Cinderella’s Bad Magic

A chamber opera for five singers, flute, three synthesizers, and fretless bass

Libretto by Jeffrey Sichel

by Kyle Gann
2002
Cinderella's Bad Magic (2002)

Cinderella's Bad Magic is a chamber opera, with libretto by Jeffrey Sichel, written in just intonation and using three keyboard synthesizers. For the ease of singers not accustomed to just intonation, the piece moves from triad to triad in a pattern that uses as many consonances as possible. The structural triads are as follows:

Bb - C - C - C - C# - C# - C# - Cx - Cx
G - G - G - A - A - G# - G# - A# - A# - Gx
Eb - Eb - E - E - E - E - E# - E# - E# - E#

Therefore the tuning of these twelve structural pitches, linked by perfectly tuned fifths and thirds, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch:</th>
<th>Bb</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C#</th>
<th>Cx</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratio:</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>5/3</td>
<td>125/72</td>
<td>3125/1728</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cents:</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>1026</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch:</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>G#</th>
<th>A#</th>
<th>Gx</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratio:</td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>25/18</td>
<td>125/96</td>
<td>625/432</td>
<td>3125/2304</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cents:</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>528</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch:</th>
<th>Eb</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>E#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratio:</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>25/24</td>
<td>625/576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cents:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus when the A# major triad resolves to Eb major, as happens recurringly in scene 9, the A# is not Bb, but actually just over a quarter-tone sharp, and a little closer to A than Bb.

In addition, other pitches employ the conventions of Ben Johnston’s just-intonation notation. C-E-G, F-A-C, and G-B-D are all perfect 4:5:6 triads. A plus (+) raises a pitch by a syntonic comma; thus, in the score an F+ is 9/8, 204¢, while an F natural is 10/9, 182¢, above Eb. In addition there are a few pitches preceded by a 7 as accidental, which lowers them approximately a quarter-tone to make a 7th harmonic (969¢) of whatever tonic they relate to. In addition, there are quarter-tone symbols to indicate an 11/9 interval (347¢) above the prevailing tonic, always leading from a minor third to a major one or the reverse.
The flutist is required to play in just intonation. The singers can merely tune to the pitches given by the instruments. Synthesizer 1 has a vibraphone-like tone, like a bell. Synthesizer 2 is a more sustained organ sound. Synthesizer 3 has a twangy, guitar-like sound. Fretless bass is required to produce the tuning correctly.

The characters are:

- Rip Van Winkle – soprano
- Cinderella 1 – soprano
- Cinderella 2 – tenor
- Mother – alto
- Father - baritone

*Cinderella’s Bad Magic* was premiered on Oct. 26, 2002, in Moscow, Russia, and on Nov. 1 in St. Petersburg. The American (concert) premiere was at Bard College on Feb. 4, 2003

Duration: 43 minutes
Scene 1: Cinderella's Departure

Cinderella, stuck up in the air

Wake up!

Wake up!

f

Cinderella's Bad Magic

Jeffrey Sichel

Kyle Gann

2002
"po - king through the clouds."

"High, blue, yel - low,

aw - ful - ly hap - py, smi - ling down on me"
twisable flashing, streaming upwards and downwards free from the gravity world.

Heading for home doesn't work. Exclude

Cinderella's Bad Magic
me the sign says.

The sun doesn't penetrate it doesn't

shine here in the shadow world... the other

Cinderella's Bad Magic
world. It doesn't touch our...

Shush. Watching Staring Void.
Cinderella's Bad Magic

Immersed in I don't understand the expectation of

Immersed in I don't understand the expectation of

"..."
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Most of the time I delude myself with love.
even come close. 

Poetry. And dirt can look clean and that's O.K. But it doesn't
al-ways work. I can see through ev-ery-thing and it's so fuck-ing hol-low and

Eve-ry-thing seems un-real and I don't like know-ing plas-tic.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic

Slow motion separation and observation... looking out from behind the window. Rolling moving pictures...
mo-tion-al-ly phy-si-cal-ly mov-ing up on the high-wire e-spe-cial-ly at night.
Leaves.  Birds.

I want to see the sky...

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Scene 2: The "Red Death" Aria

A little slower

$\frac{\text{98}}{\text{132}}$

Cinderella's Bad Magic
found that I had wasted my life and didn't have much
Continuities got broken.

Changes I ne ver

Left to make sense of the empty periods with no record of...

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella’s Bad Magic

There is a
fire and motion of the soul which will not dwell in its own narrow being

It aspires beyond the fitting medium

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
long devastated the country.

pestilence had ever been so fatal or so hideous.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
was its avatar and its zeal. The redness and the

horror of blood.

There were sharp pains and

Cinderella's Bad Magic
sudden dizziness and then profuse bleeding.

from the pores with dissolution.
Scene 3: The Zero Gravity Debate

M. 154

in zero gravity. The clown itself alone existing in a circus

Fl.

in zero gravity.

