



STUDENT
MATINEE
PROGRAM

Discovery Guide

The Acclaimed Fiasco Theater Production

James Lapine & Stephen
Sondheim's

into the woods

Welcome to Center Theatre Group for Fiasco Theater's production of James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim's musical, *Into The Woods*, co-directed by Fiasco Theater members Noah Brody and Ben Steinfeld.

Into The Woods is a musical mash-up of well-known fairy tales that have been woven together in unexpected ways. Complications arise when the characters from these stories interact with one another as they travel into the woods to pursue their wishes.

The main story involves The Baker and The Baker's Wife, who desperately want to have a child. A witch informs the couple that she cast a spell on The Baker's father many years ago, and this is why they cannot have any children. In order to break the spell, The Baker and his wife must bring four items to the Witch:

**"the cow as white as milk,
the cape as red as blood,
the hair as yellow as corn,
and the slipper as pure as gold,"**
all before midnight in three days' time.

The Baker and The Baker's Wife go into the woods on a quest for these items, where they encounter Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Jack who climbed the beanstalk, Cinderella, and other fairytale characters.

**"Into the woods
it's time, and so
I must begin my journey."**

—Little Red Ridinghood

the characters

What do you think will happen when all of these characters meet?

The Baker:

a humble man who runs a bakery in town.

The Baker's Wife:

willing to do whatever it takes to make their wish come true.

Witch:

The Baker's neighbor; she has hidden Rapunzel deep in the woods and has raised her as her daughter.

Rapunzel:

a beautiful young maiden locked away in a tower.

Little Red Ridinghood:

an enthusiastic young girl who is bringing treats to her grandmother's house in the woods.

Wolf:

a charming creature who plots to do harm to Little Red Ridinghood and her Grandmother.

Cinderella:

a young woman who lives with her father and her cruel stepfamily; she longs to go to the prince's festival.

Jack:

a young boy who lives in poverty with his mother and his beloved pet cow, Milky White.

Jack's Mom:

requests that he sell Milky White so they will have money for food.

the Woods

Characters in fairy tales often find themselves in the woods, where they confront mysterious creatures and the unknown. They leave the woods with problems solved and wishes fulfilled. And sometimes they have to go back into the woods to complete the transformation.

Fiasco Theater's production of *Into The Woods* celebrates creativity and the power of transformation. Piano strings represent the trees in the woods. Plain pieces of paper become bird puppets. A pair of decorative curtains bring to life Cinderella's stepsisters.

“THOUGH IT'S fearful, THOUGH IT'S dark
THOUGH IT'S deep, AND THOUGH YOU MAY LOSE THE PATH,
THOUGH YOU MAY ENCOUNTER WOLVES, YOU CAN'T JUST ACT,
you have to think.”

—*Into The Woods* Ensemble

Have you ever spent time in the woods? If so, what kinds of experiences did you have there?

When have you gone “into the woods” in your life? What did you learn about yourself from that journey?

Wishes

The characters in the play go into the woods on a journey to make their wishes come true.

What wishes do you have for your life? For the lives of people around you?

What will you do to make your wishes come true?

In *Into The Woods*, parents have wishes for their children but children have wishes of their own.

Are your wishes the same as your parents' wishes for you?

As you listen to adults, what do you hear?

What do you wish adults would say to young people?

“Are you certain what you Wish is what you Want?”

—Cinderella's Stepmother

fairy tales

“Once upon a time” and “happily ever after” are phrases we have heard since childhood. A witch casts a spell. A princess sleeps for a hundred years. A bean grows into a stalk that reaches the sky.

All cultures tell fairy tales. Variations of the same story are told around the world. For example, Cinderella stories can be found in China (Yeh-Shen), France (Cendrillon), and Africa (Chinye).

Into The Woods is a mash-up of Western culture's most popular fairy tales.

Why do humans need fairy tales? Why does every culture tell them?

What is a story that mattered to you when you were younger?

“Careful the tale you tell. That is the spell. Children will listen”

—The Witch

Written by Lynn Clark

Welcome to the theatre!

where?

Into The Woods will be performed at Center Theatre Group's Ahmanson Theatre in Downtown Los Angeles.

Founded in 1967, Center Theatre Group, a nonprofit organization, is one of the largest and most active theatre companies in the nation, programming shows year-round at the Ahmanson Theatre and Mark Taper Forum in Downtown Los Angeles and the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Downtown Culver City.

what?

Theatre is performed LIVE, right there in front of you, in real time. The performers respond to the way you listen, laugh, gasp, and applaud. Live theatre can't happen without you!

Before the performance, there will be a welcome and introduction. After seeing the show, you will get to share what excited you and then meet the artists and ask them questions.

why?

**"We believe that theatre...
brings communities together, teaches empathy and
has the power to inspire, galvanize and heal people."**

—Fiasco Theater

who?

Theatre involves many people working together to tell a story: playwright, director, actors, designers, musicians, stage manager, crew members, make-up artists, house manager, ushers, maintenance staff, producers, educators, administrative staff.

the Creative Team

The characters in the play discover they are much more powerful when they come together to conquer dangers than when they try to face challenges on their own.

Teamwork is an essential ingredient for theatre as well. Long-time collaborators Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine are the theatrical team behind *Into The Woods*. Sondheim wrote the music and lyrics and Lapine wrote the book. (The book is the story of the show.) The duo decided to take characters from different fairy tales and combine their stories, resulting in the musical mash-up *Into The Woods*.

Fiasco Theater, the ensemble-based theatre company behind this production of *Into The Woods*, honors the power of collaboration and working together in their telling of this story: **"We choose to work as an ensemble because we believe this allows us the possibility to create something greater than the sum of its parts."**

Special Thanks

Bank of America



JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.



A special thanks to Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation for its generous contribution to support the Student Matinee performances of *Into The Woods*.

The Student Matinee Program also receives generous support from Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, Renee & Meyer Luskin, Deena & Edward Nahmias, Laura & James Rosenwald & Orinoco Foundation, Eva & Marc Stern, and the Artists & Educators Forum.