

IN THE WINGS 2022-2023

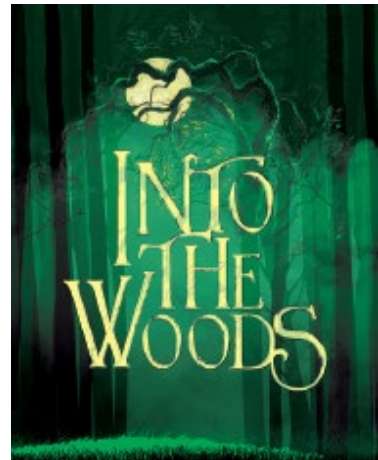
# INTO THE WOODS

**Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim**

**Book by James Lapine**

**IN THE WINGS Performance May 4, 2023 @ 7:30pm**

Fort Wayne Civic Theatre  
IN THE WINGS  
Arts-In-Education Program  
Study Guide



Study guide prepared by Eunice Wadewitz, Education Director

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## *Stephen Sondheim* (MUSIC AND LYRICS)



Stephen Sondheim was born in New York on 22 March 1930, and is widely acknowledged as the most innovative, most influential and most important composer and lyricist in modern Broadway history.

For more than 50 years, Stephen Sondheim set an unsurpassed standard of brilliance and artistic integrity in the musical theatre. His accolades included an Academy Award, eight Tony Awards (more than any other composer) including the Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre, multiple Grammy Awards, multiple Drama Desk awards and a Pulitzer Prize.

He 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)
- *Sweeney Todd* (1979)
- *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981)
- *Sunday In The Park With George* (1984)
- *Into The Woods* (1987)
- *Assassins* (1991)
- *Passion* (1994)
- *Bounce* (2003) which later became *Road Show* (2008)

He also wrote lyrics for:

- *West Side Story* (1957)
- *Gypsy* (1959)
- *Do I Hear A Waltz?* (1965)
- *Candide* (1973, additional lyrics)

Anthologies of his work as composer and lyricist include:

- *Side By Side By Sondheim* (1976)
- *Marry Me A Little* (1981)
- *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow* (1983)
- *Putting It Together* (1993/99)
- *Moving On* (2001)
- *Sondheim on Sondheim* (2010)

For films, he composed the scores of *Stavisky* (1974) and co-composed *Reds* (1981), as well as songs for *The Seven Percent Solution* (1976) and *Dick Tracy* (1990). He also wrote the songs for the television production *Evening Primrose* (1966), co-authored the film *The Last of Sheila* (1973) and the play *Getting Away With Murder* (1996).

He provided incidental music for the plays *The Girls Of Summer* (1956), *Invitation To A March* (1961), *Twigs* (1971), *The Enclave* (1973) and a new production of *King Lear* (2007) and songs for the plays *I Know My Love* (1951) and *A Mighty Man Is He* (1955). He wrote the "Passionella" segment of *The World of Jules Feiffer* (1963), and additional material for *Hot Spot* (1963), *The Mad Show* (1966) and *The Madwoman Of Central Park West* (1979).

He created cryptic crosswords for *New York Magazine* in the late 1960s, and was screenwriter for the television series *Topper* (c.1953). As an actor, he featured in the television revision of *June Moon* (1974) and has appeared as himself in the film *Camp* (2003).

Sondheim studied at George School, Pennsylvania (1942 to 1946) and at Williams College, Massachusetts (1946 to 1950), where he was a music major. On college graduation he received the Hutchinson Prize for Composition, and subsequently studied music theory and composition with the avant-garde composer Milton Babbitt.

Mr Sondheim's early work for school and college theatre includes *By George* (1945) and *Phinney's Rainbow* (1948). Between 1948 and 1951, he wrote *All That Glitters*, *High Tor*, *Mary Poppins* and *Climb High* as part of a course of study under his mentor Oscar Hammerstein II. *Saturday Night* (1954), his first professional musical, finally had its world premiere at London's Bridewell Theatre in 1997 at the instigation of The Stephen Sondheim Society, followed by a Broadway production two years later.

Mr. Sondheim received the Tony Award for Best Score/Music/Lyrics for *Company*, *Follies*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Into The Woods* and *Passion*, all of which won the New York Drama Circle award for Outstanding /Best Musical, as did *Pacific Overtures* and *Sunday In The Park With George*. In total, his works have accumulated more than sixty individual and collaborative Tony Awards.

"Sooner Or Later" from the film *Dick Tracy* won the 1999 Academy Award for Best Song. Mr Sondheim received The Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1984 for *Sunday In The Park With George*.

In 1983, he was elected to The American Academy of Arts and Letters, which awarded him the Gold Medal for Music in 2006. In 1990, he was appointed the first Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Oxford University and was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award in the 1993 Kennedy Center Honors. In 1992, he declined the National Medal of Arts from the Bush Administration but accepted it from the Clinton administration in 1996. In 2000, he was honoured with the *Praemium Imperiale*, Japan's highest honour for a lifetime of artistic achievement; in 2001 was granted the Fellows of the Phi Beta Kappa Society Award; and in 2002 received the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) Richard Rodgers Award. In February 2007, he was a recipient of the 49th Grammy Awards Trustees Award, an award recognizing outstanding contributions

to the industry in a non-performing category.

He had been patron to The Stephen Sondheim Society since its foundation in 1993. Mr Sondheim was also on the Council of the Dramatists Guild – the national association of playwrights, composers and lyricists – having served as its President from 1973 to 1981, in which year he founded Young Playwrights Inc. to develop and promote the work of American playwrights aged 18 years and younger.

In June 2008, Mr Sondheim received the Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre; also the New York transfer of The Menier Chocolate Factory's London production of *Sunday in the Park with George* received nine Tony nominations.

Mr Sondheim's most recent show, *Road Show* (aka *Gold, Wise Guys and Bounce*), opened off-Broadway in October 2008, and in London in 2011. It had a US revival in June 2013 in Chicago.

March 22nd 2010 was Stephen Sondheim's 80th birthday and there were numerous celebrations around the world to mark the event. Among those was the new anthology show *Sondheim On Sondheim*, for which Sondheim himself provided a pre-recorded video commentary. This opened on Broadway in March of that year.

In July 2010, Mr Sondheim received the accolade of having a London Prom Concert dedicated to his work and in a ceremony on September 15th New York's Henry Miller's Theatre was renamed The Stephen Sondheim Theatre. In the same year, his work was produced in Paris with the Théâtre du Châtelet production of *A Little Night Music*. This was followed in 2011 with *Sweeney Todd*, then *Sunday in the Park With George* (2013), *Into The Woods* (2014) and *Passion* (2016).

In October 2010, the first of two volumes of his collected and annotated lyrics, *Finishing the Hat*, was published; that same month The Royal Academy of Music conferred on him an Honorary Doctorate of the University of London. Volume two, *Look I Made a Hat*, was published the following year.

To mark his 80th birthday, Arlington's Signature Theatre instituted the Sondheim Award, which in its first year was presented to Angela Lansbury. Bernadette Peters and Patti LuPone won in 2011 and 2012 respectively; the 2013 winner was Harold Prince; orchestrator Jonathan Tunick won the 2014 award; and librettist James Lapine in 2015.

In 2011, among other things, he received the Olivier Special Award, the Chicago Tribune Literary Prize, and the Handel Medallion, (New York City's highest award for achievement in the arts); the Kennedy Center inaugurated the Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards; *Road Show* opened in London, and volume two of his collected and annotated lyrics, *Look I Made a Hat*, was published.

The UK Critics Circle 24th Annual Award for Services to the Arts was given to Mr Sondheim in March 2012 and later that year an acclaimed London production of *Merrily We Roll Along* opened at the Menier Chocolate Factory. This production then transferred to play at the West End's Harold Pinter Theatre in April 2013. At the 2013 Olivier Awards, the Chichester production of *Sweeney Todd* won Best Musical Revival, and the transfer of *Merrily We Roll Along* won two Olivier Awards in 2014 for Best Musical Revival and Best Sound Design.

In July 2013, The Stephen Sondheim Society launched The Stephen Sondheim Society Archive. Housed at Kingston University, this is of great use and interest to Sondheim academics and scholars around the world.

Recent revivals of his work include *Gypsy* at Chichester, directed by Jonathan Kent and starring Imelda Staunton, which subsequently enjoyed a West End transfer at the Savoy Theatre; *Assassins* at the Menier Chocolate Factory, directed by Jamie Lloyd; and two important productions of *Sweeney Todd*, one from the ENO at the Coliseum starring Bryn Terfel and Emma Thompson, and the other at Harrington's Pie & Mash Shop by the Tooting Arts Club, a site-specific production that transferred to a pop-up pie shop on Shaftesbury Avenue.

In 2014, Sir Cameron Mackintosh announced that The Ambassadors Theatre in London was to be renamed The Sondheim Theatre in Stephen's honour. The following year, Sondheim's 85th birthday

was marked with, among other things, the gala *Hey, Old Friends!*, produced at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane by The Stephen Sondheim Society and Richard Douglas Productions.

