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Dramatic Publishing

The Dancing Princesses OR The Worn-Out Dancing Shoes



*Adapted by Max Bush
From
The Brothers Grimm*

The Dancing Princesses or The Worn-Out Dancing Shoes

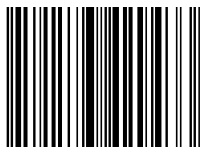
Fairy tale. Adapted by Max Bush from a story by the Brothers Grimm.

Cast: 6 to 12m., 8 to 16w., 3 to 6 either gender. Here is a magical tale of dance and romance. A mystery threatens the security of the kingdom: where do the princesses escape to every night, and why are their dancing shoes worn out each morning? Why do they sleep through their princess duties each day? The king, who was wounded in the war, desperately tries to solve the mystery by proclaiming that any man who can solve it will marry the daughter of his choice and become the future king. An old woman servant, Ursula, who is much more than she appears to be, decides to act to solve the mystery and restore balance and security to the kingdom. Ursula seeks out a suitable husband and heir for Amalia, the oldest daughter. She chooses Gunter, a simple soldier with a good heart, and provides the information he will need to solve the mystery. As Amalia's affection for Gunter grows, he follows the princesses down into the underground where he witnesses the dreamlike dances of the princesses. The script focuses on six dancing princesses, although there can be more or fewer. The suggested music comes from the time period of the tale and includes pieces by Handel, Gluck and Stamitz. The choreography aboveground focuses on classical dance, while the dances in the underground reflect less the baroque style and much more the romantic fantasies of the princesses. *One ext., two int. sets. Approximate running time: 65 minutes. Code: DF4.*



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The Dancing Princesses or The Worn-Out Dancing Shoes

By
MAX BUSH

Based on the fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm



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The Dancing Princesses or The Worn-Out Dancing Shoes was co-commissioned by Savannah Children’s Theatre, Savannah, Ga., and Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, Grand Rapids, Mich. The play opened at the Savannah Children’s Theatre on April 27, 2012.

CAST:

Jannika	Morgan Jane Anderson
Ihse	Lexy Bonsignori
Emlin.....	Quoya Brown
Helene	Rachel Cowart
Dagmar.....	Emily Edwards
Belinda	Emilye Eischeid
Amalia.....	Mary Caitlin McMahon
Clothilda.....	Katherine Peecksen
Kathrin	Taylor Peecksen
Lenore	Anna Schneider
Freda	Nellie Wadman
Gudrun	Jaz Wright
King Aldrich.....	Edmond Clark
Ursula.....	Ashlyn Fesperman
Claus	Brennan Jones
Sophia	Madison Major
Rickert.....	Cason Richter
Gunter	Henry Wadman
Franz	Seth Williams
Ladies-in-Waiting.....	Madeline Grove, Nan James, Skyler Lanier, Celinda Milton, Savannah Patenaude, Shannon Rowbal, Kodi Smith
Dancing Princes	Edmond Clark, Noah Edwards, Mark Greene, Madeline Grove, Nan James, Brennan Jones, Nick Jowers, Skyler Lanier, Andy Paul, Finn Repella, Cason Richter, Seth Williams
Cherubs	Xavianna Annette Brown, Anna Claire Edenfield, Elise Eischeid, Katie James, Elizabeth Smith, Anna Strunjas, Lyric Swan

PRODUCTION STAFF:

Director Kelie Miley
Choreographers Megan Youngblood, Kendra Norwood
Playwright Max Bush
Stage Manager Cynthia Holmen
Dramaturg Paul Gabbard
Set design and construction Mike Prow, Eric G. Mitchell
Set painting Kendra Norwood, Henry Wadman, Lisa James
Sound and lighting design..... On Site Services
Costumes..... Bonnie Juengert, Pam Edenfield, Renee McMahon
Wig design Donna Moore
Props Stacy Rowbal
Windows Heather Kingery
Concessions..... Terry and Christina Edwards, Pam Edenfield,
Stephanie Cowart, Takosha Swan, Ruth Campbell
Box Office..... Georgette Bonsignori, Lisa James, LeeAnn Kole,
Kathy Browne, Cheryl Lauer, Gail Eischeid
Sound Operator Paul Gabbard
Poster design Carly Hallman
Program..... Renee McMahon
Housekeeping..... Josh Riggs

The Dancing Princesses or The Worn-Out Dancing Shoes opened in Michigan at the Grand Rapids Civic Theatre on July 27, 2013.

