INTO THE WOODS

MUSIC & LYRICS BY STEPHEN SONDHEIM
BOOK BY JAMES LAPINE
ORIGINAL ORCHESTRATIONS BY JONATHAN TUNICK

4 DECEMBER 2015 - 16 JANUARY 2016

DIRECTOR Matthew Xia
DESIGNER Jenny Tiramani
LIGHTING DESIGNER Ciarán Cunningham
MUSICAL DIRECTOR Sean Green
MUSICAL SUPERVISER Julian Kelly
CHOREOGRAPHER Jason Pennycooke
ILLUSIONS Chris Fisher

PERFORMED BY Lucinda Michaela Bennison (Lucinda), Gillian Bevan (Witch), Cameron Blakely (Narrator/ Mysterious Man), Claire Brown (Jack’s Mother), Amelia Cavallo (Cinderella’s Mother), Natasha Cottrill (Little Red Riding Hood), Marc Elliott (Rapunzel’s Prince), Alex Gaumond (Baker), Rachel Goodwin (Milky White), Maimuna Memon (Florinda), David Moorst (Jack), Michael O’Connor (Steward), Gemma Page (Cinderella’s Stepmother/ Grandmother), Maxine Peake (Voice of the Giant’s Wife), Michael Peavoy (Wolf/ Cinderella’s Prince), Isabelle Peters (Rapunzel), Amy Ellen Richardson (Baker’s Wife), Francesca Zoutewelle (Cinderella).

Teacher Resource

This resource has been created with Key Stage 3, 4 & 5 Drama and English teachers in mind, but many of the activities can be adapted to suit other subject areas and age groups. The resource aims to enhance students’ understanding of the INTO THE WOODS rehearsal process and to spark interesting conversations around the Royal Exchange’s production.

For further information about our Schools’ Programme, please contact Natalie Diddams on 0161 615 6750 / natalie.diddams@royalexchange.co.uk
OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

- *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* by Bruno Bettelheim
- *From the Beast to the Blonde* by Marina Warner
- *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm* translated and edited by Jack Zipes
- *Once Upon a Time* by Marina Warner
HAPPILY EVER AFTER?

INTO THE WOODS intertwines the classic tales of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk and Rapunzel, bringing them together through an original story involving a Baker and his Wife, their wish to begin a family and their interaction with a Witch that has put a curse on them.

Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine created the musical in 1987. Initially, they wanted to write an original fairy tale for the stage that would last 2 hours, with music that would define the characters and move the story forward. But they found it difficult to create a new fairy tale that would last longer than half an hour. Fairy tales, by their nature, are short. The characters have simple objectives that are easily resolved with a ‘happily ever after’.

So, Sondheim and Lapine decided instead to intertwine the narratives of existing fairy tales, complicating their simple narratives by making the characters cross paths in the same woods. The woods are a symbol of the unconscious: a place where the characters face their trials and emerge wiser or destroyed.

Sondheim and Lapine also contributed a new story about a Baker and Baker’s Wife that long for a child. This story gives the piece a modern twist: these characters are reminiscent of a contemporary western couple and have an objective that audiences can immediately connect with and understand.

The show covers multiple themes: growing up, parents and children, accepting responsibility, morality, and the consequences of chasing after your dreams. It also playfully subverts the fairy tale form: allowing the first half of the play to end in triumph (with all of the characters achieving their ‘happily ever after’) but then blowing this apart in the second half when they have to deal with the consequences of their actions.

Importantly, the unusual structure of the musical shows the darker side of narratives that end with: ‘happily ever after’. It is widely accepted that fairy tales were created as ‘instruction manuals’ for children and that they would be most useful if they ended with the protagonists being successful. However, this musical presents an alternative point of view: highlighting the ways that fairy tales can give children false expectations.

WHY NOT? Check out a film version of INTO THE WOODS! There are a few available; we would suggest the 2014 film with Meryl Streep and Emily Blunt (available on DVD now) or the 1991 American Playhouse version (also available on DVD).

Put ‘Happily Ever After’ on trial!

Split your group in half. Ask one half to prepare an argument for the benefits of the traditional fairy tale form, and the other half to prepare an argument against the happily ever after format.

When both groups are ready, ask them to sit on opposite sides of the room with you in the middle as the ‘chair’. Invite each group to nominate one person to speak for a minute (it is a good idea to set an alarm or have a bell with you, so that there is a clear signal to stop talking). Once both arguments have been introduced; invite other members of each group to speak for a minute.