Stephen's 90th birthday was marked with a virtual concert, *Take Me To the World: A Sondheim 90th Birthday Celebration*, which saw Broadway luminaries such as Stephen Schwartz, Neil Patrick Harris, Kelli O'Hara, Melissa Errico, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Patti Lupone, Bernadette Peters and Raul Esparza stream their appreciation and birthday greetings.

His work continues to be staged around the world. The much-lauded gender-switched production of *Company* directed by Marianne Elliott - which started life in London's West End - only last week re-opened on Broadway, and the Spanish premiere of *Company* is currently on stage in Malaga with Antonio Banderas. Work was underway on a new show, in collaboration with the playwright David Ives, based on the movies of Spanish filmmaker Luis Buñuel, and Stephen teased the 2022 release of *Square One*, also created in partnership with Ives, in September this year on the Stephen Colbert Show. Steven Spielberg's version of *West Side Story* is due to open in early December, and pre-production work has begun on a cinema adaptation of *Follies*.

Stephen died suddenly on the morning of Friday 26 November 2021 at the age of 91 at his home in Roxbury, Connecticut, where he had been spending most of his time during the COVID-19 pandemic. He will be remembered as the most influential and inspiring musical theatre creator of his generation, whose legacy will resonate long into the 21st century.

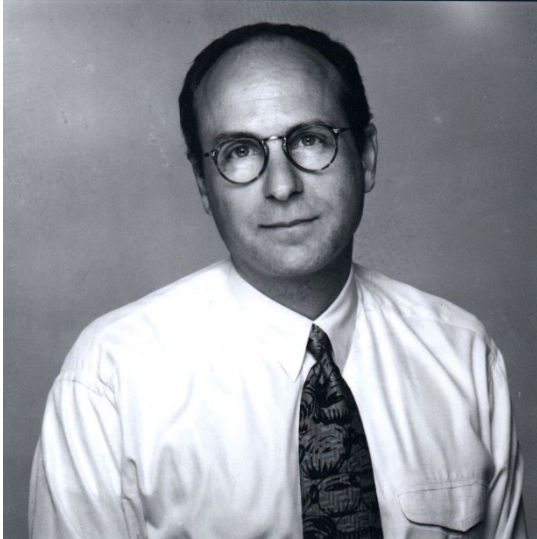
"Look I made a hat... Where there never was a hat" [Stephen Sondheim Society | Official biography](#)



Cast of 2022-2023 Broadway Revival of *Into the Woods*

*"What happens in the show is what happens to everyone who grows up"*  
*-Bernadette Peters-*

## James Lapine (BOOK)



Professions: director, playwright, graphic designer, architectural preservation, teacher

**James Elliot Lapine** (born January 10, 1949) is an American stage director, playwright, screenwriter, and librettist. He has won the Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical three times, for *Into the Woods*, *Falsettos*, and *Passion*. He has frequently collaborated with Stephen Sondheim and William Finn.

Lapine was born in Mansfield, Ohio, the son of Lillian (Feld) and David Sanford Lapine.<sup>[1]</sup> He graduated from Franklin and Marshall College in 1971.<sup>[2]</sup> Though he did not actively pursue theatre in childhood, Lapine did play Jack in an elementary school production of *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Lapine did graduate study in photography and graphic design at the California Institute of the Arts, where he received an MFA in 1973. He was a photographer, graphic designer, and architectural preservationist, and taught design at the Yale School of Drama. At Yale University he wrote an adaptation of and directed Gertrude Stein's *Photograph*, which was produced Off-Broadway at the Open Space in SoHo in 1977. He went on to write and direct Off-Broadway plays and musicals, directing composer William Finn's *March of the Falsettos* in 1981; the musical won the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Play. Frank Rich, the *New York Times* theater critic, noted "Mr. Lapine's wildly resourceful staging".

In 1982, Lapine was introduced to Stephen Sondheim. The pair developed *Sunday in the Park with George*: Lapine wrote the book and directed; Sondheim created the music and lyrics. The play was first produced Off-Broadway in 1983, and moved to Broadway in 1984.<sup>[8]</sup> Their next musical was *Into the Woods*, which premiered on Broadway in 1987,<sup>[11]</sup> for which Lapine won the Tony Award and the Drama Desk Award for Best Book of a Musical. They next collaborated on the musical *Passion*, for which Lapine wrote the book and directed. The musical ran on Broadway in 1994 and in London's West End in 1996, receiving a nomination for the Olivier Award for Best New Musical, and winning the Tony Award for Best Musical and the Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical, among other awards and nominations. Their last collaboration was the revue *Sondheim on Sondheim*. Presented on Broadway in 2010, it won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Musical Revue.

In 1992, Lapine returned to working with William Finn, and wrote the book and directed the Broadway musical *Falsettos*. Lapine wrote the book and Finn composed the music for *A New Brain*, which premiered Off-Broadway in 1998. They later worked together on Finn's musical *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, which premiered Off-Broadway in 2005 and later moved to Broadway. The *New York Times* reviewer wrote of the *Spelling Bee* Broadway transfer that "Mr. Lapine has sharpened all the musical's elements without betraying its appealing modesty."<sup>[18]</sup> The latest Finn-Lapine work is *Little Miss Sunshine*, which premiered in 2011 at the La Jolla Playhouse in California.

Lapine has also directed dramas, including *Dirty Blonde*, which ran Off-Broadway and then on Broadway in 2000. Conceived by Claudia Shear and Lapine and written by Shear with direction by Lapine, Ben Brantley called Lapine's direction "stylish and compassionate." Lapine was nominated for the Tony Award and Drama Desk Award for Best Direction of a Play.

Lapine directed the 2012 Broadway revival of *Annie*. He wrote a stage adaptation of the Moss Hart autobiography *Act One*, which premiered on Broadway at the Lincoln Center Vivian Beaumont Theater in April 2014.

Lapine wrote the book for and directed the new musical *Flying Over Sunset*. A staged singing/reading was presented at the Vineyard Arts Project (Martha's Vineyard) in August 2015. The composer is Tom Kitt and lyrics are by Michael Korie. The musical premiered on Broadway at the Vivian Beaumont Theater on November 11, 2021 in previews with the official opening scheduled for December 13. The production was originally scheduled to open on April 16, 2020, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 1991, Lapine directed his first film, *Impromptu*, which has a screenplay by his wife, Sarah Kernochan. The story revolves around the romance of George Sand and Chopin, and stars Judy Davis and Hugh Grant. He followed with *Life With Mikey*, with Michael J. Fox for Disney. In 1993, he directed *Passion*, starring the original Broadway cast, for television. He directed the film version of Anne Tyler's novel *Earthly Possessions*, starring Susan Sarandon and Stephen Dorff, for HBO in 1999. He wrote the screenplay for Disney's film version of *Into the Woods* (2014), directed by Rob Marshall. He wrote and directed the film *Custody* in 2016 with Viola Davis, Hayden Panettiere, and Catalina Sandino Moreno.

Lapine received the 2015 Mr. Abbott Award at a special gala on October 19, 2015. The award is presented by the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation "in recognition of a lifetime of exceptional achievement in the theatre." Lapine's book *Putting It Together: How Stephen Sondheim and I Created Sunday in the Park with George* was released on August 3, 2021, and reviewed by Alan Cumming in a cover story in the *New York Times Book Review* on August 8, 2021.

[James Lapine - Wikipedia](#)



Cast of 2022-2023 Broadway Revival of *Into the Woods*

## CHARACTERS

**Narrator:** A gentleman who helps guide the story along, the Narrator also plays a surprising role in the show later.

**Cinderella:** Even though she lives with her father, wicked stepmother, and two cruel stepsisters, Cinderella is kind and good and her only wish is to go to the Prince's festival (a.k.a. the ball), but once she does go and the Prince pursues her, she is uncertain about how to proceed.

**Jack:** Young, foolhardy, and desperate for a better life, Jack sells his cow for magic beans which lead him on a journey of growing up and learning to accept consequences.

**Jack's Mother:** A single mother and a fighter, Jack's Mother is mainly concerned with not starving. When she forces Jack to sell his cow, little does she know what *big* things are in store!

**Baker:** The "hero" of the story (although his actions are not always heroic), the Baker feels he must "fix" he and his wife's inability to have children and initially tries to pursue his quest without her; but he soon realizes he is much better off with her by his side.

**Baker's Wife:** Badly wanting a child, the Baker's Wife would go to any length to have one. When her husband sets off into the woods to seek the things that would enable them to remove their "curse" of infertility, her assertiveness and stubbornness eventually helps bring about a change between her and her husband.

**Cinderella's Stepmother:** Greedy, selfish, and mean-spirited, Cinderella's Stepmother wants what is best for herself and her two daughters, but not Cinderella.

**Florinda and Lucinda:** Cinderella's cruel stepsisters.

**Cinderella's Father:** A pushover, Cinderella's Father is out-of-touch with his family.

**Little Red Riding Hood:** A sassy, spoiled girl, Little Red Riding Hood must journey from youth and innocence into adulthood and responsibility through an adventurous and scary path.

**Witch:** Originally portrayed as "the villain," the witch's story is much more complicated. She has an ulterior motive when she reveals she was the one who placed the curse of infertility on the Baker's family.