CAST:

Sophia	Rebecca Prevost
Claus	Michael Kam
King Aldrich.....	Steve Place
Ursula.....	Deb Schakel
Amalia.....	Anna Valente
Kathrin	Meghan Schilthius
Gudrun	Mary McHugh
Freda	Allison Hubbard
Ilse.....	Mia Van Erp
Lenore	Koby Westers
Rickert.....	Brian Peerbolt
Franz	Brandon Ambs
Gunter	Joshua Watkin
Princes.....	Quenton Kimble, Travon Williams, Josh Carter, Natalie Brown, Michael Kam, Victoria Learman
Ladies-in-Waiting.....	Victoria Learman, Erin Burke, Natalie Brown

PRODUCTION STAFF:

Director	Jennifer Hunter
Playwright	Max Bush
Stage Manager	Kirk Laing
Choreographer	Chris Carter
Fight Choreographer	Mike Hull
Costume Designer	Val Fisher, Jamie Tinker Heeringa
Dressers	Maddy Hagger, Ashleigh Schneider, Claire Dettloff, Laura Bullen, Brooke Bacigal, America DeGraw
Hair and Makeup Artist	L. William Vicari
Set Designer/Technical Director ...	Michael Wilson, John Donovan
Deck Captain	Elizabeth VanHaren
Deck Crew	Samantha Peterson, Ryleigh Galer, Hannah Elliott, Jaixone McPeak, Meghan Johns, Paige VanSickle, Mackenzie Anthony
Fly Crew	Taryn Vanlopik, Kobe Brown, Darby Spears
Sound Designer	Samuel Johnson
Sound Engineer	Ben Utter
Sound Effects Operator	Bri Sprague
Mic Technician	Katherine Loose
Lighting Designer	Catie Marlett Dreher
Light Board Operator	Martha Tinker
Property Designer	Jason Marlett
Property Managers	Autumn Shelton, Grace Oxford
Program Editors	Samantha Peterson, Kobe Brown, Quenton Kimble, Grace Oxford

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To Jennifer Hunter

PARTIAL MUSIC PLOT

1. Preshow and opening:
Christoph Willibald Gluck's "Dance of the Blessed Spirits"
2. Interrupted dance with the prince of Saxony:
George Frideric Handel's "Sarabande," orchestral version
3. Dance with Rickert, Prince of Saxony:
George Frideric Handel's "Water Music,"
Suite in F major, Hornpipe
4. Kathrin's song to Rickert:
To the traditional music of "Frau Wirtin," in $\frac{3}{4}$ time,
adapted from the 1809 text by Ludwig Uhland
5. Amalia's interrupted dance with Gunter:
George Frideric Handel's "Sarabande," orchestral version
6. Amalia's and Gunter's song:
Traditional English folksong, "Rose, Rose, Rose, Rose"
7. Kathrin's song to begin the ritual:
"Come Again, Sweet Love Doth Now Invite,"
adapted from John Dowland
8. Music for the first princess dance in the underground castle, the
"happy dance":
Johann Stamitz's Symphony in D major, op. 3, no. 2,
orchestral version, first movement
9. Music for the second princess dance in the underground castle,
the "serious, romantic dance":
George Frideric Handel's "Sarabande," orchestral version
10. Music for the third princess dance in the underground castle, the
"wild dance":
Christoph Willibald Gluck's "Dance of the Furies"
11. Kathrin's song to her prince:
"Come Again, Sweet Love Doth Now Invite"
adapted from John Dowland
12. Music for the final dance with Amalia, Gunter and the princesses:
George Frideric Handel's "Sarabande," orchestral version

