2003

Direction of the Play: Into the Woods

Pamela Kay Cressey

Central Washington University

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Direction of the Musical: Into the Woods

A Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

by
Pamela Kay Cressey
Winter, 2003
This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, musical analysis, casting, direction, vocal coaching, and post-production analysis of Kentlake High School’s production of *Into the Woods*. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play, its music, and evaluation of the musical as a production vehicle for the department of Theatre Arts at Central Washington University. The analysis also includes a discussion as to the directorial vision of this production.
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

Final Examination of

Pamela K. Cressey

B.A., Grand Canyon University, 1978

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

Committee in Charge

Professor Derek Lane

Professor Michael Smith  Professor Brenda Hubbard

McConnell Hall

Room XXX

Thursday, March 18, 2004

3:00 p.m.
Pamela K. Cressey

Courses presented for the Master’s Degree

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Pamela Kay Cressey

Undergraduate Study:

Grand Canyon University 1975 - 1978

Post Graduate Study:

University of Puget Sound 1994
City University 1994
Seattle Pacific University 1994 - 1996
Antioch University 1995 - 1996
Seattle University 1996
Lewis and Clark College 1997

Graduate Study:

Central Washington University 2000 - 2004

Professional Experience:

Junior High/ High School Teacher, Private School 1978-1985
Junior High/ High School Teacher, Kent School District 1995 - 2004
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Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. The form should be submitted in quadruplicate to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Student Name: Pamela K. Cressey
Mailing Address:
City, State, Zipcode:
Birth Date:
Student ID:
Date: 7-12-2003

Check option:

- Written Exam*
- NonThesis Project
- Creative Project
- Studio Project
- Portfolio Review
- Thesis

Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option:

- TH 700 Master's Thesis Project Study 6

*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title: Into the Woods

2. Purpose of Study: The direction of the production Into the Woods serves as the culminating experience in Theatre Graduate Studies.

3. Scope of Study: Documentation based upon the preparation of pre-production research, post production evaluation, the direction of the production (including casting and rehearsal of actors, the preparation of the Director's Production Book, and oral exam) shall benefit both the actors and the community.

4. Procedure to be used: Three phases of study shall be included: 1. Pre-production research and thesis documentation: MLA style. 2. Rehearsal and direction of the production. 3. Post-production evaluation and documentation.

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? Yes ** No 
   Use of Animals? Yes ** No

** If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

Professor Derek Lane
Committee Chair (typed or printed)

Professor Michael Smith
Committee Member (typed or printed)

Professor Brenda Hubbard
Committee Member (typed or printed)

Approved by: 

Dept Chair/Designee (signature) Date

Associate VP of Graduate Studies Date

Students will be required to submit two copies of all motion picture film, film strips, sound film strips, slides, tapes, cassettes, pictures, etc. produced as part of the thesis. These are to be submitted at the time the thesis (three copies) is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.
MASTER'S THESIS PROJECT
PLAYSCRIPT APPROVAL FORM

SCRIPT TITLE:  Into the Woods

PLAYWRIGHT(S):  Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by James Lapine

NUMBER OF ACTS: 2
APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYING TIME:  2 HOURS 45 MIN.

CAST
MEN:  9  WOMEN:  14  CHILDREN:  ZERO  OVER 40:  NONE
ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR:  ZERO
ROLES COULD DOUBLE:  6-8
TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST:  24
OTHER CASTING CONCERNS:  This musical is vocally challenging. The play must be cast with the best vocalists. A dedicated vocal director will be an essential part of the production team in order to ensure quality singing performances.

ARTISTIC STAFF
MUSICAL DIRECTOR  X  DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER  X  VOCAL DIRECTOR  X
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER  _______  DIALECT COACH  _______  SPECIALTY HIRE  X  (specify what kind):  Lighting Consultant, Set Consultant, and Professional Pianist
ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size):  ORCHESTRA, 15-18 STUDENTS
Will you be fulfilling any of the above? If so, which?
Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? If so, which?  Some professional musicians might be needed to play along with the students in the pit orchestra, those parts will be determined by the Musical Director. I plan to hire a lighting and set consultant.

SCENERY/PROPS
UNIT SET?  NO  NUMBER OF SETTINGS:  There are five basic sets with the woods rearranged throughout the play to create the illusion of more than one location.
HISTORICAL PERIOD:  FAIRY-TALE  GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:  THE WOODS
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:  The musical begins with a simple drape showing the three exteriors and partial interiors of the main character's homes. The set design requires flexibility in its conception that will allow rapid change to occur which will represent the different locations of the woods. The giant in the final scene will be a challenge. It might be a huge
puppet of some sort. It could be a large prop or set piece flown in to create the special effect.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS: 20-25  PERIOD: FAIRY-TALE
DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL PROPS? YES  DESCRIBE: Difficult props would be the large puppet as the lady giant, the cow “Milky White” if made as a prop instead of having live actors costumed as a cow. The large tree which contains Cinderella’s mother and Rapunzel’s tower will also be difficult to stage.

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS? YES  HOW MANY: ONE KNIFE
DESCRIBE: The Baker uses a medium sized hunting knife to cut open the wolf in order to rescue Little Red Ridinghood and her Grandmother.

COSTUMES
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER: Each character wears one costume, except for Cinderella, her step-sisters and stepmother, and her father who all change into their finery to go to the Festival.
HISTORICAL PERIOD: FAIRY-TALE  SEASON: This will be determined in the design concept collaboration as the play is not specific.
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: The costumes will be somewhat difficult due to the detail and elaborate nature of fairy-tale clothing. They will be a reflection of the final design concept. Rentals might also be used for some of the more difficult costumes. I do have some talented Parents that are ready and eager for this challenge.

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT
HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? Not done on stage, but I have viewed the Broadway DVD-version with Bernadette Peters cast as the Witch.
HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? NO  BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION:
WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?
Kentlake High School Drama Club is capable and excited to produce this musical. Into the Woods is challenging technically and vocally, and will also stretch the acting abilities of my students. The cast size is medium for a musical, and the major roles can be doubled in order to give the actors’ voices rest. We will be doing a total of eight shows in two weeks. Sondheim’s music is a challenge that will stretch the orchestra and also the actors’ voices. “Life lessons” and morals abound in this musical, which makes it appropriate for this age level. It is touching, life changing and entertaining. Kentlake has the talent and the resources available to produce this show. Our production staff and hiring authority have already committed to producing it with a full understanding of the many extra hours that will be required to create a show of this nature. This show has name recognition that makes it marketable. The set should be somewhat cost effective if a designer is brought in to help in the design and construction. Costumes will be the biggest expense, so I have lined up volunteers to sew in order to keep rental costs down. There is strong community support for this production and a high level of parent involvement. Kentlake Drama was nominated this past year for fifteen categories, out of twenty, at the 5th Ave Theatre High School Awards and walked away with three of those.
Our goal is to be nominated again next year and this is caliber of musical will showcase our talent and dedication to producing quality Theatre. Our Music Department has strongly requested that our musicals be produced in the fall instead of spring due to scheduling conflicts with the band, choir and orchestra students. Spring sports have also caused many talented students to choose sports over participation in the spring musical. It was decided to utilize the fall time-slot to see if it might correct these issues.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL? The only concern is that the time-slot may not be good due to weather conditions. I have already obtained permission to produce this musical from Musical Theatre International for the dates I have submitted for production in December of 2003. We have full authority from my principal Diana Pratt to produce this musical. All those on my production staff are committed to the success of this production and are excited about the challenges of this show. My students are also committed to this production.

Synopsis of Into the Woods: It is a musical that combines and brings to life the fairy-tale stories of Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Ridinghood and Rapunzel all set to the unforgettable music and lyrics created by Stephen Sondheim.

The baker and his wife, who have been longing for a child of their own, find out that they are the victims of a curse that the witch, who lives next door, had placed upon the baker's family when he was only a child. Long ago the baker's father had stolen the witch's greens from her garden, including her "magic beans" to give to his pregnant wife. His mother was carrying the sister he has never known, Rapunzel. The witch demanded the baby from them in payment for the garden incident. At the same time, the audience is also brought along into the fairy-tale stories of Little Red Ridinghood and Cinderella. All of these stories converge into one.

The driving force of the play requires the main characters, the Baker and his Wife, to "reverse the curse". All of the characters must make their own journeys into the woods to solve their own problems or curses and to gain wisdom from their mistakes, moments, and wrong turns in the woods. It is here in these woods that the characters learn, through adversity, how to pull together and act as a community in order to fend off the giant that is destroying them. They learn that no one is really ever alone in this world, if we all can all communicate and work together to kill society's many giants. It is a story of hope in the midst of disaster, of life going on after struggle, and of the knowledge we acquire after struggling through the sometimes heart-breaking and painful lessons through the journey of life.

SUBMITTED BY: ____________________________  Pamela K. Cressey
DATE SUBMITTED: June 26, 2003
APPROVED BY: ____________________________  Derek Lane, Thesis Advisor

Please note:
This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
Suggested Performance Dates

Performance dates are December 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, of 2003.

This contract was established through special arrangement with Musical Theatre International, 421 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019, contract # 208214. Curtain times are 7:00 PM each night at the Kentlake Performing Arts Center. Presale tickets are $8.00 for general admission, $6.00 for seniors and children 10 years and under. They will cost $10.00 at the door. Tickets may be purchased at the door, through the Kentlake High School ASB Cashier during school hours, or through a cast member or parent contact.
Parameters Established by Kentlake Performing Arts Center

Staff hired to produce Into the Woods:

Pam Cressey          Director
Dave Harris          Musical Coordinator and Orchestra Director
Pricilla Balldock    Vocal Director
Jon Langrell         Lighting Designer and Overall Production Consultant
Chris Anderson       Scenic Designer
Matt Turner          Production Pianist
Permission of the Hiring Authority:

We the undersigned, as the administrative representatives of Kentlake High School, do hereby give permission for our Theatre Director, Pam Cressey, to produce and direct the musical *Into the Woods* by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine in the Performing Arts Center at Kentlake High School on the dates of December 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10, 11, 12, 13, 2003. We understand that this production vehicle will be the culminating Thesis Project for Pam Cressey's Master of Arts in Theatre Production Directing from Central Washington University.

______________________________  ________________________________
Diana Pratt, Principal            Cindi VanEtten, Vice Principal

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
Kentlake High School has a fully operational theater facility with state of the art equipment. All other equipment deemed necessary for this production, will be rented or purchased through PNTA or another reputable theatrical supplies business. In addition, the ASB Drama Club will be fundraising to support the production and to help with any other financial issues that ticket sales do not cover for expenses accrued during the show.
Evaluation of the Play as a Production Vehicle

In evaluating *Into the Woods* as a production vehicle, several areas stand out as potential concerns. These areas are set design and construction and vocal coaching. As for set design, I have already been in contact with my Lighting Designer, Jon Langrell, and we have set up a meeting to begin discussions about the concept and set design. Jon has assured me that he will do all he can to help with these concerns and will bring in a good friend of his, Chris Anderson, who is a professional set designer, to consult and help with the production. Chris has expressed an interest in doing educational work with students. I trust Jon’s judgment and know he will not fail me, as I have had his help with two previous productions. He has been generous with his time and in each case became a valuable resource. It has proved to be a great opportunity for the students to work with a professional theatre practitioner and receive that kind of training.

My vocal director has had some attendance problems in previous shows, but she has owned up to those problems and has asked for another chance. I have already seen an improvement in her attitude. She has expressed a strong desire to work on *Into the Woods* and is willing to work in cooperation with the other production team members and the students to make the show a success. She understands the degree of difficulty in producing a musical of this caliber and knows the amount of work that will be required. If she does not keep her agreement to be on time and in attendance at all rehearsals I will be forced to use another vocal coach. I have a commitment from two private voice coaches; one of whom has had specific training in stage voice. Both women are ready and willing to step in if needed. Pricilla must be given another chance due to the contract issues in the building. But, if she begins to fall into her old habits of not attending or
being late to rehearsals, she will be replaced early into the production even at the cost of paying the replacement vocal instructor out of the production budget.
**Concept Statement**

The musical *Into the Woods*, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Lapine, is a magical, imaginative adventure with a moral and political point of view. The title, *Into the Woods*, refers to the journey we must all take through the subconscious forest of the mind. It is the abstract fairy tale location that the characters must travel through in order to learn or grow, to obtain the things they most want, and to fulfill their deepest desires.

This bouncing musical score with its insightful lyrics will lead the audience on a journey or quest, into the darker side of fairy tales. The audience will join the characters as they explore the difficulties of achieving maturity, the complex relationship between parent and child, and ultimately the necessity of recognizing human interdependence. In this fairy tale world of witches, giants, and spells, the characters will trudge forward on their individual journeys to see their wishes come true. But, as we tag along with the characters, on this comedic farcical romp through the forest, the audience must never be allowed to forget the serious thematic underpinnings of the work.

As the plot begins to unfold, I see the childless Baker and his wife, desperately wishing to start a family, yet unable to due so because of the curse placed on the Baker’s family by a witch. They set off into the woods in hopes of ridding themselves of this evil spell. In these woods they will encounter Cinderella searching for her prince, Little Red Ridinghood trying to bring her Granny some goodies, the Wolf trying to get a meal, Jack the Giant Killer looking for adventure, Rapunzel attempting to escape the same witch, Rapunzel’s sadistic mother, and other fairy tale characters each on his or her individual journey through the forest, each struggling to have their wishes come true.
realization that we are all in need of each other, no man is an island. Only through the
trials and terrors of the maturity process, the “journey through the woods”, do we
hopefully recognize this need and our responsibility to love and take care of one another
in times of need. It is this necessity to unite as “one people” that makes us successful in
fighting our “modern day” giants.

The action of the play will take place in a magical fairy tale forest. This forest
could be any time period, but I will set it in a “modern youth fantasy forest”, a reflection
of the student body here at Kentlake High School, or any typical high school of today.
The characters will represent the inner conflicts and subcultures of modern day youth.
The narrator’s role will be one similar to the student body president, a representation of
the All-American, honor student subculture. He is focused on his future, assured of his
destination, his goals. He knows the “story” better than anyone else. He knows all the
rules. He will methodically and accurately tell the story and keep the characters moving
forward. The rest of characters will represent the other subcultures of this world: the
“Geeks”, the “Skaters”, the “Preps”, and the “Goths”. This concept will be an innovative
way to get a more active and positive interaction from the student body population that
makes up our audiences. It will also make the whole theatrical experience relevant to the
actors involved in this production.

In Act I, the “Woods” will be reminiscent of the childhood stories read to us by
our parents at bedtime, or the Disney movies we all fondly remember. It will be a place
to play, to explore, and to take risks; a place full of childhood innocence. Little by little
though, as the story moves forward, the signs of innocence will disappear. The story will
begin to seem a little off centered, like a picture needing straightening on a wall. Nothing
too disruptive in the natural order of things, but as the story progresses we begin to see things about those fairy tale stories that are not exactly as we remember them. The dust, on the old books that contain our memories of these tales, begins to blow off and we slowly see these stories in a brighter light.

Sondheim’s musical score will definitely help to perpetuate this dark feeling. Sondheim wrote this musical utilizing a slightly twisted off-beat rhythm, very similar to those found in current pop music trends of today. Through the music the audience will feel the unusual rhythms, hear the minor keys and sense the dark mood of the play as it progresses toward the climax. The forest will become more dark and frightening, foreshadowing the future events. By Act II, we will see the world of the play begin to outwardly show signs of society’s downward spiral leading toward more chaos and destruction. These characters represent a generation that is lost, without direction, for they will ultimately destroy the Narrator, which is the authority figure of their society. The forest continues to decay until there is very little left that even looks like the original woods of Act I. Colors will change and become darker, intense, and more sinister. The final scene will show the rebuilding or the initial repairing of the mistakes the characters have made. They will show their resolve to survive, to continue to plod onward deeper into the woods. But, they now begin to function as a unit, no longer as individuals. In the last scene we see they have lost the subculture titles and have finally learned to get along without fighting or blaming each other. They begin to move on and pick up the pieces of their shattered lives and stories, never forgetting all they have learned in the woods.
Kentlake high school students will be cast as the fairy tale characters for this musical; therefore, I see the play emerging as a reflection of that generation’s current social issues from the students’ viewpoint. In Act I, the familiar fairy tale characters are represented in the typical way, 19th Century Germanic peasant style costuming with the look of the Bruegal silhouette. The Cinderella story characters will be in 1830 costuming that is typical of this fairy-tale. But, I want to do it all with a twist. In Act II we can use modern fashion pieces, added to each character as the play progresses. These articles can be added to give the characters a youthful edge, typical of the modern music and fashion scenes. Little Red Ridinghood might have the “punk” look after her encounter with the Wolf and her loss of innocence. Her skirt might be shorter and her blouse unbuttoned; her hair taken down to hang loose and wild. She will need interesting punk style jewelry and her sensible shoes should be replaced with high black platform boots. Jack might change his look to the “skater”, or rebellious child, when not in the presence of his mother who wants him to remain a child forever. His hair could be spiked, or multicolored. He may wear his pants “sagging” low and he will need some expensive jewelry or “bling bling” to show his newly acquired wealth. The Baker and his wife are more representative of today’s adult population, not high school students. They should be modeled after the modern day urban couple struggling with issues of infertility, infidelity and pressures of the job. Their costumes do not change; they feel most comfortable in their regular business attire, they should also seem somewhat stuck in the past, their era. The other characters will also be given this modern touch to create an atmosphere of society as the audience we it today. This will help the audience better
identify with the characters and their problems and make the connection to their own “journey through life”.

