

## **"Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella" Auditions**

The Waupaca Community Theatre is announcing auditions for its summer 2026 production of the Tony Award-winning classic musical, "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella."

Long ago in a kingdom far away, a young woman forced into a life of servitude by her cruel stepmother and self-centered stepsisters dreams of a better life. With the help of her fairy godmother, she is transformed into a princess and finds true love with the kingdom's prince.

"Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella" is the new Broadway adaptation of the classic musical. This contemporary take on the classic tale features Rodgers & Hammerstein's most beloved songs, including "In My Own Little Corner," "Impossible/It's Possible" and "Ten Minutes Ago," alongside an up-to-date, hilarious and romantic libretto by Tony Award nominee Douglas Carter Beane. Originally presented on television in 1957 starring Julie Andrews, "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella" was twice remade for television, first in 1965 and again in 1997. The Broadway production of "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella" opened in 2013 at the Broadway Theatre and starred Laura Osnes.

The cast of characters includes: ELLA – though no one notices her beneath her rags and quiet demeanor, she is opinionated, charismatic, passionate, beautiful, and funny. Idealistic and hopeful, she courageously challenges the prince to change the policies in his kingdom and is determined to see the good in everyone despite her hardships and suffering. TOPHER – a misguided and lost prince who longs to do something important with his life. Though brave and heroic, he feels lonely and unfulfilled. Moral, genuine, and kindhearted, he is at a crossroads and must take control of his kingdom and his future. MADAME – Ella's selfish stepmother and epitome of vanity and fashion, she's a social climber who values wealth, status, and material possessions above all else. SEBASTIAN – the kingdom's Lord Chancellor and Topher's trusted advisor, he is devious and selfish. Using propaganda and dishonesty, he keeps Topher isolated and in the dark about his kingdom while ruling without regard for the lower class, or anyone other than himself. MARIE – a friend to Ella and the town's resident crazy lady and beggar woman, she is actually a fairy godmother in disguise. Wise, warm, otherworldly, and charming, Marie rewards Ella for her kindness by making her dreams a possibility. GABRIELLE – Ella's stepsister and daughter of Madame. Encouraged by her mother and sister to value material wealth and social status, she unenthusiastically joins them in their abrasive behavior. Quietly passionate, empathetic, and witty, she is drawn to Ella and is ironically aware that she doesn't fit in. CHARLOTTE – Ella's other stepsister, is rash, self-centered, materialistic, snooty, loud, sassy, and bratty. She has a high, but unfounded, opinion of herself and never passes up an opportunity to be the center of attention. JEAN-MICHEL – a feisty, passionate peasant determined to make a change for the starving class but lacks authority and isn't taken seriously as a revolutionary. He has a crush on Gabrielle, though their courtship is forbidden because they are from different social classes. LORD PINKLETON – Sebastian's right-hand man who announces royal balls, banquets, and even the weather to the villagers. There is also a large ensemble consisting of Knights, Peasants, Serfs, Townspeople, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Court and Servants.

Auditions will be held on Saturday, March 21 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Waupaca Middle School's Knoepfel Auditorium. Those auditioning should prepare 32 measures of a song, preferably from a Broadway show. An accompanist will be present so please bring sheet music. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes. Waupaca Community Theatre is looking for talented and diverse performers of all ethnicities high school age and older for roles in this production.

Rehearsals will take place Monday through Thursday evenings beginning June 1. Rehearsal requirements will vary depending on the role. Performance dates are July 25, 26, 30, 31 and August 1 & 2. Justin Schilling will direct the production and performances will be accompanied by a full pit orchestra conducted by John Kelley.

The Waupaca Community Theatre is a division of the Waupaca Fine Arts Festival. For more information please visit [www.fineartsfestival.org](http://www.fineartsfestival.org) and Waupaca Community Theatre on Facebook.

## **A NOTE ON RODGERS + HAMMERSTEIN'S CINDERELLA**

When Rodgers & Hammerstein sat down to write CINDERELLA, they were crafting an original musical to be produced for television. Rather than think of the usual Broadway proscenium, with a 40 foot opening and a full stage behind, they had to think about how to adapt their skills to what worked for camera: close-ups, simple staging, limited space. Their CINDERELLA was aired live on CBS on Sunday evening, March 31, 1957.

It turned out that Rodgers & Hammerstein's telling of the well-known fairy tale worked both on television – it has been remade twice, in 1965 with Lesley Ann Warren and in 1997 with Brandy and Whitney Houston – and on stage. Theaters began to present CINDERELLA on stages ranging from small high school auditoriums to the 12,000 seat St. Louis Muny.

When Robyn Goodman led the charge for what ended up as “Rodgers + Hammerstein's CINDERELLA”, she was focused on creating a Broadway-worthy, expanded and fleshed out version that would include more than all the well-known songs, fill the 1,700 seat Broadway Theatre, and be acceptable to a savvy modern audience. Magic would be present, of course, but Robyn wanted characters who would take charge of their own lives and destinies; she wasn't interested in, and didn't think today's audiences would be interested in, passive characters whose princes just drop in from the sky. Landing a prince would have to be earned.

What was created, and what this script represents, is a Tony Award-winning 2013 Broadway show with modern sensibilities, but with a whole lot of traditional theatrical magic. The creators of this version wanted all the magic to happen in front of the audience's eyes: No dashing off-stage to reemerge instantly in a new costume; no smoke allowing sets to rise through the floor, no projections that whirl the audience through woods and forests. Everything would happen in theater time... with theater magic.