

# South Valley

## 'Cinderella' a memorable opening to SVCT's season

October 8, 2019 [Susan Rife](#)

<https://southvalley.com/cinderella-a-memorable-opening-to-svcts-season/>



SHOW STOPPERS South Valley Civic Theatre's performance of "Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella" runs through Oct. 26. Photo by Elizabeth Mandel

There's something about the sheer joy and enthusiasm radiating from a cast of theater kids singing and dancing their little hearts out in a musical that can charm the most seasoned theatergoer.

And the young people who opened South Valley Civic Theatre's 51st season with *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* on Oct. 5 do a terrific job with a version adapted for pre-high school students. It's short and energetic, just right for budding princes and princesses (many of whom dressed for the occasion at Sunday's matinee) who might find their wiggles impossible to contain for a longer show. The Rodgers and Hammerstein score and lyrics are catchy and memorable.

Making his directorial debut at SVCT, Daniel McDonald, assisted by his mother, Susan McDonald, as vocal director, has at his disposal a cadre of young voices who surprise and delight at nearly every turn. His Cinderella, Riley Brown, has a big voice and a natural ease on the stage that wasn't shaken even by a wardrobe malfunction that might have rattled a less poised performer. She moves easily from the mistreated yet plucky servant to her stepmother and snobbish stepsisters ("In My Own Little Corner") to the dazzled yet still quick-thinking belle of the ball as the kingdom's prince falls for her at first sight ("Ten Minutes Ago"). London McWilliams' Prince Charming has a startlingly warm and appealing voice displayed to best advantage in his duet with his future princess, although he could slow his dialogue-delivery down a tad.

Stealing the show at nearly every opportunity are Angelina Villafranca and Paige DeRosa as Cinderella's silly stepsisters Portia and Joy. Outrageously dressed in confectionary-colored, beribboned and beruffled gowns that belie their uncouth natures (nose-picking and butt-scratching, indeed), the pair bicker between themselves until they turn their joint sneers toward Cinderella. "Stepsisters' Lament" and "A Lovely Night" let these two youngsters (13 and 12 years old, respectively) really let loose.

As the Fairy Godmother, Jillian Puente harmonizes beautifully with Brown on "Impossible," perhaps the show's most memorable tune.

Elyas Payan as King Maximillian and Ruby Salvatti as Queen Constantina make a charmingly mismatched pair of royals, concerned that their son (who amusingly towers over both of them) is so reluctant to take a bride.

Costume credits go to Kimberly Lynch and Adrienne Wilkinson, who have pulled out all the stops for this show, from the inventive transformation of mice to the horses pulling Cinderella's pumpkin carriage. The program notes that Lynch donated costumes for Cinderella, the Prince, and all tiaras and crowns in memory of her mother, Bobbie.

*"Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella" continues through Oct. 26 at South Valley Civic Theatre in the Morgan Hill Playhouse, 17090 Monterey Road, Morgan Hill. For information, call (408) 842-SHOW or visit [www.svct.org](http://www.svct.org).*

## Curtains Up ... with Camille Bounds: Rodgers and Hammerstein's 'Cinderella' is delightfully captivating

by [Camille Bounds](#) | Oct 9, 2019 | Published in the October 16, 2019 issue of Morgan Hill Life

<https://gilroylife.com/2019/10/09/curtains-up-with-camille-bounds-rodgers-and-hammersteins-cinderella-is-delightfully-captivating/>

**Cast of 36 ranges in age from 3 to 13**



**Photo by Chris Foster**

For the young and young at heart, a timeless fairytale about a glass slipper and a magical night at a royal ball comes to life at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse. South Valley Civic Theatre brings a children's version of the captivating Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical "Cinderella" to the stage with a cast of 36 performers.

The Tony Award-winning Broadway musical opened on Broadway in 2013. This Cinderella has a few new twists with this adaptation by Tom Briggs.