**Cinderella's Mother:** Though no longer living, Cinderella's Mother is still pivotal in granting useful advice and helping fulfill Cinderella's wish of going to the Prince's ball.

**Mysterious Man:** A wanderer in the woods, the Mysterious Man is full of riddles and a secret.

**The Wolf:** Lustful, hungry creature, the Wolf represents a lot more than just a dangerous animal in the woods.

**Granny:** Rapunzel's grandmother who lives in the woods, Granny is feisty and vindictive towards the Wolf.

**Rapunzel:** Raised and locked away by the Witch, Rapunzel grew up confined to a tower in the woods; and even though she escapes to start a new life and learn her true history, she struggles to maintain her sanity after her distressing upbringing.

**Cinderella's Prince:** Though charming, handsome, and seemingly perfect, Cinderella's Prince thinks his royal birth entitles him to take anything, and anyone, he wants.

**Rapunzel's Prince:** Attractive and pompous like his brother, Cinderella's Prince, Rapunzel's Prince tries his best to help when Rapunzel starts to lose her grip on reality.

**Steward:** A self-important, surly servant to the royal family.

**Giant:** Loud, angry, and very, very big.

**Snow White and Sleeping Beauty:** These two catch the attention of Cinderella's and Rapunzel's princes.

*Sometimes the things you most wish  
for are not to be touched.  
- Witch*



## INTO THE WOODS

One of the most frequent images in folk literature is that of a character traveling through a dark forest. Noted child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim explains the symbolism of the woods in these fairy tales as: the place in which inner darkness is confronted and...where uncertainty is resolved about who one is...or who one wants to be. In "Into the Woods," Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine lead a conglomeration of new and old storybook characters on just such a journey of growth and self-discovery.

The initial concept for the show was for Lapine to devise an entirely original story, but as he worked on it. He decided that there were already so many existing fairy tales that his seemed arbitrary. Instead, he hit upon the notion of uniting numerous characters from familiar literature: Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack (of Beanstalk fame) and Rapunzel.

Various moments in the show seem straight from some Disney movie, but unlike those cartoons which invariably sanitized many of the violent and brutal aspects of the classic fairy tales, Lapine and Sondheim re-acquaint us with some of the crueller elements of these stories. The more gruesome moments in the show – like the blinding of Rapunzel's prince and Cinderella's step sisters – are taken straight from the source of material.

"Into the Woods" opened at the Martin Beck Theater on November 5, 1987 and ran for 764 performances. The original cast included Bernadette Peters, Joanna Gleason, Chip Zien, and Tom Aldredge.

(from: [www.imgi-nation.com](http://www.imgi-nation.com) )

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

*Into the Woods* blends familiar fairy tales with the story of a childless Baker and his Wife, who catalyze the action of the story by attempting to reverse a curse on their family in order to have a child.

In the first act, the characters set out to achieve their goal of living "Happily Ever After" through familiar routes - Cinderella goes to the Ball and captures the heart of Prince Charming, Jack climbs the Beanstalk and finds a land of Giants and Gold, Little Red Riding Hood survives her clash with the wolf at Grandma's house, and Rapunzel manages to escape her tower with the aid of a handsome prince who climbs her long hair. The Baker and his Wife move through their stories while pursuing their own goal - the witch who keeps Rapunzel (revealed to be the Baker's sister) has put the curse on his house, and agrees to lift it if the Baker and his Wife can find the ingredients to help the Witch reverse a spell which has made her old and ugly. They must bring the Witch a cow as white as milk, a cape as red as blood, hair as yellow as corn, and a slipper as pure as gold. At the end of Act I, all characters seem poised to live "Happily Ever After".

Act Two, however, deals with the consequences that traditional fairy tales conveniently ignore. All the characters must deal with what happens AFTER "Happily Ever After." What does one do with a dead Giant in the back yard? Does marrying a Prince really lead to a happy and fulfilling life? Is carving up the wolf the solution? Is the Giant always wrong? They also learn about the need for community and family when they must unite to fight against the wife of the giant Jack killed, who has decided to come back for revenge.

*This is a compilation from a synopsis at [www.stageagent.com](http://www.stageagent.com) and a summary by June Abernathy at [www.sondheim.com](http://www.sondheim.com).*

## The Road to Broadway and the Broadway Production

In contemporary American musical theatre, most new works follow a series of developmental steps before arriving on Broadway. *Into The Woods* followed this pattern before its successful Broadway opening in the fall of 1987. By presenting the show in a workshop format and in a regional theatre production, the writing team and their artistic collaborators had a series of valuable opportunities to learn about the ways in which the show was “working” for themselves and for its audience.

*Into The Woods* began as a workshop at Playwrights Horizons in the summer of 1986. It was produced without costumes or sets. The performers wore baseball caps with signs on them indicating their character names. When they changed roles, they changed caps. The cast was grouped around a piano bench which became a variety of locations and props.

The next step in the development of *Into The Woods* was a fully staged production in December 1986 at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego. While it was far more elaborate than the workshop had been, economic constraints still required a physical production that was less ambitious than the Broadway version. For instance, panels of branches gathered by local Boy Scouts were used to represent the woods in that production. The Witch had a punk rock look and a Tina Turner wig.

An additional two-week workshop took place at 890 Studios in New York in August 1987, prior to rehearsal for the Broadway production. The Broadway production opened on November 5, 1987 and ran 764 performances.



The two princes from the 2022-2023 Broadway Revival of *Into the Woods*.

*“I was raised to be charming, not sincere. I didn’t ask to be born a King, and I am not perfect. I am only human.”*  
- Cinderella’s Prince

*The harder to get, the better to have.*  
- Rapunzel’s Prince

*Once upon a time... in a far-off kingdom... there lived a young maiden, a sad young lad, and a childless baker... with his wife. - Baker*

*You may know what you need, but to get what you want, better see that you keep what you have. - Baker’s Wife*



Baker & Baker’s Wife

## The Story

(From Original Broadway Cast Recording Booklet)

### Act I

Once upon a time there was a beleaguered young maiden called Cinderella, an abstracted boy named Jack and a childless Baker and his Wife. The curtain rises on their cottages, where the much-put-upon Cinderella cleans the kitchen; the impoverished Jack futilely attempts to milk his haggard cow and companion, Milky-White, and the Baker and his Wife prepare the next day's bread. A Narrator begins to tell their tales, as they express musically their various wishes, cross-cutting from one to the next: Cinderella wants to go to the King's three-night Festival, Jack is hoping that Milky-White will give some milk, and the Baker and his Wife dream of a child.

Each of their reveries is interrupted: Jack's Mother appears and insists her son sell his beloved "pet"; a ravenous Little Red Riding Hood comes calling on the Baker in preparation for a visit to her sick Grandmother, and Cinderella's Stepmother and stepsisters, Florinda and Lucinda, enter and mock her. The Stepmother throws a pot of lentils into the ashes and tells the girl that if she can remove them within two hours, she may come along to the ball at the Festival. Cinderella, who can talk to birds, enlists their help in accomplishing the task. But when her family, including her Father, leaves for the palace, she is left behind.

Just after Red Riding Hood, her basket filled with bread and cakes, begins her journey into the woods, the Baker and his Wife hear another knock at the door. It so happens that they live in the house of the Baker's parents, who died years ago in a "baking accident" - or so the Baker believes - and the cottage next door belongs to an ugly Witch, who has come to pay the couple a visit. She reveals that years ago the Baker's father, to please his wife, stole greens from her garden, including some special beans. In exchange the Witch insisted that the Baker's parents give up their unborn child, a sister the Baker never knew he had - a girl named Rapunzel, whom the Witch has hidden somewhere in the forest. But the Witch didn't stop there. She laid a curse: their "family tree would always be a barren one."

However, she tells the Baker and his Wife they can undo the spell if, before the stroke of midnight in three days' time, they can go into the woods and find the four ingredients needed for a potion: "the cow as white as milk; the cape as red as blood; the hair as yellow as corn; the slipper as pure as gold."

The Baker insists that, since the curse is on his house, he must lift the spell without the aid of his Wife, who wants to help. Before he begins his quest - alone - he discovers six beans in a jacket belonging to his father and takes them along in case they are the special beans the Witch spoke of.

So the Baker sets out to break the spell; Jack goes off to sell Milky-White for "no less than five pounds," as his Mother warns him, and Cinderella travels to her Mother's grave, to ask for guidance (Prologue: Into the Woods).

As the characters begin their journeys their homes disappear, and we are in the woods. Cinderella stops at a hazel tree, watered by her own tears, which marks the spot where her Mother is buried. Here she reiterates her desire to go to the Festival (Cinderella At the Grave). Her wishes are answered, as a silvery gown and golden slippers drop down from the tree.

After she runs off to attend the ball, Jack is seen roaming through the forest with Milky-White. He is greeted by a Mysterious Man, who lingers just long enough to tell the boy he'd be lucky to exchange his useless cow "for a sack of beans." In another part of the forest Red Riding Hood encounters a surprise of her own: a hungry, lascivious Wolf (Hello, Little Girl) who convinces her to take a brief detour en route to Granny's.

