

## **Snow Queen - Directors Guide.**

The Snow Queen was originally a group of seven short stories written by Hans Christian Andersen and first published in 1844. They are cumulatively, an allegorical fairy tale which reflect the various stages of the journey through adolescence. This literary aspect can be coordinated into a school's curriculum for added value. The main themes in this play are; friendship, loyalty, and the power of one pure heart. The key to a successful production, is to present the show in a sincere, heartfelt and honest manner. The children really relate to this musical as does the audience and, to clinch it, they learn the Secret to Eternity as well.

Casting is all-important. The leads Gerda and Kai must be the best singers, but check their vocal ranges first. Gerda carries the show with her loyalty and sincerity through her journeys, and Kai represents the rebellious teenage boy stage. The Robber Girl should be a good dancer and singer as well. Emphasize the conflict between the Snow Queen and Sorceress, who can be played by adults, although, back in 1991 when we first mounted this show, 8th graders sang the roles excellently. Kai is lured to the Snow Queen's cold reason but finds there - the secret to Eternity - love. The songs "Security", "Maybe I Could", "You'll Never Be Me", "Opposites Attract", were added over the years and can be subtracted to compress the show if needed. For costumes, the Nordic peasant look is ideal, with puffed out shirts and embroidered blouses & vests. Use darker colors for the winter scenes and for the summer, choose a lighter palette. It's in the best interest of the show, to

double cast the lead roles, in order to protect against illness and engender friendly competition. Use two separate dress rehearsals, one for each cast.

The set can be simple. We use raised levels with a balcony and a roof to represent the grandmother's house in scene one. A cage for the Reindeer and Doves is needed. We use a 2" by 3" latticed frame. Other productions we've seen were not so simple. They employed two towers erected at opposite sides of the stage to house the Snow Queen and Sorceress. For the Snow Queen's dais, we use a raised platform with steps where her attendants are stationed.

Concerning movement, the Sorcerer's attendants - the Furies, should be small of stature, and dance "wild and crazy". The snow Queen's escorts should look like ballerinas, and implement graceful movement, with white flowing gowns. It is a good idea to form a relationship with a local dance studio where the synergy will work to everyone's advantage. As is always the case, the bigger the cast, the larger the audience and the resultant - ticket sales. The Snow Queen is our most popular show and is being performed all over the world. The themes; friendship, loyalty, courage, and the journey through adolescence have universal interest. You can do it.

### **Snow Queen – Directors Message**

This show was written in 1991 and is based on the famous fairy tale written by Han Christian Andersen in 1844. Schools producing this show can and should incorporate the English literary and mythological aspects in their lesson plans.

The psychological characteristics of this show are also interesting. First, there's Gerda's journey - which represents the various stages of adolescence. Second; there is the attraction and allure of cold, hard reason - in particular, for young men. And finally, above all, there is the importance of loyalty and friendship - especially to adolescents. Concerning the topic, "the power of one

pure heart” well, whole treatises can, and have been written on this concept. And who doesn't want to learn the secret to Eternity?

This Show has evolved over the years. Scenes and songs can be deducted as needed. In that regard, it's quite versatile as to cast size and length. More about this is discussed in the 'Director's Guide'. Likewise, the show can be mounted with massive sets or the minimum – flats, platforms and boxes. For costumes, strive for the German, Nordic fairy tale look - full skirts, layers, and peasant type blouses. Hans Christian Andersen is the narrator and can be incorporated to a more or lesser extent as desired.

The key to a successful production, is to present this show in a sincere and heartfelt manner. The young actors really relate to this show and the audience relates to the purity that comes across. The secret to Eternity is – Love.