

# **The Not-so-tall Prince**

*for Soprano, Piano, and Magic Box*

by Tom Baker  
January, 2001

Frog Peak Music

# **The Not-so-tall Prince**

Recitative and Aria from  
“Very Grim Fairy Tales”

*for Soprano, Piano, and Magic Box*

Libretto by Alissa Rupp

Music by Tom Baker

January, 2001

Dedicated to Hope and Christopher  
in celebration of their wedding, September 2000

## Libretto: The Not-so-Tall Prince

This work is written for Soprano, Piano and a magic box. This box is a battery-operated box that, when turned on, begins to shake and bounce. From the box is heard: "Excuse me. Excuse me. Will you let me out of here?!" In staging this work, this box is to be positioned in the Princess' chamber, and after she expires at the end of the "Boxes" aria, the magic box should be heard speaking.

### **Narrator:**

As our tale begins, we find the Princess Hopelda in a sad state indeed. Alas, she is searching frantically for her beloved, Prince Christopherus the Tall. The Prince has been made small, having been shrunk to the unseemly height of two-and-one-quarter inches tall, just one day before he and the Princess are to be married in the most extravagant wedding ceremony the kingdom has ever seen.

The worst part is that the shrinking of the Prince is, for all intents and purposes, Princess Hopelda's fault. For she neglected to tell the very jolly Prince Christopherus that jokes, most especially jokes about her father, King Stanislaw, were expressly forbidden at the royal dinner table.

And, as fate would have it, it was at the traditional wedding-eve festival where Christopherus the Tall succumbed to his natural state of general levity. As the royal desserts were being served, Christopherus noticed that the King's velvet robes were not of exactly the same shade of violet. "Did you get dressed in the dark this morning, 'Slaw?'" quipped the prince, leaning his lanky frame over the table to elbow the royal ribs.

A gasp arose and traveled the table, as the Prince's one-liner was whispered from guest to guest. The king, unruffled, took a bite of chocolate truffle and gestured to his chief wizardess, Robininni. "I have had enough of his impertinence," he said quietly, "and I've no desire to spend the rest of my days trying to talk to someone so tall. Please take care of this matter in the customary way." In a flash, Robininni spun her wand in the air, and Christopherus found his stature reduced from one of lofty tallness to the very un-lofty height of two-and-one-quarter inches. Hopelda was horrified. Fearing that her wedding celebration would be a complete failure (for lack of a suitably tall groom) she begged Robininni to un-shrink her betrothed.

"It was not his fault!" the Princess cried, defending her royal fiancé, and stamping her foot just once. "He was only beginning to understand all of the rules of the court! He just got here!"

"Nevertheless, you both must pay for your carelessness," Robininni told her, without the least bit of sympathy for her situation. "You know the rules of the court, and you are aware that any levity at the royal table could ruin the reputation of the king."

“Please give me a chance to restore my beloved to his rightful height,” the Princess cried. “Tell me what I might do to release Christopherus from his enchantment and restore his majestic tallness before our wedding day!”

“Very well,” Robininni began, for this was her favorite part. “I have filled your chamber with boxes. Very tedious, regular boxes. Your beloved is inside one of those boxes. If you are able to find him before the stroke of midnight tonight, your wedding will be a great and festive event, complete with the tallest groom in the land. But if you fail to find him by the time the chimes are heard, he will remain two-and-one-quarter inches tall for all eternity.”

### **Hopelda:**

*The princess is in her chamber, which is full of boxes of all shapes and sizes.*

*(recitative)*

Boxes. Boxes. Boxes. There are boxes everywhere!  
Why has this happened to me? Me! Me! Me!  
Alas, alas, alas, alas. How will I ever get through all of these horrid boxes?  
My hands are not suited for such menial labor. All the boxes I have ever opened  
were tied with golden ribbons or velvet sashes.  
I had better get back to opening boxes. Midnight approaches.