At the end, have a vote: should we throw out ‘happily ever after’ for good?
INTO THE WOODS WITH COSTUME AND DESIGN

Right at the start of the creative process on INTO THE WOODS, Director Matthew Xia took his team on a trip to Alderley Edge Woods. He wanted the characters and the landscape to be recognizable to an audience of today, so this research trip felt important as a starting point:

“INTO THE WOODS explores characters that should only ever really exist as 2 dimensional archetypes, but in putting them onstage we insist that they are fully formed and therefore, the only way forward was to avoid the cliché of non-specific medieval Germanic nowhere and locate our play and its people very close to Manchester: a fantastical forest on the outskirts of the City.” – Matthew Xia

Designer Jenny Tiramani focused her design for the show on nature. She was inspired by a book called WILDER MANN: THE IMAGE OF THE SAVAGE by Charles Fréger. The book contains a series of photographs of people across the globe who have maintained a ritualistic relationship with the natural world. Draped in animal skins, foliage and daubed in mud, they represent a forgotten time of seasonal cycles, harvest and fertility gods; a time before electricity, social media and prepackaged chopped vegetables.

Both Matthew and Jenny felt that these images captured the feeling of being in the woods; when everything before you is organic matter, when you are away from tarmacked roads, cars, telephone wires and the Internet.

They wanted to translate this feeling for the Great Hall, by using real trees and foliage, real mud and real animal skins. To achieve the effect, the theatre’s production team sourced and installed a coppice of fir trees around the theatre module and taxidermy animals featured heavily throughout the design. The floor of the stage was made from wood with real mud and foliage placed over the top.
COSTUME

Jenny Tiramani and Matthew Xia wanted the costume designs for INTO THE WOODS to reflect the sense of the ‘real’ they had developed in their set design.

They felt it was important that the Wolf’s costume was made with real wolf hide, for example, and that the Witch’s costume featured organic elements.

They also wanted to modernise the characters through their costumes – placing them in the world of ‘Manchester, today’ as opposed to world of Pantomime. To do this, they explored each ‘character archetype’ in the show (character archetypes are characters that represent a universal part of human nature) and then discussed real people living today that might conform to those archetypes.

The Wolf, with his aggressive sexuality, for example, reminded them of Russell Brand or Iggy Pop, while the Ugly Sisters, with their self-obsessed natures, reminded them of ‘The Real Housewives of Cheshire’.

Because the character archetypes in the musical are so ingrained in our collective consciousness, they found that it did not take much to signal who they were through costume. A red parker, for example, is more than enough to conjure Little Red Riding Hood’s cape, which we all know so well, whilst at the same time telling an audience a brand new story about the character and about the world today.

WHY NOT? Have a go at designing your own modern costumes for fairy tale characters!

Ask your students to pick a fairy tale character that they know really well and decide which ‘character archetype’ they are. For more information on how to do this, simply search online for: ‘fairy tale archetypes’.

On their own or in groups, they should discuss who this character might be in today’s world, then collect images to inspire costume ideas. Challenge them to think of ways to retain elements of their character’s traditional fairy tale costume, to make it clear who they are.

Finally, ask your students to draw and label a costume design for their character. As a last activity, ask each student to present their costume design to the rest of the class.

ADAPTATION AND DEVISING
Fairy tales can be appreciated on many levels of meaning. This is perhaps why they are so often adapted and used to inspire new forms of storytelling.

Think for a moment about how many different ways you have experienced fairy tales in your lifetime. They appear in children’s books, novels, paintings, photographs, Pantomimes, Ballets, Operas, films, television shows... the list could go on and on!

Because of this, fairy tales are a great stimulus for adapting and devising. Here are some suggested activities to inspire your students to start their own creative process in response to INTO THE WOODS. They could be used across the curriculum as a starting point for making artwork, for writing stories or for making a piece of theatre.

**FAIRY TALE MOOD BOARDS**

1) Start by asking your class to discuss (in pairs or in small groups) the following question: “Why tell stories?”

2) Compile their answers on the board or on a sheet of paper. They might say things like: to entertain, to communicate a message, to teach, to keep a tradition going, to see things from someone else’s point of view.

3) Give each person the name of one of the following fairy tales:
   - Little Red Riding Hood
   - Jack and the Beanstalk
   - Cinderella
   - Rapunzel

4) Challenge them to create a quick story board (you could use the template in APPENDIX A if you like). They do not need to know the story really well; they just need to draw a picture of (or write a sentence about) something that happens at the start of the story, something that happens in the middle of the story and something that happens at the end.