The idea of the current world joining with the fantasy world will be evident in the props and costumes used. I envision a combination of fairy tale and modern props for example: The harp might be an electric guitar; the baker might have an electric appliance in his shop; other props might also be used for conveying the modern connection. I most definitely do not want the fairy tale look to be upstaged; these items will be very subtle and used sparingly; just enough to keep the production a little off the traditional.

In casting this musical I will be looking for talented singing voices as well as acting talent. The Baker and his wife will be the most important characters to fill as they should represent a middle aged couple. I will be looking for maturity as well as the vocal abilities needed to accurately represent these roles. Cinderella’s Prince and the Wolf must be a student that can portray the adult sexuality this role demands. I do see the need to keep the role of Wolf/Prince together for reasons that the Prince is a “wolf” when he is unfaithful to his wife Cinderella. I think the wolf costume could be worn by another student, while the Prince sings the part offstage. The Narrator will not be playing the part of the Mysterious Man; I will separate those roles to give another student an opportunity to be a part of this production. I realize Sondheim doubled these characters for reasons of establishing the themes of the characters, but in a school setting I need to give out as many roles as I can without doubling up on parts. I see the character of Jack as very innocent and naive, yet he is yearning for his independence from his mother. A younger student may be best for this part. Jack must also be a talented singer. The cow, Milky-White, should be played by a student in some kind of a cow costume to give the scenes
with Jack a human to pet relationship. The part of Jack’s mother will need to be played by a student who can pull off the age demands of this character. Little Red Ridinghood must be a good singer and be able to portray a young girl that can show a growth and maturity process. I believe that my students are more than ready for this challenge and will do a wonderful job. Casting will be difficult only because of the wonderful talent I know I already have at Kentlake.

Kentlake Performing Arts Center is a fully functioning “state of the art” theatre, built approximately eight years ago. It has a forty-foot high proscenium arch stage, complete with a fly system, orchestra pit, abundant lighting and sound equipment, and apron. The orchestra pit will have only a portion of the apron lid opened for this show and some acting surfaces may be utilized on both sides of that opening. This facility gives me the freedom to think and be creative on a large scale.

I envision the set for Into the Woods as having five to six main acting areas on stage with three different platforms that create levels, which help make scenes more interesting. The set design should be one in which the audience is transported back in time to remember their own childhood memories of fairy-tales being read to them at bedtime, of the joy and innocence of being a child. In Act II, the ugliness of what happens after “happily ever after” should be in great contrast of Act I and its simplicity, as we see only destruction and death all around. I want to somehow keep the theme or symbolism of the fairy-tale book, or pages from a book, as a consistent and repetitive design element. The giant is portrayed as wreaking havoc on the kingdom in Act II, so there must be some destruction represented in the forest. The set must be flexible enough to show the movement of the giant and the earth shaking aspects created by that
movement. The lobby should also reflect the atmosphere of a fairy tale wood or forest, which draws the audience into the world of the play even before they enter the house and take their seats. It might be a good idea to leave the house itself bare to give the audience a place of safety and security from the final action of the play.

Special effects will be created to enhance the magical feel of the play, the feeling of being on edge, not knowing what will happen next. Special effects might include the use of a fog machine to add to the magical forest effect and it would also give coverage for special effects that must be hidden from the audience. The extensive use of sound effects will be necessary for: the bird noises, the giant’s footsteps, and other required effects called for by the text. Microphones will be a must in order to amplify the actor’s voices over the live music produced by the orchestra.
## Kentlake High School Rehearsal Schedule: *Into the Woods*

**Production Dates:** December 3, 4, 5 & 6 and 10, 11, 12 & 13, 2003

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### Notes:
- **1st Day of School:** 2:45-5:00
- **Auditions:** 2:45-5:00
- **TECH & Production Meetings:**
  - #1: 9:00 – 3:00
  - #2: 9:00 – 5:00
  - #3: 9:00 – 5:00

### Rehearsal Details:
- **Music Rehearsals:** 9:00-5:00
- **Characterization Meetings:** 6:00
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**Kentlake High School... [FINAL] Rehearsal Schedule:**

**Into the Woods**

**New Production Dates:** December 3, and 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, & 14 2003

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Given Circumstances

The geographical location of *Into the Woods* is a magical fairy tale forest. It can be depicted as a literal forest or a dream sequence, or perhaps a forest of the mind. The forest in Act I will look like a literal forest: lush, green and fairy-tale like. Act II, however, evident destruction and ruin upon the land caused by the Giant’s Wife makes the forest appear barren...

The woods are representative of the transition between childhood and maturity. Whitaker and Wigley indicate that they believe that like adolescence, they are scary and filled with angst, emerging sexuality, self-discovery and definition, and even death. Sondheim created his woods to be threatening, scary, and perilous, yet a place where wishes can be fulfilled, but not without a cost and a consequence. The woods in Act I are much more inviting and fairy-tale like than in Act II, where they reveal reality and the destruction resulting from society’s lost values and moral decay.

As for climate, I am setting it in “fairy tale climate”, a climate that will change with the mood of the script. In the beginning of Act I it appears to be a lovely, crisp, late summer, early fall day. Cinderella wants to go to the Festival at the castle being held by the Prince. It is somewhat chilly as she runs into the forest to ask for her wish at the grave of her mother. The costumes will help to set this feeling in that Cinderella will be wearing a light wrap, as will all of the characters before they venture out of their homes on their journey into the woods. The Baker’s wife uses the excuse that he has forgotten his scarf as she follows him into the woods. The climate will remain the same throughout Act I. Three days pass in Act I. The characters are all in the woods during the night, and during the daylight hours. A late summer storm might be suggested by the way the
Witch may command a bit of lightning in her Rap song about the curse, and at other times for dramatic effect. There are no actual weather related storms to speak of, but when giants fall down from the sky, and step on people and destroy their homes and villages, that constitutes the “storm” we wish to reveal in this musical. Another reason for the production to be set in early fall is to give credence to the falling leaves concept, (the pages of books) in Act II, that will occur on stage when disaster strikes.

In determining the economic and political environment, I have reasoned that due to the character of the Prince, and his brother, there must be or have been a King and a perhaps a Queen at some point in this time period. The original fairy tales collected and written by the Brothers Grimm in the early 1800’s, depicted the German landscape being farmed by serfs or peasants and wealthy landlords ruled under a superior ruler, a King. Class structure is revealed with the Baker’s wife and the Prince when the Prince refers to her as a peasant. The characters all show their respect to the royal family in their physical gestures of bowing and curtseying and their dialogue about the royal family.

There are four different fairy tales combined to create this story and they are all in different time periods. Jack and the Beanstalk is the only English folktale used, the others are all of German origin. Sondheim and Lapine’s plan was to combine them all into one kingdom, with all of these stories living in it in the same time period, with the same King. The characters refer to the Princes and the castle throughout the script. The upper-class is represented by the evil Stepmother and her children and husband. It is obvious that the ruling powers that be are painfully not available, even non-existent, as they are caught leaving, or running away to hide, when the villager’s most need their leadership and protection in Act II.
The social environment is the key to the plot of *Into the Woods*. The characters are divided into class structures, but never the less are shown to possess similar problems or dilemmas that life brings to all. They are in many ways equal or at least they are all representative of all human beings. Everyone is emotionally on the same playing field.

The middle-class is represented by the main characters: the Baker and his wife. They own a bakery, which would place them slightly above poverty level, compared to a servant or a slave. In the first act we see the upper class, Stepmother, sisters and father, all going to the ball. The Steward and his treatment of the peasants is another indicator of class structure. Class status is referred to in Act II by the prince as he has the affair with a peasant, but as they all fall under attack from the giant, class structure does not seem to matter any more, just survival of the fittest. All class structure is ignored when they must all learn to ban together in order to fight the giant as a community. This raises the question of why we value certain classes or cliques when in the end it really does not matter. This is similar to the typical high school groups or cliques. Are they really necessary for survival? What purpose do these groups serve? Does everyone belong to a certain group? Can you move from one group to another?

The audience sees how religion affects and guides the characters in the way their morals, or belief systems, lead them through the woods. It is not an obvious denominational statement in one way or another, but the audience is free to, and encouraged to, insert their own values into the theme of the play. Fairytales and parables have been used extensively throughout time as tools to guide mankind through the maturity process. They gave us answers to the deepest questions about life, and they
helped us to transition from childhood to adult society and the pressures therein. In reading Ruskin’s views on fairy tales he reminds us that:

Fairy stories...cannot be removed altogether from their sphere of religious faith, since in them: “the good spirit descends gradually from an angel into a fairy, and the demons shrink into a playful grotesque of diminutive malevolence.” For Ruskin what is expressed most strongly in fairy tales is a world of angels and demons, a world of energies that transcend familial conflicts, and that offer irrational solutions to the sorrows of “growing up.” (Giradot 278)

In light of this musical being a combination of these types of stories, the religious aspect becomes evident.

The themes and morals of original fairy tales, collected around 1806, by the Brothers Grimm, seem to have placed more emphasis on the values of the working class. Eugene Weber, in his study of the reality of folktales, writes about how these stories reflect the values of the working world:

The work ethos is accepted by everybody, though not for everybody, since high birth, or success, or beatitude bring escape from labor. Hierarchy-social or supernatural – is affirmed by power and mitigated by luck. Folk wisdom and official values approve of reward and retribution, but experience, in which the relation between cause and effect remains unclear suggests that many explanations are supernatural and that resignation is the ultimate wisdom. (Weber 109)

There is some reference to “Original Sin” and the consequences of bad choices, but nothing formally directing each character’s spiritual life. The witch brings the element of
the supernatural, as do the birds and all of the other “magical” characters. Sondheim tries to give his own interpretation of the moral values he believes society needs by using these folktales that we used to teach this concept throughout history. The true religious aspect of this show might be found in the community aspect, love one another and take care of one another.

The political environment suggested by Sondheim is one of “social conscience”. Sondheim stresses community responsibility. The witch sings, “Children Will Listen”, in order to impart her experience with her daughter Rapunzel. He also tries to show us that villainy exists even among the poor, and the powerful are often objects of aspiration. There is always corruption of the powerful…that is to be expected.
Previous Action

Into the Woods reveals the action that takes place before the play by using the Narrator to tell, or refresh the audience’s memory, as to the old familiar fairy tales and their plot lines. He begins with “Once upon a time…” as most fairy tales begin, and retells each of the four stories in the musical

Beginning with “Cinderella”, he talks as she sings to the audience about her “wish”. She wants, more than anything in life, to go to the festival. Her evil Stepmother and two evil stepsisters’ are jealous of her beauty and scheme to prevent her wish from coming true. Cinderella’s real mother had died and her father had remarried this evil woman who made a servant out of Cinderella.

The Narrator goes on to reveal the Baker and his Wife’s wish, to have a child. This is the story of “Rapunzel”. An evil Witch punished the Baker’s father for stealing her greens in her garden to give to the Baker’s mother who was pregnant with Rapunzel, the sister the Baker has never known. For punishment, the Witch took the baby from the Baker’s father and mother and raised her as her own child high up in a tower to protect her from the world.

The Narrator then tells the story of “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Jack is a young boy with a best friend, a cow named Milky-White. He lives with his overprotective Mother who belittles him and makes him sell his cow for food. Jack apparently doesn’t have a father around the house and his mother is very abusive. He finds the beanstalk that has grown up into the heavens and climbs it to get the hen that lays golden eggs and the harp of gold that plays the most beautiful music. He has to kill the giant by chopping down the beanstalk and that makes the giant’s wife seek revenge upon the land.
This is the previous action of the play as is told to the audience by the Narrator. He continues to tell bits and pieces throughout the play to keep the stories separated and to keep the audience straight about the plot sequence. It is this character’s job to remind us of the old familiar fairy tales we were told as children.
Analysis of Dialogue

The word choices used by Sondheim and Lapine in the musical *Into the Woods*, are deceptively simple. The stories are from our childhood memories. These familiar stories are easy to understand and simple to perform. The language is meant to be suitable for all audiences and all people. Both lyrics and music express the stylistic purity of the fairy tale libretto and much of the score has a lively nursery rhyme quality. As Sondheim reveals:

> What I am trying to do with the score is to sprinkle it with ditties; I’m trying to do little sixteen-, thirty-two, and eight-bar tunes, almost cartoonish except in a sort of contemporary style of morals and traveling songs. And these little tunes start to go strange in the second act. You see, the first act is fast and funny and light and the second act is less goofy and a bit darker, so I would like the score to reflect that. (Gordon 306)

Sondheim uses simplicity in his words and music to draw his audience into this world of fairy tale innocence. As the words ring familiar, the audience can relax and completely join into the journey through the woods.

Sondheim’s use of comedy furthers the simplistic and relaxed atmosphere of his musical. Each of the major characters needs to enter the dark entangled wood of their inner desires and journey through an elemental rite of passage; Little Red Ridinghood, who skips blithely into the woods, blissfully stuffing buns into her mouth, must learn the thrills and terrors of indulgence. Sondheim and Lapine combine an innocence and innuendo in each encounter between the Wolf and his plump young prey that is both
extremely funny and unexpectedly poignant. There is a wonderfully lascivious song for
the leering Wolf as he entreats the succulent young girl:

Hello, little girl,

What’s your rush?

You’re missing all the flowers.

The sun won’t set for hours,

Take your time. (Sondheim 29)

Here the comedy is perfectly tailored to character and action. It is the perfect
synthesis of humor and insight. His characters learn, but even with experience do not
lose their ambivalence; as reflected in the following line: “Isn’t it nice to know a lot!
and a little bit not…” (Sondheim 48).

Pacing of the dialogue and the lyrics is extremely important in this musical. It has
to go fast and remain fluid. Sondheim wrote tunes that would lend the score a child like
quality written with “a lot of rhythmic propulsion to try to keep a bounce going”
(Kakutani 2). The journey is moving us along into and through the woods at a fast pace.
It is this driving force that requires short sentences and fast paced word groupings.

Images created are clearly fairy tale or folk tale simplistic. Mr. Lapine took
existing tales and merged them mainly by interpolating the blank spaces in their plots.
He began charting the story lines of various tales to see which ones might conceivably
converge, and that is how Act I was created. In addition to recapitulating the action of
several familiar fairy tales, he mapped out a network of beguiling new connections: the
princes who marry Rapunzel and Cinderella, for instance, turned out to be brothers (who
later romance Snow White and Sleeping Beauty), and the wolf who threatens the Three Little Pigs was revealed to be a relative of the wolf who threatens Little Red Ridinghood.

One of the wonderful things about fairy tales, Mr. Lapine says, is that they allow everyone “to invent their own meaning” (Kakutani 5). He recalls reading somewhere the notion that the reason fairy tales have stayed around for so long is that every generation reads them and comes up with its own interpretations to answer its own needs. In a way, that is what this musical is all about.
## Analysis of Dramatic Action: Act I of *Into the Woods*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Beats</th>
<th>Beat Lines</th>
<th>Beat Titles</th>
<th>Beat Action</th>
<th>Beat Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beat 1 Lines 1-32</td>
<td>“Once upon a time…” to “I wish…”</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>The narrator begins with, “Once upon a time…” and he tells the audience to think back to their childhood memories of three famous fairy tales- Cinderella, Jack and the beanstalk, and the newest story of the Baker and his Wife. He then also introduces Little Red Ridinghood.</td>
<td>To begin each Of the three Stories. To introduce Each fairy tale Character and Remind the Audience of Each familiar Story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beat 2 Lines 1-15</td>
<td>“You wish to go to the festival?”… to “All three were beautiful, but vile and black of heart.”</td>
<td>Beat # 2= Put Down</td>
<td>Narrator tell story…. As wicked Stepmother enters and begins to belittle Cinderella for wanting to go to the festival; Stepsisters join in on the attack.</td>
<td>(always moving ahead) Stepsisters’ To tease, to attack, and to berate Cinderella.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beat 3 Lines 1-6</td>
<td>“Jack, on the other hand, had no Father, and his Mother…”</td>
<td>Bad Cow</td>
<td>Jack’s mother enters and scolds Jack about his pet cow that does not give milk.</td>
<td>To scold Jack And to belittle His intelligence, Or lack thereof.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beat 4 Lines 1-2</td>
<td>“Why, come in little girl…”</td>
<td>Loaf of Bread</td>
<td>Little Red Ridinghood enters Bakery to get the Baker to give her a loaf of bread to take to her Grandma in the woods.</td>
<td>To persuade The baker to Hand over a Loaf of bread.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beat 5 Lines 1-9</td>
<td>“Cinderella’s Stepmother had a surprise for her…”</td>
<td>Lentil Surprise</td>
<td>Cinderella’s Stepmother empties a pot of lentils into the fireplace ashes and tells her if she can pick them out in two hours time, she can go with the family to the festival.</td>
<td>To challenge Cinderella, To do the impossible To set her up for failure, to continue to belittle and harass.</td>
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<td>Beat</td>
<td>Lines</td>
<td>Scene/Line</td>
<td>Character/Event</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>Listen well, son. Milky White must be taken to market...</td>
<td>No More Cow</td>
<td>To explain why the cow must go to market. Jack’s Mother insists Jack take the cow to market. The cow is Jack’s best friend and he puts up a fight to keep her/him.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Into the Woods...</td>
<td>Into the Woods</td>
<td>Little Red Ridinghood goes out of the bakery and begins her journey towards Grandmother’s house.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1-16</td>
<td>Fly birds...</td>
<td>The Twist</td>
<td>The Stepsisters demand that Cinderella do their fix a dress and mend a dress. Cinderella’s birds helped with her lentil task and then fly away.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1-17</td>
<td>Because the Baker had lost his Mother in a baking accident....</td>
<td>The Witch’s Bean Wrap</td>
<td>The witch comes to the bakery and is introduced—her story is told by her song. She is intimidating and powerful! magic happens!</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>Now listen to me, Jack...</td>
<td>Jack’s Head in a Sack</td>
<td>Jack’s mother tells him to take his beloved friend, Milky White, to market to sell the cow to get money to buy them food. She is disappointed in her son and thinks he is slow and a perpetual dreamer.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>You wish to have the curse reversed?...</td>
<td>Curse Reversed</td>
<td>The witch explains the process that the baker and his wife must go through in order to remove the original curse on their house.</td>
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- **Beat 6**: Lines 1-7: Listen well, son. Milky White must be taken to market... No More Cow. Jack’s Mother insists Jack take the cow to market. The cow is Jack’s best friend and he puts up a fight to keep her/him. To explain why the cow must go to market. To ridicule Jack’s lack of intelligence.

