

The Live Arts Teen Summer Musical

Directed by
Jessica Harris

Musical Direction by
Xavier Taylor & Austin Robey

Into the Woods

BOOK BY
JAMES LAPINE

MUSIC & LYRICS BY
STEPHEN SONDHEIM

JULY 15–31

Who knows what may
be lurking on the journey?



livearts.org
434-977-4177

STUDY GUIDE

INTO THE WOODS

Live Arts Teen Summer Musical

Book by James Lapine
Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

July 15 - July 31, 2022 in the Gibson Theater

Directed by Jessica Harris
Musical Direction by Xavier Taylor & Austin Robey

The play runs for approximately 2.5 Hours with a 15-minute intermission

"...Indeed, like many Grimm Brothers' tales, "Into the Woods" is rooted in heartbreak, betrayal, disappointment and death. The characters—a vengeful witch, charming princes, disobedient children—are flawed people whose happily-ever-afters didn't turn out as they expected. Selfish, greedy and desperate, their (mostly) good intentions (often) lead them to make bad choices that more often than not end in tragedy. Yet, as "Into the Woods" penultimate number reminds us, no one is alone. Love endures. And these days especially, that's something worth remembering."

- Daily Herald

"This twisty fairy-tale mash-up shows an appreciation for the virtues of old-fashioned storytelling, along with a welcome dash of subversive wit. It benefits from respect for the source material, enticing production values and a populous gallery of sharp character portraits from a delightful cast."

- The Hollywood Reporter

"INTO THE WOODS blends imagination and playfulness in its own very special proportions ... By the end the musical arrives at a clearing in the woods illuminated by autumnal shafts of wisdom, but not before it has followed a path strewn with wit and the beguiling songs we've come to expect from Sondheim."

- Newsday



Photo by Jannatul Pramanik. Featuring (from left to right) Chloe Rogers as CINDERELLA, Hope King as LITTLE RED, and Ezra Smith as BAKER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Director's Note	4
Synopsis	4
Setting	5
Playwright Bios	6
Character List	8
Character Description and Analysis	8
Previous Show History	11
Talkback Information	13
Works Cited	13

[Director's Note](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Setting](#)

[Playwright Bios](#)

[Character List](#)

[Character Description and Analysis](#)

[Previous Show History](#)

[Talkback Information](#)

[Works Cited](#)

Director's Note

Thank you for joining us for Live Arts' Teen Summer Musical, INTO THE WOODS.

As you'll soon experience, this show is not your average fairy tale. INTO THE WOODS takes everything we know about these classic characters and turns that understanding on its head. It uses familiar stories to highlight the harsh realities of the human experience and to examine the possibility of our world as we wish to see it—and as we wish to pass it on to our children.

Part of the power of INTO THE WOODS (now celebrating its 35th anniversary) is that it is timeless. It is about the narratives we pass on, the wishes we choose to make, and how we deal with the consequences of our actions. It is also about the strength we find in one another in times of adversity—and what better time than this to remind us of that power.

Since May, this talented cast has poured their hearts into this production. Throughout the process, we took time to dive deep into our understanding of these characters, find our meaning in the world of the show, and bring our current moment to the fore. The talent of the cast and crew is matched only by their compassion and support of one another, and I am grateful for our creative community.

Through INTO THE WOODS, we see that "...wishes come true, not free." Sondheim's words remind us to choose our paths thoughtfully. And as we consider our own paths, may we always remember that indeed "no one is alone."

Thank you for journeying into the woods with us. We hope you enjoy the show.

-Jessica Harris, Director of INTO THE WOODS

Synopsis

INTO THE WOODS begins with a montage of familiar fairy tale characters and stories. Cinderella wishes to attend the Prince's festival, but her cruel stepsisters and stepmother are trying to prevent her from going. Jack (of Jack and the Beanstalk) wishes for a better life; but his mother, desperate for money, makes him take his cow, Milky White, into the woods to sell her. Little Red Riding Hood visits the Baker and the Baker's Wife to purchase bread to take to her sick grandmother in the woods.