Unknown to the Wolf or Red Riding Hood, the Baker has witnessed this scene and is concerned for the little girl's safety. But the Witch admonishes him to forget about the girl and go after her red cape. The Baker is now so frazzled he can't remember the precise ingredients needed to break the spell. Fortunately his Wife, looking for any excuse to join him, has come after him with his scarf, and sets him straight. An argument ensues about whether she should return home, but they stop fighting when they spot Jack and his cow "as white as milk." The Baker's Wife suggests to Jack that he swap Milky-White for five of their six beans, and leads him to believe they carry magic. Remembering the

Mysterious Man's warning, Jack agrees to the exchange and then tearfully tells Milky-White I Guess This Is Goodbye.

The Baker is upset about using deceit to get the cow, but his Wife stands firm and, speaking of the beans, rationalizes that Maybe They're Magic. The Baker insists his Wife take the cow and go home. Elsewhere, the Witch goes to visit Rapunzel, who spends her time singing wordlessly and combing her hair, locked away in a doorless tower, which now rises into view. In order to gain entrance, the Witch calls out, "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair to me." From a window on high, hair "as yellow as corn" descends, and the Witch climbs up. She is unknowingly observed by a Prince, who determines to ask the beautiful maiden to "let down her hair" to him the very next day.

The Baker is in pursuit of Red Riding Hood, who finally arrives at her Grandmother's - where she is promptly swallowed up by the Wolf, who has already devoured the old woman. The Baker rescues them both from the confines of the Wolf's stomach. It's been an eye-opening day for Red Riding Hood, who sums up her new awareness with I Know Things Now and rewards the Baker with her cape.

Jack, however, does not make his mother happy when he returns to their cottage with the five beans, which she throws on the ground in disgust. Back in the forest, the Baker's Wife is making her way home with Milky-White when Cinderella stumbles into view. She is running from a Prince - brother to the first - and hides behind a tree as he and his Steward come searching for her. The Prince asks the Baker's Wife whether she has seen the girl, and when she responds that she has not, he and his Steward continue on their way.

Cinderella is about to leave as well, but the Baker's Wife is enthralled by the Prince and bombards her new acquaintance with questions about him. More confused than enchanted by his attention, Cinderella responds that he's A Very Nice Prince. She is ready to start for home when she notices a giant beanstalk growing in the distance; simultaneously, the Baker's Wife notices that the girl is wearing slippers "as pure as gold." She is all set to follow Cinderella when Milky-White takes off in the other direction.

The Baker's Wife chases after the cow, as the day draws to a close. All the characters are seen going about their business in the woods, oblivious of each other. They pause just long enough to deliver various morals (First Midnight) all, that is, except Rapunzel, who only sings her wordless song. Jack has returned from his first trip up the beanstalk and, with new insight - not to mention stolen gold, with which he hopes to buy back his cow - explains what he learned upon discovering that there are Giants In the Sky.

The Baker and his Wife meet by chance, and she is forced to admit that Milky-White has run away. They go off in separate directions, and the Baker's Wife happens upon the two Princes. Fascinated, she eavesdrops. Both express the Agony they are experiencing in winning the hands of their respective maidens. Rapunzel's Prince tells his brother where his love is locked away, and when he describes her as having "hair as yellow as corn," the Baker's Wife is off in search of the maiden's hair.

Things seem to be falling into place for the childless couple. The Mysterious Man has found Milky-White and returned her to the Baker, and the Wife succeeds in yanking a long strand of hair from Rapunzel, giving them three of the four objects they need. When the Baker learns that his Wife has managed to obtain the hair, he realizes what she already knew: It Takes Two. Their joy is tempered when Milky-White abruptly dies.

The second midnight passes. After burying the animal the couple bickers over how to get another cow, and the Baker gives his Wife their one remaining bean. It is ultimately decided that he will search for a new cow, and she will again attempt to secure Cinderella's shoe.

Meanwhile, the Witch has discovered that Rapunzel is being visited by a Prince; she drags the girl from her tower and implores her to Stay With Me. Finally, unwilling to share her with anyone, the Witch chops off Rapunzel's hair and casts her out to a remote desert. Rapunzel's Prince, attempting to escape the sorceress, falls into a thicket and is blinded by thorns.

Jack, returning from a second trip up the beanstalk, encounters Red Riding Hood, who is now wearing a cape made of wolf skins. He shows her a golden egg and the hen that produced it and tells her of the Giant's golden harp. The now-skeptical Red Riding Hood calls him a liar and dares him to return to the kingdom in the sky and fetch the harp - which, of course, he proceeds to do.

Cinderella hobbles on, clearly wearing only one shoe, and mulls over her indecisiveness regarding the Prince (On the Steps Of the Palace). Desperate for the remaining slipper, the Baker's Wife gives her the last magic bean - which she throws away. Only when the Prince's Steward closes in on her does Cinderella hand over the golden slipper, swapping it for the other woman's shoes, easier for running.

Suddenly a tremendous thud is heard, which reverberates throughout the forest: there is a dead Giant in Jack's backyard. The ogre was pursuing Jack, but the boy was able to stop him by chopping down the beanstalk.

The Baker now returns with another cow, and it appears that the Witch's demands have been met. But she discovers that this cow is not as white as milk; it has been covered with flour. She tells the couple to fetch the dead Milky-White, whom she proceeds to bring back to life. The Witch instructs the Baker and his Wife to feed the other items to the cow and then milk her - the milk will be the potion. Milky-White, though, is still dry. The problem is that the Witch cannot have handled any of the ingredients needed for the potion, and she has touched Rapunzel's hair. But the Mysterious Man comes to the rescue, telling them to feed corn silks to the cow. The Witch reveals to the Baker that the Mysterious Man is in fact his father, who abandoned his son after his wife died. As the cow gives milk, the Mysterious Man, at last fulfilled by having helped end the curse on his house, keels over and dies before he and the Baker can speak.

The Witch drinks the potion and, with the spell broken, is restored to her former state of youth and beauty but loses her powers; the Baker's Wife becomes pregnant, and a wealthy Jack is reunited with Milky-White. As for the others...Cinderella marries the Prince after he discovers that hers is the foot that fits the golden slipper; Rapunzel encounters her Prince wandering aimlessly in the desert and, overcome at being reunited, restores his sight when two of her tears wet his eyes; Florinda and Lucinda are blinded by pigeons as punishment for their wickedness (Ever After). But as the first act reaches its happy conclusion, another giant beanstalk begins to grow.

## Act II

Once upon a time...later. The scene is similar to the opening of the first act, but this time, Cinderella sits on her throne in the palace, surrounded by her eager-to-please step family; Jack and his Mother have been considerably spruced up, as has their cottage, which now houses two friends for Jack - Milky-White and the golden harp - and the Baker's home has become too small for a family of three. As the Narrator explains and the others agree, despite a few complaints all are content with their lot (Prologue: So Happy).

But not for long. An explosive noise is heard, and the Baker's house crashes down around the family. The now-beautiful, powerless Witch appears and tells them that her garden has been trampled upon and destroyed. The huge footprints seem to indicate one thing: a Giant is on the loose. The Baker relays the news to Jack and his Mother, then heads to the castle to inform the royal family and to seek assistance. Soon after he returns home Little Red Riding Hood stops by and explains that her house has collapsed, her mother is gone and she is once again on her way to Grandmother's. The Baker and his Wife realize it is not safe to stay in their cottage and decide to escort the girl to her destination; Jack leaves home in search of the new Giant, and Cinderella, advised by the birds that there is trouble at her Mother's grave, goes off to investigate. And so we are back in the woods, which show more and more signs of havoc as the action progresses.

While the others are in the forest on urgent business, the Princes are preoccupied with different concerns: two more seemingly unobtainable maidens who have them in Agony.

They head off in different directions. The Baker's family and Red Riding Hood appear, unable to find the path of Grandmother's house. As they search in vain, they encounter the Prince's Steward, Cinderella's family and the Witch. Suddenly there is a loud noise, the earth shakes and a Giant hovers over them. The Giant is a woman. She has come in search of Jack, to avenge the death of her husband. They explain that Jack is not there, but the near-sighted Giant doesn't believe them. Not knowing what to do, they offer her the Narrator instead - they don't like the way he has been telling the story. He convinces them to let him go when he makes them realize that, if he is killed, they'll have to work out their stories on their own. But as he backs away from the group, the Witch throws him to the Giant.

Jack's Mother appears and begins arguing with the Giant. The Steward, afraid the old woman will get them all killed, hits her over the head with his staff, mortally wounding her. An hysterical Rapunzel runs on, cannot be restrained by the Witch and runs off in the direction of the Giant, who, in her relentless pursuit of Jack, tramples the girl. Jack's Mother dies, but not before she gets the Baker to promise that he will not let her son be harmed.

The Witch mourns the death of Rapunzel (Lament) and vows to find Jack and hand him over to the Giant. The members of the royal family go into hiding. But the Baker, his Wife and Red Riding Hood are determined to protect Jack. Leaving their baby with Red Riding Hood, the Baker and his Wife go off in opposite directions in search of the boy.

