

into the woods stephen sondheim

****Into the Woods Stephen Sondheim: A Masterpiece of Musical Storytelling****

into the woods stephen sondheim is more than just a musical; it's an intricate tapestry of fairy tales woven together with wit, emotion, and complexity. Stephen Sondheim, one of the most influential figures in musical theatre, crafted this unique work that explores the consequences of wishes and the tangled paths we all navigate through life. If you've ever wondered what happens after "happily ever after," **Into the Woods** offers a thought-provoking, richly layered answer.

The Genesis of Into the Woods: Stephen Sondheim's Vision

Stephen Sondheim, renowned for his clever lyrics and sophisticated compositions, collaborated with playwright James Lapine to create **Into the Woods** in 1987. The idea was to blend familiar fairy tales—Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Rapunzel—into a single narrative. But instead of a straightforward retelling, the musical delves into the darker and more complicated aftermath of these stories.

Sondheim's genius lies in his ability to take seemingly simple stories and infuse them with psychological depth and moral ambiguity. The "woods" serve as a metaphor for life's uncertainties, challenges, and moral dilemmas, making the musical resonate on multiple levels.

Musical Style and Themes in Into the Woods Stephen Sondheim

Unlike many traditional musicals, **Into the Woods** features a complex score that combines witty lyrics

with intricate melodies. Sondheim's use of leitmotifs—musical themes associated with particular characters or ideas—helps unify the varied fairy tales into a cohesive whole.

Exploring the Themes

At its core, *Into the Woods* explores themes such as:

- **Desire and Consequence:** The characters' wishes lead them into the woods, but once those wishes are fulfilled, new challenges arise. This reflects the idea that achieving goals often brings unexpected responsibilities.
- **Morality and Ambiguity:** Unlike fairy tales with clear-cut good and evil, Sondheim presents characters with complex motivations, forcing audiences to question right and wrong.
- **Community and Isolation:** The intertwining stories show how individuals' actions impact others, emphasizing interconnectedness.
- **Loss of Innocence:** The journey through the woods symbolizes a rite of passage, highlighting growth and the loss of naivety.

These themes give *Into the Woods* a timeless relevance, appealing to both children discovering fairy tales and adults seeking deeper meaning.

Key Characters and Their Journeys

One of the reasons *Into the Woods* remains so captivating is its ensemble cast of well-drawn characters. Each fairy tale figure embarks on a personal journey, facing unique trials and transformations.

Notable Characters

- **The Baker and His Wife:** Central to the narrative, their quest to lift a family curse drives much of the plot. Their story examines partnership, sacrifice, and the complexity of human relationships.
- **Cinderella:** Her wish to attend the royal festival and escape her life leads to unexpected consequences, challenging traditional narratives of princesses and happy endings.
- **Little Red Riding Hood:** Her encounter with the wolf is a cautionary tale about innocence and danger.
- **Jack:** His climb up the beanstalk represents ambition and recklessness, with repercussions that affect everyone.
- **The Witch:** A morally complex antagonist whose motivations evoke sympathy, illustrating that villainy can have shades of gray.

Each character's development is supported by Sondheim's nuanced lyrics and the emotional depth of the music.

Why Into the Woods Stephen Sondheim Stands Out in Musical Theatre

Into the Woods is often hailed as a landmark in musical theatre for several reasons:

Innovative Storytelling

By intertwining multiple fairy tales, Sondheim and Lapine broke conventional narrative structures, offering a fresh and inventive approach. The musical's second act, which deals with the aftermath of the characters' wishes, is particularly notable for its mature and unexpected turn.

Complex Characters

Sondheim's characters are multidimensional, avoiding stereotypes. This complexity adds richness and invites audiences to reflect on their own experiences and choices.

Musical Complexity

The score challenges performers and delights audiences with its clever wordplay, counterpoint, and thematic cohesion. Songs like "No One Is Alone," "Children Will Listen," and "Agony" have become staples in the musical theatre repertoire.