*(aria)*

Is he here among these papers? Is he there among those books?  
This box holds the royal linens. That one only hinges and hooks.  
Papers and books.  
Linens and hooks.  
Spoons and forks.  
Bottles and corks.  
This is very tedious indeed. Where is my love? Where is my prince?  
Oh Christopherus, my darling!

Here are Brother Johann’s toy cars. Look, my mother’s freeze dried flowers.  
These are very strange guitars. If only they had magic powers!  
Cars and flowers.  
Guitars with powers.  
Small toy houses  
Skirts and blouses.  
This is very tedious indeed.

*(speaking)*

Although here I have found a lovely hat. And it fits me perfectly.  
If I move these boxes over I can get to that mirror.

*(She moves some boxes, shoving several to the front of the stage, including a very small one. She primps in the mirror.)*

I forget myself. I must find the Prince. This is not my strength, looking through horrid boxes! I am not sure how much longer I can go on!

*(singing)*

Oh no! Oh no, oh no! I must have my prince, and I must have him tall!

*(speaking)*

Christopherus! Give me a sign from your cardboard prison! Will I not have a wedding with the tallest prince in the land as my groom? Is this the end of me?

*(Twelve chimes are heard in the distance.)*

*(singing)*

My tall Prince! My tall Prince!

If you are small, how can we marry?

Christopherus! Christopherus! Christopherus! Christopherus!

*(She falls, unconscious, over a heap of boxes.)*

**The Box:**

Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me. Will you let me out of here?

Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me. Will you let me out of here?...

Dedicated to Hope and Christopher from Tom and Alissa

# The Not-So-Tall Prince

Music by Tom Baker  
Libretto by Alissa Rupp  
January, 2001

(Begin during end of narrator's introduction)

Hopelda

$\bullet = 72$

Piano

$\bullet = 72$  *freely*

*mf*

*Red.*

Hopelda

4  $\bullet = 88$

Pno.

$\bullet = 88$   
*harshly*

*ff*

*Red.*

5

Hopelda

Pno.

6

Hopelda

Pno.

7

Hopelda

Pno.

8

Hopelda

Pno.

9

Hopelda

Pno.

10

Hopelda

Pno.



12  $\bullet = 72$

Hopelda

$\bullet = 72$   
*dolce*

Pno. *mp*

16  $\bullet = 88$

Hopelda

$\bullet = 88$   
*harshly*

Pno. *pp* *ff*

*Red.*

18

Hopelda

Pno.

19

Hopelda

Pno.

20

Hopelda

Pno.

23

Hopelda

Pno.



40

Hopelda

*mp*

My hands

Pno.

*mp*

43

Hopelda

are not suit - ed for such me - ni - al la - bor. All the box - es I've ev - er o - pened

*p*

Pno.

45

Hopelda

were tied with gold - en rib - bons, or vel - vet sa - shes.

*mp*

Pno.

48 *mp* *p*

Hopelda *mp* *p*

I'd bet-ter get back to o-pen-ing box-es. Mid-night ap-proach-es.

Pno.

53  $\bullet = 72$

Hopelda  $\bullet = 72$   
*dolce*

Pno. *mp*

57 "Boxes" Aria  $\bullet = 144$

Hopelda  $\bullet = 144$

Pno. *p* *mp*

62

Hopelda

*mp*

Is he here a-mong these pa - pers?

Pno.

68

Hopelda

Is he here a-mong these books?

Pno.

73

Hopelda

This box holds the roy - - al

Pno.

75

Hopelda

lin - ens. This one on - ly hing - es and hooks.

Pno.

80

Hopelda

*mp* Pap - ers and books. *mf* Lin - ens and hooks. Spoons and forks.

Pno.

84

Hopelda

*f* Bot - tles and corks. *ff* This is ve - ry te - di - ous in - deed! *p* Where is my love?

*Sva* - - - - -

Pno.

89

Hopelda

*pp*

Where is my prince? Oh Christ - o - pher - us, my

92

Hopelda

♩ = 144

dar - ling.

97

Hopelda

*mf*

Here are broth - er Jo - hann's



102

Hopelda

toy cars. Look, my moth - er's freeze dried flowers.