The Dancing Princesses or The Worn-Out Dancing Shoes

CHARACTERS

CLAUS: the king's guard

SOPHIA: a servant

KING ALDRICH: the king

URSULA: the king's nurse, an old woman

PRINCESSES

AMALIA: the oldest of the princesses

KATHRIN: the second oldest princess

GUDRUN: the third oldest princess

FREDA: the third youngest princess

ILSE: the second youngest princess

LENORE: the youngest princess

RICKERT: an older prince, of Saxony

FRANZ: a thief

GUNTER: a soldier

PRINCES (6): masked, nonspeaking dancers

LADIES-IN-WAITING

SERVANTS (3): masked, nonspeaking, in the underground castle.

TIME

Around 1812

PLACE

Multiple locations in Hesse, Germany:

The king's castle

The deep forest

The underground castle courtyard

The Dancing Princesses or The Worn-Out Dancing Shoes

SCENE 1

AT RISE: *Preshow music carries into the opening—an orchestral version of Gluck’s “Dance of the Blessed Spirits”—and plays underneath the opening scene. We see the hall just outside the bedroom of the PRINCESSES, the door leading into the bedroom and the bedroom with six beds.*

It is early morning and the PRINCESSES are all asleep in their beds. The bedroom is strewn with clothes and shoes. These clothes are not their dancing clothes, but their everyday princess clothes. CLAUS sleeps in a chair just outside the bedroom door, his sword on his lap, hand on the hilt. SOPHIA and the LADIES-IN-WAITING enter quickly.

SOPHIA (*quietly*). Claus. (*Quietly, but urgently, shaking him.*)
Claus—

CLAUS (*almost falls, catches himself and raises his sword*).
Stand there—do not move—

SOPHIA. Wake up!

CLAUS. Or by order of the king I—

SOPHIA. Quiet down! The king is coming!

CLAUS. What is it?

SOPHIA (*moving to look down corridor for the king*). Did they come out?

CLAUS. No one came out, no one entered, that I am sure.
(*Suddenly panics, runs into the PRINCESSES’ room and*

counts them.) One-two-three-four-five-six ... All there, *(Relieved.)* all asleep.

SOPHIA. The king!

(CLAUS quickly sheathes his sword and assumes his guard post. KING ALDRICH enters with URSULA at his side. SOPHIA and the LADIES-IN-WAITING bow. KING walks with a discernible limp that obviously hurts him. URSULA will pay close attention to him.)

SOPHIA *(cont'd)*. Your Highness.

CLAUS. My lord.

KING *(to SOPHIA and LADIES-IN-WAITING)*. Enter quietly, and gather their dancing shoes. I will see their shoes before they awaken.

SOPHIA. Certainly, sire.

(SOPHIA quietly enters the bedroom and quickly moves about, gathering the dancing shoes. The LADIES-IN-WAITING pick up the clothes. KING enters the bedroom and looks at his daughters.)

KING *(quietly)*. Sleeping ... innocent as angels ... dreaming of ... if only I could see their minds. What must these young ladies dream? Strange and fantastic imaginings ...

(SOPHIA shows him some shoes.)

KING *(cont'd)*. Worn through ... worn-out dancing shoes ...

(Music fades out. Quietly but intensely.)

KING *(cont'd)*. Were you awake the entire night?

CLAUS *(quietly)*. Yes, sire.

KING. Did you hear music or laughter or footfalls—

CLAUSE. No, sire.

KING. Or the sliding of shoes upon the floor?

CLAUS. No, sire.

KING. How do you explain this?

CLAUS. I ... cannot.

KING. Sophia, how did these holes come into these shoes?

SOPHIA (*quietly*). Your daughters do not confide in me, sire.

KING. Ursula, you are a woman and a nurse. Do you understand what is happening here?

URSULA (*quietly*). Where can they dance? And to what music? There is no other door out of this room.

KING (*suddenly exploding, pounding his cane on the floor, startling all.*) Rise! Awaken! It is morning! Out of bed! Amalia—Gudrun—Kathrin—Lenore! All of you!

