

Spotlight Publications

Beauty & The Beast

A pantomime by
Ron Nicol



Beauty & The Beast

CAST (in order of appearance)

Rosella, a good fairy

Clementina, Monsieur Villeneuve's daughter

Nectarina, her sister

Gabrielle, their maid

Belle, known as Beauty, Villeneuve's other daughter

Maleva, an enchantress

Monsieur Villeneuve, a rich merchant

Claude, Villeneuve's servant

Hermione, Beast's housekeeper

Hortense, Beast's cook

Beast

Three sons, servants, faceless watchers (optional)

Place - Villeneuve's house, the farmhouse, a forest, Beast's palace

Time - 18th Century France

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Spots for inserting musical numbers have been indicated and suggestions for songs follow, although other music might be preferred, and additional songs may be inserted at appropriate times.

Song 1 - Belle, or Belle & Gabrielle duet: '*Somewhere Out There*' - Horner, Mann & Weil

Song 2 - Clementina & Nectarina: '*Lovely*' - Stephen Sondheim

Song 3 - Hermione & Hortense: '*Anything You Can Do*' - Irving Berlin

Song 4 - Belle solo: '*The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*' – Ewan McColl

Song 5 - Belle & Beast: '*Somewhere Out There*' - Horner, Mann & Weil

For permission to perform these or any other songs, application should be made to

The Performing Rights Society

29-33 Berners Street

London W1P 4AA.

ACT 1

Prologue

A rose pink spot comes up DR. Rosella enters

Rosella Bienvenue, mesdames, messieurs et les enfants. Je m'appelle Rosella. Je vais raconter l'histoire de "La Belle et la Bête". Qu'est-ce que c'est? You understand me, no? This story was written in French, n'est-ce pas? You speak French, of course. No? How many of you speak French? How many don't? Ah. Don't worry. Let's start again. Good evening. My name's Rosella, and this is the story of "Beauty and the Beast". Once upon a time there was a rich merchant who had three daughters and several sons.

The Sons enter and bow

But the sons aren't really important, so I'm afraid we won't be needing them. Go away.

Sons Awww.

The Sons slink off dispiritedly. General lighting comes up as Gabrielle enters

Rosella This is Gabrielle. She's a maid in Monsieur Villeneuve's house, so I'll let her tell you about his daughters. Continue, Gabrielle.

Rosella exits and her spot fades out

Scene 1

A room in Villeneuve's house

Gabrielle Monsieur Villeneuve has three daughters. Belle is the youngest. She's very good to me, but her sisters Clementina and Nectarina treat me like a slave. They're awful! Bossy bullies, both of them. I know, perhaps you could help me. Whenever they come on, could you call out 'Watch out! Sisters about!?' You could? Good. (*Looks offstage.*) Look out - here they come! (*Encouraging the audience*) Watch out! Sisters about!

Clementina and Nectarina enter

Clementina So this is where you're hiding, Gabrielle.

Nectarina Never here when we want you.

Clementina Brush my hair, Gabrielle. I can't be bothered doing it myself.

Gabrielle Certainly, Miss.

Gabrielle rather roughly starts to brush Clementina's hair

Clementina Don't tug, Gabrielle!

Gabrielle Sorry, Miss, but your hair's been dragged through a hedge.

Clementina What was that?

Gabrielle I said this hairstyle should give you an edge.

Clementina Thank you, Gabrielle.

Nectarina I'm bored, Clementina. Shall we visit Gardenia?

Clementina Gardenia's only a shopkeeper's daughter. Not nearly grand enough for posh ladies such as what we are. That's enough, Gabbi. Do Nectarina's hair now.

Gabrielle Yes, Miss.

Gabrielle rather roughly starts to brush Nectarina's hair

Nectarina Gently, Gabrielle. Gently!

Gabrielle But your hair's like a haystack, Miss.

Nectarina What was that?

Gabrielle I said I'll start with the back, Miss.

Nectarina Good. Who should we visit, Clementina? What about Ambrosia?

Clementina Her father's a butcher. He makes sausages!

Nectarina Sausages! Yuck!

Clementina She's not in our class at all.

Nectarina Are you sure? I think I remember her at school.

Clementina I don't mean our school class. I mean our social class. Our status. We're upper class. Aristocracy. Ambrosia's only working class. Not posh like what we are.

Nectarina But she *was* at our school. She had pigtails.

Clementina Pigtails! Not trendy at all. But what else can one expect from a butcher's daughter. She's dead common. Like our Gabrielle.