Syn.1

Syn.2

Syn.3

Bass

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
place... circus tent. I jump like a child in a
giant clear plastic room. I jump up and down. I
jump against the walls.

Is it a game?

Is it a game?

The "Gravity" Aria

Gravity persists. It doesn't go away... it just stays around and won't let

Cinderella's Bad Magic
An obsession. An obsession.

Are you trying to keep in touch with reality?

Are you defining reality by the apple drop?

Do you need _

Cinderella's Bad Magic
a ruler snapping on your wrist? Pay attention! Very direct first

Image. World which says we are earth-bound... the contradiction. Can we be-

Cinderella's Bad Magic
lieve it. Can you prove your earth-bound ness in a personal way?

In the first case the a-pri-ori image is

Cinderella's Bad Magic
and always has been of gravity.

The apple does drop.

Newton discovers the apple and the world becomes

Cinderella's Bad Magic
There are powers far greater than your own personal imagination. Natural law is a profound re-
Cinderella's Bad Magic
You can not break the laws of gravity when you are earth bound.

Snap! I need pain as an affirmation of my conscience.
walk - ing, wak - ing, be - low and a - bove, in and out of in -
walk - ing, wak - ing, be - low and a - bove, in and out of in -

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Scene 4: The Nonexistent Hour / Painting Bad Dreams

305

R. J = 136

M. Cin-de-rel-la.

3 a-de-qua-cy of dreams.

3 a-de-qua-cy of dreams.

F.

Fl.

Syn.1

Syn.2

Syn.3

Bass

308

R. Mov-ing parts. Cin-de-rel-la chasing mul-ti-ple wind-

Fl.

Syn.1

Syn.2

Syn.3

Bass

Cinderella's Bad Magic
mills.

I journey through a place and it re-

Cal - der - style mo - biles.

Cal - der - style mo - biles.

Cal - der - style mo - biles.

leases cer - tain uh... che - mi - cals and it al -

leases cer - tain uh... che - mi - cals and it al -

leases cer - tain uh... che - mi - cals and it al -

Cinderella's Bad Magic
R.  

M.  

Fl.  

Syn.1  

Syn.2  

Syn.3  

Bass  

When I was young I would see pictures and that was the size of the world.

I let my mind wonder.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
What's beautiful is crisp not

I realize I don't feel anything.
The leaves are changing color. Machines do cold. The leaves are changing color.

The leaves are changing color.

nothing practical but express everything about impractical creation.
and invention and meaninglessness.

The process of

Devo-ting lives to the true value of

get-ting there.
I have created a machine that has no function.

I am not Frankenstein.

Human function.

I am a machine.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
I don't have hands, five moving parts.

The time has changed and it's like this long night for

Cinderella's Bad Magic
I hear your no particular reason.

Rip Van Winkle is talking.

Rip Van Winkle is talking.

Rip Van Winkle is talking.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic

voice. It's like reading... I wrote to myself so

A letter.

A letter.
I'd remember

Life takes place during the

lost hour when light saving time ends.

In a

Cinderella's Bad Magic
The leaves are nonexistent hour the clock turns back-wards.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Lost in silence.

in - su - lar world.

Lost in si - lence.

Lost in si - lence.

Lost in si - lence.

Lost in si - lence.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
feel but I feel the same thing here and now.

session. None for you.

Salvation. Frustration. No frustration.
None for you.

I don't re-mem-

Are you com-ing or go-ing?
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Betty Boop came
a bus and the bus went slow.

spi-ri-tu-al-ly closer.
Acting Medea.
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Gi-ant Me-de-a painting bad dreams and pale.

Locked in a gas chamber I feel the air unsettled sleep.
slip away. I don't know what to do.

Wake up.

Wake up.
A strange clown show on a hillside air-planes

A strange clown show on a hillside air-planes

come flying over dropping bombs.

come flying over dropping bombs.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
I do.  I hide behind a tree.  I'm captured.

You better run.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
You've been shot.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
And fades out of the dream.

is O.K. And fades out of the dream.

And fades out of the dream. Wake

Wake

I make choices as to who will live and who will up!

up!

Cinderella's Bad Magic
I'm sent to clean my body. A big light blue room with

R. & die.

C. 1

C. 2

Fl.

Syn.1

Syn.2

Syn.3

Bass

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic

Window shades pulled. I smell incense burning. The smoke gets heavier.
I wake up. Upset. I have more dreams.

I lied down as if to sleep.

I wake up.

It isn't true.

It isn't true.
Trapped.

Rip Van Winkle is talking.

I don't remember so well.

Rip Van Winkle is talking.