(GUDRUN falls out of bed to the floor. Startled and sleepy, the PRINCESSES sit up, not wanting to get out of bed.)

PRINCESSES (*speaking at once, during KING's above speech, although not in unison*). Oh, oh no, no, not now. Good morning, Father. Father. Is it morning already? Why are you shouting? Good morning? It is the middle of the night. What is wrong? What is your will? etc.

KING. The illustrious prince of Saxony has arrived this morning and wishes an audience with just one of you.

PRINCESSES (*except AMALIA. Variously, as they rise*). Amalia. Let it be Amalia! Amalia will meet him. Yes, Amalia.

AMALIA. I will greet him, Father.

GUDRUN. And let the rest of us sleep.

KING. When asked to choose, he named Kathrin.

KATHRIN. Why choose me?

AMALIA. Yes, Father, I am the oldest.

KING. He chose her because the meaning of her name is “purity.”

KATHRIN. But I am to marry the prince of Sicily.

KING. Do you wish to marry the prince of Sicily? If so, tell me of those worn-out dancing shoes and you may choose who on this earth you will marry.

KATHRIN. I do not wish to marry the prince of Sicily for I have never met him, and I will have to live in Sicily, far from my sisters, among people who speak like this: (*She does a crude imitation of a man speaking Italian.*) *Vivere in Italia mi farà male!*

KING. Dress yourself, he will arrive shortly.

KATHRIN. Yes, Father.

KING. Sophia, help her to dress, and to remain awake.

SOPHIA (*curtsies*). Sire.

(*KATHRIN exits, followed by SOPHIA.*)

KING (*to CLAUS*). When the prince of Saxony is ready, show him to this room.

CLAUS. Yes, my lord.

(*CLAUS exits. The PRINCESSES all close their eyes and lean on one another, trying to remain standing.*)

KING. Why has it again been brought to me that you—who apparently do not sleep at night—sleep during archery, during painting, during lawmaking?

URSULA. Princesses, awaken, your father, the king, is addressing you.

KING. Freda?

FREDA. I am not as wise as you, Father, and would believe whatever you say, if I could just sleep another hour.

KING. Lenore?

LENORE. I sleep because ... I cannot stay awake.

KING. Amalia, my oldest, surely you will answer the question.

AMALIA. Perhaps I could, if I could remember what the question was.

KING. And the prince of Holstein has left our castle in the night, humiliated by you. You reject all worthy suitors as—

FREDA. Dull.

GUDRUN. Strutting.

ILSE. Peacocks.

AMALIA. Lacking the imagination of a goat.

KING. We are at war, as you know. I am wounded, as you also know. And I have learned—without your mother—that the kingdom needs both a king and a queen. But you cannot stay awake during war councils.

FREDA. Then perhaps you should make peace with Rhineland and end the war.

KING (*exploding, startles the PRINCESSES apart*). Where were you in the night? Do I need to stable you like horses, one to a stall, roped to a post?!

GUDRUN (*laughing to herself. The others share her laughter.*)
Horses ...

URSULA (*calming KING*). Perhaps if you spoke to their gentler spirits, in a gentler manner, (*Turning to the PRINCESSES, instructively.*) they would answer you truly.

KING (*much softer*). Oh, you make me into a father I despise. My ignorance in this matter is perfect ... Does anyone threaten you? ... Are you bewitched? Or forced against your will? I will help you. (*No answer.*) Very well. Dress yourself, ladies, for you all have a busy day. And, since you love to dance in the night, you will all dance for the prince of Saxony this morning.

GUDRUN. In the morning?

KING. That is his request, and you will honor it.

(One by one, they kiss KING's cheek and walk off. The LADIES-IN-WAITING exit with clothes.)

FREDA. Rest today, Father, and heal your wound.

ILSE. Don't despise yourself, Father. We love you.

GUDRUN. Thank you for taking such fine care of us, Father.

LENORE. Don't let my sisters trouble you, Father. We all love you.

AMALIA. Do not worry so much. All is well, Father.

(All PRINCESSES have exited with the LADIES-IN-WAITING.)

URSULA. Your Majesty, all is not well. But here is your lovely daughter.