5) Once they have created their story boards, ask your students to find a partner and sell their story, imagining that they are a movie mogul and their partner is a potential funder. Again, they don’t need to know the story really well. They should simply use what they do know about it to make their story sound exciting, relevant and worth telling. Ask each of the pairs to feedback about what was interesting about their partner’s story and reflect on the exercise: was anyone surprised by what their partner said? Did the stories sound good? Are fairy tales still relevant today?

6) Next, split your class into 4 groups and give each group one of the fairy tales. They should write the name of their fairy tale in the centre of a large piece of paper. This will become their ‘mood board’. Around the name of the fairy tale, they should write anything they associate with the story including: Words / Themes / Pop Culture references / Song titles / Characters / Sounds / Places / Smells / Atmospheres
7) Ask each group to then choose a few images and a couple of objects that somehow connect with the story. You could place a collection of images and objects on a table for them, or allow them to search for images and objects on the internet (don’t forget to check out our Pinterest page: https://uk.pinterest.com/royalexchange/into-the-woods/) or simply ask them to hunt around the room for inspiration! Encourage them to think outside of the box and find things that make them think about their story in a different way.

8) Each group should then create a sentence about their story that starts with: “This is a world where...” and share it with the rest of the class. As an extension, you could ask each group to create a trailer for their unique version of their fairy tale.

9) Finally, ask your class to reflect on the exercise. What are the similarities and differences between the different mood boards? How could the mood boards inspire creative writing, a piece of art or a play?

ENTWINED TALES
This exercise will help your students to create new stories by entwining one or more fairy tales.

1) Ask your class to split into small groups and read the 10 point synopses of each fairy tale in APPENDIX C. They should choose two ‘points’, ideally from different fairy tales. Challenge them to create a still image to represent each point and then ask them to show their still images to the rest of the class. Ask everyone to reflect on what they like about each image. Is it clear what is happening in each story? How could each image be developed?

2) Challenge each group to return to their still images and find a way of ‘transitioning’ from one to the other. They should use movement to make the connection as fluid as possible, and choose a word or a line of dialogue that somehow fits with both image. They can bring the word or the line of dialogue into their transition in whatever way they want.

3) Look at all of the images again and discuss how they have changed. What is it like to see two fairy tales merged together in this way?

4) As an extension, show your class some pieces of art and ask them to discuss what is powerful about each image (some suggestions are in APPENDIX B). They might talk about: perspective, colours, facial expressions, body language, groupings, isolation – all of which are important in visual art and in theatre and film.

5) Give each group one of the pictures that they have talked about and ask them to develop their still images further by taking some inspiration from that picture. Watch the still images again and invite your class to discuss how each piece made them feel.

6) You could now challenge your class to write a story or a script inspired by their piece as homework, or to use it to inspire their collage.

APPENDIX A - STORY BOARD TEMPLATE
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

10 POINT SYNOPSIS

1. Little Red Riding Hood is given some food to take to her sickly Grandmother. Her mother tells her to stay strictly on the path.

2. Little Red Riding Hood walks through the woods to deliver food.

3. A mean wolf approaches Little Red Riding Hood and she naively tells him where she is going.

4. The wolf suggests that she picks some flowers; which she does.

5. In the meantime; the wolf goes to the grandmother's house and gains entry by pretending to be the girl.

6. The wolf swallows the grandmother whole and dresses in her clothes. Then he gets into bed and waits.

7. When Little Red Riding Hood arrives, she notices that her grandmother looks very strange. She says: "What a deep voice you have!" ("The better to greet you with"), "Goodness, what big eyes you have!" ("The better to see you with"), "And what big hands you have!" ("The better to hug/grab you with").

8. Little Red Riding Hood says, lastly, "What a big mouth you have" ("The better to eat you with!").

9. The wolf jumps out of bed, and swallows her up. Then he falls asleep.

10. A woodcutter comes to the rescue and with his axe cuts open the sleeping wolf. Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother emerge unharmed.
JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

10 POINT SYNOPSIS

1. Jack is a young boy living with his widowed mother and a cow who is their only source of income. When the cow stops giving milk, Jack's mother tells him to take the cow to the market to be sold.

2. On the way, he meets an old man who offers "magic beans" in exchange for the cow and Jack makes the trade.

3. When Jack arrives home without any money, his mother becomes furious, throws the beans on the ground and sends Jack to bed.

4. A gigantic beanstalk grows overnight, which Jack climbs to a land high in the sky. There he comes to a castle, which is the home of a giant. He asks at the door for food and the giant's wife takes him in.

5. When the giant returns, he senses that a human is nearby:
   
   Fee-fi-fo-fum!
   
   I smell the blood of an Englishman,
   Be he alive, or be he dead,
   I'll grind his bones to make my bread.