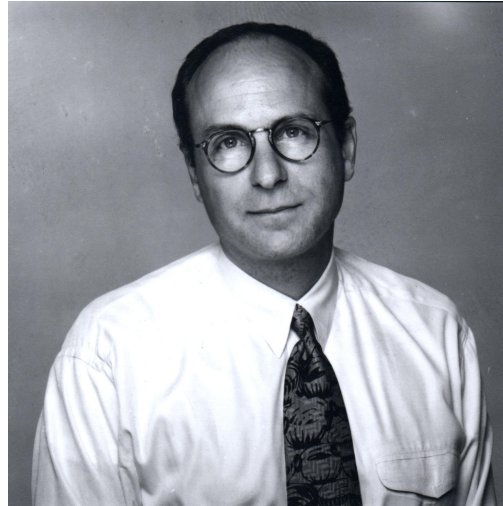
Meanwhile, the Baker and his wife lament the fact they are childless. Soon, the Witch from next door visits and reveals she is the cause behind their infertility; in the past she placed a curse on their family because they stole from her precious garden. In order to reverse the curse, the Witch assigns them a series of tasks to complete in "three days time." During their quest to fulfill the witches' demands, they encounter Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Cinderella, and numerous other fairy tale figures in the woods. Each story is altered and intertwined, and most eventually work toward the same goal, but not until they each realize the repercussions of their desired "happily ever afters."

Setting

This version of INTO THE WOODS takes place in today's world. In doing so, the Live Arts' version highlights the parallels between the show's original production in the 1980s. Leaning into the comparisons from the show's conception to the modern day, nearly 35 years later, the audience sees that, while written in a different generation, the lessons portrayed throughout INTO THE WOODS still hold true in our contemporary world.

Playwright Bios

JAMES LAPINE is a playwright and director. On Broadway he worked with Stephen Sondheim on *Sunday in the Park with George*; *Into the Woods*; and *Passion*. He also conceived and directed the musical review *Sondheim on Sondheim*. With William Finn he created *Falsettos*, recently revived by Lincoln Center Theater; *Little Miss Sunshine*; *Muscle*; and directed Finn's *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Other Broadway credits include his play based on Moss Hart's memoir *Act One* (also LCT), *Amour*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Golden Child*, and *Dirty Blonde*. He has written the plays *Table Settings*, *Twelve Dreams*, *The Moment When*, *Fran's Bed* and *Mrs. Miller Does Her Thing*. Lapine has been nominated for 11 Tony Awards, winning on three occasions. He has also been the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize and SDC's Mr. Abbott Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theater, and has been inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame.



STEPHEN SONDHEIM wrote the music and lyrics for *Saturday Night* (1954), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964), *Company* (1970), *FOLLIES* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *The Frogs* (1974), *Pacific Overtures* (1976), *Sweeny Todd* (1979), *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), *Into the Woods* (1987), *Assassins* (1991), *Passion* (1994) and *Road Show* (2008) as well as lyrics for *West Side Story* (1957), *Gypsy* (1959) and *Do I Hear a Waltz* (1965) and additional lyrics for *Candide* (1973). Anthologies of his work include *Side by Side by Sondheim* (1976), *Marry Me a Little* (1981), *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow* (1983), *Putting It Together* (1993/99) and *Sondheim on Sondheim* (2010). He composed the scores of the films "Stavisky" (1974) and "Reds" (1981) and songs for "Dick Tracy" (1990) and the television production "Evening Primrose" (1966). His collected lyrics with



attendant essays have been published in two volumes: "Finishing the Hat" (2010) and "Look, I Made a Hat" (2011). In 2010, Broadway's Henry Miller's Theatre was renamed The Stephen Sondheim Theatre in his honor; in 2019, London's Queens Theatre was also renamed the Sondheim.



Photo by Jannatul Pramanik. Featuring Chloe Rogers as CINDERELLA

Character List

THE NARRATOR

CINDERELLA

JACK

MILKY WHITE

JACK'S MOTHER

BAKER

BAKER'S WIFE

CINDERELLA'S STEPMOTHER

FLORINDA (CINDERELLA'S STEPSISTER)

LUCINDA (CINDERELLA'S OTHER STEPSISTER)

CINDERELLA'S FATHER

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

WITCH

CINDERELLA'S MOTHER

MYSTERIOUS MAN

WOLF

GRANNY

RAPUNZEL

RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE (BROTHER OF RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE)

STEWARD

GIANT

Character Description and Analysis

Cinderella - A young, earnest maiden who is constantly mistreated by her stepmother and stepsisters. She wants to break away and live her own life, but discovers that perhaps being rescued by a prince isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Jack - The feckless Giant-killer who is "almost a man." He is adventurous, naive, energetic, and bright-eyed. He is devastated by the loss of his best friend, the family cow.

Milky White - A hapless, hungry cow who is falling apart at the seams.

Jack's Mother - Browbeating and weary, Jack's protective mother who is independent, bold, bitter, and strong-willed.

The Baker - A harried and insecure baker who is simple and loving, yet protective of his family. He wants his wife to be happy and is willing to do anything to ensure her happiness but has old-fashioned views about the role of a wife.

The Baker's Wife - Determined and bright woman who wishes to be a mother. She leads a simple yet satisfying life and is very low-maintenance yet proactive in her endeavors.

Cinderella's Stepmother - The mean-spirited, demanding stepmother of Cinderella. She is a ruthless social climber.