As the Baker's Wife makes her way through the forest, she runs into Cinderella's Prince, who seduces the wary, if willing, woman (Any Moment). At the same time, in another part of the woods, the Baker comes upon Cinderella at her Mother's now-destroyed grave and persuades her to return with him for safety. Meanwhile, the romantic interlude between their spouses comes to an end.

The Prince hurries off, and the Baker's Wife reflects on their encounter (Moments In the Woods). Realizing that her place is with her husband, she begins to make her way back. But it quickly becomes apparent that she is lost, and as she tries to find the right direction, the shadow of the Giant appears. The Baker's Wife panics, tumbles backward and is crushed to death by falling trees.

The Baker, joined by Cinderella, has returned to his child and Red Riding Hood. They await the return of his Wife. Instead, the Witch comes along, with Jack tightly in tow, and informs the Baker that his Wife is dead. Soon everyone is blaming everyone else for the presence of the Giant (Your Fault). The Witch silences the group and offers her perspective (Last Midnight) then disappears in a cloud of smoke.

The distraught Baker abandons his son and the others, leaving his child in the care of Cinderella. As he runs away, just like his father before him, he meets up with the Mysterious Man. There follows a passionate exchange between the Baker and this apparition of his father, which helps him understand it is time to assume responsibility (No More).

The Baker returns to the group and, together, they devise a stratagem to slay the Giant, with the help of Cinderella's faithful birds. While the others go off to put their plan into motion, Cinderella stays behind with the baby. Her Prince wanders through. She is upset that he has betrayed her and tells him she cannot return to him. Regretfully, he leaves.

Red Riding Hood returns with the news that her Grandmother is gone. As Jack and the Baker sit in a tree, ready to strike the unsuspecting Giant, the Baker informs the lad that his mother has been killed. The older pair comfort the younger ones with the thought that No One Is Alone. United, they kill the Giant.

One by one the other characters - dead and alive - return and present their morals to the story. With the words "Once upon a time," the Baker begins to tell his son the tale we have just heard. The Witch appears and shares her new-found wisdom - Finale: Children Will Listen.

*“Running away - we'll do it.  
Why sit around, resigned?  
Trouble is, son, the farther you run,  
the more you feel undefined  
for what you have left undone,  
and more, what you have left behind.”  
- The Mysterious Man-*

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### ACT ONE

Prologue: Into the Woods.....	Company
Hello Little Girl.....	Wolf, Little Red Riding Hood
I Guess This Is Goodbye.....	Jack
Maybe They're Magic.....	Baker's Wife
I Know Things Now.....	Little Red Riding Hood
A Very Nice Prince.....	Cinderella, Baker's Wife
Giants in the Sky.....	Jack
Agony.....	Cinderella's Prince, Rapunzel's Prince
It Takes Two.....	Baker, Baker's Wife
Stay With Me.....	Witch
On the Steps of the Palace.....	Cinderella
Ever After.....	Narrator, Company

### ACT TWO

Prologue: So	
Happy.....	Company
Agony.....	Cinderella's Prince, Rapunzel's Prince
Lament.....	Witch
Any Moment.....	Cinderella's Prince, Baker's Wife
Moments in the Woods.....	Baker's Wife
Your Fault.....	Jack, Baker, Witch, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood
Last Midnight.....	Witch
No More.....	Baker, Mysterious Man
No One is Alone.....	Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Baker, Jack
Finale: Children Will Listen.....	Witch, Company

*"You're so nice. You're not good, you're not bad, You're just nice. I'm not good, I'm not nice, I'm just right. I'm the witch. You're the world."*

**THE MUSICAL OF THE YEAR**

**BEST MUSICAL**  
1988 N.Y. DRAMA CRITICS AWARD

**BEST MUSICAL**  
1988 DRAMA DESK AWARD

**BEST SCORE**  
1988 TONY AWARD  
Stephan Sondheim

**BEST BOOK OF A MUSICAL**  
1988 TONY AWARD  
James Lapine

**BEST ACTRESS IN A MUSICAL**  
1988 TONY AWARD  
Joanna Gleason

**BEST MUSICAL SHOW ALBUM**  
1989 GRAMMY AWARD

**2002 Tony Award & Drama Desk Award for BEST MUSICAL REVIVAL**

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*"Careful the things you say,  
Children will listen.  
Careful the things you do,  
Children will see.  
And learn.*

*Children may not obey  
But children will listen.  
Children will look to you  
For which way to turn,  
To learn what to be.*

*Careful before you say,  
"Listen to me."  
Children will listen."*

*- The Witch*

The Witch from the 2022-2023  
Broadway Revival of  
*Into the Woods*

*The difference between a cow  
and a bean  
is a bean can begin an adventure!  
- Jack*



Jack's Mother, Jack, and Milky White  
From the 2022-2023 Broadway Revival of  
*Into the Woods*.



## SHOW REVIEWS

### *New York Post, Clive Barnes (11/6/1987)*

The moon has a dark side, and so do fairy tales. It is the darker side of both that Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine are exploring in their new musical, "Into the Woods," which opened last night, once upon a time, at the Martin Beck Theater.

At first the musical seems a collection of fairy tales with a certain difference – most are familiar, some are grim and are made grimmer.

There are Cinderella and Little Red Riding Hood, a brace of assorted Princes (as one explains, 'I was brought up to be charming, not sincere'). Jack the Giant-killer, Rapunzel and, of course the Witch.

And there is also a Baker and a Baker's Wife, who want nothing more than to have a child, and if you don't remember the fairy tale about the Baker and his Wife, don't worry. They are the pure invention of James Lapine's always inventive book.

It is the adroitness of this book that threads all those various threads together and makes an ingeniously interlocked fabric from the various tales. And, naturally, they all end happily ever after. Don't they?

Well, only until after the intermission. Then a certain degree of bitterness intervenes as reality intrudes. "Into the Woods" suffers the ravages of a moral forest fire, not to mention the trampling of a real giant.

The earlier Sondheim/Lapine musical, "Sunday in the Park," had a rather similar two-act "masque, anti-masque" structure, but what failed so pompously, pretentiously and predictably in the earlier musical, narrowly, but triumphantly, works here.

Each act has a certain parallelism to it – details are oddly echoed in a different emotional key, with a different dramatic coloring.

Even the zaniness of the first act takes care to stress not only a high degree of sophisticated irony, but also the violence and savagery that never traditionally existed in fairy tales but that we, in modern, Disneyesque times, have tended to bowdlerize.

In the second, comeuppance act, we even have death, murder, adultery and the problem of pain. Yet Lapine and Sondheim are neither bleak nor pessimistic about the human comedy, or even the human condition. Despite all failures and mistakes, betrayals and departures, they insist that: 'No One is Alone'.

Sondheim has long abandoned writing conventional, common or garden variety Broadway musicals, and obviously 'Into the Woods' is not going to go up the common or garden path.

He may be ready to tackle the problem of pain, but he still has the problem of music – the problem of finding an acceptably literate musical language between pop and pop opera, between rock and a hard place.

He has abandoned the furtive passes he made at Puccinian Lloyd Webber lyricism in "Sunday in the Park" and returned to the cooler, crisper, less expansive, more urgently dramatic language of his own "Sweeney Todd."

The melodies are here very much shaped by the lyrics – the word – the musical word, that is – takes precedence over the actual music, forming it and shaping it to its own sense.

This spare, laconic score, with Jonathon Tunick's succinct orchestrations, may not please everyone – it's a long way from 'Oklahoma!' - but I find it exciting in its acceptance of simplicity, at times almost minimalist simplicity, and its quest for an acceptable musical usage to bridge the threatening gap between Broadway and its future.

The lyrics are dazzling. Note, for example, how many rhymes for "ick" Sondheim can find with a flick, and how he can construct them into brilliantly cerebral poetry.

Lapine's staging seems more confident than it was in "Sunday in the Park," with smoother transitions and sharper performances, although in the former he was presumably much helped by the choreographer Lar Lubovitch, credited with the musical staging.

The real success of the production team goes to the settings, with designs by Tony Straiges. With etching-like front-cloths of fairy tale castles and cottages, and wonderful bosky, sylvan woodland scenery that might have been inspired by the now textbook first settings of the French designer Jean Carzou of some 30 years back, "Into the Woods" is a scenic trip. And the costumes by Ann Hould-Ward are also imaginative and vigorous.

Unusually, perhaps, for a Broadway musical, "Into the Woods" lacks a star role, although Bernadette Peters, as the most calculating witch to come down the pike since "Macbeth," with her street-smart brittle glitter unquestionably offers a star performance.

Other particularly lovely performances come from a warily resourceful Joanna Gleason and chirpy honest Chip Zien as the Baker couple, Robert Westenberg handsomely stuffed as the wolfish Prince, Kim Crosby as a knowing Cinderella, and Barbara Byrne as a reluctant hero's mother.