- **Beat 7**: Lines 1-6: Into the Woods... Little Red Ridinghood goes out of the bakery and begins her journey towards Grandmother’s house, in the woods. To begin to go into the woods to Grandmother’s house. To journey, to eat.

- **Beat 8**: Lines 1-16: Fly birds... The Stepsisters demand that Cinderella do their fix a dress and mend a dress. Cinderella’s birds helped with her lentil task and then fly away. To demand Cinderella, to fix a dress—and comb their hair. To attack each other’s choice of dress, hair, etc. To out do one another.

- **Beat 9**: Lines 1-17: Because the Baker had lost his Mother in a baking accident.... The Witch’s Bean Wrap. The witch comes to the bakery and is introduced—her story is told by her song. She is intimidating and powerful! magic happens! To explain her characters’ role in the story. To demonstrate power. To intimidate and cause fear. To expound on the story details, rapidly.

- **Beat 10**: Lines 1-9: Now listen to me, Jack... A piggy Jack’s Head in a Sack. Jack’s mother tells him to take his beloved friend, Milky White, to market to sell the cow to get money to buy them food. She is disappointed in her son and thinks he is slow and a perpetual dreamer. To give instruction. To scold. To express Disappointment. To give up a pet/loved. To take the cow to Market. To feed the family.

- **Beat 11**: Line 1: You wish to have the curse reversed?... Go to the wood Curse Reversed. The witch explains the process that the baker and his wife must go through in order to remove the original curse on their house. To explain To make a list of items needed to reverse a curse To send them into the woods to guarantee a child for their efforts.
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<th>Beat</th>
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<td><strong>Beat 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lines 1-6</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ladies our carriage awaits....”</strong></td>
<td><strong>Look what I found in father’s hunting jacket.”</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cinderella had planted a branch at the grave of her mother...”</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quiet, silence everywhere, Milky White. Not to my liking...”</strong></td>
<td><strong>No Festival for You</strong></td>
<td><strong>Baker and Beans</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mother Tree Visit</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jack and Milky White</strong></td>
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<td><strong>&quot;I wish&quot;</strong></td>
<td><strong>&quot;And so, the baker, reluctantly set off to meet the enchantresses demands.”</strong></td>
<td><strong>&quot;I’m off to get my wish.”</strong></td>
<td><strong>&quot;Come along, Milky White. There are spirits here...”</strong></td>
<td><strong>The family members are all leaving for the festival. Cinderella shows her stepmother the pot of lentils... she still denied! The family leaves her at home and goes off the festival in their carriage.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The baker puts on his father’s old hunting jacket and finds the witches six beans. He tells his wife that he is going alone... the spell is on his house so he must go alone to reverse this curse.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cinderella visits the tree where the spirit of her departed mother resides. She asks her for help. Granting her a wish- a gown to go to the festival in. the mother tree reminds her to be careful what she wishes for.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jack and milky white meet the mysterious man in the woods. The man tells jack that he would be lucky to exchange the cow for beans.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>To go back on a promise to lie</strong></td>
<td><strong>To find the magic beans</strong></td>
<td><strong>To seek help</strong></td>
<td><strong>To meet the mysterious Man</strong></td>
<td><strong>To feel rejection</strong></td>
<td><strong>To set off alone into the Woods</strong></td>
<td><strong>To be comforted</strong></td>
<td><strong>To prod jack along</strong></td>
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<td><strong>To feel belittled</strong></td>
<td><strong>To remember the four items that must be obtained</strong></td>
<td><strong>To get your wishes</strong></td>
<td><strong>To introduce mysterious Man character to the plot</strong></td>
<td><strong>To feel unloved and unwanted</strong></td>
<td><strong>To be controlling of the wife</strong></td>
<td><strong>To make things right</strong></td>
<td><strong>To set up the thought in Jack head about taking Beans for his cow</strong></td>
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<td><strong>To feel unloved and unwanted</strong></td>
<td><strong>To do what the witch Told them to do.</strong></td>
<td><strong>To seek, to learn, To make, to go</strong></td>
<td><strong>And the audience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Get the four objects.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Get the four objects.</strong></td>
<td><strong>To: see, sell, get, bring. Make, lift, go...”</strong></td>
<td><strong>&quot;then home before dark!”</strong></td>
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<td>Beat</td>
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<td>Character Action</td>
<td>Note</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Good day, young lady....&quot;</td>
<td>The Wolf</td>
<td>To introduce character Of the wolf</td>
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<td>1-16</td>
<td>&quot;Is harm to come to the little girl in the red cape....&quot;</td>
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<td>To become hungry</td>
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<td>To become leery</td>
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<td>To inspect future food</td>
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<td>To stray from all your Mother taught you</td>
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<td>To loose innocence</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Forget that little girl, and get me the cape!....&quot;</td>
<td>Take the Cape</td>
<td>To steal the cape.</td>
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<td>1-10</td>
<td>&quot;Get me what I need, get me what I need!!!&quot;</td>
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<td>To do something</td>
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<td>Against his values</td>
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<td>To remind the baker of</td>
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<td>His goal</td>
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<td>To teach how to steal</td>
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<td>Adam and Eve-</td>
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<td>&quot;This is ridiculous. I'll never get that red cape, nor find a golden cow, or a yellow slipper- or was it a golden slipper and a yellow cow. Oh no.&quot;</td>
<td>Good Bye Old Pal</td>
<td>To join together</td>
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<td>1-43</td>
<td>&quot;It won't be on a plate.&quot;</td>
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<td>To get the cow</td>
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<td>To trick the lad</td>
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<td>To trade the beans for</td>
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<td>To work as a team and</td>
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<td>See its value</td>
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</table>
| 2 | Beat 6 | "Take the cow and go home!"  
"Take the cow and go home. I will carry this out in my own fashion..." | Justifying the Beans | The baker tells his wife to take the cow and go home, but she tells him to wake up and except the fact that he needs her-they must work as a team. She also convinces him that it doesn't matter what they have to do if in the end- they get what they want- a child. The baker is not ready to act as a team- he sends her home. | To control his wife  
To disobey him  
To reevaluate your goals  
To recognize what it will require to obtain Your goals  
To question wife's Decision choice  
Adam and Eve- apple |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Beat 7 Lines 1-17 | "And so the baker continued his search for the cape as red as blood..."  
"Exemplary... unh... (witch climbs hair.)" | Our Little World | After hearing Rapunzel's singing, the witch goes to the tower to see her child. They sing "Our little world," which tells of the lonely life Rapunzel leads and the witch's reasons for keeping her locked up. The witch thinks she is protecting her, by doing so. Keeping her from the evil world. | To explain of reason out  
Why someone does something to another  
To keep hidden from danger  
To justify questionable behavior |
| 2 | Beat 8 Line 1 | "As for Rapunzel!"  
"I will stand before her window and ask her to let her hair down to me." | Rapunzel Revealed | As the witch leaves, a prince is lurking in the wood and vows to get into the tower to see her. | To learn the maidens name  
To learn how to enter the Tower  
To express a strong Desire to visit Rapunzel |
| 2 | Beat 9 Lines 1-15 | "Hello there little one..."  
"I'd rather a wolf then you any day." | Get the Cape | Little red riding-hood meets up with the baker in the woods. He tries to get her red cape, but she doesn't let him. He struggles with what is right and wrong. | To reason with little red Riding-hood  
To get the cape  
To do what is right  
To what is necessary  
To justify a wrong |
| 2 | Beat 10 Lines 1-2 | "If you know what you want..."  
"And so the baker...." | Who Needs the Cape More? | The baker struggles with his conscience about trying to steal little reds cloak. He is trying to rationalize his actions. | To rationalize  
To reassure  
To reaffirm his goals |
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<th>Beat</th>
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<td>1-46</td>
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<td>“Oh dear, how uneasy I feel…”</td>
<td>“And so the baker…”</td>
<td>“Are you alright, Miss?”</td>
<td>“One midnight gone…”</td>
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<td>“Thank you”</td>
<td>“Little did they know…”</td>
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<td>“Into the woods, then out of the woods and home before…”</td>
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<td>Granny’s House goes to her granny’s house and the wolf, waiting in granny’s bed for Little Red, eats her along with granny. The baker comes along and discovers this crime - cuts open the wolf’s belly and retrieves both. Little Red tells the audience about her experiences and what she learns from is the experience.</td>
<td>To Bed Without Supper! Jack’s mother scolds him for bringing home beans instead of cash for the cow milky white. She sends him to bed without supper. The beans grow into an enormous beanstalk.</td>
<td>I Need Those Shoes The baker’s wife meets Cinderella in the woods. They talk about the festival and the princes and the baker’s wife discovers the golden shoes, on Cinderella’s feet, that she needs to reverse the curse.</td>
<td>One Midnight Gone One by one, each of the characters appears moving through the woods, giving a run down of what each has accomplished to this point. It is exposition that informs the audience as to what has been learned to this point in their journeys.</td>
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<td>To visit granny To be suspicious To be eaten To be rescued To rescue To learn lessons To be appreciative To change</td>
<td>To scold To ridicule To belittle To plead To punish</td>
<td>To help To enquire To learn To discover To want/desire To weigh options To hide To seed To ask for assistance</td>
<td>To reflect To learn To give details To explain To understand To continue on with the journey To get it over with so as To return home.</td>
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<td>Beat</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“There are giant’s in the sky…”</td>
<td>Giants in the Sky</td>
<td>To reflect on past Experiences</td>
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<td>“Wait... I didn’t say-“</td>
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<td>To tell audiences about Experiences in the giants World</td>
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<td>Exposition-jack comes back from visiting the giant’s land and tells the audience about what he has learned and done. He then wakes up the baker and wants to buy milky white back. He goes back to the land of the giant to get even more riches.</td>
<td>To learn, to know To refocus priorities To be free To buy back a friend To go back for more Money</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>“But could you buy yourself a child?”</td>
<td>No More Money</td>
<td>To teach To force To learn To take the money To get angry To miss the point To put material Possessions before a Child.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>“Come back here! Damn, Give me back-“</td>
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<td>Mysterious man enters and forces the baker to think about the “prince”, or sacrifice it will take to have a child. He takes the gold away to force the baker to re-evaluate his cause, his quest, and his desire to have a child.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“What are you doing here now?…”</td>
<td>Family Feud</td>
<td>To compare To accuse To scold To blame To question To conjure up excuses To remind To refocus on objective</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1-16</td>
<td>“… deliver the items or you’ll wish you never thought to have a child.”</td>
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<td>Baker and his wife meet in the woods. They discuss the progress each has had finding the items, and they fight about who has not done enough or made mistakes. The witch enters and reminds them that time is running out- get busy!</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Ah, there you are good brother…”</td>
<td>Agony</td>
<td>To seek To rationalize To compete To compare To agonize To resolve</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-35</td>
<td>“I must have her to wife.”</td>
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<td>The 2 princes meet in the woods- Cinderella’s prince is chasing her and Rapunzel’s prince is trying to free her from the tower. Both are competing against each other’s dilemmas and the agony the game brings.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Two Princes, each more handsome than the other.”</td>
<td>Stay on Track</td>
<td>To listen To stay on task To continue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Line 1</td>
<td>“No Get the hair”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beat</td>
<td>Lines</td>
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<td>Action 1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;Excuse me, young woman. Have you encountered a boy with carrot-top hair and a sunny though occasionally vague, disposition, answering to the name of Jack?&quot;</td>
<td>Where’s Jack?</td>
<td>Jack’s mother questions the baker’s wife as to the whereabouts of her missing son, Jack.</td>
<td>To seek To find To question To affirm To teach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>&quot;Jack...! Jack...!&quot;</td>
<td>Found Cow?</td>
<td>The baker finds the cow with the help of the mysterious man.</td>
<td>To search for To question To wonder</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;moo...moo...&quot;</td>
<td>Stay Out Of This, Old Man</td>
<td>The witch comes upon the mysterious man in the woods and warns him to stay out of her way.</td>
<td>To question To discover To warn To grant a wish</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>&quot;hello&quot;</td>
<td>THE HAIR!! As Yellow as Corn</td>
<td>The baker’s wife tricks Rapunzel into giving up some of her hair to get the third item to reverse the curse.</td>
<td>To trick To steal To cause pain To feel duped To ask for forgiveness</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;What are you doing?&quot;</td>
<td>Second Shoe Chance</td>
<td>The baker’s wife meets up again with Cinderella in the woods and tries to get the golden slipper from her. As she finally gets the slipper, the Steward scares Cinderella away.</td>
<td>To explain To confirm To get information To recall To be opinionated To be interrupted To run away</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>&quot;You’ve caused enough trouble. Keep out of my path.&quot;</td>
<td>Where Did She Go?</td>
<td>The Steward questions the baker’s wife and she points them off into the other direction.</td>
<td>To question To seek To follow To lead To explain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beat 13 Lines 1-6</td>
<td>“Where did he go” “Please let me just me compare this color with that of your own.”</td>
<td>Cow Molestiation</td>
<td>The stepmother and stepsisters of Cinderella are in the woods searching for the prince. They meet the baker and he tries to compare the corn to their hair.</td>
<td>To question To seek To explain To compare To search</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beat 14 Lines 1-18</td>
<td>“I thought you were returning home?” “It takes two”</td>
<td>It Takes Two</td>
<td>The baker meets up with his wife again and they compare each other’s success on getting the four items. Now they have three of the four items. They agree that they have worked well with each other. The baker admits he was wrong about trying to do it alone. It really did take the both of them working as a team.</td>
<td>To question To compare To rejoice To agree To change To understand To accept To comprehend To complement To become aware of the Dependence upon Another individual To continue on</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beat 15 Lines 1-19</td>
<td>“Stop her, stop that hen.” “TWO”</td>
<td>To Buy Back His Cow</td>
<td>Jack returns from the giant’s house with gold to buy back his beloved Milky White from the Baker. The baker takes the gold yet does not have the cow. The baker’s wife returns with the cow, but the cow dies. Jack runs off heart broken.</td>
<td>To buy back To pay To retrieve To promise To clarify To question To clear up To be greedy To grieve a loss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beat 16 Lines 1-18</td>
<td>“Two midnights gone”</td>
<td>Two Midnights Gone</td>
<td>This song is a chance for the audience to catch up on all of the events that have happened so far. Each character reveals the lessons they have learned thus far in their individual journeys. They all feel the pressure of time running out!</td>
<td>To summarize To evaluate To ponder To preach To rationalize To reflect To understand To move ahead</td>
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<td>Beat</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>&quot;Two midnights gone and the exhausted baker and his wife buried the dead Milky White&quot;&lt;br&gt;“Fine, fine, that’s simply fine.”</td>
<td>To bury&lt;br&gt;To think&lt;br&gt;To reconcile&lt;br&gt;To argue&lt;br&gt;To disagree&lt;br&gt;To go your own way</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1-20</td>
<td>&quot;Unfortunately for Rapunzel…”&lt;br&gt;&quot;NO! NO!&quot;</td>
<td>To punish&lt;br&gt;To chastise&lt;br&gt;To question&lt;br&gt;To warn&lt;br&gt;To beg&lt;br&gt;To force&lt;br&gt;To belittle&lt;br&gt;To banish</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>&quot;When is a white cow not a white cow?&quot;&lt;br&gt;&quot;In need of another cow?&quot;</td>
<td>To question&lt;br&gt;To push away&lt;br&gt;To help&lt;br&gt;To make amends</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1-13</td>
<td>&quot;What a beautiful cape!&quot;&lt;br&gt;&quot;I am not a liar! I’ll get that harp. You’ll see!&quot;</td>
<td>To compare&lt;br&gt;To brag&lt;br&gt;To evoke jealousy&lt;br&gt;To accuse&lt;br&gt;To challenge&lt;br&gt;To meet the challenge</td>
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"Fine, fine, that's simply fine."
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Beat 5 Lines</th>
<th>Beat 6 Lines</th>
<th>Beat 7 Lines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“After having cast out Rapunzel to a remote desert, the witch returned to take the prince by surprise...” “As for Cinderella she returned from her final visit to the festival.” “And you’ve learned something, too. Something you never knew, on the steps of the palace.”</td>
<td>“Don’t come any closer to me!”</td>
<td>“Who was that woman?” “Give her the slippers and all will...”</td>
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<td>Steps of the Palace</td>
<td>Give Up the Other Shoe.</td>
<td>It’s My Shoe!</td>
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<td>Cinderella finishes her last of the three visits to the festival. She reflects on all she has learned. She tells how the prince spread pitch on the stairs to trap her. She has finally decided that he must really love her. She still decides not to decide, but leaves it up to him to find her with the shoe she left as a clue.</td>
<td>Baker’s wife meets up again with Cinderella. She is accused of attacking her. The baker’s wife explains her reasoning. Cinderella does not understand, but is tricking into giving up her shoe to be able to run faster from the prince.</td>
<td>The steward finds the baker’s wife with the shoe and demands it for himself. The baker shows up and he and his wife struggle for the shoe with the steward. Mysterious man enters and tries to help in the struggle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beat</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>1-14</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>“The corn! The corn!” “He’s dead!”</td>
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<td>1-18</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“And so the mysterious man dies, having help and the curse on his house. For the baker, there would be no reunion with his father, and he and his wife, now bewildered, returned home.”</td>
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<td>1-20</td>
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"No blood at all within the shoe. This is the proper bride for you, fit to attend a prince."
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<tr>
<th>Beat 2</th>
<th>Lines 1-9</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Beat 3</th>
<th>Lines 1-7</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Witch/Rapunzel/Priune Reunion</td>
<td>Rapunzel, her twins and her prince unite with the witch. Rapunzel doesn't recognize her youthful, beautiful mother. But, when she does, she resolves to stay far away from her. Rapunzel now speaks for herself.</td>
<td>The Wedding</td>
<td>The wedding of the prince and Cinderella. Losing their sight punishes the stepsisters. The wedding is happy and the baker's wife thanks Cinderella for the shoe, she is obviously now pregnant. Everyone got his or her wish?</td>
<td>To reunite To renew love To surprise To forget To resolve to stand Strong To stand by your mate</td>
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<td>“And finally, as for Rapunzel, she bore twins, and lived impoverished in the desert until the day her prince, wandering aimlessly, heard a voice so familiar that he went towards it…”</td>
<td>“As is often the way in these tales, in exchange for her youth and beauty, the witch lost her power over others.”</td>
<td>“When the wedding with the prince was celebrated, Lucinda and Florinda attended wishing to win favor with Cinderella and share in her good fortune.”</td>
<td>“I didn’t think I could be so happy!…”</td>
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<td>1-32</td>
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<td>1-18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1-18</td>
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| “And to came to pass, all that seemed wrong was now right, the kingdoms were filled with joy, and those who deserve to were certain to live a long and happy life.” | Happy Ever After | They all come together to sing and dance the finale of Act 1. A celebration, a relief that the journey is over; the prize is won. | To celebrate To reflect To evaluate To rejoice To feel proud of Accomplishments To get the wish |
| “Had we used out common sense, been worthy of our discontents…” | “To be happy, and forever, you must see your wish come true.” | To Be Happy | Happiness comes when you see your wishes come true. It is worth all the danger, and fear. You may encounter wolves, loose your path, or be afraid. Keep going, don’t stop! Go into the woods to life the spell, lose the longing, have the child, wed the prince, get the money, save the house, kill the wolf, find the father, conquer the kingdom, etc. -And happy ever after! | To confirm To rejoice To reflect To be thankful |
Character Analysis