Relevance Across Generations

The musical's themes of desire, consequence, and community resonate with people of all ages, making it a popular choice for both professional and amateur productions worldwide.

The Impact of Into the Woods Stephen Sondheim on Popular Culture

Since its premiere, **Into the Woods** has deeply influenced musical theatre and popular culture. Its success led to multiple Broadway revivals, international productions, and a 2014 Disney film adaptation starring Meryl Streep, Emily Blunt, and James Corden.

Why the 2014 Film Matters

The movie brought Sondheim's work to a broader audience, introducing the musical's complex themes to those unfamiliar with theatrical productions. While the film made some changes to the story and tone, it preserved the heart of Sondheim's vision, highlighting the enduring appeal of the musical.

Influence on Other Works

Into the Woods has inspired countless artists and writers to explore the darker and more nuanced sides of fairy tales. It paved the way for other works that blend fantasy with reality, encouraging a more sophisticated approach to storytelling in theatre and beyond.

Tips for Experiencing Into the Woods Stephen Sondheim

If you're new to **Into the Woods** or Stephen Sondheim's work, here are some helpful tips to fully appreciate the musical:

- **Listen to the Score Carefully:** Sondheim's lyrics are packed with meaning and clever wordplay. Paying close attention enhances understanding and enjoyment.
- **Read Up on the Fairy Tales:** Familiarity with the original stories enriches your appreciation of how **Into the Woods** subverts expectations.
- **Watch Different Productions:** Each staging offers unique interpretations. Comparing them can deepen your insight into the characters and themes.
- **Reflect on the Themes:** Consider how the musical's exploration of wishes, consequences, and

morality relates to your own life experiences.

- **Explore Other Sondheim Works:** If you enjoy **Into the Woods**, try listening to **Sweeney Todd**, **Company**, or **Sunday in the Park with George** to discover more of his genius.

Stephen Sondheim's Legacy Through Into the Woods

Stephen Sondheim's contribution to musical theatre is monumental, and **Into the Woods** exemplifies his ability to blend storytelling, music, and emotional complexity. The musical challenges audiences to look beyond the surface, urging us to confront the ambiguity of human nature and the unpredictable paths life takes.

By reimagining beloved fairy tales with honesty and nuance, Sondheim created a work that is as entertaining as it is thought-provoking. **Into the Woods** stands as a testament to the power of musical theatre to explore the human condition in all its complexity, ensuring its place in the hearts of audiences for generations to come.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who wrote the music and lyrics for Into the Woods?

Stephen Sondheim wrote both the music and lyrics for *Into the Woods*.

What is the central theme of Stephen Sondheim's Into the Woods?

The central theme of *Into the Woods* is the exploration of wishes, consequences, and the complexities of human desires through intertwined fairy tale characters.

When did Into the Woods by Stephen Sondheim originally premiere?

Into the Woods originally premiered on Broadway in 1987.

Which fairy tales are combined in Stephen Sondheim's Into the Woods?

Into the Woods combines fairy tales such as Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Rapunzel, and Little Red Riding Hood.

How does Stephen Sondheim's Into the Woods differ from traditional fairy tales?

Unlike traditional fairy tales, Into the Woods explores the darker consequences of the characters' wishes and actions, presenting a more complex and mature narrative.

What is the significance of the 'woods' in Stephen Sondheim's Into the Woods?

The woods symbolize the unknown, danger, and the journey of self-discovery that the characters must navigate to face their fears and desires.

Has Stephen Sondheim's Into the Woods won any notable awards?

Yes, Into the Woods won several Tony Awards, including Best Score and Best Book of a Musical.

Was there a film adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's Into the Woods?

Yes, a film adaptation of Into the Woods was released in 2014, directed by Rob Marshall and featuring several well-known actors.

What makes Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods* a popular choice for theater productions?