Gabrielle I'm better than you, Miss.

Clementina What was that?

Gabrielle I said I'm nearly through, Miss.

Nectarina Stop tugging, Gabrielle!

Gabrielle (*stops brushing*) Sorry, Miss.

Nectarina So I should think! Be more careful next time.

Gabrielle Yes, Miss. Sorry, Miss. You've a face like a cow, Miss.

Clementina What did you say?

Gabrielle I said I'll be careful just now, Miss.

Clementina That's better.

Nectarina Maybe we could visit Valeria.

Clementina She's a fishmonger's daughter. She always smells of fish!

Clementina takes out perfume and sprays it around wildly. Nectarina copies her

Nectarina Fish! Yuck!

Clementina Let's face it. There's absolutely no-one suitable for us to visit. They're all dead common. When one's papa is a rich merchant who trades all over the world, like what ours does, one cannot possibly associate with common working people! Their houses are full of dogs. I wouldn't have a dog in the house. Horses now, they're different. They can come into the house at any time. Talking of horses, what are you doing, Gabbi?

Gabrielle Nothing, Miss.

Clementina Then go and complete your tasks.

Gabrielle I don't have anything else to do, Miss. I've finished.

Clementina Then hold your tongue, or you'll definitely be finished.

Gabrielle sticks out her tongue and holds it with her fingers

Don't be clever, Gabbi, and don't answer back. Don't be gabby, Gabbi.

Nectarina Oh! That's so funny!

Clementina and Nectarina snigger at such incredible wit

Gabrielle Yes, Miss. Thank you, Miss. You old bat.

Clementina What did you say?

Gabrielle I said I'll do that.

Belle enters, reading

Clementina Ah, Belle! There you are! What are you doing?

Belle Reading.

Nectarina I wish I could read.

Clementina Nonsense, Nectarina. You're a lady of leisure. You don't need to read. I've never read a book in my life. I don't know why Belle bothers.

Belle I want to improve myself.

Nectarina That's a good idea.

Clementina No it isn't, Nectarina. Rich and beautiful women such as what we are don't need to improve. We're perfect. Absolutely perfect.

Nectarina Are we?

Clementina Of course.

Gabrielle You could've fooled me.

Clementina What was that?

Gabrielle I said, you should be top of the tree.

Clementina Exactly. Absolute perfection.

Nectarina I'm so glad I'm perfect. I'm delighted I'm beautiful. I'm so relieved I don't have to read. Reading's stupid. A waste of time.

Clementina What's the point of reading when all you need is a man?

Nectarina A man! Ooh! The very word sends shivers down my spine.

Clementina You won't get a man by reading, Belle. You have to go to parties, balls, plays, concerts. Like what we do.

Nectarina You're right. Reading serves no useful porpoise.

Clementina Purpose, Nectarina. Purpose.

Nectarina Sorry.

Clementina Do you know, Aubergine Léotard proposed to me yesterday morning. I turned him down, of course.

Nectarina He proposed to me yesterday afternoon. I turned him down as well.

Clementina/Nectarina So common!

Clementina Such a pity you don't get proposals, Belle.

Belle Oh, but I do. I'm afraid I've had to refuse them all.

Nectarina All?

Clementina How many?

Belle Oh, about half a dozen.

Nectarina Half a dozen! How many's half a dozen?

Clementina Too many!

Belle I told them I'm too young to marry and want to stay with my Papa a few years longer. They quite understood. They're such fine young men.

Clementina But they're all shopkeepers' sons!

Clementina/Nectarina Pure dead common!

Belle They sell the goods our father trades in. We couldn't survive without them.

Gabrielle What would you do if there weren't any tradesmen at all? No butchers. No fishmongers. No dressmakers. No maidservants. Who'd do all the work for you?

Clementina/Nectarina Belle, of course!

Clementina You should be trying to find a rich husband, Belle. I doubt if you'll ever get one, but I suppose you can always hope that someday your prince will come.

Gabrielle It's all very well to say your prince will come, but if he's been and come and gone and you've missed him, you've had it.

Clementina Yes, I should think you've definitely had it, Gabbi.

Clementina and Nectarina snigger

Belle Don't be so unkind, Clementina.

Clementina You'll never find a prince who wants to marry you, Belle. It'll have to be a tradesman or a commoner.

Nectarina I couldn't possibly marry a commoner. The man I marry will have to be a duke. An eel at least.

Clementina Earl, Nectarina, earl.

Nectarina Sorry.

Clementina Let's face it, Belle - nobody wants you.