The main or central characters in the musical, Into the Woods, are the Baker and his wife, Cinderella, Red Ridinghood, and the Witch. As these characters reveal themselves to the audience, they all seem to be in search of something that will make their lives whole. The middle class Baker and his wife represent the majority of the audience members in that they represent the typical hard working American couple in search of the American dream, yet unable to create offspring that will make their union complete.

The style of this musical is revealed through the desires or wishes of the main characters. The musical begins with the first wish coming from Cinderella, to go to the festival. The second wish is from the boy Jack, that his cow would give milk so he would not lose his best friend, the cow. Jack’s mother in turn wishes her son were not a fool. The third wish comes from the Baker and his wife, to have a child. This wish is the catalyst that eventually intersects all of the character’s journeys. The fourth wish is from Little Red Ridinghood, to obtain bakery goodies to take to her sick grandmother, even though she eats most of the goodies on her journey. And the last wish comes from the Witch, who wishes, in a round about way, for the Baker and his wife to get their wish. She has them do her bidding and hunt down the four items she needs for her wish, which is to be young and beautiful again. In return for their work, she will lift the curse. And so, their journeys all lead them toward stark reality of what really happens after happily ever after.

Of all of the main characters the Baker and his wife have the most compelling desire, or “wish”, which is to have a child. The Witch tells them the whole story about
need for love, understanding, and cooperation (Gordon 312). He is the central character in that he has a reversal in the end of Act II and comes to realize his mistakes and makes a change, which affects all of the other characters. His final acceptance of this responsibility results in his change of attitude. As a leader of a family, community, and, as a single father; he is resolved to continue on in life, no matter what may come.

His moral stance consists of his high values of which he has a difficult time compromising. He knows that the goal is to retrieve the four items to appease the witch and get the curse reversed, but he has a hard time doing the unethical tasks required to achieve that goal. Things like lying, cheating and stealing are against his nature. He wrestles with his conscious every time a choice must be made, until he is convinced by his wife:

If the end’s in sight,

You’ll realize:

If the end is right,

It justifies

The beans! (Sondheim 38)

The Baker’s wife is the character of the play that is the driving force behind his path to change. His wife is the level-headed character of the play who does all of the thinking for the family and later in Act II for the community in crisis. She is headstrong, an independent thinker, and wise in a practical way. There is much effort on her part to work with him and be the strong support for him, yet she does not openly take the credit for their successes. She follows him into the woods to make sure he gets the job done, but even then she tries not to take over the leadership role of their family. The goal of
having a child is always in sight and keeps her on track. When he chastises her for following him into the woods she replies “You forgot your scarf”. “I wish to help” (Sondheim 32).

The Baker admits to the rest of the characters in the end, after learning of his wife’s death, that he was absolutely nothing without her. He tells how she did everything; he just followed along, did what she told him to do, and then took all of the credit for their success. The reality of her death completely unravels his courage. His lack coping skills is obvious. He runs away from his child and the leadership he now faces in the surviving community. As he runs away form this burden, he says to Cinderella: “My child will be happier in the arms of a Princess...” (Sondheim 170).

The thought of having to make all the decisions on his own is too much for him to handle. There is much anger aimed toward his wife for leaving him with this undesirable responsibility of raising a child on his own. The Baker sums up his feeling of inadequacy in Act II when he says to the small group left in the wake of the giant’s destruction, “You don’t understand. My wife was the one who really helped. I depended on her for everything” (Sondheim 170).

Back in the woods, he is visited by his dearly, departed father. The father sings a song with the Baker about running away and how it did not solve his problems. The father tells him about the heartbreaking disappointment he will cause if he runs from his responsibilities as he did long ago. The Baker is left to ponder the advice he has received and the audience witnesses the change in his attitude when he sings:

No more giants,

Waging war.
That was always their advice.

So be nice, Cinderella

Good, Cinderella,

Nice good good nice_

What’s the good of being good

If everyone is blind

And you’re always left behind?

Never mind Cinderella —

Kind Cinderella —

Nice good nice —

Kind good nice — “(Sondheim 11).

When Cinderella finally does make a choice and ride off to live happily ever after
with her Prince, she finds out that he is unable to commit to keeping their marriage bed
sacred. She is heart broken and begins to wish for what she had back at home, even
though it was horrible. She says farewell to her Prince in the end of Act II,

    My father’s house was a nightmare. Your house was a dream. Now I
    want something in between. Please go (Sondheim 177)

After the giant has been felled, Cinderella begins to help the Baker take care of
his child. As she realizes her need for a simpler more fulfilling life, she tells the Baker:

    I’ll gladly help you with your house. There are times when I actually enjoy
    cleaning.”(Sondheim 188)

The Witch is the only character in this musical that tells the truth. Her intentions
are clear from the very start. Sondheim says he created this role to make the audience
think before it judges a book by its cover. Traditionally, we think of a witch as a scowling old hag who is the very essence of evil. Sondheim purposefully chose to make this character the opposite of that image. He made her the key symbol of moral ambivalence. The Witch, an extremely dysfunctional and overprotective mother, locks her daughter Rapunzel, in a tower with no doors to protect her from the world. As the musical progresses we see, like the rest of the characters, she too becomes unhappy with her granted wish of returning to her former youth and beauty. Her powers are gone and now she is just normal, like the rest of the characters. You could almost say she is the token god-like figure. In Act II, when she sings, “The Last Midnight”, we hear her resolve to leave them all to their own devices. This is her last curse:

I’m leaving you alone.

You can tend the garden, it’s yours.

Separate and alone,

Down on all fours. (Sondheim 169)

After she leaves them alone they regret their past mistakes, feel remorse for the choices they have made. They are alone and without someone to believe in. The Witch has her faults, but never tries to hide them. She sings to the characters and warns them by telling about her own dismal failures as a mother and implores them to heed her advice in Act II. She sings with the rest of the cast in the finale:

Careful the spell you cast,

Not just on children.

Sometimes the spell may last

Past what you can see
Only me beside you.

Still, you’re not alone.

No one is alone, truly.

No one is alone.

Sometimes people leave you

Halfway through the wood.

Others may deceive you.

You decide what’s good.

You decide alone.

But no one is alone. (Sondheim 179)

Sondheim uses the character of Little Red Ridinghood to speak directly to the audience. No one is alone. We are united in our struggles to overcome all of the giants we face together as human beings in this frightful world. If we can pull together, we will defeat them as the Baker, Cinderella, Little Red Ridinghood, and Jack, do in the end of Act II.
Ideas of the Play

When James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim began the creation of this musical, the initial concept was to have James Lapine devise an entirely original story. Sondheim wanted to do a quest fairy tale, and so Lapine worked on one for awhile. He decided there were already many existing stories so why not just combine some of them and use the characters from already existing folk literature. The show would deal with the difficulties of growing up: the relationship between parents and children; with taking responsibility; with developing a code of morality; and with wish-fulfillment (Gordon 301).

Sondheim and Lapine served up a cautionary tale in various shades of gray, unlike most fairy tales that present right and wrong in childlike terms of black and white. Witches tell the truth, nice people lie, good people die. Yet, the characters deeds and misdeeds bring them closer together; until they mold themselves into an interdependent community and work in concert to slay a giant who threatens their very existence (Pressley 2). The message of this musical is clear: only by banding together can we conquer the giants who cast shadows over our own society.

Despite the musical’s dark implications, there is a sweetness and simplicity that makes the audience fall in love with this show. “Happily ever after” is only something that happens in children’s stories, so we must be realistic, we must come to the conclusion that Into the Woods is an affirmation of faith in mankind. It is a reminder that even when things look the blackest “No one is alone”. The major theme is found in this song, it is the connection between people. Sondheim has used this theme in many of his shows, such as: Bobby’s inability to find someone to love in Company through Seurat’s
command to himself to “connect” in *Sunday in the Park with George*, up through the current Broadway show *Passion*, in which a woman’s desperate need for love leads to a fierce, possessive relationship.

*Into the Woods* exemplifies this theme in various ways. In the beginning of the show, all of the characters are only concerned with getting their own wishes fulfilled. They ignore the plight of others around them and focus solely on their own problems. The witch rebukes the Baker and his wife for only thinking of themselves. All of the characters are so busy running around, almost running over each other that they fail to see the connection they all share. They are all on the same journey, to get their wish fulfilled, to live “happily ever after”.

The music is written to emphasize the themes. In Act I, we hear the connections in the way the jaunty rhythm and simple melody reflect their optimism and the lyrics reflect the naivety and simplicity of fairytales. The cautionary note is repeatedly sounded. There is a delightful humor and yet bleakness that permeates all of the songs in the score. Sondheim recorded a videotape of himself and James Lapine discussing the musical elements of the show for the use with the materials from Musical Theatre International. In this video they both stressed the “bounce” of the music suggesting the journey, constantly moving us through the woods. There are five notes in each song that create a chord for each character. The music is designed to give definition to each of the characters so we can identify with them better. The humor of Act I quickly disappears in Act II when the Giant makes her first step of destruction. The chords change to discords to keep the melodies repeating, yet darker and more threatening. The three songs sung by Jack, Little Red Ridinghood and Cinderella are musical and lyrical variations of each
other, linking them even as they remain unaware of the connection. Sondheim said it this way:

> What I am trying to do with the score is to sprinkle it with ditties: I’m trying to do little sixteen-, thirty two-, and eight bar tunes, almost cartoonish except in a sort of contemporary style morals and traveling songs. And these little tunes start to go strange in the second act. You see, the first act is fast and funny and light and the second act is less goofy and a bit darker, so I would like the score to reflect that. (Kakutani 4)

The woods, “the place in which inner darkness is confronted and...where uncertainty is resolved about who one is...or who one wants to be.” (Sondheim 5) is the dominant symbol of the play. They are not the traditional pastoral forest, but a dark, threatening, scary and perilous place where wishes can be fulfilled. According to Bruno Bettelheim’s Freudian analysis of fairy tales, it is a forest of the mind, or the subconscious, where we must make decisions as to what is right or wrong. It is where we discover who we really are and what we are made of. The woods are a symbol of the transition between childhood and maturity. Like adolescence, they are scary and filled with angst, emerging sexuality, self-discovery and definition, and even death (Whittaker 1).

Like maturity and adulthood, the woods are not a place the characters want to go, but they know it is the only means to get their wishes fulfilled.

Sondheim’s characters learn on their journey through the forest, but they keep their ambivalence about what they have learned. This is his take on our modern day society. This forest is the dark entangled wood of their inner most desires and a journey
through an elemental rite of passage. His character Little Red Ridinghood skips through the woods, blissfully stuffing buns into her mouth. She must learn the thrills and terrors of indulgence. She is freed from the wolf's belly and now there is the conflict between parental advice and temptation, not to mention her loss of innocence. Jack, like Little Red Ridinghood, has an experience with a lady giant. He has to compromise his moral code to achieve his goals. Cinderella's journey is also fraught with danger and fulfillment. Her tale of family rejection and ultimate success is humanized in Sondheim's lyrics as she describes her experience at the festival to the Baker's wife. She doesn't really know what she wants after all. The Baker and his wife have a simple wish, they want a child. The Witch next door has cursed them with infertility. In order to break the spell they must seek out four items, which are clearly found on the other fairytale characters. The Baker must shed his false male independence and recognize his need for love, understanding and cooperation. They both must go against their values and lie and cheat to gain possession of the four items. The unity in the action of this musical is all about these characters and their discoveries while journeying into the woods.

The play's title represents this inner and outward "journey." In the final song we see it's meaning clearly:

Into the Woods you go again,
you have to every now and then.
Into the Woods no telling when,
be ready for the journey.
Into the Woods,
but not too fast
or what you wish you lose at last.
Into the woods,
but mind the past.
Into the Woods,
but mind the future.
Into the Woods,
but not to stray,
or tempt the wolf
or steal from the Giant-
The way is dark,
the light is dim,
but now there's you,
me, her and him.
The chances look small,
the chances look grim,
but, everything you learn there
will help when you return there. (Sondheim 191-192)

though it's deep, though it's dark and though you may lose the path. You just can't act; you have to think (Sondheim 190). This journey is tough, but we are all responsible for the good of the whole of society. We must go through the woods and grow up and overcome the eternal, terrifying plight of being alone (Rich 17)
The playwright’s philosophy is best summed up in one of his statements concerning *Into the Woods*:

I think the final step in maturity is feeling responsible for everybody. If I could have written “no man is an island, “I would have. But that’s what “No One Is Alone is about. What I like about the title is it says two things. It says: no one is lonely, you’re not alone- I’m on your side and I love you. And the other thing is: no one is alone- you have to be careful what you do to other people. You can’t just go stealing gold and selling cows for more than they are worth, because it affects everybody else.

(Kakutani 760)

This growing older and wiser with age may reflect his own wisdom, through the school of hard knocks, gained throughout the later years of his life.
Past Productions

One of the wonderful things about fairy tales, Mr. Lapine goes on, is that they allow everyone “to invent their own meaning.” I remember reading somewhere the notion that the reason fairy tales have stayed around for so long is that every generation reads them and comes up with its own interpretations to answer its own needs. In a way, I think that is what we’ve tried to do with this show” (Presley 5). James Lapine and his partner Stephen Sondheim got their “wish”, so to speak of, when the drama critiques wrote their own interpretations of the various productions of the musical, Into the Woods.