Its rich, complex characters, memorable music, and the blend of familiar fairy tales with deeper themes make *Into the Woods* a favorite among theater companies and audiences.

Additional Resources

Into the Woods: Stephen Sondheim's Masterpiece Revisited

into the woods stephen sonenheim stands as a defining work in modern musical theatre, combining complex storytelling with intricate musical compositions. This 1987 musical, with book by James Lapine and music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, has captivated audiences and critics alike, becoming a cornerstone of Sondheim's illustrious career. Its unique blend of classic fairy tales with mature themes offers a nuanced exploration of human desires, consequences, and morality, setting it apart from traditional musical theatre fare.

Exploring the Depths of *Into the Woods*

Stephen Sondheim is widely regarded as one of the most innovative and influential figures in musical theatre, known for his sophisticated lyrics and challenging scores. *Into the Woods* represents a pinnacle of his creative genius, where he intertwines multiple fairy tale characters—Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack (of beanstalk fame), and Rapunzel—into an original narrative that probes beyond the surface of happily-ever-after endings.

The musical's structure is notable for its two-act format: the first act follows the traditional narrative arcs of the fairy tales, while the second act deconstructs and complicates those resolutions, revealing the consequences of the characters' wishes and actions. This duality provides a rich, layered storytelling experience that invites repeated viewings and interpretations.

Thematic Complexity and Sondheim's Lyricism

One of the hallmarks of *Into the Woods* is its thematic depth. Sondheim uses the familiar framework of fairy tales to delve into themes such as responsibility, loss, parenting, and the ambiguity of good versus evil. The characters' journeys explore the complexities of human nature and moral ambiguity, which is a signature element in Sondheim's work.

The lyrics in *Into the Woods* are densely packed with meaning, wordplay, and subtext. Songs like "Children Will Listen" and "No One Is Alone" have become iconic, not only for their melodic beauty but also for their profound philosophical insights. Sondheim's ability to craft lyrics that serve both narrative and emotional functions exemplifies his mastery in musical storytelling.

Musical Composition and Orchestration

Musically, *Into the Woods* stands out for its intricate score that blends various styles, from lyrical ballads to energetic ensemble numbers. Sondheim's compositions challenge performers with rapid-fire lyrics and complex rhythms, demanding both technical skill and emotional depth.

The orchestration complements the narrative shifts, with lighter, whimsical motifs in the first act giving way to darker, more somber tones in the second. This musical evolution mirrors the narrative's progression from innocence to experience, enhancing the audience's emotional engagement.

Impact and Legacy of *Into the Woods*

Since its Broadway debut in 1987, *Into the Woods* has enjoyed numerous revivals, concert performances, and adaptations, including the 2014 Disney film that brought the musical to a wider audience. Its enduring popularity speaks to the timelessness of Sondheim's work and its relevance to contemporary audiences.

Critical Reception and Awards

Upon its initial release, *Into the Woods* received critical acclaim for its originality and depth. It won several Tony Awards, including Best Score and Best Book of a Musical, cementing Sondheim's reputation as a leading figure in the theatre world. Critics have praised the show for its intelligent narrative and emotional resonance, often highlighting its ability to subvert traditional fairy tale expectations.

Comparisons with Other Sondheim Works

Within Stephen Sondheim's oeuvre, *Into the Woods* occupies a unique space. Unlike the darker, more psychologically intense works such as *Sweeney Todd* or *Company*, *Into the Woods* balances darkness with whimsy and hope. It is more accessible while maintaining the sophistication characteristic of Sondheim's style.

This balance has contributed to its frequent inclusion in educational theatre programs and community productions, allowing a broad range of performers and audiences to engage with Sondheim's complex musical language.

Why *Into the Woods* Remains Relevant

The musical's exploration of the consequences of choices, the complexities of human relationships, and the loss of innocence resonates across generations. In an era where storytelling increasingly embraces moral ambiguity, *Into the Woods* feels remarkably prescient.