(A sleepy KATHRIN enters, dressed, but in some disarray. SOPHIA enters with her, adjusting KATHRIN's clothes.)

KATHRIN. I am ready, Father.

KING. How you've grown. *(Fondly, holding out his hand, she takes it.)* Remember that a marriage with Saxony would make us a stronger kingdom. They would join our side in the war.

KATHRIN. Yes, Father. *(She kisses KING's cheek, sits in a chair and closes her eyes.)*

CLAUS *(entering, announcing)*. Lord Rickert, Prince of Saxony.

(RICKERT enters, dressed in courtly garb.)

RICKERT *(removing his hat, elegantly bowing to KING)*. King Aldrich, the fair, the just, the conqueror of lands and hearts.

KING. Prince Rickert, welcome.

RICKERT *(elegantly bowing to KATHRIN, who is asleep. He remains bowed for a time, waiting for a response)*. Lady Kathrin, what a sincere pleasure to meet you. *(As he gets no response, he bows again.)* Princess Kathrin, whose name means "purity," what an honor to meet you.

(*KATHRIN snores. RICKERT, still in his bow, at a loss, looks to the KING.*)

KING. Kathrin ...

KATHRIN (*asleep and dreaming, caressing SOPHIA's hand*).

Oh, my prince, my beautiful prince—

KING. Kathrin.

KATHRIN. How I long to dance with you forever.

SOPHIA. Princess!

KATHRIN (*jolts awake*). What?—Where? ...

SOPHIA (*indicating RICKERT*). The prince of Saxony is here to—

KATHRIN (*sees RICKERT; a small startled scream of fear*).

Ahh!

RICKERT (*once again bowing to KATHRIN*). Princess Kathrin who, I am sure, is as pure as her name, what a sincere pleasure to finally meet you.

KATHRIN (*struggling to stand*) Prince Ri— (*She falls back into her chair; then jumps up, gracefully curtsies.*) Prince Rickert.

URSULA. Come, sire, she is finally awake.

KING. Ah, yes.

(*KING slips out the door with URSULA. As he does, he signals KATHRIN to smile and remain awake.*)

RICKERT. You are ... pleasing to the eye, madam. Young, healthy. Good teeth, sturdy on your feet.

KATHRIN. Are you speaking of me? Or of some horse you are buying.

RICKERT. Why, of you, my dear, of course. (*He laughs.*)

KATHRIN. You are as old as the rocks, aren't you, Rickert.

RICKERT. My father, the king, has lived on and on and on ... and on ...

KATHRIN. How inconsiderate. That he doesn't die and make you king.

RICKERT (*removing his hat and cape, giving them to SOPHIA*). Princess, your father has let it be known throughout the land, that if any person could discover the secret of your worn-out dancing shoes, he should have the daughter he liked best for his wife. And, oh, he should be king after your father's death.

KATHRIN (*to SOPHIA*). My father has said this?

SOPHIA. Yes, my lady.

RICKERT (*removing his gloves, giving them to SOPHIA*). If I were to learn your secret, I would then be king of both Saxony and Hesse. I would think you would find that a sensible arrangement for a marriage.

KATHRIN. I am to marry the prince of Sicily.

RICKERT. Your father will break that bond.

KATHRIN (*to CLAUS*). Has he said this?

CLAUS. Yes, my lady.

RICKERT. You would not have to live in Sicily—with Italians—but here in your own castle.

SOPHIA. The king has also proclaimed that, whosoever tries and does not succeed in learning your secret, will be put to death by having his head chopped off by the executioner.

KATHRIN (*shocked*). Executioner?

RICKERT. So you see, I risk all to be wedded to you.

KATHRIN. Then I pity you, Prince Rickert. For you have made a foolish mistake. I urge you to leave this castle immediately, while your head remains attached to your shoulders.

RICKERT. But we have not danced. I hear you love to dance.

KATHRIN. I do.

(The PRINCESSES all enter, dressed to dance.)

KATHRIN (*cont'd*). My sisters.