In SVCT's version, Cinderella is played by an endearing Riley Brown as a considerate and caring young woman. Her cruel step-sisters, Portia and Joy, delightfully are played by Angelina Villafranca and Paige Derosa and keep the audience laughing every time they appear. And London McWilliams takes on the role of the unsure, sensitive young prince. Lauren Perales serves up a fantastic performance as Cinderella's selfish step-mom who doesn't deter anyone from her greedy journey.

The large ensemble cast range from ages 3 to 13 and act, sing and dance under the excellent direction and choreography of Daniel McDonald. They carry the production to enjoyable moments with lovely tunes by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein including "My Own Little Corner," "Impossible," "Ten Minutes Ago," "A Lovely Night," and "Do I Love you Because You're Beautiful?"

I encourage parents to bring their children or a fun joy ride of a delightful telling of a favorite fairytale that includes the magical change from a pumpkin to carriage complete with mice/horse drivers.

A shout out to Kimberly Lynch and Adrienne Wilkinson for their colorful costumes and the quick change from Cinderella's house-chore rags to a beautiful gown as Cinderella's Fairy Godmother (played with warmth by Jullian Puente) sends the off to the ball. Also, I must praise the set designs are by Jarad DeRosa and Jenellen Gallagher's staff and lighting designer by Bridget Harnett that blend beautifully together.

This South Valley Civic Theatre's production of "Cinderella" offers a charming, delightful cast that will make audiences smile and put a song or two in their heart.

## Details

**What:** SCVT's Cinderella

**When:** 8 p.m. Oct. 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26; and 2:30 p.m. Oct. 6, 13 and 20

**Where:** Morgan Hill Community Playhouse

**Tickets:** \$18 to \$28 and available at [www.svct.org](http://www.svct.org)



# South Valley

## Youth take charge in 'Cinderella'

October 1, 2019 [Susan Rife](#)

<https://southvalley.com/youth-take-charge-in-cinderella/>



Jillian Puente

(left) as the Fairy Godmother and Riley Brown as Cinderella star in South Valley Civic Theatre's production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. Photo: Chris Foster

Riley Brown has gotten a little tired of playing boys in community theater productions, from the Cowardly Lion in *The Wizard of Oz* to Jack in *Into the Woods*. So she's thrilled to be able to get her princess on as the title character in South Valley Civic Theatre's production of *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*.

She auditioned to play either Cinderella or the Fairy Godmother in the classic fairy tale about a young girl who is tormented by a wicked stepmother and haughty stepsisters until she meets a Fairy Godmother who shows her other possibilities.

"I will do this show; I just want to be a girl," the 13-year-old said in an interview with other cast members, director Daniel McDonald and producer Ingrid Rottman last week before rehearsal.

The show opens Oct. 5 for a four-weekend run at the Morgan Hill Playhouse.

Brown, a big reader of princess stories, said she "loved the characters who were wanting to be princesses," especially those who were growing into "more extended versions of themselves."

McDonald, directing and choreographing the show, said it's particularly near and dear to him because it was the first show he saw on Broadway. The Rodgers and Hammerstein version is not the familiar Disney animated version; it includes such songs as "In My Own Little Corner," "Impossible" and "Ten Minutes Ago."

"I think the show brings a lot of magic," he said.

And, he added, its heroine is not a fragile little flower, but a resilient girl taking control of her own destiny. No waiting around for a handsome prince to rescue her from her cruel stepmother and stepsisters.

"The way we're doing the show, Cinderella is not passive," he said. "I think I see that fighting nature in Riley. I think she knows what she wants and knows how to get there."

"This is a Cinderella who's going to be able to take care of herself," said Rottman, who was last seen as Mama Rose in SVCT's production of *Gypsy*.

Cinderella's Fairy Godmother is played by Jillian Puente, also 13. She sees the role as more like a big sister or aunt to Cinderella, a role model and inspiration to the scullery maid.