Moreover, the fusion of multiple fairy tales into a single cohesive narrative anticipates the contemporary trend of intertextual storytelling seen in film and television. This interweaving of narratives challenges audiences to reconsider familiar stories through a more critical, nuanced lens.

Challenges and Opportunities in Production

Producing *Into the Woods* presents unique challenges due to its demanding score and the necessity of a versatile cast capable of handling quick character transitions and emotional shifts. The show's orchestration requires skilled musicians, and the thematic complexity demands thoughtful direction to balance the fairy tale elements with the darker undertones.

However, these challenges also offer opportunities. The ensemble nature of the musical fosters collaboration, and its rich narrative layers provide actors and directors with material ripe for creative interpretation. This makes *Into the Woods* a rewarding endeavor for theatre companies aiming to blend commercial appeal with artistic depth.

Educational and Cultural Significance

Into the Woods is often studied in academic settings for its innovative approach to musical theatre. It serves as a prime example of how music, lyrics, and narrative can converge to explore complex human experiences. The show's use of archetypal characters to discuss contemporary issues also makes it a valuable cultural text for discussions on storytelling traditions and their evolution.

- Integration of classical fairy tales with modern themes
- Use of music to enhance narrative and emotional depth
- Exploration of morality beyond binary notions of good and evil
- Challenging yet accessible musical composition

As such, *Into the Woods* continues to inspire new generations of theatre practitioners and audiences, encouraging a thoughtful engagement with the narratives that shape cultural consciousness.

In revisiting *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim's ability to transform familiar stories into profound meditations on life and human nature remains as compelling as ever. The musical's enduring relevance and artistic richness underscore its position as a landmark work in the canon of American musical theatre.

Into The Woods Stephen Sondheim

into the woods stephen sondheim: Into the Woods (movie tie-in edition) Stephen Sondheim, 2014-12-01 It is that joyous rarity, a work of sophisticated artistic ambition and deep political purpose that affords nonstop pleasure.—Time *Into the Woods* brings well-known fairytale characters to musical life, interwoven with the story of a baker and his wife, whose longing for a child is thwarted by a mischievous witch. Stephen Sondheim's songs, seamlessly melded to James Lapine's text, are perfect expressions of the complications of living in modern society and the difficult choices we encounter on the paths of our lives. *Into the Woods* premiered on Broadway in 1987, winning three Tony Awards. It has been a beloved favorite on stages throughout the United States and around the world for almost thirty years. On December 25, 2014, *Into the Woods* was released as a major motion picture, produced by Walt Disney Pictures. The film, directed by Rob Marshall, stars Meryl Streep, Johnny Depp, Emily Blunt, Anna Kendrick, James Corden, and Chris Pine. This book includes an eight-page insert with color photographs from the film. Stephen Sondheim wrote the lyrics for *West Side Story* and *Gypsy*, and the complete scores (music and lyrics) for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Into the Woods*, *Company*, *A Little Night Music*, *Follies*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Assassins*, *Passion*, *Pacific Overtures*, and *Sweeney Todd*, among others. He has won seven Tony Awards, eight Grammy Awards, an Academy Award, and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and many other honors. James Lapine wrote the book for and directed the musicals *Into the Woods*, *Passion*, and *Sunday in the Park with George* (all with scores by Stephen Sondheim) and *Falsettos*, *A New Brain*, *Muscles*, and *Little Miss Sunshine* (all with scores by William Finn). He has written and directed numerous plays, and has received three Tony Awards, five Drama Desk awards, and the Pulitzer Prize.

