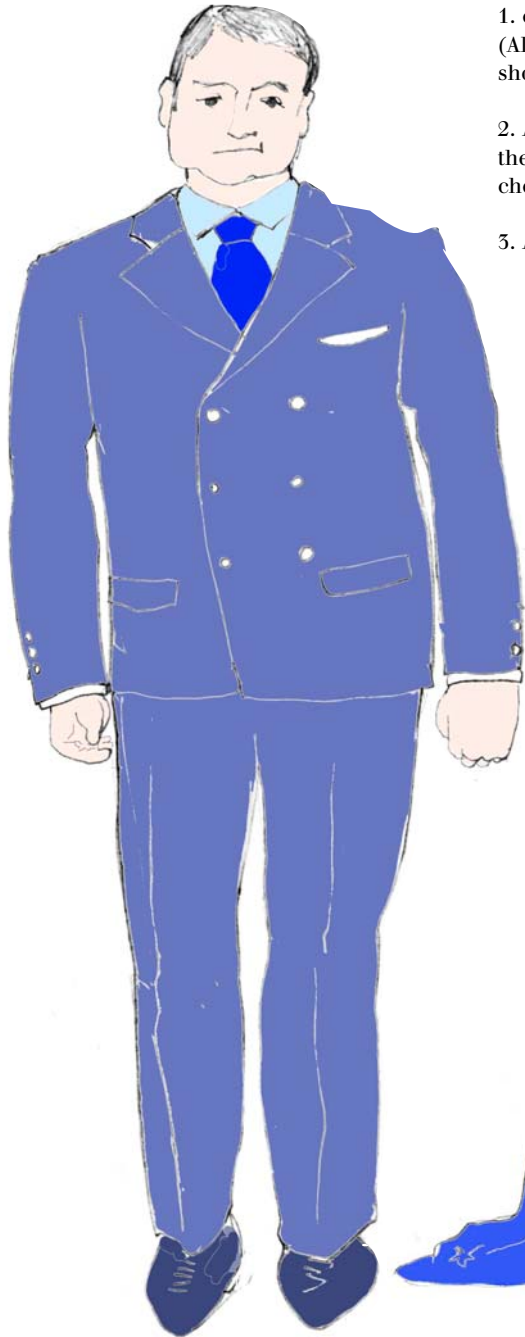


## ALIDORO and CHORUS

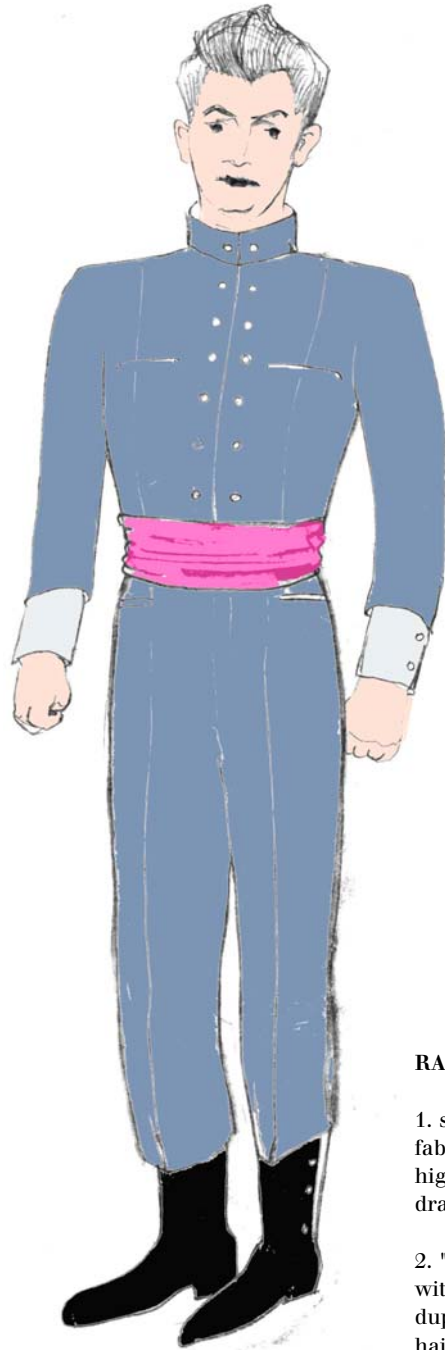
1. costume of official, grey double-breasted suit (Alidoro), single- reasted for chorus, blow tie, dark shoes