Florinda and Lucinda - Cinderella's stepsisters who are beautiful of face but black of heart. They follow in their mother's footsteps in abusing Cinderella.

Cinderella's Father - A hapless sucker who sacrifices his daughter's happiness and well-being for the sake of appeasing his shrewish wife.

Little Red Riding Hood - A young girl who is strong-willed, quick-witted, fearless, yet youthful and naive. She has a love of sweets.

The Witch - Sarcastic, obsessive protector of Rapunzel who is straightforward and aggressive. She dislikes and mistrusts most people.

Cinderella's Mother - A memory of a beloved mother, a ghost guarding and aiding her daughter from a tree.

Mysterious Man - A mischievous vagrant and father/grandfather figure. He is a good-natured protector and observer.

Wolf - A hunter who enjoys the game. He is dapper and sophisticated.

Granny - Street-wise and nobody's fool. She protects herself and her grandchild with a vengeance.

Rapunzel - A ditzy and deeply unsatisfied maiden who is sheltered by the Witch and terribly lonely. She yearns to experience the world.

Cinderella's Prince - Vain and gorgeous, he is a disloyal lover who is currently searching for the next new, exciting thing.

Rapunzel's Prince - Just as vain and gorgeous as his older and more jaded brother, he is always chasing the newest, most exciting endeavor.

Steward - A nasty servant who dislikes his role and dislikes the peasantry even more.

The Giant - Angry and vengeful, particularly because she shows kindness to a child who then kills her husband. She is seeking restitution for her loss.



Photo by Jannatul Pramanik. Featuring Hope King as LITTLE RED

Previous Show History

INTO THE WOODS, with book by James Lapine and music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, premiered in San Diego, California, at the Old Globe Theatre on December 4, 1986. It ran for 50 performances.

The musical later opened on Broadway on November 5, 1987, at the Martin Beck Theatre. The production closed on September 3, 1989, after 765 shows, although most of the original cast reunited for a 10th anniversary benefit performance on November 9, 1997. A national tour ran across the United States from November 1988 to September 1989, with a longer residency at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC.

The original West End production opened at the Phoenix Theatre on September 25, 1990, and ran for nearly 200 performances. A London revival opened on November 16, 1998, running for only three months.

In the new millennium, the musical has seen a significant number of revivals: Los Angeles in early 2002 (before moving to the Broadhurst Theatre on Broadway), the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden in June 2007 and the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre of England in a six-week limited engagement, which performed in an actual forest. This particular production transferred to the Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park series in New York's Central Park for a limited run in the summer of 2012.

A second Broadway revival began performances on June 28, 2022, following a sold-out New York Center Encores! Run.

Throughout the years, the musical has been performed in theatres across the United States (including Puerto Rico), London, Australia, New Zealand, Spain and Singapore.

Themes and Topics to Explore

1. What do “the woods” represent to the characters in act one? What about in act two? What do “the woods” represent to you?
2. What is a cautionary tale? In what ways is INTO THE WOODS a cautionary tale?
3. Can you describe either a situation in your own life or someone else’s where it is acceptable to put one’s own desires over the wellbeing of someone else? What was the outcome of this situation?
4. Is lying ever acceptable? What is the difference between a small and a big lie?
5. What qualities do you look for in a friend? How would you define friendship? Is it okay to keep secrets from your friends? When and why?
6. If you could wish for five things, what would they be? Do the majority of these wishes serve to benefit you, the world around you, or both?
7. Have you ever had a wish turn out in the opposite way you planned (an ironic wish)? What did you take away from this situation?
8. How does the accomplishment of the characters’ wishes (Witch’s returned beauty, Baker and his wife’s child, Cinderella’s marriage, etc.) grant the characters the happiness they were looking for? In what ways does the wish leave the characters unfulfilled?
9. What is destiny? Is destiny a comforting or scary thought to you and why?
10. Why do you think James Lapine chose to combine multiple fairy tales throughout the tale of INTO THE WOODS? How does Lapine convey a stronger message by combining multiple short stories into a longer, singular tale?
11. If you were to incorporate characters from one more fairy tale throughout INTO THE WOODS, who would they be and why?
12. If you could erase one character from INTO THE WOODS, who would it be and why?

Talkback Information

The audience talkback for Live Arts' INTO THE WOODS is scheduled for Sunday, July 24, 2022 at 4:30pm in Gibson Theater (123 East Water Street) with members of the cast and crew, facilitated by Education Director Ti Ames. You do not have to purchase a ticket to that day's show to attend the talkback. This program is provided free of charge to the Charlottesville community. Please email Education Director Ti Ames at ti@livearts.org with questions about the event.

Works Cited

Music Theatre International (mtishows.com)