Into the Woods was first produced at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, California in 1986. It had its Broadway premiere in 1987 at the Martin Beck Theatre in New York, then in 1990 it was produced in the Phoenix Theatre in London and in 2002 it was produced again at the Broadhurst Theatre on Broadway. In 1987 Into the Woods received nine Tony Award nominations and won three of those: Best Score, Best Book, and Best Actress in a Musical, Joanna Gleason. In 1997 it received five Drama Desk Awards and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical. In 2002 the musical won two Tony Awards, one for Best Revival of a Musical and Best Lighting Design by Brian MacDevitt. It also had eight other nominations that year. The Ahmanson Theatre production of Into the Woods was nominated for seven of the L.A. Ovation Awards and won one of those for Best Set Design by Doug Schmidt. Susan Hilferty won the 2002 Hewes Award for Best Costume Design. In 2002, it was also nominated for nine Drama Desk Awards, four Drama League Awards, and four Outer Critics Circle Awards.
Various critics have termed Stephen Sondheim’s productions as “concept musicals”, shows that rely on theme rather than plot or unity. Sondheim is criticized for writing musicals that, although extremely entertaining and enjoyable, do not provide the cheerful escapism which Broadway’s musical theater audiences seek. Instead of escapism, his conceptual musicals present serious concerns and dramatic subtexts. Critic Peter Reilly has described Sondheim’s career as “parallel to without being a part of the mainstream of American musical theater.” (“Stephen Joshua Sondheim” 1) Although some of his work is complex and not readily accessible, Sondheim has set a high standard for Broadway musicals.

His songs express ideas, which directly relate to the themes and actions of the plays; therefore, they often work only when sung by the character for whom they were written. For this reason his songs usually do not translate well off the stage, but critics feel that this is a significant improvement over musicals which are little more than showcases for various disparate songs. Although many critiques have pointed to a lack of warmth and an emotional detachment in his songs, they agree, for the most part, that Sondheim has greatly raised the artistic level of American musical theater. (“Stephen Joshua Sondheim” 2)

In studying Sondheim’s career, it became obvious that he is generally acknowledged to be the best composer-lyricist currently working on Broadway. His musicals have earned enthusiastic acclaim from critics, but most have only been moderately successful at the box office. According to Arthur Laurents, Stephen Sondheim is “without question, the best Broadway lyricist past or present...Any lyric he has written can be quoted to illustrate his contention. I think Sondheim is the only
lyricist who almost always writes a lyric which should only be sung by the character for which it was designed, who never pads with unnecessary fillers, who never sacrifices meaning or intention for a clever rhyme and who knows that a lyric is the shortest of one-act plays, with a beginning, a middle and an end. Moreover, he knows how the words must sit on a musical phrase" ("Stephen Joshua Sondheim" 3). Burt Shevelove had this to say about Stephen Sondheim: “Far and away the best of the new lyric writers is Stephen Sondheim. Beside wit, ingenuity, and warmth, he brings a sense of the character to every word that is sung. He is the first and perhaps the only true theatre lyricist we have” ("Stephen Joshua Sondheim" 3). Sondheim’s contributions to the musical theatre have been so significant the Dramatists Guild Literary Quarterly designated its first ten years as the “Sondheim decade.” “There can hardly have been an issue since, and often more than one” ("Stephen Joshua Sondheim" 3).

Critics complained that Sondheim had sold out to the public demand for lighter material when in 1986; the musical Into the Woods was first produced on Broadway. It won Tony Awards for lyrics and outstanding musical, and it was a greater commercial success than Sunday in the Park with George had been. It was criticized for having an upbeat ending with the song, “No One Is Alone”. Other critics found the musical wholly appealing. “It is that joyous rarity,” wrote Elizabeth L. Bland and William A. Henry, III, in a Time magazine review, “a work of sophisticated artistic ambition and deep political purpose that affords nonstop pleasure” (“Stephen Joshua Sondheim” 9). Here are a few other summaries of critical reviews of the musical Into the Woods. These reviews were given after the 2002 Broadway version which featured Vanessa Williams cast as the Witch. Ben Brantley, of the New York Times wrote: “Follow the music. It will take you
somewhere wonderful. Mr. Sondheim has written songs that are indeed like fairy tales in their surface simplicity and echoing depths. Yet, as is often the case with this composer, what surrounds the music only occasionally touches the same levels of complexity...Not that Mr. Lapine...doesn’t provide intellectual ambition and theatrical flair.

“James Lapine, who directed the original production as well as the current revival, has figured out how to eliminate this disparity. Here he has found a single tone for everything: It is coarse from start to finish” (Kissel 2).

“A mute cow, believe it or not is the life of the party...This revival...isn’t wholly dependant on its scene-stealing bovine for the new spring in its step, to be sure. But you could say that Chad Kimball’s nimble performance in this mute role...has resulted in a major mood swing for this knotty musical. With some splashy special effects, fleet choreography by John Carrafa and performers who bring piles of sass, wit and sparkle to their roles, this is a flashier and blessedly brisker presentation of Sondheim and Lapine’s crazy quilt of fairy tales for our unhappy-ever-after age. No it doesn’t solve the problems of a show that still lacks cohesion and concision – and, on a deeper level, authentic emotional appeal. But in taking itself less seriously, the new production does render those flaws less deleterious, and it allows the gems in Sondheim’s score to glitter bewitchingly” (Isherwood 2).

“...its cautionary fairy tales still enhanced by Stephen Sondheim’s marvelous songs and stymied by James Lapine’s approach to the show’s overabundance of plot...for the most part, Lapines cast handles the story and songs with style. Vanessa Williams makes a gorgeous, diva-like Witch, who gets to change from a ugly old hag into what looks like a forth member of the Supremes...More problematic are the Baker and Wife, played by
subdued Stephen DeRosa and Kerry O’Malley, who, while vocally strong, lacks the sardonic awareness Joanna Gleason brought to the original. It’s their tale that should anchor the evening, and it never quite does. But then there is almost as much plot as there are trees in this musical. And that’s ultimately the problem. It’s a much harder time getting out of them” (Kuchwara 2).

“Yes, the set designed by Douglas W. Schmidt is breathtaking, placing characters and viewers in a whimsical world of lush forests and picturesque storybooks. And Gregory Meeh’s effects alternately wink and dazzle, mirroring the production’s mix of campy humor and heart. But the text, music and performances are ultimately what make these Woods captivating. Though it doesn’t boast one of Sondheim’s better scores, the musical features such highlights as the lovely No One is Alone and the wicked Agony duets sung by the romantically challenged princes. Lapine, who directs here, ensures that these numbers and his droll dialogue retain their luster and bite. The cast handles this material with a playful energy” (Gardner 3).

“The production, directed again by Lapine, has not been deconstructed or radically transformed from the memorable one that won Tony Awards for Sondheim’s jaunty, gorgeous and witty score and Lapine’s dark, wise and adorable book. The designs and cast are new – most famously, Vanessa Williams as an irresistible witch we trusted would forever be Bernadette Peters. Some brainstorms are louder – most conspicuously, the changing of the cow, Milky White, from a cardboard with handles to a tragicomic bovine, a man in a bony cow puppet, with a lovely, melancholy disposition and just the slightest tendency to milk beyond his scenes. And, though some may find an
extra jolt of pertinence in the story of vulnerability and resilience, the show is timeless, deeply playful and unpretentiously profound” (Winer 3)

Since the initial Broadway run, Into the Woods has become the most performed of all of the shows for which Mr. Sondheim has written. Some of his critics say he doesn’t write tunes you’ll hum on the way home from the theater, nor do his songs constitute an invitation to the dance, but no one this side of Cole Porter can be so witty and so musical at the same time, and it is said that Sondheim is even superior to Porter in the variety of dramatic situations he can find musical expression for. James Lapine, who both wrote the book and directed, surely deserves equal credit to Sondheim’s for what works, and for what doesn’t. As for what doesn’t work, many critics have written that the theme based musical bites off more than its audience can chew. His musicals have an over elaborate structure that can create a feeling of overload. There are too many characters with too many stories we must focus on, and there are too many lessons to learn. It has been said that the key to make this show a success is all about casting equally strong characters so the focus can be equally shared. If one actor is stronger than another we can truly get lost in the plot and the many subplots. Other critics have said this show lacks humanity. Imbuing fairy tale characters with pop-up neuroses and powers of self-analysis doesn’t really render them human; it just makes them less archetypal (Isherwood 4).

My biggest challenge as a director of this musical will be to cast and direct my show in such a way as to help these roles take on more human elements, the characters must be more approachable and accessible to help the audience connect on a higher emotional level. Into the Woods is far more charming when a satirical approach is taken to its archetypal characters, allowing its talented cast to dig into the loopy comic aspects...
of the material. The show’s inner silliness is, in the end, more memorable than its murky musings on the pains and perils of maturity (Isherwood 5).
About the Creators

Stephen Sondheim (composer and lyricist) was born in New York City, March 22, 1930, and raised there and also in Pennsylvania. At the age of twelve he met Oscar Hammerstein II, who became his close friend and mentor. He graduated from Williams College, where he received the Hutchison Prize for Music Composition. After graduation, he studied music theory and composition with Milton Babbitt who helped him learn to analyze popular songs and classics. In the late 1940’s he was working as production assistant on such Broadway musicals as South Pacific (1949) and The King and I (1951). He worked for a short time in the 1950’s as a writer for the television show Topper. His first professional musical theatre job was as the songwriter for the unproduced musical Saturday Night. He was the composer of incidental music for The Girls of Summer, produced at Longacre Theatre, New York City, 1956. He wrote the lyrics for West Side Story (1957), Gypsy (1959) and Do I Hear a Waltz? (1965), as well as additional lyrics for Candide (1973). He also wrote the music and lyrics for A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum (1962) and 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 (1982), Sunday in the Park with George (1984), Into the Woods (1987), Assassins (1991) and Passion (1994).

Sondheim composed the songs for the television production of “Evening Primrose” (1966), co-authored the film The Last of Sheila (1973), and wrote incidental music for Broadway’s The Girls of Summer (1956), Invitation to a March (1961) and Twigs (1971). Side by Side Sondheim (1976), Marry Me A Little (1981), You’re Gonna Love Tomorrow (1983: originally presented as A Stephen Sondheim Evening) and Putting It Together (1993) are anthologies of his work as composer and lyricist. He has also
Award in theatre arts, 1982; Unique Contributions Award, Drama League of New York, 1983, “for initiating an American Young Playwrights Festival”; Common Wealth Award of Distinguished Service in dramatic arts, Bank of Delaware, 1984’ Pulitzer Prize for drama, Columbia University graduate School of Journalism, 1985, for Sunday in the Park with George; Lawrence Olivier Award for musical of the year, Society of West end Theatre (England), 1988, for “Follies,” and 1991, for Sunday in the Park with George; named lion of the Performing Arts, New York Public Library, 1989; Academy Award, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 1990, for best original song “Sooner of Later (I Always Get My Man)” from the film Dick Tracy; Golden Globe Award nominations, Hollywood Foreign Press Association, 1990, for original songs “Sooner or Later (I Always Get My Man)” and “What Can You Loose?” from the film Dick Tracy; National Medal of Arts Award, National Endowment for the Arts, 1992 (Declined).

Sondheim’s career was that of a composer and lyricist, from 1956 until the present. He was also a visiting professor of drama and musical theater and fellow at St. Catherine’s College, Oxford University, 1990. He appeared in various television specials, including June Moon, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS-TV), 1974, and Putting it Together—The making of the Broadway Album, Home Box Office (HBO), 1986. He also appeared in episodes of the television series Great Performances, including “Broadway Sings: The Music of Jule Styne, “PBS-TV, 1987, and “Berstein at 70. “PBS-TV, 1989.
The writer, James Lapine was born in Mansfield, Ohio. He received a B.A. History from Franklin and Marshall College and an M.F.A. Design from California Institute of the Arts. Prior to moving into theatre, he worked as a professional photographer and graphic designer, as well as an architectural preservationist, at the Architectural League of New York before moving full-time to New Haven and designing graphics for the Yale Repertory Theatre and teaching design at the Yale School of Drama.

He wrote and directed Passion, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, in 1994, winning the Tony Award for Book or musical. He co-conceived with William Finn and directed Falsettos for which they won the Tony award (for Book) in 1992. In 1990, Falsettoland, the second part of Falsettos, won the Outer Critics Circle Award of Best Musical. In 1988 Mr. Lapine won the Tony for the book of Into the Woods, as well as the Drama Desk Award (Book) and the New York Drama Critics Award. The London production of Into the Woods won the Evening Standard Award and the London Critics Award of Best Musical in 1991. For Sunday in the Park With George, Mr. Lapine won two Drama Desk Awards for Book and Direction, the New York Drama Critics Award for Best Musical and the 1985 Pulitzer Prize for Drama with Stephen Sondheim. The London production of Sunday in the Park with George won the Oliver Award for best musical. In 1980, Table Settings, which he wrote and directed, won the George Oppenheimer Playwrighting Award. In 1979, he wrote and Twelve Dreams (public Theatre). In 1978 H also won an Obie award for his first production, Photograph by Gertrude Stein, which he adapted and directed.
Lapine’s extensive directing credits include: *A Winter’s Tale*, 1988 (Public Theatre); *Merrily We Roll Along*, revised version, 1985 (La Jolla Playhouse); *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 1982 (Delacorte Theatre); and *March of the Falsettos*, (the first act of *Falsettos*), 1982 (Playwrights Horizons). In film he has directed *Life With Mikey* (1993) and *Impromptu* (1991). In 1988 he directed *Into the Woods* for PBS American Playhouse.
List of Learning Outcomes

The student will:

- exhibit understanding of acting and technical Theatre terms and apply those terms
- work cooperatively within an ensemble
- analyze physical and emotional character traits and apply to the development and portrayal of their individual roles
- intellectualize, dissect, analyze and develop a case history for their individual roles
- assimilate and communicate this case history both physically and vocally
- draw on sensory recall observation, past experience, and imagination when creating characters
- use imaginative and appropriate stage business
- use voice to communicate a range of meanings, ideas, and feelings
- develop memory skills
- articulate and project lines with emphasis on line endings
- give focus and take focus in context of the beat
- utilize vocal variety for correct emphasis of lines
- focus on picking up cues to insure accurate timing and tempo
- make strong contact between actors by either direct physical touch, passing of properties, or eye focus
- selectively focus and react to environmental stimuli
- use silence to build tension or comedic effects
- sustain high energy levels during rehearsals and performances
- enter the stage fully in character and sustain that character until completely off stage
- be fully prepared to run the show without any director input during final performances
- be open to direction and strive to implement director choices
- explain how sense, feelings, observation, past experience, and imagination contribute to character creation
- demonstrate cooperative work as an ensemble
- analyze and articulate goals of the play
- demonstrate elements of dramatic timing
- understand specific acting objectives and utilize to motivate their characters dramatic actions
- expand a stage character through creation of a subtext
- mark a script
- develop professional rehearsal and performance etiquette
Production Journal

September 2, 2003

Today is the first day of the school year of 2003-04. Already I feel quite overwhelmed with the dilemma of not having enough stamina to be a mother and wife, teach full time, and complete my thesis project! I guess I will just press forward and get it done as best as I possibly can!

Today it began...I met with my tech crew for this year and we had our first production meeting. We began with a discussion about the concept for our fall musical, Into the Woods. Samantha Birklid was assigned the task of stage manager for this show, her second show in this position, and she seems to be anxious to get it started. Our other crew members will be given their titles and job responsibilities as we get farther into the process.

We discussed the plot of the musical. They are to read it on their own before the next meeting and return with materials to describe the types of feelings, textures, and moods they may have felt after reading the script. A copy of the Broadway version of the musical, with Bernadette Peters as the Witch, was also made available to them. We were all in agreement that collaboration on the concept would be advantageous in giving my students a sense of real connection to the whole design process.

The students were thrilled with the amount of responsibility and control they were given on the production. They are ready for the challenge. This is an amazing core crew...I hope to add some new sophomores to the group to train them so that when this group moves on and graduates; Kentlake will still have a trained and functional crew. The crew promised to begin recruiting tomorrow.
Tomorrow will be the first day of auditions. Students flooded my office, all day today, asking about the audition requirements. I handed out the packets that were prepared for them and informed them of a mandatory, three-day audition process. Interested students signed up on the bulletin board outside of my room and tomorrow we will see what we have for talent to fill these roles.

September 3, 2003

The day began with the second production meeting with my vocal director, Pricilla Baldock and my music director, David Harris. I emphasized the importance of commitment on their part to the rehearsal schedule and amount of work load sharing with them. I voiced my concerns about the music and vocal challenges that are present in this musical. They both reassured me that they had been working on the music through the summer and they were ready to tackle this project and give me the full support that will be necessary. I had some trouble last year with my vocal director not showing up for a lot of critical rehearsals, so Pricilla and I had a good talk about what I expect from her this time around. She says she is fully committed and will not let me down like she had in the past. I hope this will be true, only time will tell. I do have a back up plan in the form of another voice teacher, if I need to make the switch. David is already setting up the pit orchestra and he said it is looking great and for me not to worry.

At 2:45 sixty students showed up to audition for twenty three parts! I promised them that there will not be any double casting in this show. The students cheered that statement! I’ll guess I will now have to stick to my promise. I then explained what the production would require; a large amount of vocal talent and acting talent along with an unswerving commitment to the rehearsal schedule above all other outside commitments including jobs, sports, and even family at times. They were told that the choral director
and I would be teaching them the audition music and dialogue for the first two days and that perfect attendance would be required to obtain any part. All were in agreement; I expect a few to drop out tomorrow.

Everyone sat in a huge circle on stage. Rules of conduct, academic expectations, and other rules listed on the audition sheet were discussed. They were told that it is an honor to be selected for any Kentlake High School production. Rehearsal schedule commitment, costume costs, and fund raising requirements were explained. Audition sheets were then filled out by the students and collected by my vocal director.