2. Alidoro: wide coat, blue with stars (corresponding to the stage) over his official costume and halo chorus: also halo

3. Alidoro: modern beggar, costume from store

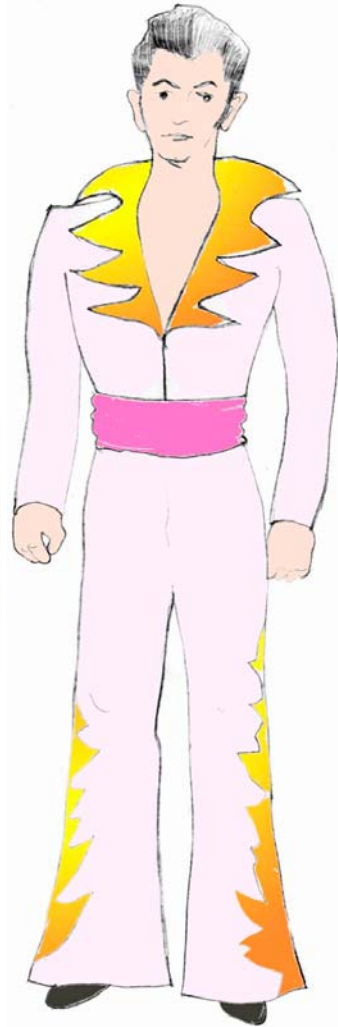






**RAMIRO**

1. servant costume, grey and fabric like Cenerentola 1, dark highclosed boots, belt of pink draped fabric
2. "Elviscostume" pink catsuit with bright fabric application, duplicated with plastic, Elvis hairlook (natural hair)



**DANDINI**

1. "Elviscostume", same principle like Ramiro 2, but the colour of the catsuit is turquoise, leatherbelt, applicated with rubins, wig cut out of big piece of foam material
2. servant costume, colour and fabric like Ramiro1, bald head



**TISBE**

1. felt corset, skirt of foam material, plasticsandals, bald head

2. skirt and sleeves of fabric, duplicated with plastic, wig of foam



**CLORINDA -**

1 top of foam-material, garter belt, plastic sandals, bald head

2 baloon-skirt (fabric), top (drapped fabric, duplicated with plastic), wig of foam



### MAGNIFICO

1 sleeveless vest, underpants of foam material, thick socks, shawl

2 strict jacket, shirt with jabot, bow, baggy breeches of fabric, duplicated with plastic, high closed boots, wig of foam



**LEO KRISCHKE**

Director

Born in 1972 in Vienna

Dramatics and Musicology (University Vienna); Operadirecting (University for music and dramatic arts Vienna) and with Ruth Berghaus (Masterclass Berlin)



Assistentdirector and Co-director of Ruth Berghaus, Olivier Tambosi and Hans Neuenfels and others at Wiener Volks- und Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Salzburger Festspiele, Opernhaus Zürich, Wiener Festwochen, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Staatsschauspiel Stuttgart and other places

Since 1992 Opera- and Theatreproductions (Works by A. Berg, P. Hindemith, H. Purcell, G. Kühr, P. M. Davies, S. Shepard, W. Schwab, W.Sauseng, Th. Dorn, J. Offenbach, S. v. Lohuizen, K. Weill, K. Schwertsik) in Austria, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, England

1995- 97 Artistic director of Wiener Taschenoper

Since 1999 Artistic director of ensemble adhoc

2001/02 Visiting-Professor for Directing at University for music and dramatic arts Vienna

2005 Lead of the Festival "Marleni - Film-Theater-Dialog" about Marlene Dietrich and Leni Riefenstahl, a cooperation of ensemble adhoc, schikaneder and Offene Kanäle Österreich in schikaneder in Vienna (award of the Austrian government)

2005 Prize-winner in the finale of the "ring.award.03" International Competition for Stage Direction and Design at Schauspielhaus Graz

**[www.leokrischke.com](http://www.leokrischke.com)**

Concept: Leo Krischke

Set design and costumes: Sofia Mazzoni

Layout: Team X'n'friends ([www.xanf.de](http://www.xanf.de))