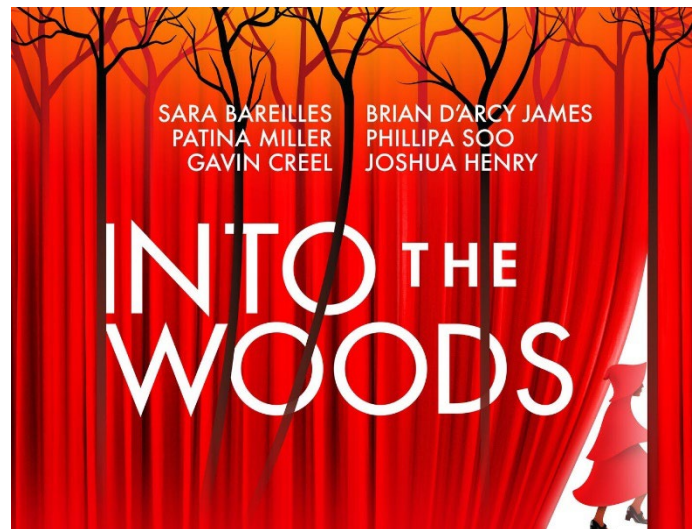
"Into the Woods" takes a new look at adult fairy tales and lunar romance. June doesn't have to rhyme with moon anymore, and there isn't a tune to go with it. I found it refreshing.



Cinderella, Stepmother, Florida,  
Lucinda, and Steward  
From the 2022-2023 Broadway  
Revival of *Into the Woods*



Little Red Riding Hood from the 2022-2023  
Broadway Revival of *Into the Woods*.



Show logo for the 2022-2023 Broadway  
Revival of *Into the Woods*



Baker's Wife from the 2022-2023  
Broadway Revival of *Into the Woods*

*"Oh, if life were made of moments  
Even now and then a bad one--!  
But if life were only moments,  
Then you'd never know you had one."  
- Baker's Wife*

## Village Voice , Howard Kissel (11/17/1987)

Stephan Sondheim is not everybody's idea of someone to tell you bedtime stories. But in "Into the Woods," a musical based on Grimm's fairy tales, the lyricist-composer of such acid, bittersweet shows as "Company," "Follies," and "Sweeney Todd" has written a spellbinding score, witty enough to make old stories fresh for adults, lovely enough to enchant youngsters.

You know that "Into the Woods" is wizardry as soon as you see Tony Straiges' bewitching sets, which move as magically as dreams. And if you can resist its luscious star, Bernadette Peters, you are beyond the help of potions and spells. (Go directly to "Starlight Express." Do not pass Go. Do not collect \$200.00).

Peters, who every sensible person must adore, is central to James Lapine's book, which tells the stories of Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood, The Baker's Wife and Rapunzel concurrently. It is like making half a dozen plates dance on top of spinning poles, which Lapine does with finesse.

Many of these stories hinge on ancient fears about "the weaker sex." Who but Peters could make even a wicked witch a droll image of troubled motherhood?

In the second act the characters discover that living happily ever after ain't easy. It is equally funny but more sober in spirit, a balancing act greatly aided by Peter's tongue-in-cheek warmth and his beguiling voice.

Sondheim's music weaves in and out of the dialogue seamlessly. At times it is a bouncy cushion for his ingenious lyrics (much less self-conscious than in some of his work). At other times the music is rhapsodic, particularly in a haunting refrain for Rapunzel, several glorious ensemble numbers, and a ravishing duet for two princes.

Some of the most evocative music recalls the more tender moments in "Sunday in the Park with George," as does a touching lyric like "Children can only grow/From something you love/To something you lose."

The cast is perfection. Joanna Gleason, whom sensible people are learning to adore, is funny and moving as the Baker's Wife. Chip Zien, an actor who has grown greatly, is appealing as her hapless husband. It is hard to imagine a more dashing, vocally seductive prince than Robert Westenberg (though his fellow match, Chuck Wagner, is a good match).

Danielle Ferland is hilarious as a nasty Red Riding Hood, Tom Aldridge powerful in the tricky role of the narrator, Ben Wright wonderfully innocent as Jack. Kim Crosby is a captivating Cinderella, Barbara Byrne is expectedly funny as Jack's long-suffering mother.

Ann Hould-Ward's costumes have gorgeous shapes and colors. Richard Nelson's wondrous lighting and Jonathon Tunick's elegant orchestrations also add to the spell.

Unlike most current shows, which belong in Vegas or Disneyland, "Into the Woods" is genuine musical theater, an evening of total enchantment.

Metaphor is the problem of *Into the Woods*, too. Stephen Sondheim is once again asking musical numbers to take on more responsibility than his music can carry. James Lapine's book merges Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood, and Rapunzel with his own tale of a childless couple – the baker and his wife – willing to steal Cinderella's slipper, Jack's cow and Little Red's hood for a chance to have a baby promised them by Bernadette Peter's beguiling Witch. It is an ingenious subversion of what fairy tales are supposed to do – at least, in the first act. Bruno Bettelheim says that "fairy tales intimate that a rewarding, good life is within one's reach despite adversity – but only if one does not shy away from the hazardous struggles without which one can never achieve true identity."

Lapine's and Sondheim's characters are presented first as hopeless boobies, not teachable in either life or fairy tale. Best of all are the ridiculous Princes, "raised to be charming, not sincere." Cinderella is sappy, her sisters look like they've seen MGM's *Pride and Prejudice* too many times, Jack is a wimp, his mother a scold, Red Riding Hood as a casual thief, Rapunzel a stray from *Bel Canto*, the childless couple a pair of sentimental hysterics, and the Witch – mercifully – a fugitive from musical comedy's best tradition of wise-cracking, cynical heels. If *Into the Woods* were content with its first act alone, all might be well, but even more so for the naturally acerbic, subliminally revolted Sondheim. Worse, both metaphor and moral are a mess. Jack kills the giant, leaving the others at the mercy of the surviving giant's revenge. Who should that be, however, but none other than a woman (!), the giant's widow? If you hadn't already noticed, most of *Into the Woods* is about terrifying women all of them consuming monsters, as ready to betray or kill as anything else. The men are either weaker or dumber – either way, better. Meanwhile, just as the image of the threatening woman seems to be consuming all the earlier subversion, along comes blur and goo together: "No more giants waging wars," declares a passing lyric, just in case you might have thought the show wasn't about America and Russia; then – in a moment that unashamedly borrows slop and sentiment from Sondheim's mentor, Oscar Hammerstein, (*Carousel's* "You'll Never Walk Alone") – comes the message, like all such homilies, a patent lie: "No One is Alone."

Even this might not be half so bad if Sondheim had bothered to supply a tune or two, which we know he could do. Instead, he provides alternately energetic and downbeat doodles, perhaps under the delusion that it's ever so modern to be minimalist about melody. It's as if Mozart woke up and decided to be Carl Orff, his natural lyricism totally submerged by Johnny One-Note rhythmic drive.

Flinging rhymes at us like so many splashes on a Pollock canvas, Sondheim's no less clever than ever. But it's too

many aimless words in aid of an undecided thing. The biggest fairy tale of all is the musical comedy whose magic had been crushed by a once-upon-a-time giant.

**The Record, Robert Feldberg (5/1/2002)**

"Into the Woods," which opened Tuesday right at the Broadhurst Theatre, is a show that makes a post-Sept. 11 connection to its audience, with an ending that packs a much greater emotional punch than it did in the original production in 1987.

There has been great loss in the community of the musical's fairy-tale characters – a spouse, parents, a grandparent all dead – because of unfathomable, wanton violence. The numbed survivors realize they must go on, and that it will be easier if they can comfort and help one another.

As expressed in "No One is Alone," perhaps the most tender of all Stephen Sondheim songs, the moment is both sad and stirring, and only partly about the story we've been watching.

That story, with songs by Sondheim and a book by James Lapine, who also directed (as he did the original production), is a what-if look at characters from Grimm's Fairy Tales.

In the first act, Cinderella (Laura Benanti), Little Red Riding Hood (Molly Ephraim), Rapunzel (Melissa Dye), Jack of beanstalk fame (Adam Wylie), and two newly minted characters, a Baker (Stephen DeRosa) and his Wife (Kerry O'Malley), who desperately want a child, all realize their hopes or meet their familiar fates. Also on hand is an all-purpose Witch (Vanessa Williams), and a Narrator (John McMartin), who ties together and prods the characters as needed.

The second act is what happens after "happily ever after": Cinderella must contend with an unfaithful prince. ("I was raised to be charming, not sincere," he notes), Rapunzel, married and with twins, shows the destructive emotional effect of all those years of isolation. Jack brings down the terrible wrath of the wife of the giant he killed.

Seeming very much like the original production, it's a clever show that has fun with the conversations of fairy tales, pointing out, among other things, their muffled psychological and sexual references.

The two wolves separately pursuing Little Red Riding Hood and the Three Little Pigs run into each other in the woods and share a dirty, rapacious laugh. And the Princes – both rather dim bulbs – pursuing Cinderella and Rapunzel are played by the same actors (Gregg Edelman and Christopher Seiber) who play the wolves.

If the music isn't Sondheim's best, his lyrics are very smart and amusing, and fit well with Lapine's book and his generally nimble direction.

But the pleasures of "Into the Woods," consistent as they are, remain diversions, never building into anything big. There are few major musical moments of significant dramatic ones. (The destruction of the giant's wife is so blandly staged you're barely aware it's happened.) And the musical's homely message seems out of sync with its sophisticated, semi-satirical tone.