As they learned the music, I began to take notes on their characterization and vocal quality. I am auditioning them as they learn the dialogue and music, so by Friday I should be able to cast the show easily. Some were aware of my note taking, but most were relaxed and just showing me how difficult or easy they are to work with...very important to know before casting. I could also detect some of the behavior problems today, especially important to know ahead of time!

The training for audition music took place and all students stayed until 5:00 learning what would be required of them on Friday. I made it clear to them that attendance is required for all three days to be considered for a major role. This is also a test on their commitment to the show; if they can’t stay for the audition process...they might not make it through the production process, which is a much bigger commitment.

It was a good day! The talent I saw today was exciting and there were many students for each role...that makes my “one cast only” decision harder, but at least I am not worried about having enough talent to pull it off. My vocal director and I met after they all left and she seemed confident of the singing talent too.
Second day of auditions went well. We had only three students drop out, after yesterday’s sixty students. I thought more would drop out after being told about the commitment issues, but they all seemed eager to be a part of this show. Last year's 5th Avenue Musical Theatre Awards must have something to do with this turnout. I hope this group will get the same opportunity to sing and dance on the stage of the 5th Avenue stage as last year's group did! That must be one of the reasons for such a great turn out.

Today the students were showed off some unexpected talent in characterization early on in the process. I had already begun matching student names to a sheet of characters. There were about five or six per part, so I am going to have to rely on the final auditions tomorrow to weed out some of them. The role of the Baker will not be an easy one to fill. If he is in this group of boys; I sure can’t see one yet. The baker’s wife could be four different girls. It looks like Lauren Kottwitz is definitely the witch. She has so much confidence in herself that the witch is the perfect part for her. She has a strong singing voice and has shown the best acting abilities so far. Pricilla agreed with me on that one. She is still up in the air about the boys’ parts too.

After auditions, Pricilla and I compared notes and had a few disagreements about the male parts. I am not so much concerned about their voices. They are all strong singers, but maybe tomorrow I will see that spark I am looking for the part of the Baker. Justin Fincher is the strongest so far, but I am not sure he is right for that role. I hope to put him with the four girls I like for the Baker’s wife tomorrow and see if there is any chemistry. I like Shauna Hagreen as Cinderella, but she may also be the best Baker’s wife when put together with Justin. There are four Princes...I only need two! Oh well, tomorrow is another day, the last day. I like this process of teaching audition material
first! It gives me a wonderful chance to see them up close and not as self conscience about trying to impress me. I got a good feel for how directable they are…some are definitely not!

September 5, 2003

Final audition day! This was an amazing day, full of surprise and revelation. I can now cast the show due to the wonderful chemistry I witnessed between characters that I saw today in the last day of auditions. All along I have been casting while observing the students working on the material. Today they gave me their best efforts. I will include the final cast list in another part of my thesis, but I am very pleased with the cast I have chosen. My vocal director and I came to a rather fast agreement, which tells me it is a good casting job. It will be posted on Monday. I did NOT double cast! A few parts do have doubles, but only a few.

My students were also given a blank cast list and I asked them to cast the show. This was, after all, an open audition, and I wanted to see what they felt would be the perfect cast. I read the cast lists and I was pleased to see they too saw the chemistry between certain cast members. All did not agree with my final choices, but it was very close. Giving them this chance to voice their opinions is important. After final casting, I ask them not to second guess my final choices, but they can express their choices by casting the show on their own. We will see on Monday how it worked, after all the tears have fallen and the reality sets in.

Wow, I am so excited about this cast. Casting over a three-day period was wonderful; I think I will do this for the spring show too. I could really focus on each individual student and what they were capable of as they learned the material. The
standing up there and freezing during an audition was all but gone. The atmosphere was relaxed and I could really see their talent more clearly.

Today was wonderful and now I have the cast that I think will be loyal and true blue to the end, I hope! They seem to be ready and looking forward to the challenge of this difficult show.

September 6, 2003
Saturday...and I am already spending all day at the school. My, where did the summer go? I hate to admit it, but I am tired already!

OK, we did have a fantastic production meeting today, so I am very excited about the possibilities. Five new sophomore “techies” showed up to join our team and help with our concept statement. Good for the future of this program...I found out they actually are hard workers too!

We sat around the tables discussing colors and textures and trees and houses and what this musical is really about. Some brought in an item to help with our concept, but most needed more help with the plot. Their homework was done, reading the play, except for the new students. The play had been read and they had many questions! I showed them my research materials and what my concept statement was looking like, but I told them I would like to use theirs in my final analysis. I wanted them to be a bigger part of this process than they have been in the past. Everyone was excited and a little bit scared. I hope they take this seriously and get excited about the show...we will just have to wait and see!

Responsibility and job titles were talked about. We all agreed to bring more materials to the table next week when our Lighting Designer, Jon Langrell, is scheduled to meet with
us for the first time. We also worked on finishing our lighting Rep. Plot, which we began last summer and needed to finish.

The rest of our day was spent on cleaning and preparing the shop for our newest production, Into the Woods.

September 8, 2003

Monday...cast was posted on the bulletin board outside my room. Many tears were shed today. It breaks my heart every time I post a cast list. I told the ones that did not get a part to come and make an appointment with me and I will tell them what they need to work on in order to have a better audition next time. Honesty is the only policy if they are to improve. I try to give it out gently and with kind words of encouragement to go along with the honesty. They will survive and hopefully be better for it.

First read through was done today. We did not get all the way through the show, but we will finish tomorrow. Wow, this is a great group, only a few problems and I have informed them all of serious consequences for those who cannot behave. I will ask them to leave rehearsal the first time, the second time I ask them to leave...they will be replaced. This did not go over well, but I must be strong! The cast and crew are all involved with the concept now. I feel that the buy in will happen if I give them more input on big item decisions. They are eager to give input...some of the ideas we talked about today do not fit in with my version of the concept...am I too old? I am going to try to be more open to their suggestions and stick to the fact that it is their show too! I hope I can do that!

Read through was fun and entertaining. We sang the music, or tried to, as we read along. This show is almost an opera! They handled the music OK for a read through...we will get more into it later.
My vocal coach is happy with their attempt at the music. Pricilla wants to jump right in and do music only for the first month! I do not know if I like that idea or not...I guess I will have to think about that.

September 9, 2003

Tuesday, and day two of the first read through. All went well today, the kids loved the ending and we even had some tears. Great discussion about what the main themes are and which ones we want to emphasize. The Community pulling together theme was our number one choice. They also think the play emphasizes the parent to child “letting go theme too. Through discussion we have seen that the witch and Cinderella are similar...which one is evil? Jack is a thief! The Baker’s wife commits adultery and gets stomped on by the giant...punishment? All kinds of great questions are coming up and the students are really giving thought to what our show is all about!

I like this cast. I have a great feeling about them. Today we began to talk about the research I have done and how it relates to their characters. We have now begun to dig deeper into the characters. They had some thoughtful insights of their own. I gave them too much information to swallow in one day. Their heads are spinning! The show is so rich in metaphors, it will take us a while to get into the deeper layers of each character and how they all relate to one another. I gave them homework to read the play on their own at least five times before we talk any more about underlying stuff. I want them to see it without me hand feeding it to them. Doing their own research was brought up and I encouraged them to look for things that make their characters tick. Cameron, who was cast as Cinderella has already read all of the early versions in almost every country of the story of Cinderella. This group is talented and smart, what a great combination!
Our first Parent Meeting was tonight. About seven parents showed up and we discussed the schedule and all of the demands this show will place on their families and their student's lives. They are all very supportive, but reluctant to sign up for the various committees we have established, Publicity, Costumes, Ticket Sales, Concessions, and Fund Raising. I guess they need to check schedules before committing to anything. Costumes were the most organized and the parents were pushing for colors and period already. The design students will need to get it together to give these parents something to work on fast! As for Fund raising...Mrs. Lori Bissett has been working all summer putting together an auction to be held sometime in October. She asked for volunteers to help with that, but only one parent said she could do some of the work. I am hoping I do not get stuck with fund raising on top of all of this! I must stand firm and not cave in when they say help. I hope I made it clear that every parent must be involved. I will say it again tomorrow.

The students must make baskets worth $50.00 in order to fulfill their commitment to help with the cost of the show. I suggested we try and get a local celebrity to host it and do a variety show along with the auction and dinner. I hope the next parent meeting gets better attendance. I am going to get an e-mail list going and then I can send out reminders to parents about meetings and other information.

September 10, 2003
All music rehearsals begin today. We are desperate to find a low cost piano player to help out with rehearsals. I am going to call the man who played in our pit orchestra last year, Matt Turner. Maybe he has some free time. No parent volunteers have come forth and I do not like using the Midi system the MTI sends out with their musicals. It makes the kids unable to adjust properly to a live orchestra and different
tempos. They need to practice with a real piano. My “to do” list just got longer. Where do I get the money to pay for this?

Pricillla worked hard on three numbers today and I interrupted to interject small bits on each of their characters as we went along. We also did a bit of analyzing of the lyrics to these three songs: The First Midnight, Into the Woods, and the Last Midnight. The kids are beginning to see these songs for what they say on a deeper level. They worked diligently on these songs and that was a whole day. They also broke into parts and learned those as well.

I reminded them to read the play more then one or two times. Some had done a little bit of research on the origins of the beanstalk fairy tales. We discussed that and more about the Grimm brother’s versions and how Sondheim and Lapine used some of those and some of the original stories, which have a darker side. They are not talking about the concept being “punk” or the gothic style of certain students here at school. We talked about how the tales could be set in a modern-day time period if we chose to do that. Good discussions toward reaching a common direction to take on our journey into the woods.

September 11, 2003

On the 911 Anniversary of the horrible attack on America, it was brought to my attention how the “giants” we face are very similar to the plot in our show. We had a great discussion before rehearsal began about the twin towers and the pentagon and how the people of America have pulled together to battle the “giants”. The kids were very reflective and this gave them more insight into the themes and concept of the show.

Music rehearsals today focused on the same three songs and then we went on to work on the group songs of Act II. I worked with the larger groups and Mrs. Baldock
took the soloists off into another room to work on those. The students worked on parts and articulation. I have vowed that we will make the ending of every sentence as loud as the beginning, something that Wess burned into my brain this summer in my Shakespeare class. They are all aware that that is our goal this week and I see them thinking about endings more than I have ever seen them in the past. Maybe this will be the best goal yet!

We began with vocal warm-ups that Pricilla does with them every day and then I moved them into the articulation tongue twisters. We also did a breathing exercise that Pricilla uses in her choir classes to help in proper breathing and air movement through the throat. I am glad she is here to help with this area...as I did not get the chance to take Michael’s voice and diction class. Improvement in sound and articulation was noticeable by the end of the day. We must continue to focus every day on this articulation issue.

High school students have the most trouble with this.

More discussion on the themes of the show occurred today. They are digging out details and seeing how they all relate to the main themes. Again I have encouraged them to dig up more information, but the key is to read it over again.

September 12, 2003

Friday at last! I am feeling overwhelmed today. I am having trouble finding a piano player that can rehearse with us the whole week. Matt Turner can only come in on Mondays and Thursdays. I have a parent who teaches piano that says she can play on Fridays, but I need someone to do this consistently. I guess we will use Matt and just use the Midi system when we need to on the days he can not make it. He says he can do it for $20.00 a day and will be in the pit for all except the last two nights...guess we have no other options.
Today we worked again on all of the group songs. Warm ups focused on articulation and basic vocal stuff like breathing and pitch. They don’t sound too bad. I am pleased with our first week of rehearsals, but we all need a weekend break.

We had a couple of attendance issues this week and had to get tough and threaten replacement. That seemed to fix things, except all of the colds and weird virus’ going around this week. Flu shots were discussed…and the medication that will cut the time of the sickness in half. I hope they all get sick this week and not by show time in December! I had been thinking about appointing some understudies just to have a back up plan, so today I approached Brandon about being an understudy for both of the Prince parts and he has agreed. I am going to start hunting for a witch replacement and perhaps a Baker and his Wife, just in case. I do not want to go overboard on this or they might expect that they will be entitled to a show or two!

Tomorrow is a tech day and I am excited that Jon Langrell is coming to do a workshop for my tech kids. He has also looked into having a professional designer friend of his that might also be willing to come and give the kids pointers and advice. That is the way to end a week!

Costume meeting with the “Costume Moms” after rehearsal. They all had great ideas on how to find the colors we are looking for and patterns for the high gothic fairy tale time period. They are going to meet again on the 20th of Sept. to get together a plan of attack to get those costumes figured out as soon as we possible can! What a great bunch of Moms. The first costume deadline is set for Oct. 6th so that we can have them early in order to take pictures for the posters.
The hardest part of this job is letting go! I want to do it all, but I can’t and I know I shouldn’t try. It is just sometimes easier to do things yourself, so that you know it will be done the way you want it to be done. Today I let costumes go. I chose the patterns and colors and now they can do the hard part...sew them and fit them to the cast members.

September 13, 2003

It was “Techie Saturday” today and we had about fifteen students show up at 9:00 AM, donuts helped entice them. The cost of feeding these guys is really causing problems in my personal finances, but I feel I must do something to help get volunteers in and working.

This was production meeting #2 today. I was excited to have our lighting designer Jon Langrell, lighting designer employed by the Seattle Bumbershoot Festival. WOW! This was the best production meeting we have ever had at this school. We talked about the over-all concept of the musical, what Sondheim wanted his audience to get from the play and what the themes the students of KL want their audience to walk away with from this show. Most have read the play by now, but a few still need to complete this task. Some have also watched the Broadway version of this show and have definite ideas about what our show should be like.

Discussion began as to how to get KL students to want to attend this show, not just the community. What kind of kid centered twist should it have, was our main focus today. The idea was introduced as to having it take on a youth culture twist to give it relevance to today’s teens. The kids all want to express the Act II darkness by having some kind of revelation from the characters about the different youth cultures they might represent, for example the Cinderella character is similar to the “geek” culture in a typical
high school setting. The Princes and evil step-sister family represent the Abercrombie and Fitch, “preppy” youth culture, etc... The kids wanted all of these sub-cultures to be represented and thought the characters in this play already do this; we just need to emphasize certain parts to make it obvious to the audience, maybe through the set design? We reached consensus that this show is to be their own creation, even if it is to be my thesis project, they want and need to feel ownership and the responsibility and power of creating this production too, it is a learning tool for their futures.

Jon also showed them his earlier work and portfolio while I video taped the whole morning discussion that occurred around the tech table in order to use it again for tech crews of the future. He was amazing to listen to and the kids are getting first hand instruction from a working professional. We video taped this lecture in order to use it on future productions...

After our morning meeting the students broke into smaller committees and began planning for the set, props, and lighting and design for Into the Woods and others began working on our rep light plot that Jon is working to complete. The rest of the day was spent reorganizing our shop area, cleaning up cabinets, etc. It was a good hands-on; learn about real theatre, kind of day. We went home exhausted.

September 15, 2003
It was yet another day of getting around the piano and learning the lines with the music. I believe this is the only way to approach this show. The music must be learned before any acting can take place. It is a process of layering and this is the bottom layer, the foundation. If they can remember the music the show can hold together. This is almost an opera, very little letting up on the music until Act II. Pricilla worked them from 3:30 until 5:30 and they all felt the time ran by quickly. I am pleased to see my
music director taking this so seriously this year. I can only hope this holds out. I am happy about the sound of the cast’s voices, some are amazing, and others need to get serious and study more at home. You can tell which ones are putting the most effort into it and which ones aren’t! I talked to them individually during and after rehearsal.

September 16, 2003

“Around the rugged rock…” we are beginning work on articulation NOW. I am stopping them at every line that I can not hear or understand. We did worm-ups with articulation as our focus, tongue twisters and vocal warm-ups in breathing. We spent half of the rehearsal with me stopping them and starting them again and reminding them to speak slowly and clearly. I tried something that Wess taught us in Shakespeare class this summer, stressing the last words in each line. The kids hated it at first, but then I could really hear a difference. It isn’t just for Shakespeare. They were very frustrated with me at the end of the day. I hope after a couple of weeks of this we won’t have to spend too much time on this again, just reminders. I want them to be strong in this area.

September 17, 2003

Today we worked again on articulation, as I plan to continue for a couple of weeks her at the beginning. Some of the leads are showing dissatisfaction in my choice of working them so hard at the first. They expressed to me their desire to just focus on the music, so I kind of backed off…for a little while. I couldn’t let yesterday’s work go away, so we worked on stressing the endings, even in the music. This bothered the vocal director as it didn’t always fit the markings of the musical score. She too must learn that this is not like her choir. I am trying to get them thinking on more than one dimension. I expressed my concerns about not letting everything just go for the sake of the music, but her point is also good about not over loading them too early. We compromised…I tried
not to stop them unless it was a huge articulation or weak ending error. We made it through the day.

After rehearsal we had Open House and I didn’t get home until 10:00 PM, which is too late! This job makes me tired.

September 18, 2003

Rehearsal around the piano again, but this time our pianist Matt Turner showed up to play for us in person. Matt played for our Music Man orchestra last year and when I asked him to help again, he said he would love it. He is a Jr. High teacher in another district and drives an hour to get to us. He is very reasonable when charging us too, it must be the teacher in him! What a talented individual and extremely nice man, he is so great with the kids. He is going to charge us $10.00 an hour, and that is very reasonable and fits in with my projected budget.