Nectarina Absolutely nobody.

Clementina Come along, Nectarina.

Clementina and Nectarina exit

Belle Oh Gabbi, why do my sisters dislike me so much?

Gabrielle They're just jealous, Miss Belle. Everybody admires you, and it makes your sisters jealous. Don't worry about it, Miss. It's not worth it.

Belle What about you, Gabrielle? Have you had any proposals?

Gabrielle Not yet, Miss. But I can still dream, can't I?

Gabrielle exits – or might remain if a duet with Belle is preferred

Belle Yes. There's nothing wrong with dreaming.

Song 1

Belle exits. The lighting fades and a green spot comes up DL as Maleva enters

Maleva Surprise, surprise! Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Maleva the enchantress. The very embodiment of evil is here amongst you! Didn't expect me to pop up, did you? Unless you looked in the programme, of course. But now I'm here I'm going to take a hand in the story. You'll find out why – eventually. I hate Belle! She's so beautiful it makes me sick! I'll spoil things for that little lady, though. Dreaming about finding the right man indeed. I'll make sure she finds somebody – but it'll be someone of *my* choosing. I can take my time. Now, first I'm going to spoil her perfect home. Some bad news for her father, perhaps. Just you watch!

Maleva exits DL as her spot fades. Lighting is restored as Gabrielle enters

Scene 2

The same

Gabrielle It seems there's been some bad news. Monsieur Villeneuve has asked everybody to meet him.

The Sons enter

Except you, I'm afraid.

Sons Awww.

The Sons exit miserably

Gabrielle Belle's sisters will be here in a minute. They always want to know what's going on. *(Looks offstage.)*
I thought so. Here they come. *(To audience)* Remember what to say! *(Encouraging)* Watch out! Sisters about!

Clementina and Nectarina enter, looking around curiously

Clementina What was that? I thought I heard voices. *(Sees Gabrielle.)* Oh. It's you.

Nectarina Stop making so much noise, Gabbi.

Gabrielle It was probably your tummy rumbling.

Clementina What did you say?

Gabrielle I said – I think somebody's coming.

Belle enters R. Villeneuve enters L with Claude

Belle You sent for us, Papa?

Villeneuve Yes, my daughters, I've something very sad to tell you.

Clementina I can't possibly listen to anything sad or bad. I'm not in the mood.

Nectarina Neither am I. I'm never in the mood to hear anything sad or bad.

Belle What is it, Papa? What's wrong? Are you ill?

Villeneuve No, my dear Beauty, I'm not ill. It seems that some of my ships have been attacked by pirates and all my goods have been stolen. Others have been wrecked in a storm. It's a disaster. I've lost my entire fortune. I'm afraid we can't afford to live in luxury any longer.

Clementin No luxury.

Nectarina No longer.

Clementina Any longer, Nectarina. No luxury *any* longer.

Nectarina Sorry.

Clementina What about our social life? We're greatly in demand, Father. We go to all the parties. All the dances.

Villeneuve I'm afraid there won't be any more parties or dances. We'll have to sell this house and move to the country.

Clementina The country! Consort with peasants! How unpleasant.

Nectarina They might be quite pleasant peasants, Clementina.

Clementina No peasant could ever be pleasant. Take my word for it.

Nectarina I suppose you're right – all those feathers!

Belle Feathers? How many peasants have you met, Nectarina?

Nectarina None! The very thought of meeting peasants is most unpleasant.

Belle How do you know every peasant's unpleasant?

Clementina It's obvious. They're just like servants. Look at Gabrielle. An absolute disgrace.

Gabrielle At least I don't have your ugly face.

Clementina What did you say?

Gabrielle I said I'm sorry I'm such a disgrace.

Clementina You're dead common, Gabrielle. I don't know how I put up with you.

Gabrielle With great difficulty I'm sure, Miss.

Villeneuve There's another thing, children. You'll all have to work for your living.

Clementina Work, Papa! Did you say work!

Nectarina That's even more unpleasant than consorting with peasants. What'll we do?

Villeneuve I still have my farm in the country. You could look after the dairy.

Nectarina You mean – write things down every day?

Clementina Dairy, Nectarina, not diary.

Nectarina Oh. That's good. I can't write.

Villeneuve You'll have to milk the cows.

Nectarina Cows! What are cows, Clementina?

Clementin They go moo, Nectarina, and smell absolutely horrid. You squeeze them to get milk.

Nectarina Milk?

Clementina The white stuff you put on your cornflakes, Nectarina.

