

Russian and East European Studies Center
University of Oregon
presents

Scarlet Flower

A play inspired by a tale by S. Aksakov

АЛЕНКЫЙ ЦВЕТОЧЕК



Written & directed by J. Nemirovskaya

May 22, 2005

6:00 p.m. at Milam auditorium, OSU

S. Aksakov's story is a 19th century rendition of the Russian folk tale, Beauty and the Beast. This timeless story, about how fearless love transforms ugliness into beauty, varies from culture to culture, as does the idea of beauty itself. The Russian word for beautiful (*krasivyy*) derives from red (*krasnyj*), which was considered the most beautiful of all colors. And the Russian word for bad (*khudo*) comes from thin (*khudoj*), which means that Russians thought only corpulent people were beautiful! To fight the battle against the slim waistline, Russian noblewomen would lie in bed, taking special treatments of milk, honey, and vodka (along with lots of snacks, of course) in order to nurture the soft, round shape that they so coveted. To set off their full-figured beauty, Russian women painted their faces white, their teeth black, and finished this dramatic look with one red circle on each plump cheek.

Despite the differences in standards of beauty over time and across cultures, there is a universal side to beauty. Everyone appreciates the beauty of a flower. There can be something in a look, a gesture, a form, or a voice, which is almost indefinable but nonetheless recognized as beautiful. This universal aspect of beauty allows people of all cultures to understand each other and, in the end, brings them closer together. Perhaps this was what the great Russian novelist, F. Dostoevsky, meant when he wrote his enigmatic phrase: "Beauty will save the world."

Students from REESC Russian Through Theater class along with members of Eugene's Russian community came together to present this timeless story. For months, they studied Russian and Gypsy folk culture, songs, dances, and crafts in order to bring this story to life on the stage.

Thank you, my dear dedicated cast, for your enthusiasm, tremendous work and your love for Russia and its culture! Thanks to everyone else who gave us their generous help! And thank you, dear audience, for coming to our show tonight! We thought of you as we worked on this production, and we hope you will enjoy the show.



CAST, IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

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| Director..... | Seth Davis |
| Russian Dancers...Anton Melkov, Pat Benad, Tanya Beede, Sergei Larionov, Luda Kremers, Sveta Easton | |
| First Buffoon and Devil..... | Ruby Brunk |
| Second Buffoon, Devil and Polimchuk..... | Calvin Evans |
| Grandpa and Leshij..... | Pat Benad |
| Grandma and Baba Yaga..... | Tanya Beede |
| Mouse..... | Rose Gobeo |
| King..... | Barry Ng |
| Queen, Merchant's Customer and Beauty's Maid.... | Elena Bogolyubova |
| Prince-Beast..... | Konstantin Avramov |
| Nanny..... | Sveta Easton |
| Cat and Scarlet Flower..... | Masako Fujiyama |
| First Bride and Turnip..... | Amberle Johnson |
| Granddaughter..... | Anna Laptova |
| Dog and Ivan the Fool..... | Sergei Larionov |
| Second Bride and Kolobok..... | Dasha Shulgina |
| Third Bride and Devil Girl..... | Yuliya Golosova |
| Praskovia (Beauty's sister)..... | Lyuda Kremers |
| Marfa (Beauty's sister) and Gypsy Girl..... | Gabriella Anelauskaite |
| Beauty..... | Dasha Bakhtina |
| Merchant..... | Matvey Ivashov |
| Merchant's helper, Kumchuk, Messenger..... | Anton Melkov |
| Russian Singers..... | Lena Ivashova, Sasha Polishchuk, Geoffrey Dyer |

The Plot of Our Play:



ACT I

Once upon a time, in a faraway kingdom, a King and Queen told their son that it was time for him to marry... The Prince doesn't want a wife. He prefers listening to the stories that his loving Nanny tells him. He eventually agrees to marry if a bride can be found that tells a story he has never heard before. The messenger announces the storytelling contest.

The first bride tells a popular Russian folk tale, "The Turnip". But of course the Prince has heard that one. The second bride tells the story of a mischievous *kolobok* (gingerbread bun) that was tricked by a sly fox. But the prince has heard that one, too! The third bride, an Arabian princess, captivates the entire court with her exotic dancing. But the Prince knows every story she begins to tell him --- he knows all folk tales in the world! All three candidates are thrown out of the palace by the mocking jesters.

