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.

“I must begin my journey.” — Little Red Ridinghood
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?

Once upon a time and happily ever after are phrases we have heard since childhood. A witch casts a spell. A prince 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).

In *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?

Are you certain what you wish is what you want?

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.

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.

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?

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.

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.”

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

Special Thanks

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.