I need a change in my?
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Scene 5: It Never Really Snows

Eclipses do affect people. They affect the

weather. They are mystical events. They affect the world.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
They are the gods getting angry giving us warning.

Are you buying perfection? Cinderella’s Bad Magic
It's not snowing and I enjoy
Are you a person of great importance?
joy snow when the world rests under a white blanket sliding.
-ing on ice... soft-ness of the world... the beauty.

The trees bending with frost... poetry.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Slightly faster

An icy cold place. It never really snows...

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic

Walking along the paths that weren't chosen.

still a big world.

I discover my

Walking along the paths that weren't chosen.
Cinderella's Bad Magic

crazy horse.
No, I didn't die. Indian
style in the snow. No-thing is masked. Stumb-ling through the pro-cess. Stumb-ling through

blank days... street names on signs re-gi-ster the same num-ber af-ter

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic

I'm a tourist in this

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Rip Van Winkle keeps talking.

Remembering the back roads.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Remembering the sites and the sounds... and the smells... the younger generation's hanging haunts and Cinderella wasting away behind.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
bars. She didn't escape.

I fell in love with my prince.

God

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Myths decay then melt then crack.
knows bad magic.
Myths decay then melt then crack.
Myths decay then melt then crack.
Myths decay then melt then crack.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
time. No thing e-ver last-ing... e-phe-me-ral, keep-ing count. I can't not count.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
It's hard to sit days on end feeling useless.

To believe in

Cinderella's Bad Magic
for a beginning

Always a place to start. Never the place to end.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
The world is hotter.

It's hot.

The world is hotter. Burning up the clouds.
It's too late to start again.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Are you make-believe?

ever in mytho-log-cal unreal time. 

Are you make-believe?

Are you make-believe?

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Scene 6: Brains Split Sometimes

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Not possible to feel... not held together anything. Gravity. Gravity.

I can't fly. I don't fly. I don't want to fly. I want to get both feet planted
and this girl loved me and made my dreams come true.

She took care of the hard part.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic

R.

C. 2

Fl.

Syn.2

Syn.3

Bass

Some-thing on the
lieve in her self but she could be-lieve in me_

outside fa-ted to me-di-oc ri-ty.

Me-di-o cre self-loathing ex-

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Brains split some times and comeback together... and I'm getting the

Cinderella's Bad Magic
On a slow road to a not so nice place.

feeling that mine will.

De-

Cinderella's Bad Magic
lay-ing it with cra-zy hor-ses. Scream-ing. No, I just
lay-ing it with cra-zy hor-ses. Scream-ing. No, I just
Can you talk a-bout it?

Cinderella's Bad Magic
feel like running, running naked.

Every thing just

You're not Robinson Crusoe.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
seems like so much artifice and artificial big words that don't capture any sense

Cinderella's Bad Magic
of what it is to be a live.
Rush slightly
\[ \frac{\text{j}}{70} \]

They took me out of the zoo. They said I didn't be-

Black out. Lights up!

Black out. Lights up!

They said my hair had grown too long. They said that my anger was dis-

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic

a-ni-mals. They said that I had no place in their world.

I left. I created my own. I created my own world.
Am-bi-dex-trous. Believe my brain is split. I can't decide.

Am-bi-dex-trous. Believe my brain is split. I can't decide.

No it's not.

No it's not.

left or right. Most of the time I'm coming home or going happy.

left or right. Most of the time I'm coming home or going happy.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
I pretend. I slow down and pretend that a lot of things are worth no thing.

Sitting down too long.

and that somethings are worthwhile but quite a lot of things seem stupid.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
so - la - ted)_ no sto - ry to tell._ Can't re mem - ber a - ny way,

I - so - la - ted._ Feel - ing lost._ I don't have time
de - pres - sing._

Cinderella's Bad Magic
to live. Bulbs always burn out. Dim yellow light. The wind like

Scene 7: Dead Dog Diary Girl

Fly away little

no-where else in the world.
The door at night.

Sanctuary.

A young girl... her parents shot during the war.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
she runs down the road with her dead dog. Can't admit or understand death. She

Dead dog diary girl.

Dead dog diary girl.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
held on to this dead dog, carried it like a baby. Surreal maybe.

She buries the damn thing and that's the end.

She buries the damn thing and that's the end.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Re-a-li-ty seems daun-ting Home... look ing... i-den-ti-ty... cause...

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Belief can challenge old and current times.

Life... mission.

I want

experiences other than an idea for even thinking that I had space to live.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Smaller always smaller.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
A no-ther deed-le dumb dream on a dog's life.

Another deedle dumb dream on a dog's life.

A no-ther deed-le dumb dream on a dog's life. Thank-ful games.
and realities slip by the window.

Always windows.

move in opposite directions.

Slow motion windows moving underground.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
fi-sher folk laugh-ing and sing-ing. They at-tached bells to the rods.

