



# CENTRAL YORK PERFORMING ARTS

PARENTAL GUIDE

## ABOUT INTO THE WOODS

### **SYNOPSIS** (from [MTI.com](http://MTI.com)):

James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim take everyone's favorite storybook characters and bring them together for a timeless, yet relevant, piece...and a rare modern classic. The Tony Award-winning book and score are both enchanting and touching. The story follows a Baker and his wife, who wish to have a child; Cinderella, who wishes to attend the King's Festival; and Jack, who wishes his cow would give milk. When the Baker and his wife learn that they cannot have a child because of a Witch's curse, the two set off on a journey to break the curse. Everyone's wish is granted, but the consequences of their actions return to haunt them later with disastrous results.

One of Sondheim's most popular works, *Into the Woods* is a musically sophisticated show with the opportunity to feature actors adept at dark comedy. Designers will especially enjoy highlighting the fantastical elements of this magical world.

### **WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW** (from [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org))

Parents need to know that *Into the Woods* is a beautiful, clever, frequently funny, sometimes somber, and ultimately uplifting take on classic Brothers Grimm fairy tales. Its presentation of characters like Cinderella, Prince Charming, and more as very flawed people may be confusing or upsetting for younger kids; there's lots to think about here, but it's pretty emotionally complicated stuff. A lascivious wolf preys on a young girl, children lose and are separated from their parents, sympathetic characters die, handsome princes aren't all they appear to be, and there's no promise of happy ending for anyone. There is a wicked witch who might scare younger kids, and giants wreak havoc upon the land and terrorize its residents -- but for the most part, the scares are mild. There's no strong language to speak of (though some of the brilliant lyrics are tricky to follow); characters do kiss, and there's an implied tryst between a couple who are married to others. But teamwork is valued, family is found in unexpected places, and characters tackle moral dilemmas in ways that will resonate with viewers.

Act 1 follows the well-known storylines and ends with a "happily ever after." Act 2 is more contemplative and darker, delving into the consequences of our choices and other more grown-up themes. It is perfectly acceptable for younger audience members to attend only Act 1, which will provide a complete musical theater experience and a satisfying story.

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## **RATING:**

INTO THE WOODS has been assigned a rating of PG-13 by MTI (Musical Theatre International). It is worth noting that the characters and stories that are familiar to most audiences through Disney productions, will not be represented in this version. The musical focuses on the original Brothers Grimm versions of the stories which tend to be "darker" and less "happy ending" focused.

## **FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:** *(from MTI Resource Guide)*

Various elements of the plot for INTO THE WOODS pose powerful questions for the audience to consider. As such, performers and theatre-goers may have a number of questions about the production and it may be worthwhile to allow them a space to talk about these lingering questions. Part of the rehearsal process has been dedicated to discussing some of these questions with the cast and crew, and we encourage families to consider exploring some of these questions with your child. Feel free to check out more with the Study Guide below:

[https://www.musikundbuehne.de/fileadmin/media/Downloads/Education\\_Packs/Into\\_the\\_Woods\\_Study\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.musikundbuehne.de/fileadmin/media/Downloads/Education_Packs/Into_the_Woods_Study_Guide.pdf)