Nectarina Oh. Who's going to squeeze them?

Gabrielle I'll milk the cows. I've done it before.

Belle We could use the milk to make butter and cheese.

Clementina Milk cows! Make butter and cheese! What else is there?

Gabrielle (*rural accent*) You'll have to muck out t' cowshed.

Nectarina (*rural accent*) Muck out t' cowshed?

Clementina Clean, Nectarina, clean. We don't use such awful words as - muck.

Nectarina Muck! Yuck!

Villeneuve We could keep chickens and sell the eggs.

Nectarina Chickens?

Clementina They're like pheasants, Nectarina.

Nectarina Oh no! More feathers!

Belle And we could keep pigs.

Clementina That's enough! Peasants are unpleasant, work makes me wince, but nothing will make me pass the time with pigs!

Villeneuve Nonsense. You'll soon get used to it.

Clementina But we can't soil our hands with work. We want to get married.

Nectarina Who'd marry us if we have to work?

Clementina They wouldn't even want to marry Belle.

Nectarina Nobody would want to marry Belle!

Claude I'd marry her if she'd have me.

Belle I'm very fond of you, dear Claude, and I thank you for your offer, but I'm afraid I don't want to marry you.

Clementina You'd have to be an earl before *I'd* marry you, Claude!

Nectarina A duck at least.

Clementina Duke, Nectarina, duke.

Nectarina Sorry.

Clementina Nobody would marry you! You're such a clod, Claude!

Villeneuve Nobody can think about getting married just now. I'm afraid there's no choice. We'll have to move to the country. I must go and make preparations.

Belle I'll help you, Papa. I'm sure we can be just as happy without a fortune.

Villeneuve and Belle exit

Clementina Without a fortune our lives will be ruined!

Nectarina I refuse to work. There are plenty of men who'd be pleased to have me.

Clementina And me.

Clementina and Nectarina flounce off

Claude Nobody would marry those two. They're too proud. Pride comes before a fall, they say, and there's plenty who'd like to see them fall. Let them give themselves airs milking cows if they can, but I'm sorry for poor Miss Belle.

Gabrielle Everybody will be sorry for her. She never puts on airs like her sisters, and she's so kind and thoughtful. I know plenty of men who'd marry her, even though she hasn't a penny. Erm - would you really marry Belle, Claude?

Claude Of course not! I only said that because her sisters were being so horrible to her. I've got my eyes on somebody else.

Gabrielle Oh? Who?

Claude That would be telling.

Gabrielle Will you tell me one day?

Gabrielle and Claude look at each other dreamily for a moment, then come back to reality

Claude No! It's impossible. Like Monsieur Villeneuve said, nobody can think about getting married just now, and Miss Belle wouldn't think of leaving her poor father in his misfortune. She's determined to go with him to the country.

Gabrielle At least we'll be able to help.

Gabrielle and Claude exit. The lights fade. Rosella enters her spot DR

Rosella When they came to their country house, the merchant and his sons...

The Sons enter

Yes, they're still hanging about, but although they work on the farm I'm afraid we're still going to ignore them.

Sons Awww.

The Sons exit unhappily

Rosella Belle got up at four o'clock every morning, cleaned the house, and prepared dinner for the family. Her sisters left her all the work to do and bullied her the whole time. They got up at eleven o'clock – can you imagine lying in bed until eleven o'clock! (*To audience*) You don't lie in bed that long, do you? (*Possible ad-lib interaction with audience*) They were so lazy they did nothing the whole day, except moan about the loss of their fine clothes and their lack of boyfriends.

Rosella exits. Her spot fades out. General lighting is restored as Gabrielle enters

Beauty & the Beast

Ron Nicol's revised script is based on Beaumont's 18th century version of the classic tale, but with new features. There is divine intervention in the shapes of a good fairy, Rosella, and a malicious spirit, Maleva. Beauty's sisters Clementina and Nectarina (almost a comedy double act), a feisty maid Gabrielle and Beast's two servants Hermione and Hortense bring the number of female characters to eight. While not being characters as in the Disney version, two props, a looking glass and a ring, play an important part in the plot.

Plot Summary

Belle, known as Beauty, lives with her father and two sisters. Her father falls on hard times, and on a journey to try to restore his fortunes he plucks a rose from a palace garden as a present for his daughter. The palace belongs to an ugly Beast who demands a life in return for the rose, but Belle saves her father's life by consenting to live in the palace. When she eventually falls in love with Beast, he is released from a magic spell and turns into a handsome prince.