As the title song tells us more than once, the woods into which the characters keep venturing, consists of what lies beyond home, a place of opportunities and of danger. Their adventures are about growing up, becoming independent, finding out who you are, and dealing with life (and death).

The actors are all quite good, but except for Benanti's touching and feisty Cinderella – the actress also sings like a dream – the message doesn't flow affectively from their characters. It seems an intellectual proposition that's imposed on them. That the musical's ending is profoundly moving has much less to do with the fairy-tale story than with the lesson of real life.



The Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood from the 2022-2023 Broadway Revival of *Into the Woods*

*There's no possible way  
To describe how you feel  
When you're talking to your meal!  
- Wolf:*

## Variety, Steven Oxman (2/18/2002)

Some hit Broadway musicals age like flowers – they bloom and then they rot, providing a nice dash of color and box office for a season or more, before shedding their petals and existing purely as memory (and cast album). Some musicals age like fashion – they go in and out of style, maybe resurfacing because they genuinely return to modernity, maybe because they develop a campy retro appeal. The Stephen Sondheim/James Lapine fairy tale fantasia “Into the Woods,” turns out, 15 years after its initial Broadway run, to have aged like fine wine. This funny musical proves to have deeper, better blended flavors than it first seemed. This new production of “Into the Woods,” launched at the Ahmanson on its way to an April berth on Broadway, is as accessible and robust as the original, but also far more balanced and mature. And it demonstrates that this show's complexity was genuine – “Into the Woods” isn't a lesser example of Sondheim's relentless cleverness but a deeply felt, ever-so-slightly sentimental examination of human vulnerabilities in a morally knotty world.

Most of all Lapine has improved as a director, and he has clearly endeavored to iron out the tonal troubles of the original show, its too-jarring shift from fast-paced frolic in Act One to morbid existential contemplation in Act Two. There are some changes to the content – the song “Our Little World” from the London edition has been included, and the gentle tune settles down the first act a bit, keeping its frenetic and wonderfully constructed confusions from spinning too fast. And that song is delivered, lovingly, by Vanessa L. Williams, who's a very different, less harsh witch than Bernadette Peters was. Her glamour certainly helps the swirling, wire-flying transformations from witchered hunchback to supermodel.

But this is still very much the same show in terms of content, with a mild attitude adjustment and souped-up special effects. The effects include the face of Cinderella's mother being projected onto a tree, and an enormous shadow that signals the giant's presence when happily ever after turns sour. These effects aren't especially theatrical, and in fact they lack a certain creative spark, but they work nonetheless. They make use of Douglas Schmidt's lush, beautiful set design.

The cast contains lots of fine performers, although musically it takes a little while before the show really takes off. The production comes into its own about mid-way through the first act, when Adam Wylie (the big-eared kid on “Picket Fences”) delivers Jack's melodious “Giants in the Sky” with a rich voice that still has an adolescent authenticity right for the part.

This starts a chain of terrific numbers. First, there are the two Princes, embodied by Gregg Edelman and Christopher Sieber, singing the great comic ode to loving what you can't have, “Agony.” Each of them singing alone is strong; together they're great.

Then along come the Sondheim/Lapine-created characters who unify the plot-line: The Baker (Stephen DeRosa) and his Wife (Kerry O'Malley), who are seeking to undo a spell that has left them childless. O'Malley gives the best sung performance of the night (especially “Moments in the Woods”), and DeRosa gives the best acted. Laura Benanti, as Cinderella, also is superb.

From the time it starts generating its musical momentum, the show really never flags, and Lapine, with help from Jonathon Tunick's orchestrations, manages to give the second act as much energy as the first. The second act has long been a topic of dispute among fans and detractors of “Into the Woods.” Quality wasn't the issue; rather, some felt act two was too much of a downer pulling the rug out from under act one with such force that it seemed a different show. What the second half needed wasn't a loss of edge, Lapine seems to have discovered, but a better pace.

Our world, of course, is knottier than ever, and there will be plenty of discussion about how “Into the Woods” reflects on a post-Sept. Manhattan. The show certainly proves to be incredibly evocative thematically, even while it manages to sustain its pure entertainment value. Previously, the disillusionment of act two had seemed a warning – and nobody likes the spoilsport who goes around issuing dire predictions of doom. Now act two seems almost comforting; the assurance that everything will be OK takes precedence over the assurance that everything will go wrong before it is.

But its not just recent events that have transformed the environs since Sondheim and Lapine first journeyed “Into the Woods.” Broadway and the artistic state of musical theater, have changed fundamentally. In 1987, we were at the height of the British invasion, and visually spectacular, oh-so-serious fare such as “Les Miserables” and “The Phantom of the Opera,” which took home the Tony for best musical over “Into the Woods,” put in relief the more frivolous elements of act one. Now, this show is the adult on the block compared to the enjoyable juvenile “The Producers” and the ultra-ironic “Urinetown.”

For this and more obvious reasons, the line that defines the ultimate wish of “Into the Woods” resonates with clear-sighted conviction: “My father's house was a nightmare, our house was a dream,” says Cinderella, after she has decided to leave her philandering Prince “Now I want something in between.”

That “in between,” a musical comedy with a purpose and a point, has never seemed more bracing.

# With a perfect cast, Broadway has an ‘Into the Woods’ for the ages

Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine’s urbane musical twist on fairy-tale endings gets a priceless Broadway revival



Review by [Peter Marks](#)

July 10, 2022 at 8:30 p.m. EDT

NEW YORK — The scintillating new revival of “Into the Woods” is rendered so harmoniously and meticulously, you’ll swear you even hear the punctuation marks in the lyrics. Here at the St. James Theatre, where the musical had its official Broadway opening Sunday night, the memory of the late Stephen Sondheim is honored in the best way possible: by actors who really know how to sing, and singers who really know how to act.

They’ve all been encouraged by an inspired director, Lear deBessonet, to bring the bravura. That impulse on other occasions might bend the theatrical arc toward camp. But for the brand of musical comedy that Sondheim and book writer James Lapine were after — a storybook world of out-of-control anxiety — some rib-tickling personal dazzle is absolutely the right way to go.

One after another, the members of the exceptional cast — Sara Bareilles, Phillipa Soo, Gavin Creel, Patina Miller, Brian d’Arcy James, Joshua Henry, and on and on — add funny new twists to fairy-tale characters old and completely new. There’s no one who doesn’t rise to this special occasion, the Broadway transfer of a concert version that originated earlier this year in the long-standing [Encores series at City Center](#), the institution that birthed the 10,000-performance-plus revival of “Chicago.”

If you’ve never been to a production of “Into the Woods,” which premiered on Broadway in 1987, this would be the ideal place to start. If you have, this would be the perfect place to renew the acquaintance. The physical format is basic: an onstage orchestra more than a dozen strong, conducted by Rob Berman, communicating the whimsical texture of Jonathan Tunick’s orchestrations; a simple set design by David Rockwell, of platforms in front of and behind the band, and birch trees that descend for the forest quests, and shimmer with Tyler Micoleau’s lighting as a Giant rattles the kingdom; and a cast, wittily costumed by Andrea Hood, delivering Lapine’s lines and Sondheim’s score with verve.

The program lists two sound designers, Scott Lehrer and Alex Neumann, which feels particularly apt, because the clarity with which Sondheim’s lyrics reach our ears is perhaps double the norm. Have you ever experienced what I call audibility fatigue at the theater — the feeling of exhausted defeat that sets in when you lose half the words in musical amplification issues or garbled vocal execution? The opposite occurs in the St. James: Sondheim’s poetry is rousing conveyed, down to the last syllable of recited rhyme.

“Into the Woods” is one of the best known and most often performed musicals in the Sondheim canon, but it’s a family show only if you want to explain some of life’s complexities to the little ones afterward. Lapine and Sondheim devise a kingdom of wishers: a childless baker (d’Arcy James) and his wife (Bareilles); a brutalized Cinderella (Soo); a penniless homemaker (Aymee Garcia) and her son, Jack, of “Beanstalk” fame (Cole Thompson); a wizened witch (Miller) living under a curse. The writers tie up almost everything in a pretty bow when the wish list is filled by the end of Act 1 – then rip the bow to shreds in Act 2.

No one emerges unscathed. “Wishes may bring problems such that you regret them,” goes the second-act opener, “better that, though, than to never get them.” The story follows our universal passage from childhood to adulthood. We are cast out of the land of make-believe and into a world of tragic consequences. As the kingdom unravels, beset by that vengeful Giant (Annie Golden), characters die, turn on each other, and become more and more confused. Life is a riddle, but not always the amusing kind.

The show’s final sequences have been forced into a curious and not entirely persuasive moral; then again, a muddle of things may in the end be the best we mortals can expect. Still, Lapine and Sondheim create so many embraceable characters, and the score is so lovely, that any concerns about plotting become minor. And that is especially true in a version of “Into the Woods” that fields nothing but champions. Bareilles, for example, is a natural as the Baker’s Wife: The performance is effortlessly warm and funny, an embodiment of the independent-mindedness and humility that characterize the best of us.