Matt began the show at the beginning and we all plowed through it as best we could. Beside vocal warm-ups, we just focused on our time with Matt. They were not too bad for the first time through Act I with the piano. Some rough spots, Pricilla noted them all down. But for the most part the lines and music are sounding pretty good. I am pleased and kind of exhausted, more so than usual.

The added stress of adding instrumentation takes its toll on all of us, I think. It is a huge relief to know that it is going to work! The kids are proving to be quite capable and talented enough to pull off this high level of difficulty show. Now…will the director survive? Home to work on paperwork and grading and being a mother and wife, it is so draining! I need time for me, but it will not happen today or in the near future. This is the part I hate. I give and give and soon there is no more Cressey to go around! It is
early on and I am already pooped! Tomorrow I will ask for help in other areas of my life so that I can free up my own time a little bit.

September 19, 2003

No Matt today! He can only make rehearsals on Monday’s and Thursdays. Our budget will only be able to pay for twice a week too. I had asked Pricilla to make rehearsal tapes for each cast member back last week, but she says they are not finished yet. She had better not let me down again. The kids have been working with the original cast productions, which I don’t really like, but they do not have those tapes yet. Some play enough piano to get their notes, but we need those tapes. I have had problems with her getting things done in a timely manner before. She will be reminded of her duties again and again until I get the tapes.

Today we are working on Act II. The kids really noticed the change in feel for this act verses Act I. There is much more dialogue and deeper meaning to lines. It is like it is a whole other play. We pushed through it, the music is somewhat difficult, but they are getting it. More warm-ups on articulation and getting the ending son lines, but I had to let them concentrate on that tough music for the most part.

September 20, 2003

Saturday and more tech excitement! Today we welcomed our new set designer/consultant Chris Anderson who works at the Maydenbauer Center in Bellevue, WA. He and Jon Langrell sat down with the students and we all discussed the concept and what the set should look like to represent the ideas we acme up with. I showed him all of my colors and textures and the students drew their own ideas and expressed them to the group too. I video taped it again for future use in my classes, but I may put some parts of this in my thesis? Who knows?
I had a huge meeting with the “Costume Moms”. We have finalized the costumes needs and I have given them at least the beginning concepts and colors to go forth and shop and we have some great patterns available in the Jo-Ann books that will work for our show. We will also check out rentals, but I do not want to spend the budget on rentals. This is turning out to be a great bunch of women. They are all committed to getting the costumes done early so as to use them in the posters, and other publicity effects.

There was more time put in on clean up of the work area. We are trying to make our backstage areas as professional as can be. Calendar hanging of the production schedule became today’s hot priority and with Chris’s help the crew worked backward on the calendar to fill in main deadlines that must be met for our production schedule. This was a very productive day for KL tech crew and an exhaustingly long one too! I am pooped, but excited at the growth and maturity I am seeing in my crew.

September 22, 2003

Today we are beginning to explore the characters to be created by each actor in this production. Some of the students have a good handle on what makes their character tick, but today I shared a bit of my research about the fairy-tale characters they are all playing. We did warm-ups relating to articulation again and vocal warm-ups too. I went over the script and each student wrote down the beats and acting objectives. They are getting into the characterization process with exuberance. Many new ideas were talked about today, and they actually helped me firm up things in the script that I had not seen, or overlooked. This is an intelligent and thought provoking group of kids.

Matt showed up a little bit late so we put aside work on the script and began where we left off last Thurs. on singing and finished Act I and a little bit of the beginning
of Act II. The piano helps so much, it’s too bad we can’t have him more often during the week! I have tried to use the midi-system given to us by MTI, but it is too fast and too hard to follow.

Pricilla took some of the cast off into a practice room to work on individualized parts today while I worked with the rest. I think it helped especially those few that I am beginning to worry about. My evil stepsisters can not seem to get their pitches. I have one girl in there that is a goof off and is slightly tone-deaf. I am going to have to watch her and keep reminding her that I can replace her very easily. I am hoping to have Pricilla take them off more, as all three of them need to work on their parts. This is becoming a concern...did I cast the right girls? Will they be able to pull it off? I had a talk with them after rehearsal and told them it is going to take some real work to get their part down. They promised to work harder...we will have to wait and see if that is all it will take. Yikes! The rest of the cast sounds great. Our Jack was so good today, a lot of the students teared up when he sang, me too. Wow, Eric has a great voice...I hope I can get the same caliber of acting out of him! He is young and inexperienced, yet so eager to please and work hard.

September 23, 2003

More time around the piano today, a Mom came in to help with the piano. I am not so sure that she actually helped. She is a “stage mom” and her daughter is playing the role of Little Red Ridinghood. Matt is so much better with this difficult score and he is able to wait for the kids better, but she offered. I think I will try her once more and if it doesn’t get better, I will tell her we just do not need her services. I need those rehearsal tapes for the kids. No sign of them, and so I asked Pricilla to get on the stick. She says she is working on them. I made CD’s of the London cast show for them to all have at
least a version to work with on the singing. I like the quality of that soundtrack better than the Bernadette Peters. The kids do not like it, too bad. It will do until we get the other tapes finished.

September 24, 2003

Today was club fair at all of the lunches and a few of the cast members promoted the show and our Drama club.

Rehearsals were again focused on music and some work on characterization when I could squeeze it in. The music is really coming along, but I have a hard time not jumping right into the acting side of things. I know I have to wait, but it is so hard for me to do that. I am anxious and want to get that part going more. I know it is best to give them this time to work all of the bugs out of the music, but I want to get to blocking soon. The rehearsal was good today. These kids are working hard; I can see the exhaustion on their faces at the end of rehearsal.

September 25, 2003

It is Thursday and it is our day for our Pianist Matt Turner to help out! He is such a fantastic talent... and a sweet guy that the kids all love! The Midi-score, computerized music that came with the MTI stuff is not working with this musical. The music is so different from any other musical I have worked with before and I just can't seem to make it work during rehearsals. We need to stop too many times to work on parts that I can't seem to make it work, so I am glad when we get Matt to help out. He helps with parts and we can go at a slower pace to learn the music first. I will try it again after the music is down. It is also a huge pain to set up and run. I asked one of my former students to make us a rehearsal CD to see if that would help.
All of the music is coming along. The kids are beginning to understand why these songs relate to their characters. We spent today talking about how each song, as we came to it, says something about their character and how they are relating to the other characters at that moment in the show. We talked about how the songs go back to the basic concept and reinforce why their characters do what they do or say what they say. Each student was able to have a revelation in one way or the other about their character and what makes them tick! It was a great time to dig deeper into character development! I am very glad I have researched everything...it really has made a huge difference in my approach to everything. It did take a lot of my summer, but I will never be able to go back to the old way of doing it as I go along. The extra effort really helps me to have quick answers and insights into all aspects of this production.

September 26, 2003

It is a Friday and the kids acted like it. Hard to settle them down to work today! I have now given them my first lecture about not wasting “my” time. I threatened to leave rehearsals in the future if they do not strive to pull it together and use the rehearsal time we have to its fullest extent. That seemed to work today. They had a group discussion about commitment and goals for this show and for themselves. I am very impressed with their strong desire for perfection in this show. It must be the 5th Ave. Awards effect leftover from last year. I do not think this desire comes from them wanting to please me...although I know they do. These awards are setting a higher standard for my kids. I have always known that I had a lot of talent here to work with, but it seems that they now realize it to be true. If they work for it hard enough...they can be as good or better than some of the other high school competition we are up against this year. I will take any
incentive I can get to light a fire under them. They also know it is my Thesis project and I think they see my determination and desire to make this show one of my best.

Today we worked on music again along with a healthy and productive discussion to help them to come up with stage business that might feel appropriate for their characters. Before we block I want them to think about their characters many physical characteristics and how they might interact with the other characters in this show. We are beginning to understand what makes these characters tick and what they want. It is exciting to see the thought that my kids are putting into each of their roles and the desire to make themselves better.

September 27, 2003

"Techie Saturday" and we are almost through with a full day of basic clean-up and organization for this show. The final set design was due today. Chris and Jon showed up to help us make final decisions. We also continued to work on the shapes of the platforms and what they might do for functionality in the show. We talked about levels, camouflage, springboards into other scenes, and a common forest setting where wishes really can come true. I am excited to see my students working on concept decisions and not just told what to do by the professionals. They are all giving their thoughts as to what this forest should be about. Even two actors showed up today and did some drawings of what they envisioned the forest to be. It was good to get many views and to solidify all of these views before the actual building begins.

A full day of working and planning and cleaning... I am getting too old for this kind of labor! But, we do have a final plan... now to get busy and execute that plan.
September 29, 2003

Monday’s with Matt and we worked on the final music problems. Pricilla took some of the leads into the practice rooms to work on problem areas while Matt and I kept the chorus and worked on the big numbers from Act I all the way through Act II. We then brought back the main characters and worked on the big numbers with everyone. Articulation exercises began again first by slowing everything down, over exaggeration, and punching the ends of each line. Our vocal warm-ups that Pricilla does each day do help, but I add the articulation exercises after she has warmed up the voices. Still having trouble with The Witch and Rapunzel, and Jack’s Mother, Rachael needs to really do the outside work needed. You can really tell which students are NOT working at home. We discussed this today and pushed this fact again. Everyone is required to do their Into the Woods homework!

September 30, 2003

We cancelled our field trip to Northwest Afternoon and decided to stay and rehearse instead. We are scheduled to visit them again to promote the show. I felt like we needed to get the blocking going today.

First day of blocking! I pre-blocked the first Act and we made it through about half of it today. Before we did all of this we discussed the use of writing EVERYTHING DOWN in their scripts. My student director, Krysti, constantly watched as each actor wrote down blocking. She was a good watch dog and I think everyone did as they were told. We repeated each scene twice so as to check for levels and triangles and diagonals and character interaction and focus. I am pleased with the first few scenes of Act I and really excited about waiting to do this! They seem to be so much better prepared with the
music and lines and actually eager to add movement. I used to do my blocking fairly early and now I think I have learned not to rush this process.

October 1, 2003

Warm-ups in body movement began the rehearsal today. We did the warm-up about choosing two people to stay in the middle of on stage and changed it up several times. They got a high energy workout and hopefully began to realize how important other characters are on stage in relationship with themselves. Blocking continued into the middle of Act I. We worked as we did yesterday...just plodding through with blocking, writing everything and anything down and checking to see if focus is correct and levels are interesting. A lot of feed back from each student asking for the motivation of their characters movement...this is so great. They are thinking about their characters! We are really getting into what makes each character tick, and react the way they might do, or not do. These kids are really challenging my decisions about movement because they have truly thought out their characters! What a cast to be asking questions like these...they are showing me that they are truly mature and ready for this difficult show and the challenges these characters will give them throughout this experience!

Blocking is really going well, even though some of my thoughts have changed due to the input from the cast and their insights, which is wonderful. That is what I really like to see...them thinking!

October 2, 2003

Warm-ups today were to continue working on movement and delivery of lines. I set up two chairs on stage right and left, then each character took turns walking to each chair while delivering lines, timing the lines to arrive at the end putting the emphasis on the ending of each line and planting and delivery. It was helpful with articulation too and
driving home the point of speaking clearly, with good posture and purpose. We then went from one chair to the other on each syllable. The cast enjoyed this and I encouraged them to do this at home to work on articulation issues of their own.

More blocking today and we are almost through Act I. It is a slow going process, but I am making revisions as I go so it is pretty much cut and dried as to the final blocking. The scenery will be the other future changes in blocking considerations, when that happens later in this process.

October 3, 2003
A Friday again...I do not know why Fridays are such a trial! We continued to finish blocking today on Act I. I think we finally have it down. I am looking forward to next week to see if they can do it on their own. I hate the weeks following blocking and following off book on Oct. 10th. The kids seem to forget everything and rehearsals begin to slow to a crawl. I am hopeful this short rehearsal will give them a little break before next week to get some rest and recharge their batteries. Rehearsal was dismissed at 4:00 today in honor of finishing Act I blocking! We had a pizza night planned, but everyone was too tired to stay. The blocking for the biggest act is completed. It is time I gave them and myself a short break! We will do pizza night later on in the process.

October 4, 2003
Another wonderful way to spend my weekend...with my tech crew! Does that sound sarcastic? I really do mean it this time...they are working every day after school and from 9:00 Am to 5:00PM every Saturday! They are really great and that makes me glad to be here too.

Jon Langrell and Chris Anderson have made the difference in their desire to learn because they are teaching them work ethics and job related skills. The platforms were
structurally complete today. The kids came up with some very interesting shapes for the three platforms. Now covering them will be the next big challenge. We began to paint the muslin today for our tree trunks. We painted both sides to make them fire proof and to keep the colors dark and tree-like. I am trying to find camouflage on E-bay instead of buying it through PNTA or Costume and Display. It would not be cost effective if I can’t find it cheap enough for our budget.

We also talked about the lighting design again and the acting areas. I think some of my blocking genius will need to be rearranged to fit into the acting areas better. Jon is talking small spaces and I have them moving all over the stage. No problem, I will just shrink the movement down into the smaller spaces to utilize the cool lighting design! I am getting very excited about this whole concept. My set and lighting design are coming true, thanks to the help of Chris and Jon.

October 6, 2003

Costume check #1 happened today. The Baker’s costume and his wife’s were completed. The Witch’s robe and purple youthful dress are almost finished, they look great on stage and I am really happy about my color choices. With lighting, it should be wonderful. Next costume check will be Oct. 13th, next Monday. I reminded the kids to buy character shoes or the shoes that their character needs. That is their own responsibility.

Another Monday and this rehearsal seemed to drag along. After costume check, we began to block Act II, but the kids seemed to be coming up with all kinds of questions about characterization and how their characters begin to change in Act II. It was a good thing that we stopped and had a group discussion about Act II and what direction we all wanted it to go. This is where my research was most valuable... in teaching what the
authors wanted to see happen in their show. I could answer almost any question my cast and crew had about motivation or characterization. The kids came away with a deeper understanding of what our goals for this part of the production would be and what they needed to do to make the concept about Act II clear to the audience. Act II is so different from Act I that it is really another play all by itself. We were much more able to approach blocking and completing this process of producing this show now that we had this session.

We got the first scene up to the giant’s first entrance finished today.

October 7, 2003
Act II blocking was on my mind today. I thought yesterday’s long discussion would make everyone ready to complete this tedious job, but some still did not have a clue as to the author’s meaning about certain parts in Act II. It was very cool to see other cast members explaining why things were different in Act II than in Act I. I am proud to see them take the leadership roles and I am proud that they listened during discussions in the first place.

All questions answered...at least for the time being, we continued to work on blocking for Act II. Hopefully we can finish by tomorrow.

Another parent meeting tonight and we had a good turnout.

October 8, 2003
Finally we have completed the blocking process. I think I will have to tighten it all up to fit better in the lighting areas that I have planned with Jon. I think for now, we can just utilize the stage and work on making it smooth. We ran all of Act II today with blocking that was no easy feat. Lines were skipped, articulation was bad, but we have the blocking somewhat down.
Not sure of the Giant’s final death on stage…that is still being discussed as to who it will be created. I want a giant foot, like Monty Python. The kids want to create a huge head with an axe in it…yikes! I will entertain all thoughts until a little farther along in the process. There are many details of the set design that are not finalized and need to be soon!

Parent meeting after rehearsal was great. It lifted my spirits to see the twelve parents that showed up at 6:00 to give assistance to things like costumes, set and the volunteer work needed to get ready for our fundraiser/auction on Nov. 1st. These parents are taking a nice chunk of work off my shoulders and putting it on theirs. I feel somewhat relieved and excited that I can focus on the quality of the show, not so much the little details that can drag me down. The auction is still going to be more responsibility than I really want, but it must be done in order for us to make money for this and our spring shows this year.

Kim Quinn has been working on costumes and handed out materials and patterns. Our costume deadline is set for She plans to come in during rehearsals and get measurements from the cast in the next few days. This was music to my ears. We will not be renting costumes; these moms will make everything or find it at the goodwill. The color swatches were also handed out for some of the moms to do more fabric shopping.

October 9, 2003

Today we began adding blocking to the musical numbers and we got rehearsal tapes handed out so serious work on individual parts could now be done at home. The Tower scene with the Witch and Rapunzel was a tough one today. That song is difficult to articulate and to also do all the movement required at the same time. Lauren, our Witch, is doing well and I am constantly amazed at her ability to dance and sing at the
same time. I just wish her attitude about this song would be more positive. As for Kori, who plays Rapunzel, she was not into the song either. They both feel inadequate and frustrated. The parts are quite difficult and Pricilla needs to help them more. That is something I must talk to her about! I am beginning to hate this song too! It will be even more difficult in costume...the Witch costume is still not solid as to how she will look and what make-up or mask she will need to portray the old verses the young Witch. I still do not know how to make the stick fire sparks, is it a light trick? Is it pyrotechnics? I am nervous about it! I do not see anything wrong with just the pantomime with the stick toward the crotches. It is subtle and no fire permits will be needed!