6. Jack is hidden by the giant's wife and he overhears the giant counting money. When the giant sleeps, he steals a bag of gold coins and makes his escape down the beanstalk.

7. Jack returns up the beanstalk twice more. Each time he is helped by the wife, although she grows increasingly suspicious of him. He learns of other treasures and steals them when the giant sleeps: first a goose that lays golden eggs, then a harp that plays by itself.

8. The giant is woken when Jack leaves the house with the harp and chases him down the beanstalk. Jack calls to his mother for an axe.

9. Before the giant reaches the ground, Jack cuts down the beanstalk, causing the giant to fall to his death.

10. Jack and his mother then live happily ever after with their riches that Jack stole from the giant.
RAPUNZEL

10 POINT SYNOPSIS

1. A lonely couple, who want a child, live next to a walled garden belonging to a witch. The wife becomes pregnant and starts craving a Rapunzel plant (a sort of cabbage), which growing in the garden of the witch.

2. One night, her husband breaks into the garden to get some for her, but it tastes so good that she longs for more. Her husband goes to get some for her a second time, but is caught by the witch and accused of theft.

3. The husband begs for mercy, and the witch agrees to be lenient. He can take as much of the plant as he likes, as long as the baby is given to her at birth. When the baby is born, the witch takes her and names her Rapunzel after the plant that her mother craved.

4. Rapunzel grows up to be the most beautiful child in the world with long golden hair. When she reaches her twelfth year, the witch shuts her away in a tower in the middle of the woods. The tower doesn’t have stairs or a door, and when she visits her, she calls out and then climbs up Rapunzel’s hair.

5. One day, a prince rides through the forest and hears Rapunzel singing from the tower. He searches for her and discovers the tower, but is unable to enter it. He returns often, listening to her beautiful singing, and one day sees the witch climbing Rapunzel’s hair.

6. The prince waits for the witch to leave and then asks Rapunzel to let her hair down. When she does, he climbs up, makes her acquaintance, and eventually asks her to marry him. She agrees.

7. Together they plan a means of escape. He will come each night, and bring Rapunzel a piece of silk, which she will gradually weave into a ladder.

8. Before the plan can come to fruition, however, Rapunzel gives the game away, foolishly asking the witch why it is so much harder to pull the prince up with her hair. In anger, the witch cuts off Rapunzel’s hair and casts her out into the wilderness to fend for herself.

9. When the prince calls that night, the witch lets the severed hair down and hauls him up. To his horror, he finds that Rapunzel has gone. When the witch tells him that he will never see Rapunzel again, he leaps from the tower in despair and is blinded by the thorns below.

10. He wanders through the wastelands of the country and eventually comes to the wilderness where Rapunzel now lives. One day, as she sings, he hears her voice again, and they are reunited. They live happily ever after.
CINDERELLA

10 POINT SYNOPSIS

1. A wealthy gentleman and his wife have a beautiful daughter. Sadly, the gentleman’s wife falls ill and dies. A year later, he marries another woman, who has two daughters of her own.

2. The new wife’s daughters are cruel and wicked. They steal the girl’s fine clothes and jewels and banish her to the kitchen, calling her “Cinderella”.

3. Cinderella goes to her mother’s grave to pray three times a day. Her tears water a hazel tree that grows there and white doves come to comfort her.

4. The king decides to give a 3 day festival so that the prince can choose a bride. Cinderella desperately wants to go, but is not allowed as she had no dress or shoes to wear.

5. Cinderella goes to her mother’s grave to ask for help. The white doves bring her a gold and silver gown and silk shoes.

6. Cinderella goes to the first day of the festival and dances with the prince. When sunset comes, the prince asks to escort her home but she runs away from him — afraid that he will discover who she really is.

7. The next day, Cinderella goes to the festival in a much grander gown. The prince dances with her again and when sunset comes he asks if he can escort her home. Again, she runs away.

8. On the third day, Cinderella appears at the festival dressed in the grandest gown with slippers made of gold. The prince, determined to keep her, has the stairway of the palace smeared with pitch. When Cinderella runs away, one of her golden slippers gets stuck in the pitch, and the prince proclaims that he will marry the maiden whose foot will fit the golden slipper.

9. The next morning, the prince goes to Cinderella’s house. He first tries the slipper on the foot of the eldest sister, who cuts off her toes in order to fit into it. He then tries the slipper on the foot of the younger sister, who has cut off her heel for the same reason. Both sisters are given away by the blood dripping from their feet.

10. As the prince leaves the house, a white dove tells him that there is another maiden in the house. He returns and Cinderella appears. When she puts on the slipper, the prince recognizes her and asks her to marry him. She agrees, and they live happily ever after.