Creel, in the traditional double role of Wolf and Cinderella’s Prince, summons his inner ham with a fully baked comic virtuosity; “Agony” and its reprise, both sung with Rapunzel’s Prince, portrayed by a delightfully self-adoring Henry, are the best I’ve ever heard. They belong in an “Into the Woods” Hall of Fame along with Julia Lester, as an uber-confident, rough-and-ready Little Red Riding Hood; Soo, breathing insouciant charm into a mellifluous Cinderella; and Miller, singing “Stay With Me” sweetly and yet sustaining the Witch’s air of menacing authority.

Cinderella’s retinue (Nancy Opel as the Stepmother, plus Brooke Ishibashi, Ta’Nika Gibson, David Turner and Albert Guerzon) is a vivid side show, and David Patrick Kelly is an inspired choice as the Narrator and Mysterious Man. Two outstanding props must also be mentioned: the Giant’s imposing oversize footwear, and more crucially, Milky White as an emotion-racked puppet cow, operated hilariously at my performance by Cameron Johnson. It must be noted that if the Tony Awards were ever to divide acting categories into dairy and nondairy, Milky White would be a moo-in.

The final applause belongs to the [composer, who died in November](#) but whose memory infuses every scene. “Sometimes people leave you halfway through the wood. Do not let it grieve you. No one leaves for good,” go the lyrics in “No One Is Alone.” Most certainly, Sondheim has not left for good.

## QUIZ

1. Who composed *Into the Woods*?  
a. \_\_\_ Boubil and Schoenberg                      c. \_\_\_ Stephen Sondheim  
b. \_\_\_ Andrew Lloyd Webber                      d. \_\_\_ Jerry Herman
  
2. Who has the very first line in the play?  
a. \_\_\_ Cinderella                                      c. \_\_\_ Jack  
b. \_\_\_ Baker's Wife                                      d. \_\_\_ Narrator
  
3. In which three homes are the characters introduced?  
a. \_\_\_ Jack's house, The Baker's house, and Cinderella's house  
b. \_\_\_ Jack's house, Cinderella's house, and the Prince's house  
c. \_\_\_ Little Red's grandmother's house, The Baker's house, and the Witch's house  
d. \_\_\_ The Giant's house, Little Red's house, and Rapunzel's house
  
4. Which of these is NOT a character from the show?  
a. \_\_\_ Snow White                                      c. \_\_\_ Sleeping Beauty  
b. \_\_\_ Red Riding Hood                                      d. \_\_\_ Goldilocks
  
5. What is the name of Jack's beloved cow?  
a. \_\_\_ Milky    c. \_\_\_ Daisy Bell  
b. \_\_\_ Milky White                                      d. \_\_\_ Snowy
  
6. What is Little Red's bad habit?  
a. \_\_\_ Biting her nails                                      c. \_\_\_ Scratching  
b. \_\_\_ Eating    d. \_\_\_ She doesn't have one...
  
7. How many magic beans do the Baker and his Wife give Jack in exchange for Milky White?  
a. \_\_\_ 5    c. \_\_\_ 1  
b. \_\_\_ None    d. \_\_\_ 4
  
8. The Baker and his wife have to find four items in the woods. Which one of these do they NOT have to look for?  
a. \_\_\_ Cow    c. \_\_\_ Cape  
b. \_\_\_ Rose    d. \_\_\_ Hair
  
9. Who is the baker's sister?  
a. \_\_\_ Rapunzel    c. \_\_\_ Witch  
b. \_\_\_ Cinderella    d. \_\_\_ Baker's Wife
  
10. "There are giants "\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_"  
a. \_\_\_ Up the beanstalk                                      c. \_\_\_ In the sky  
b. \_\_\_ In the castle    d. \_\_\_ Overhead
  
11. Who sings the song "Agony"?  
a. \_\_\_ Little Red and Jack                                      c. \_\_\_ The Baker and his Wife  
b. \_\_\_ The Witch and Rapunzel's Prince                                      d. \_\_\_ The two Princes



12. What happens to Cinderella's stepsisters?

- a. \_\_\_ They marry the Princes
- b. \_\_\_ They get blinded when birds peck out their eyes
- c. \_\_\_ They live happily ever after
- d. \_\_\_ They get lost in the woods and are never found

13. Which ingredient for the potion do The Baker and his Wife get last?

- a. \_\_\_ The cow as white as milk
- b. \_\_\_ The hair as yellow as corn
- c. \_\_\_ The slipper as pure as gold
- d. \_\_\_ The cape as red as blood

14. What was wrong with the 2<sup>nd</sup> cow the Baker produces?

- a. \_\_\_ It was the wrong gender
- b. \_\_\_ It was the wrong breed
- c. \_\_\_ It was the wrong color
- d. \_\_\_ It was the wrong species

15. What amazes everyone about the giant?

- a. \_\_\_ That the giant's a woman
- b. \_\_\_ She's not giant at all
- c. \_\_\_ She only has one eye
- d. \_\_\_ She's a heavy drinker

16. Who sings the song "Lament"?

- a. \_\_\_ The Witch, after Rapunzel gets stepped on by the giant
- b. \_\_\_ Jack, after his mother gets killed by the Steward
- c. \_\_\_ Rapunzel's Prince, after she gets stepped on by the giant
- d. \_\_\_ Baker, after he learns of his wife's death

17. After Rapunzel gets banished to the desert... what happens to her?

- a. \_\_\_ She dies
- b. \_\_\_ She finds a beanstalk, climbs it, and befriends the giant
- c. \_\_\_ We never hear from her again
- d. \_\_\_ She has twins

18. Who is the last to die?

- a. \_\_\_ The Witch
- b. \_\_\_ The Giant's Wife
- c. \_\_\_ The Mysterious Man
- d. \_\_\_ the Baker's Wife

19. Who are the survivors who plan to live together and protect each other?

- a. \_\_\_ The Baker and his child, Cinderella, Little Red, and Jack
- b. \_\_\_ Jack, Jack's Mother, and Milky White
- c. \_\_\_ The Stepmother, Lucinda, Florinda, and the Steward
- d. \_\_\_ Cinderella, Little Red, Jack, and the Baker's child

20. Who has the last line in the play?

- a. \_\_\_ The Baker
- b. \_\_\_ The Witch
- c. \_\_\_ Cinderella
- d. \_\_\_ Jack

### Extra Credit

From what fairy tale do the characters the Baker and his Wife

## ANSWERS

1. c. - Stephen Sondheim
2. d. - Narrator
3. a. - Jack's house, The Baker's house, and Cinderella's house
4. d. - Goldilocks
5. b. - Milky White
6. b. - Eating
7. a. - 5
8. b. - Rose
9. a. - Rapunzel
- 10.c. - In the sky
- 11.d. - The two Princes
- 12.b. - They get blinded when birds peck out their eyes
- 13.b. - The hair as yellow as corn
- 14.c. - It was the wrong color
- 15.a. - That the giant's a woman
- 16.a. - The Witch, after Rapunzel gets stepped on by the giant
- 17.d. - She has twins
- 18.b. - The Giant's Wife
- 19.a. - The Baker and his child, Cinderella, Little Red, and Jack
- 20.c. - Cinderella ("I Wish!")

### Extra Credit

The Baker and his Wife were completely new characters created by James Lapine for 'Into the Woods' as a way to weave all the other Grimm fairy tales together.

C I N D E R E L L A S M O T H E R L W B A G  
 X U W D L Q A H J T Q R M R O B E I E P F O  
 R A I C L K W N A L H Y Y N I T H T H V K T  
 A G T I K I V H C V S U S Z W Y T T U X G N  
 P V C N C Y L A K J L V T T W G O L U N M A  
 U N H D A D W D S W E H E V X R M E P A E I  
 N A D E J R B N M M E Z R O P E P R R R T G  
 Z K T R L A A I O J P S I M Y H E E Q R I Q  
 E H K E M W K R T Q I C O T Z T T D A A H R  
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 C B D L S T R L E J G Q S H Q F S I N O W H  
 Z A B A U S S F R O B M M C V S A D I R O O  
 N H S S C O W W P Q E K A J S A L I C U N O  
 C F H P N J I B H U A C N C J L L N U D S D  
 K P H R Z R F C E L U V A F K L E G L F F U  
 R T O I Z X E Q J T T A C V U E R H M K A U  
 M F C N B A K E R Q Y Y L S C R E O I H E O  
 E V D C N S A F D U B G S T G E D O Q A W B  
 E Z O E R H U P X G G P W F I D N D N K S W  
 T S J Y N N A R G X N Q S W O N I C I N S Y  
 R A P U N Z E L S P R I N C E I C L G D E Q  
 T U Y J W C I N D E R E L L A C C A L M I B

Baker  
 BakersWife  
 Cinderella  
 CinderellasFather  
 CinderellasMother  
 CinderellasPrince  
 CinderellasStepmother  
 Florinda

Giant  
 Granny  
 Jack  
 JacksMother  
 LittleRedRidingHood  
 Lucinda  
 MysteriousMan  
 Narrator

Rapunzel  
 RapunzelsPrince  
 Sleeping Beauty  
 Snow White  
 Steward  
 Witch

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