into the woods stephen sondheim: Into the Woods Stephen Sondheim, James Lapine, 2020-04-14 Finally Back in Print in Over a Decade, the Lavishly Illustrated Book of *Into the Woods*, One of the Most-Performed Musicals, by Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine Based on the Grimm Brothers' most popular folktales, *Into the Woods* is a reimagining of what can happen when beloved fairytale characters are thrown together in increasingly dramatic and humorous ways. The Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning team of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine bring their cherished musical off the stage and onto the page with the help of Hudson Talbott's enchanting illustrations. Published for Stephen Sondheim's ninetieth birthday, join Cinderella, Jack (of beanstalk-climbing fame), Little Red Riding Hood, the Baker and his Wife, and more on their quest to find "happily ever after." Along the way they meet Rapunzel, the Big Bad Wolf, terrifying giants, lusty princes, and their own destinies. But after their journeys are done, the real question remains: what comes after "happily ever after" and will the

prices paid for it be worth it in the end?

into the woods stephen sondheim: A Study Guide for Stephen Sondheim's "Into the Woods" Gale, Cengage Learning, 2016 A Study Guide for Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, excerpted from Gale's acclaimed *Drama For Students*. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust *Drama For Students* for all of your research needs.

into the woods stephen sondheim: Reading Stephen Sondheim Sandor Goodhart, 2013-10-28 Stephen Sondheim is arguably the most important writer for the American musical stage today, the equivalent in his field of Miller, Albee, O'Neill, and Williams. Yet he has rarely been treated seriously within the academy. *Reading Stephen Sondheim: A Collection of Critical Essays* is an attempt to remedy that situation. Bringing together scholars and critics from a wide variety of literary and theoretical perspectives, this book undertakes to examine all of Sondheim's major productions and themes.

into the woods stephen sondheim: Sondheim and Lapine's Into the Woods Olaf Jubin, 2017-08-15 'The Woods are just Trees. The Trees are just Wood.' – All together In 1987, Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine combined several classic fairy tales including Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and Jack and the Beanstalk to create *Into the Woods*. Funny and heartfelt, this musical explores what it might mean to act responsibly in society, both as a parent and as a child. Situating the work within Sondheim's oeuvre and the Broadway canon, Olaf Jubin first offers a detailed reading of the show itself, before discussing key productions in New York and London, and 2014's Oscar-nominated screen adaptation. The radically different approaches to staging *Into the Woods* are testament to how open the musical is to re-interpretation for new audiences. A combination of critical explication with performance and film analysis, as well as an overview of popular and critical reception, this book is meant for anyone who has enjoyed *Into the Woods*, be it as a musical theatre fan, an enchanted audience member, a student or a dedicated theatre professional.

into the woods stephen sondheim: Stephen Sondheim Joanne Gordon, 2014-04-23 Stephen Sondheim is an artist with many contradictory facets: he is an avant-garde composer and lyricist working in the populist art form, an apparently dry and acerbic critic who captures all the ambivalent pain of passion, an intellectual whose work contains some of the funniest bawdy lines on the Broadway stage. He has chosen to confront an audience that is usually looking for escapist literature with the very issues it has fled to the theatre to avoid. This collection of original essays takes particular pains to present Sondheim's diversity in a chronological plan that illustrates how each new work grew out of the previous one. Some of the topics covered are the evolution of Sondheim's female characters, who take us far beyond the usual sweet ingenues; the Roman farce antecedents of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and the resemblances between Sondheim's chorus and the chorus in ancient Greek drama; Sondheim and the concept musical; and Sondheim's maturing philosophy. All students of the modern theatre and the modern musical will want to read this book.

into the woods stephen sondheim: Into the Woods Edition Songbook , 2010-04-01 (Vocal Selections). *Into the Woods* blends various familiar fairy tales with an original 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. Newly edited, with new music engravings, added songs, articles and photos. Includes piano/vocal arrangements of: Agony * Any Moment * Children Will Listen * Giants in the Sky * I Know Things Now * Into the Woods * It Takes Two * No More * No One Is Alone * On the Steps of the Palace * Stay with Me.