Pno.

107

Hopelda

These are ve - ry strange gui - tars.

Pno.

112

Hopelda

If on - ly they had ma - gic powers.

Pno.

116 *mp* *mf*

Hopelda *mp* *mf*

Cars and flowers. Gui - tars with powers. Small toy hous - es.

Pno. *mp* *mp*

119 *f* *ff*

Hopelda *f* *ff*

Skirts and blous - es. This is ve - ry ted - i - ous in - deed!

*8va* -----,

Pno. *f*

122 (spoken)

Hopelda Although here I have found a lovely hat. And it fits me perfectly. If I move these boxes over I can get to that mirror.

(Hopelda moves some boxes, and primps in the mirror.)

Pno.

123

♩ = 88

Hopelda

Musical staff for Hopelda at measure 123, showing a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

I forget myself.

Empty musical staff for Hopelda.

♩ = 88  
*harshly*

Pno.

Musical staff for Pno. at measure 123, showing a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

*mp*

Musical staff for Pno. at measure 123, showing a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature with a continuous eighth-note accompaniment.

*Red.*

124

Hopelda

Musical staff for Hopelda at measure 124, showing a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

I must find the prince.

Empty musical staff for Hopelda.

Pno.

Musical staff for Pno. at measure 124, showing a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature with a sparse accompaniment.

Musical staff for Pno. at measure 124, showing a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature with a continuous eighth-note accompaniment.

125

Hopelda

Musical staff for Hopelda at measure 125, showing a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

This is not my strength, looking through horrid boxes.

Empty musical staff for Hopelda.

Pno.

Musical staff for Pno. at measure 125, showing a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature with a sparse accompaniment.

Musical staff for Pno. at measure 125, showing a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature with a continuous eighth-note accompaniment.

126

Hopelda

Musical score for measures 126-127. The top staff (Hopelda) contains a whole rest. The middle staff (Pno.) contains a whole rest. The bottom staff (Piano accompaniment) features a continuous eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

127

Hopelda

I am not sure how much longer I can go on!!

Musical score for measure 127. The top staff (Hopelda) contains the lyrics "I am not sure how much longer I can go on!!" with a whole rest. The middle staff (Pno.) contains a whole note chord with a slur. The bottom staff (Piano accompaniment) continues with the eighth-note pattern.

128

Hopelda

Musical score for measure 128. The top staff (Hopelda) contains a whole rest. The middle staff (Pno.) contains a triplet of eighth notes with a slur. The bottom staff (Piano accompaniment) continues with the eighth-note pattern.

129

Hopelda

Pno.

131

♩ = 72

Hopelda

*mp*

Oh, no.

Pno.

*Red.*

133

Hopelda

Oh, no.

Oh, no!

I

Pno.

135

*freely*  
*(spoken)*

Hopelda must have my prince. And I must have him tall! Christopherus!

*freely*  
*8va*  
(chimes)

Pno.

137

Hopelda Give me a sign from your card board prison! Will I not have a wedding with the tallest prince in the land as my groom?! Is this the end of me?

*8va*

Pno.

140

$\bullet = 72$

Hopelda

*dolce*  
*mp*

*rit.*

Pno.

143  $\bullet = 56$

*mp* *mf*

Hopelda

My tall prince. My tall prince. If you are small, how

Pno.

*mp*

146

*p* *mp*

Hopelda

can we mar - - - ry? Chri - - - - sto -

Pno.

149

*rit.*

Hopelda

phe - rus! Chri sto phe rus! Chri - sto - phe - rus! Chri - sto -

Pno.

152

*pp*  
very slow

Hopelda

phe - - - rus!

Pno.

*p*

155

Hopelda

Pno.

*pp*

*ppp*

(As the last notes fade, the box that holds Prince Christopherus begins to shake and jump around...)

Magic Box: Excuse me! Excuse me! Could you let me outta here?!

Excuse me! Excuse me! Could you let me outta here?!