We heard the sound roll-ing with the waves... sub-tily

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Disorienting.

Disorienting. Disorienting. Doing it with

Touch sensations.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Scene 8: Something about a Rose

Li - be-ra-ted, the sen-ses wan-der. Up in space...

Cinderella's Bad Magic
feelings of being in touch in love, looking up at the sky filled with everything moving and changing.

Re-recognizable and unrecognizable configurations.

Cinderella’s Bad Magic
Walking through some seasons
nights_ star-ing at the sky...
world or-der and

beau-ty. To see and to love care-ful-ly_
Love the earth and wor-ship the earth and

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella’s Bad Magic
Layer upon layer.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Some-thing a-bout a rose that sat for a week and did n't die and thrived and kept chan - ging and grow - ing more

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Once to understand a rose.

Nothing. Listen.

Beautiful as it opened properly.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Dangling.

Silence.

I dread the report.

I'm not a bird. I can't fly.

Time held in place.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Sky blue, stuck up in the sky.

Daylight -

Nothing ever gets lightens spirits not plunged into darkness.
The man in the moon has lived a lot longer than any of us care long ago.

- Hunting down every moment a new year seems like so

- done in space.
I can't stop the clocks from ticking. I encourage them.
I pine for connection once in a while.

The fisherman gives up for the day's opium addiction and visions of a god really wanting to feel Cinderella's Bad Magic.
Scene 9: Are You Waking Up?

Motlo rit. rhythmically free

Are you wak-ing up, Cin-de-rel-la?

rel-la feel-ing lone-ly lost_and_a-lone.

Tempo as at the beginning

j = 75

Cinderella's Bad Magic
beard and then he didn't and then he did again. He died with a beard.

Every day the shadow appears.

Moments are only

Things aren't always what they seem.

Moments are only

Moments are only

Cinderella's Bad Magic
All I really wanted was to feel. That was the thing with moments.
Boxed out of my mind.

Boxed out of my mind.

Eat out of my mind.
ing flowers. Whole lives as masses of papers. Not enough time to go
Cinderella's Bad Magic
everyone at the ball.

I do new things. Losing my self.

Crying more. I do new things. Losing my self.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Doggy paddling, Acting as Cinderella breaking

Rip Van Winkle is talking.
down for the umpteenth time.

So much time alone.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
because he is God who feels much deeper than everyone.
I wish it was easier.

She was afraid.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Whole hog head first without a safety net.

half-assed commitments.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
or a guide post or a spot-ter or what-e-ver it is.
I thrive on isolation.

take the fucking plunge god damn it.

Multicolored glass panels... little
Cinderella's Bad Magic

circles and triangles, chipped, falling, mixing with the green glass

Coming down the light caps and telegraph wires... moving.
C. 1
River time and again moving along the rails and watching the wires

Fl.

Syn.1

Syn.2

Syn.3

Bass

R.

C. 1
Alone on this particular day I've

wave up and down past the windows.

Fl.

Syn.1

Syn.2

Syn.3

Bass

Cinderella's Bad Magic
come the wrong way.
I had to get away. No destination.

Rip Van Winkle is talking.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Some incomplete part of my life I have to retrieve.

Rip van Winkle is talking.
So hard to place and so close I can imagine.
I was born here.

Much too high...

Much too high...

Cinderella's Bad Magic
vanishing into the air.

A vast
1059

R.

The world in front of me

Cinderella be-

C. 1

in-ter-sec-tion.

C. 2

in-ter-sec-tion.

Fl.

Syn.1

Syn.2

Syn.3

Bass

Cinderella's Bad Magic
hind me.  Cinderella, behind me.

Stuck there standing still with the snow falling

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic

Ooo... Cinderella went crazy.

Bring me somewhere tomorrow.

Bigger than a picture frame.

Bigger than a picture frame.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
I just had to get away for a while.

She just had to get away for a while.

Rel-la went cra-zy.
On-ly Cin-da-rel-la in my bub-ble. Smel-ling the

knew I was one of them.

while.

ro-ses, in-de-pen-dence my own life, in-di-vid-u-a-lity.

Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Un-til the end of the world, tan-ta-li-zing.

Rain-drops turn a-way.

Cre-a-ting pic-tures of a
I woke up from a dream disoriented and

virtual picture.
not knowing where I was or who I was and I'm not me in my dreams.

Sleep is time travel.

Sleep is time travel.

Sleep is time travel.

Sleep is time travel.

mp
I remember. It's all about going to

Time actually can pass.

Time actually can pass.

Time actually can pass.

Time actually can pass.

Time actually can pass.

Time actually can pass.

Time actually can pass.
sleep. And waking up in another place and time as a-

And waking up in another place and time.

no-ther person sleeping a life away.
as a-ther person sleeping a life away.
Cinderella's Bad Magic
Cinderella's Bad Magic