into the woods stephen sondheim: The Stephen Sondheim Encyclopedia Rick Pender, 2021-04-15 Praise from Jesse Green, New York Times Chief Theater Critic, Arts, in the 2023 Holiday Gift Guide: "From A (the director George Abbott) to Y ('You Could Drive a Person Crazy'), The Stephen Sondheim Encyclopedia, by Rick Pender, offers an astonishingly comprehensive look, in more than 130 entries, at the late master's colleagues, songs, shows and methods. The Stephen

Sondheim Encyclopedia is a wonderfully detailed and comprehensive reference devoted to musical theater's most prolific and admired composer and lyricist. Entries cover Sondheim's numerous collaborators, from composers and directors to designers and orchestras; key songs, such as his Academy Award winner "Sooner or Later" (Dick Tracy); and major works, including *Assassins*, *Company*, *Follies*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *West Side Story*. The encyclopedia also profiles the actors who originated roles and sang Sondheim's songs for the first time, including Ethel Merman, Angela Lansbury, Mandy Patinkin, and Bernadette Peters. Featuring a detailed biographical entry for Sondheim, a chronology of his career, a listing of his many awards, and discussions of his opinions on movies, opera, and more, this wide-ranging resource will attract musical theater enthusiasts again and again.

into the woods stephen sondeheim: The Almost Unknown Stephen Sondheim , 2016-12-01 (P/V/G Composer Collection). The Almost Unknown in the title of this collection refers to the fact that some of the songs, though never before published, have been recorded, and might be known to the most knowledgeable of Sondheim connoisseurs. However, it is safe to say that the songs in this landmark collection are among the least known of Sondheim's creations. This book includes contents by show or film title as well as by song title, an introduction about Sondheim, a preface by the editor, and detailed notes about each work and the show it came from. The piano/vocal editions were all personally approved by Sondheim.

into the woods stephen sondeheim: Sondheim on Music Mark Eden Horowitz, 2010-09-20 Stephen Sondheim is widely regarded as the most important composer and lyricist of musical theater in the second half of the 20th century. Celebrating his 80th birthday, this new edition of *Sondheim on Music* finds him in these guided interviews expounding in great depth and detail on his craft. As a natural teacher, thoughtful and opinionated, Sondheim discusses the art of musical composition, lyric writing, the collaborative process of musical theater, and how he thinks about his own work. Where the first edition focused particularly on six shows—*Passion*, *Assassins*, *Into the Woods*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Pacific Overtures*—this second edition presents a new chapter that discusses Sondheim's entire career. Several shows that were not discussed previously are explored here, including *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Company*, *Follies*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, and *A Little Night Music*, as well as thoughts about the recent film adaptation of *Sweeney Todd*. The book also features an entire chapter on *Bounce*: the previous incarnation of his latest musical, *Road Show*. In addition to Sondheim's list of Songs I Wish I'd Written, the songlisting and discography has been greatly expanded and updated to include all works composed and recorded over the last six years.

into the woods stephen sondeheim: Storytelling in Opera and Musical Theater Nina Penner, 2020-10-06 *Storytelling in Opera and Musical Theater* is the first systematic exploration of how sung forms of drama tell stories. Through examples from opera's origins to contemporary musicals, Nina Penner examines the roles of character-narrators and how they differ from those in literary and cinematic works, how music can orient spectators to characters' points of view, how being privy to characters' inner thoughts and feelings may evoke feelings of sympathy or empathy, and how performers' choices affect not only who is telling the story but what story is being told. Unique about Penner's approach is her engagement with current work in analytic philosophy. Her study reveals not only the resources this philosophical tradition can bring to musicology but those which musicology can bring to philosophy, challenging and refining accounts of narrative, point of view, and the work-performance relationship within both disciplines. She also considers practical problems singers and directors confront on a daily basis, such as what to do about Wagner's Jewish caricatures and the racism of Orientalist operas. More generally, Penner reflects on how centuries-old works remain meaningful to contemporary audiences and have the power to attract new, more diverse audiences to opera and musical theater. By exploring how practitioners past and present have addressed these issues, *Storytelling in Opera and Musical Theater* offers suggestions for how opera and musical theater can continue to entertain and enrich the lives of 21st-century audiences.