RICKERT. Oho, ladies. (*Bowing.*) I am pleased to meet you all.

(They curtsy. He stays down, the PRINCESSES all come up, then go back to their curtsy; because he stays down so long, they vacillate between standing and curtsying.)

PRINCESSES (*variously*). Prince. Prince Rickert. Welcome, prince of Saxony. Welcome to our castle.

RICKERT (*after evaluating the sisters*). But I see my choice of Kathrin was a wise one. (*To KATHRIN.*) Perhaps when you see me dance, you will change your opinion of me.

KATHRIN. Then allow me to chose the music. Music befitting the beheading of a prince.

RICKERT. With your help, I will keep my head upon my shoulders.

(KATHRIN nods towards offstage. Handel's "Sarabande," the orchestral version, plays somberly but loudly. [Orchestrated in similar fashion to the version used in Barry Lyndon.] The PRINCESSES appear shocked by the music choice.)

GUDRUN. Kathrin!

FREDA. Why did you ... ?

ILSE. Amalia, what is she ... ?

(KATHRIN begins to dance slowly, gracefully, but not in Baroque style. This seems to be a dance of her own design. The PRINCESSES look at each other, not knowing what to think. RICKERT also stands in confusion.

After a short time, KATHRIN motions for the others to join her. They hesitate, look to AMALIA. KATHRIN motions again. After considering, AMALIA decides to join KATHRIN, and is followed by the other PRINCESSES. They all dance slowly, in similar fashion to KATHRIN.

RICKERT stands confused by the music and the dancing. This is not a typical Baroque style dance, but dance of their own invention. It is slow, earthy, dreamy, romantic, free-flowing, and dramatic. A short time after all the PRINCESSES begin dancing, just a couple of measures, RICKERT speaks.)

RICKERT. What dance is this? ... I do not know it, and I am familiar with all the court dances ... And this music ... Something for a funeral procession? ... Oh, no, no, no. This music is all wrong. The dancing is all wrong. We need courtly music. Joyous music! Marriage music! Stop, please!

(The music stops, dancing ends.)

KATHRIN. I thank you, prince, for revealing your understanding of music and dance.

RICKERT. Perhaps another choice, something for a celebration!

KATHRIN. Of course.

(KATHRIN nods, music plays: Handel's "Water Music," Suite in F major, Hornpipe.)

RICKERT. Aha, excellent choice. Here we go.

(They all take position and dance. This is traditional Baroque dancing. We see the dance as it is supposed to occur.

After a time, the PRINCESSES take turns breaking the steps and movement, causing awkward moments for RICKERT.

After more time, RICKERT breaks away from the ladies and begins to dance on his own. The PRINCESSES stop dancing, gather behind him, point, imitate him and swallow their laughter. RICKERT's dancing is traditional Baroque dance: light, courtly, ultra-refined; he executes the precise, standard movements well. RICKERT continues, unaware of their derision.

As the music ends, he concludes his dance with elegance and pride. The PRINCESSES applaud. He bows.)

KATHRIN. You dance the old dance well, Prince Rickert. And would charm many a princess.

RICKERT. Aha, I see you are pleased. I shall inform your father that I will learn the secret of your worn-out dancing shoes tonight.

KATHRIN. Do as you need, as we will.

RICKERT. Ladies.

(He bows, exits. As soon as he exits the PRINCESSES plop down on beds, laughing. KATHRIN, however, stands looking after him, lost in thought.)

ILSE. What a strutting goose.

GUDRUN *(as RICKERT)*. “I shall inform your father that I will learn the secret of your worn-out shoes. Because I am a MAN.”

(Laughter.)

LENORE. He’s an old goose.

GUDRUN. I think he colors his mustache with boot polish.

AMALIA. What did he mean, Kathrin, he would learn our secret tonight?

KATHRIN. Our father has made it known that if any man can discover our secret, that person should have the one of us he likes in marriage.

LENORE. This Rickert? Oh, no, Kathrin—

KATHRIN. If he cannot, then the executioner will chop off his head.

PRINCESSES. Oh ...

(The PRINCESSES are stunned.)