Then, out of nowhere, appears the ugly witch Baba Yaga. Even though the witch is being wooed by the forest spirit Leshij, she still dreams of marrying the Prince. When the Prince laughs at her. Baba Yaga is furious, she turns the Prince into a horrible Beast, and the cruel Jesters into devils, but she spares the faithful Nanny for being kind to her.

ACT 2

Now we are in the chambers of a rich Merchant with his three daughters – nasty and cruel Marfa, vain Praskovia, and the youngest, gentle and dreamy Beauty. As he leaves on a business trip, the Merchant promises to bring back anything that his daughters desire. The two elder daughters wish for vanity items – a jeweled diadem and a crystal mirror – but Beauty asks for the most beautiful Scarlet Flower in the world that she saw in her dream.

While the Merchant is away, his two elder daughters fall in love with a young man, Ivan the Fool or Vanya. He prefers Beauty, but the two other sisters won't leave him alone. After their flirting fails, they go to Baba Yaga to ask for a love potion.

The Merchant is on his journey. He has finished his trading and found gifts for his two older daughters. But he has yet to find the elusive Scarlet Flower for his beloved Beauty. He suddenly enters a mysterious palace, where devils and spirits try to confuse him. While he strolls through the palace garden, he finds the beautiful Scarlet Flower and picks it, which enrages the Beast. The Beast spares his life after the Merchant promises to send one of his daughters to live with the Beast.

When the Merchant arrives home, his daughters happily greet him. Once he tells them of his promise, the elder sisters refuse to go, but Beauty feels that it is her destiny, so she journeys to the Beast's castle.

Intermission



ACT 3

When she first sees the Beast, Beauty is very frightened. She also refuses to eat any of the food he offers. But she soon warms to him, and helps him conquer a speech impediment by teaching him rhymes. As he tries to entertain Beauty, the Beast summons a troupe of Gypsies who dance for them. Beast immediately falls in love with a Gypsy Beauty. Baba Yaga had told the Beast that the curse would be broken if a girl loved him with all her heart. Everyone thinks that the Gypsy Beauty will break the spell, but her kiss doesn't change anything, as she loves freedom more than she loves the Beast...

Back at home, Beauty's sisters are getting offers of marriage from two young men, the soldier Kumchuk and the boyar (nobleman) Polimchuk. However, the sister's constant arguing scares the grooms away. Then Vanya comes to visit and discovers that his beloved Beauty is a prisoner at the Beast's palace. He resolves to rescue her.

Vanya arrives and Beauty introduces him to the Beast. Vanya sees the Scarlet Flower and kills it. He also kills the Beast while he is asleep. Beauty is heartbroken and tries to commit suicide. But just as she is about to kill herself, her deep love for the Beast breaks his curse. He becomes alive again and turns back into a mature Prince - the one Beauty is in love with. He marries Beauty and they live happily ever after.

The End



Music: excerpts by

Glière,
Shostakovich,
Prokofiev,
Rimsky-Korsakov,
Tchaikovsky,
Minkus,
Beethoven,
Orff
Leschenko

Production Stuff

Assistant Director --- Tanya Beede, Amberle Johnson

PR --- Jackie Bangs, Pat Benad, Amberle Johnson

Flyer/Poster--- Masako Fujiyama, Rose Gobeo, Pat Benad, Amberle Johnson

Choreography --- Tanya Beede, Anton Melkov, Masako Fujiyama, Pat Benad

Set design --- Julia Tikhonov, Rose Gobeo, Anton Melkov

Props and Stage manager --- Calvin Evans

Costume --- Tanya Beede, Gabriella Anelauskaite, Rose Gobeo,

Yuliya Golosova, Amberle Johnson, Masako Fujiyama

Lights --- Kris Santoro

Makeup --- Dasha Bakhtina, Yulia Golosova

Music --- Masako Fujiyama, Philipp Novikov, Sasha Polishchuk

Program --- Masako Fujiyama, Gabriella Anelauskaite, Jackie Bangs

Editing: Amberle Johnson, Rose Gobeo

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