into the woods stephen sondheim: *Singing Utopia* Ben Macpherson, 2024-12-03 Singing Utopia is an original study of voice in musical theatre. Rather than focusing on how actors sing or analysing voices using established approaches found in opera studies, this book offers readers ways to understand musical theatre voices from a cultural perspective. It argues that musical theatre singing allows listeners and audiences to escape their everyday lives; and that voices can 'be' utopian. It then considers what this means and uncovers some paradoxes and difficulties in this idea. Introducing a new set of terms, it provides a way to listen to, think about, and even perform, voice in popular musical theatre.

into the woods stephen sondheim: *Stephen Sondheim* Meryle Secrest, 2011-10-04 In the first full-scale life of the most important composer-lyricist at work in musical theatre today, Meryle Secrest, the biographer of Frank Lloyd Wright and Leonard Bernstein, draws on her extended conversations with Stephen Sondheim as well as on her interviews with his friends, family, collaborators, and lovers to bring us not only the artist--as a master of modernist compositional style--but also the private man. Beginning with his early childhood on New York's prosperous Upper West Side, Secrest describes how Sondheim was taught to play the piano by his father, a successful dress manufacturer and amateur musician. She writes about Sondheim's early ambition to become a concert pianist, about the effect on him of his parents' divorce when he was ten, about his years in military and private schools. She writes about his feelings of loneliness and abandonment, about the refuge he found in the home of Oscar and Dorothy Hammerstein, and his determination to become just like Oscar. Secrest describes the years when Sondheim was struggling to gain a foothold in the theatre, his attempts at scriptwriting (in his early twenties in Rome on the set of *Beat the Devil* with Bogart and Huston, and later in Hollywood as a co-writer with George Oppenheimer for the TV series *Topper*), living the Hollywood life. Here is Sondheim's ascent to the peaks of the Broadway musical, from his chance meeting with playwright Arthur Laurents, which led to his first success--as co-lyricist with Leonard Bernstein on *West Side Story*--to his collaboration with Laurents on *Gypsy*, to his first full Broadway score, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. And Secrest writes about his first big success as composer, lyricist, writer in the 1960s with *Company*, an innovative and sophisticated musical that examined marriage à la mode. It was the start of an almost-twenty-year collaboration with producer and director Hal Prince that resulted in such shows as *Follies*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *A Little Night Music*. We see Sondheim at work with composers, producers, directors, co-writers, actors, the greats of his time and ours, among them Leonard Bernstein, Ethel Merman, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein, Jerome Robbins, Zero Mostel, Bernadette Peters, and Lee Remick (with whom it was said he was in love, and she with him), as Secrest vividly re-creates the energy, the passion, the despair, the excitement, the genius, that went into the making of show after Sondheim show. A biography that is sure to become the standard work on Sondheim's life and art.

into the woods stephen sondheim: *The Oxford Handbook of Sondheim Studies* Robert Gordon, 2014-05-01 The Oxford Handbook of Sondheim Studies offers a series of cutting-edge essays on the most important and compelling topics in the growing field of Sondheim Studies. Focusing on broad groups of issues relating to the music and the production of Sondheim works, rather than on biographical questions about the composer himself, the handbook represents a cross-disciplinary introduction to comprehending Sondheim in musicological, theatrical, and socio-cultural terms. This collection of never-before published essays addresses issues of artistic method and musico-dramaturgical form, while at the same time offering close readings of individual shows from a variety of analytical perspectives. The handbook is arranged into six broad sections: issues of intertextuality and authorship; Sondheim's pioneering work in developing the non-linear form of the concept musical; the production history of Sondheim's work; his writing for film and television; his exploitation and deployment of a wide range of musical genres; and how interpretation through key critical lenses (including sociology, history, and feminist and queer theory) establishes his position in a broader cultural context.