"Onstage, I try to see how far I can push her" to take control of her circumstances, said Puente.

Rottman said she "couldn't ask for a better group of kids," and praised vocal director Susan McDonald, who is coaxing sounds out of her young singers so they sound like "an angels' choir."

Likewise, the costumes, by Kim Lynch and Adrienne Wilkinson, are several notches above what audiences might expect from a teen theater show.

"Everything's bright colors," Rottman said.

## Nonprofit Profile: South Valley Civic Theatre's 'Cinderella' will open 2019-'20 season

By [Marty Cheek](#) | September 21st, 2019

<https://morganhilllife.com/2019/09/21/nonprofit-profile-south-valley-civic-theatres-cinderella-will-open-2019-20-season/>

**Beloved classic fairytale reveals how a glass slipper leads to love**





Riley Brown plays the title role of Cinderella in South Valley Civic Theatre's upcoming production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. Photo by Marty Cheek

Thanks to some magic from a fairy godmother, mice turn into horses, a pumpkin turns into a carriage, and a young woman turns into a princess on the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse stage starting Oct. 5

The South Valley Civic Theatre opens its 2019-2020 season with the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical version of "Cinderella," the beloved classic story about how a glass slipper brings a transformation that leads to love. Daniel McDonald directs 35 local children and teens in telling the story of a young woman forced into servitude who dreams of — and achieves — a better life.

"The music is beautiful," he said at a rehearsal. "Our kids are really strong with acting, singing and dancing. My focus is telling the story that empowers Cinderella and she's not this passive character who needs her prince to fulfill her or rescue her. She takes matters into her own hands and that's the driving force of our show."



Morgan Hill resident Riley Brown performs as the title character. She describes this version of "Cinderella" taking a more mature slant of the story compared with the well-known Walt Disney 1950 film "In our version, she's not hopeless and needing her prince," she said about the character she plays." She's a lot more independent. And when she wants something, she can grab that power that she needs. She can stand up against her step-family and do what she wants instead of being told what to do."



The legendary Broadway musical duo Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein originally wrote "Cinderella" as a special production for TV which starred Julie Andrews and was broadcast March 31, 1957. Songs include "In My Own Little Corner," "Impossible," "Do I Love You Because You're Beautiful?" and "Ten Minutes Ago." The show hit the Broadway stage in 2013.

Brown described how Cinderella interacts with her stepsisters and stepmother with comedy but also depth of family feelings toward each other.

"There's a closeness between them that helps us add a little bit more to the tensions of the characters," she said. "This is really fun because there are so many moments when they're so close in the show and having fun and then they do all these different emotional switches."



London McWilliams plays Prince Charming, who falls in love with Cinderella during a dance at a royal ball. He and Brown have performed together in previous SVCT productions include “Grease” and “Aladdin” and their real-life friendship helps to energize their performance on stage.

Brown encourages families to see Rodgers and Hammerstein’s adaptation of “Cinderella” because this version provides a story about how girls and young women can determine their own destiny.

“I love this show because there are so many possibilities and choices that you can make with every single character,” she said. “It’s so magical. There are so many twists and different plots and connections throughout the show that it really makes it so much different than anything you’ve ever seen at SVCT.”

McDonald also encourages families and all people who love theater to enjoy an upcoming performance of “Cinderella” because of the high quality of the SVCT’s production of the story including the dancing, singing, sets and costumes. The young performers give their best to entertain audiences, he said.

“The reason I’m passionate about theater is that it’s a form of self-expression and it’s important for children to realize they can express themselves on stage and inhabit a new character and can put part of themselves into that character,” he said. “It helps them build confidence.”

## Details

**What:** SCVT's Cinderella

**When:** 8 p.m. Oct. 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26; and 2:30 p.m. Oct. 6, 13 and 20

**Where:** Morgan Hill Community Playhouse

**Tickets:** \$18 to \$28 and available at [www.svct.org](http://www.svct.org)