into the woods stephen sondheim: *Folktales and Fairy Tales* Anne E. Duggan Ph.D., Donald

Haase Ph.D., Helen J. Callow, 2016-02-12 Encyclopedic in its coverage, this one-of-a-kind reference is ideal for students, scholars, and others who need reliable, up-to-date information on folk and fairy tales, past and present. Folktales and fairy tales have long played an important role in cultures around the world. They pass customs and lore from generation to generation, provide insights into the peoples who created them, and offer inspiration to creative artists working in media that now include television, film, manga, photography, and computer games. This second, expanded edition of an award-winning reference will help students and teachers as well as storytellers, writers, and creative artists delve into this enchanting world and keep pace with its past and its many new facets. Alphabetically organized and global in scope, the work is the only multivolume reference in English to offer encyclopedic coverage of this subject matter. The four-volume collection covers national, cultural, regional, and linguistic traditions from around the world as well as motifs, themes, characters, and tale types. Writers and illustrators are included as are filmmakers and composers—and, of course, the tales themselves. The expert entries within volumes 1 through 3 are based on the latest research and developments while the contents of volume 4 comprises tales and texts. While most books either present readers with tales from certain countries or cultures or with thematic entries, this encyclopedia stands alone in that it does both, making it a truly unique, one-stop resource.

into the woods stephen sondheim: The World of Musicals Mark A. Robinson, 2014-04-17 This wide-ranging, two-volume encyclopedia of musicals old and new will captivate young fans—and prove invaluable to those contemplating staging a musical production. Written with high school students in mind, *The World of Musicals: An Encyclopedia of Stage, Screen, and Song* encompasses not only Broadway and film musicals, but also made-for-television musicals, a genre that has been largely ignored. The two volumes cover significant musicals in easily accessible entries that offer both useful information and fun facts. Each entry lists the work's writers, composers, directors, choreographers, and cast, and includes a song list, a synopsis, and descriptions of the original production and important revivals or remakes. Biographical entries share the stories of some of the brightest and most celebrated talents in the business. The encyclopedia will undoubtedly ignite and feed student interest in musical theatre. At the same time, it will prove a wonderful resource for teachers or community theatre directors charged with selecting and producing shows. In fact, anyone interested in theatre, film, television, or music will be fascinated by the work's tantalizing bits of historical and theatre trivia.

into the woods stephen sondheim: New York Magazine , 1987-11-16 New York magazine was born in 1968 after a run as an insert of the New York Herald Tribune and quickly made a place for itself as the trusted resource for readers across the country. With award-winning writing and photography covering everything from politics and food to theater and fashion, the magazine's consistent mission has been to reflect back to its audience the energy and excitement of the city itself, while celebrating New York as both a place and an idea.

into the woods stephen sondheim: Musical Theatre David Henson, Kenneth Pickering, 2017-09-16 Drawing on the history and development of Musical Theatre, this engaging workbook provides a comprehensive overview of the nuts and bolts of the discipline. Introducing students to the basics of the theory and history of musical theatre, it covers all four elements of any Musical Theatre course: dance, music, acting and performing. Acting as a guide through the entire process of preparing material for performance, this essential companion presents a number of stimulating exercises, questions, activities and topics for discussion to aid personal and professional development. This clear, comprehensive workbook is an ideal core text for Musical Theatre students of all levels. Packed with help, ideas and guidance for teaching, it will also appeal to directors and instructors.

into the woods stephen sondheim: The A to Z of the Broadway Musical William A. Everett, Paul R. Laird, 2009-09-17 The Broadway musical has greatly influenced American (and world) culture. Such shows as *Oklahoma!* and *Annie Get Your Gun* are as American as apple pie, while the long runs of imports like *Cats*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and *Les Misérables* have broken records.

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