October 10, 2003

No school today...for the kids that is. It was another awe inspiring “in-service day” that I was required to attend. We got no rehearsing done today, and no tech. Oh well, we are on schedule and doing fine, I am trying not to worry...too much! Today I finalized some concept things in my own mind about the set design. I will run them by my tech crew tomorrow and see what they think. Chris can help with the refinement of my ideas too. I want to get the kids ideas too.

October 11, 2003

“Techie Saturday” again, and we got a big group of volunteers, about ten, to help out with construction of the forest! We finished painting the trees, only a few more to go, Chris wants to wait and see if we have enough. The houses were the big issue today. Do we use a drop? Do we just have furniture representing houses? The kids sat down for a big concept meeting before we began working and tried to nail some of this down. I still wanted the pop-up book idea, but it seemed to be crazy to think about building a huge forty foot book to lay over the stage with the actors jumping up out if it. The trees and
platforms needed to be painted and that is what we ended concentrating on this day. I plan to think and sketch out what I want to see for this pop-up book idea by next Saturday. I gave this as homework to all of my crew too! I am going to go shopping tomorrow and see what ideas I can come up with in regards of the book concept.

October 13, 2003

Warm-ups were on articulation and some were on body movement. Blocking had to be checked for Act I today. What a long day of questions and kids who couldn’t read their own writing in their scripts. My student Director Krysti was at the end of her rope. I am proud she handled each look of confusion with the director’s script version of what was decided last week. We plodded along and got to Act I Scene 5 today. This is almost worst than “off book” day!

Pricilla is still pulling some of the main characters off to work on music while we, the rest of the cast, work with Matt on stage. I will say it again...IS A GODSEND! I have tried to work with the stupid computerized Midi-system and it is worthless for this show. It was fine for last years Music Man, but this show is too fast and it is tough! We could not even get through it so far if it weren’t for Matt playing the piano twice a week, wish it could be more, but he works at another school and has to travel here from a long distance.

Today I set up the “healthy snack” system with all of the parents taking turns bringing in food, which is NOT sugar based, to help the kids get something that will help with rehearsal behavior problems. I have been making this a priority for the last six of my productions and I can see a huge difference in the kids when healthful snacks are provided verses vending machine craziness.
October 14, 2003
It was a late night rehearsal due to our field trip to Northwest Afternoon earlier today. We struggled to work through the blocking of Act I again. I did take time to run articulation and movement exercises before we got started. Warm-ups are necessary to relieve some of that high school energy and to settle them down and get them to focus.

After warm-ups we trudged through the blocking questions again and got almost to the end of Act I. I did get to work on Jack’s character and his Mother for a nice amount of time. They are doing really well, all lines down and I am able to pull some wonderful moments out of these two. It helped them a lot to have that one on one attention. I hope to pull out each little family unit in this cast to work on them each day selectively. We will see!

October 15, 2003
Today I had some attendance issues with the Prince, Jared Rinehart. He is late every day and I had to inform his parents of this. They also found out that his grades are not too impressive at this time and so he is in a bit of trouble. I hope I do not have to replace him. He had better get his act together! He is a valuable cast member and a strong male voice, but he continues to make poor choices in his academics.

We warmed up with vocal warm-ups as we have done every day so far. I was anxious to get into the blocking run-through and finish with Act I. Today the cast had other plans. They needed to have a sit down intervention to discuss personal problems. I was not happy at first, but after getting one of my cast members to act as the negotiator, they wrote down all of the issues they were feeling were a problem and came up with solutions as to how to remedy such problems in the future. They created a huge poster that was called “Drama Trauma”. It was hung in the green room to remind them of
backstage courtesies and rules to keep every one happy. I hope some of these rules will help with short tempers and individual personality conflicts.

Today I tried to complete blocking review on Act I, but it was a day for mending fences between cast members and crew members. I guess we can finish tomorrow? This is important to fix now in order to bring my cast and crew together as a working machine. There is no “I” in team? We will hang up the poster they created and look to it when the next drama arises.

October 16, 2003
After warm-ups on articulation, the discussion came up again about what they were all a buzz about yesterday. I decided to allow the first thirty minutes of rehearsal to review our poster of the rules they all agreed on and then we moved on to the real business of rehearsing. I reminded them that their baskets for the auction were due today and we then had more off task discussion about our auction. It had to be done, but loss of rehearsal time was bad!

Today I began to feel fatigued. I don’t know if it is the fault of the students or mine, but I can’t let things get to me any more. I am the leader of this endeavor and I am the one they all look to for leadership in setting the mood. I am going to keep upbeat and positive. Some problems with boyfriend and girlfriend issues showed up for the first time today. I talked to each cast member that was involved and told them to keep their romances out of the rehearsal process. I explained it was fine to have these romances develop, but I had better not see the romances getting in the way of concentration or attendance during rehearsal time. I was very clear. I hope this solves the problems before they get ugly and I have to replace someone. When they are not in the PAC when their scenes are being worked on, that is when I get irate and end up blowing a fuse.
Blocking went better today, but they still need to review what they have written before they come on stage to do the scene! It feels like we are re-blocking everything twice. This is a huge waste of time. I expressed my concerns with the cast and I am afraid I was not gentle with them. I keep reminding them of the difficult show we are attempting to do and how it will take more effort on their part if we are to have any success.

Parent meeting after rehearsal was great. It lifted my spirits to see the twelve parents that showed up at 6:00 to give assistance to things like costumes, set and the volunteer work needed to get ready for our fundraiser/auction on Nov. 1st. These parents are taking a nice chunk of work off my shoulders and putting it on theirs. I feel somewhat relieved and excited that I can focus on the quality of the show, not so much the little details that can drag me down. The auction is still going to be more responsibility than I really want, but it must be done in order for us to make money for this and our spring shows this year.

October 17, 2003

Costume check #2 today! Wow, these costumes are really looking fabulous. I love how the kids get a better feel for their characters just by trying the costumes on and parading around on stage. This is good stuff!

Warm-ups were not done today due to the time used for costume check. I had to first focus on the drama trauma of this group. Again, the one couple that I talked to yesterday missed the scene they were needed for due to their budding romance, or lack of commitment to the show. I blew up in front of the cast and let the students all have another group sharing about their commitment to this production. This was their second strike. I made that very clear to them and I warned them to get their act together or be
asked to leave rehearsal. They agreed and apologized to the cast. They claim they do not have a romance, but they are not able to concentrate on this rehearsal to the extent that the rest of the cast is doing. This is the best group I have ever worked with when it comes to behavior issues. I feel kind of sad that these few are getting so much of my energy. That energy should be going into directing, not babysitting! Out of a cast of twenty-something, four or five spoil it all for the rest.

Blocking review is now complete for Act I and we moved on to the darker Act II. Hopefully tomorrow will get us into it at a faster clip!

October 18, 2003

Techie Saturday and wow, what we accomplished today! Everyone was working frantically to cover the platforms with carpeting and then muslin cloth. We did manage to get a few of the books built too. They are really going to be wonderful. I got the idea from a cardboard book I found in a craft store. We are using as much scrap wood as possible to build these huge books, but that leaves a lot of patching and dutchmaning of the cracks. These books will take a lot of work!

Jon and Chris are so valuable to these kids and to me! I just mention my ideas and they help us to come up with solutions that are good for the budget and good for design. I am so grateful for them. I have learned a lot from them too! It was a good work day.

October 20, 2003

Well, Steve, my husband, took off yesterday to Europe for the week on business. This week is going to be tough! I hope I can juggle Motherhood, and job without his help...it will not be easy! Today I barely made it home after rehearsal in time to feed my daughter. My family does so much to let me play “Drama teacher”. The balance is not
good...way too heavy toward the drama side! How do I fix it??? You wanted my thoughts and frustrations...Well...THIS IS THE BIGGEST!

The kids did OK today...we are getting this music and blocking down! Some are even ready to take it to the next step...adding acting, while singing and moving on stage. I say "SOME" not all! Maybe I should say "MOST". I can really tell who is working at home on their lines and songs and who is not. It is so obvious that Shauna and Eric Hagreen are putting extra time into their parts. Justin, my Baker, is also working extra hours; it shows in his delivery of lines and singing. He is also a leader as to how to behave during rehearsals. He sets the tone with a diligent work ethic. He listens to all the nuggets I throw his way and gets made at the others in the cast when they goof off. I hope they follow his example and settle down and do the work needed to make this show great! Lauren is also doing a fine job as the Witch. Her music is difficult, but she knows every line and lyric. The smaller roles seem to be having the problems. Maybe they think no one will notice. I am having one-on-one conversations now with each of them to try and encourage a better effort. Only time will tell, but everyone I talked to seemed to be grateful for this type of time spent with them. I am glad this cast is not too big!

October 21, 2003

It is my 25th wedding Anniversary today...my husband is gone and I am pooped out from a very long and rough rehearsal. No candle light dinner? No husband? Oh, well, I guess I’ll write in my diary. That will make it all better?

Today, to add to my depression, many were gone, due to sickness, doctor appointments, and who knows what else. I have instructed them to phone in before 2:45 each day if they are not going to be here, but maybe they can’t figure out how to use a phone? I think they just don’t want to face my wrath! Attendance has not been a real
problem until now. I am going to have to replace the major offenders or double cast them and reduce their performances, which will upset them, but hopefully teach them something about commitment.

Maybe I am just not happy with my own life today... am I being too hard on them?

October 22, 2003

Warm-ups were fun today. They needed to let off some energy, so we did a lot of physical games. Articulation and vocal warm-ups were also done before we really got into rehearsal. I think this is an absolute must when doing a musical.

Lines went very well tonight, only a few had problems. This could be due to the pay a quarter every time you blow a line technique that I enforced today. We will make some money to pay for the budget of this show... or maybe a latte for the director at the very least. Act I, scenes five and six were our focus and I am glad to say we made it through them twice.

The dance choreography was added today. Well, at least it has a start. I did not like some of the steps, so I need to re-think it again. The whole cast is on stage and they do not fit well. My choreographer, Emma, who also plays the cow, Milky White, is doing a great job. I need to stay out of it more and let her do it. I just want it to be done! She has much better ideas about how to arrange them than I do. I want it to be very simple, but it needs to have some nice group movement to it. Emma and I talked and tried to figure out some of the rough spots after rehearsal today.
October 23, 2003
Warm-ups were all about the finale dance today. Emma took over for me and re-worked the dancing. I decided to just let her have control of it. It was very hard to let this go, but I can always tweak it after she re-works it, if I see something amiss.

Vocal warm-ups followed and then we got into the first scene of Act II. How to make an earthquake effect look realistic? That was our problem. I think the scenery, sound effects and lighting will have to help us along on this! But, we really tried to get the feeling of what it might feel like to have the earth moving and bouncing due to a giant walking around. I am pleased with what we accomplished today!

October 24, 2003
Warm-ups were fast and furious today. We did some physical stretching and vocal stretching. It was homecoming tonight so, the kids wanted to rehearse and get to the football game. We worked with scene two of Act II. I am pleased with the song “Agony” and with the two Princes’ who are much better at their lines and lyrics today. This will be a highlight of the show, both this song and its earlier version in Act I. They have the characters down and I am pleased with the singing.

James, who plays Rapunzel’s Prince, is having some trouble with his movement; I think this is due to his lack of experience on stage. Jared, Cinderella’s Prince, does really well, but he is experienced and knows how to milk an audience. I am also concerned about James behavior issues and general buy in to the cast mantra and work ethic. He is part of the romance issue I am getting sick of dealing with and I would hate to have to discipline him. I am hoping this too shall pass and he will become more committed to excellence.
October 25, 2003

It is Saturday again, more all day tech! I am kind of wishing for a day off, but I guess there is not time for dreaming!

The set is really starting to show signs of life. The concept is beginning to be very evident. The woods are going to be wonderful and will pop-up as I had envisioned them to do. I can't believe how many tie ropes are going to be used to make this forest grow from the floor up to the sky...it is amazing how Chris has taught the kids to rig scenery. We decided on the giant today...she will be reminiscent of the giant foot in Monty Python. No giant head...that might be too disturbing, what with the ax sticking out of it. The foot will be easy to build out of flats and I will go shopping for fabric to make a bottom half of her dress. Her sandal will get stuck in the pitch, as the script calls for and then she will trip. Chris says he will rig it and teach one of the techs to operate it. I am excited and we even put the flats together to begin the process. I need someone to draw the giant foot and sandal, I will ask around and find someone who it artistic in a comedic way.

Work on the giant books continues...they are difficult and will be many more hours of work before we can even use them in rehearsal. But, they are really cool and will be perfect for our concept.

October 27, 2003

Warm-ups were only vocal today. Everyone wanted to get right into the rehearsal and that was fine with me too. I still keep harping about hitting the ends of lines. Only time will tell if this really helps with the audience being able to understand every word these kids utter...I hope it does as that is the biggest challenge in working with students, articulation, pronunciation and projection.
Act I, scenes 1 and 2 were our focus today. I had trouble with the blocking of the Narrator and how he maneuvers around the huge books telling the story. I think it is a bit cluttered and he uses the same entrances and exits too much. We worked with totally unexpected entrances, like from the orchestra pit. That was OK, but detracted from the plot. I will continue to re-think this blocking and try to improve upon it!

Lines were very good today, even the small parts are better! Today I needed to add the little birds for the first time in the house of Cinderella. I asked three little girls to participate in this and their parents brought them to get some basics. I think they will be really cute and they should be able to go home with their parents after this scene as they will not be needed any more in the play. I think they will be cute.

I reminded them of Northwest Afternoon field trip again tomorrow and our late rehearsal tomorrow night and then we dismissed for the day.

October 28, 2003

We were on TV again today pushing the auction and the musical. After returning, we have another late night rehearsal. I think they like these because they have more time to unwind after school and get homework done. Too bad it almost kills me! I am too old to work 12 to 14 hour days!

Act I, scenes 3 and 4 were really good today. We figured out the choreography to “Giants in the Sky” and I like how they all move off the stage without taking away from Jack’s best song! This one is a show stopper…his voice is amazing! More choreography was fixed with Cinderella and the Baker’s wife for “On the Steps of the Palace”. I think the choreography is almost complete. I have done a lot of it and I am not sure that that is a good thing. Emma has helped when I run out of ideas. We also worked on “Stay with
Me”, the Witch and Rapunzel’s child abuse scene set to music. It will be highly effective without being too violent, I hope. We need to tweak it!

Late night rehearsals are tiring...I like the after school variety much better!

October 29, 2003
We warmed up with a line session first thing today. Each person got with someone who needed help and I gave them the first 30 minutes to do nothing but work with each other on lines. LINES...still not down! When will they figure out that I cannot do anything with the acting if the lines are not there first? I gave them this pep talk very forcefully today. They promised to work harder and get the line issue resolved.

Today I worked with Justin and Shauna on the Baker and his wife’s scenes. They were a shining example of what can be accomplished when lines are down. The whole cast watched as we really got into the subtext of the scene and they made it begin to come to life.

I am told there is no scene six in Act I...I think I made a mistake and counted wrong! In Act I there are only five scenes total. This gives more time to go back and rehearse problem scenes in Act I. The calendar is not correct, or so my students pointed that out to me today...a little late, but whatever. I do not teach Math!

October 30, 2003
My kids are still struggling with lines, or at least getting them completely accurate without ad lib. Some, about ten of them, have memorized theirs and everyone else’s too, but most need to be working on them at home or off stage when they are not needed in a scene! We warmed-up on vocals only today and got on with the business of the day...rehearsal.
We were kicked out of the PAC today, which made for a more intimate environment. This is how I caught the line problems. It is sometimes nice to switch things up and get closer to the actors in order to see problems not as easily seen on the big stage. We had a good rehearsal and ironed out many of the problem lines. We did a warm-up called “fast forward” to get them to pick up their cues and keep the pace moving. It was obvious who didn’t know their lines doing this exercise!

October 31, 2003

Happy Halloween! It is freezing today! The kids all wanted to go to the final football game, so rehearsals were only for the leads. Our football team might win the divisional championship tonight! Cool, but disruptive to our schedule. Oh well, it was a good rehearsal for the leads in an intimate environment, my room, and not the stage. I am glad we had the chance to work on the details.

November 1, 2003

It was Auction/Variety Show night! The parents were here setting up early this morning and getting things going while we worked on set construction. What a hectic day!!!! But, what a wonderful item was had by all and I think we made a lot of money. Local celebrity, Pat Cashman, was so great, doing stand-up at the auction, signing autographs, and performing with the kids and a few of us teachers on stage in the variety show portion after the auction. He is my hero! The show was a huge success!

Set construction was put on the back burner today due to the preparation of the big show. Some work went well, like the platforms, but the big items, like the books are taking a lot of time to complete. I hope the tech kids can work all next week after school to get those books completed. We did paint a lot of tree trunks.
November 3, 2003

Another Monday, and after a very busy weekend for all of us!!!! We are all dragging. I guess that is why the incident happened today that forced me to call in parents and ask two students to leave rehearsal.

During rehearsal, the two actors that I have had previous problems with went missing when their scenes came up. I had a suspicion that they were in the parking lot because one had a car out there. I sent my student director to fetch them, but they did not come in until an hour later. At that point, I asked them to leave rehearsal and not to return until I had a chance to talk with parents. This, needless to say, caused a huge interruption in the rehearsal process.

One of the mothers came into rehearsal about a half hour after this incident and I had to leave rehearsal to my student director to handle while I talked with her and the offending student. I did not even get a chance to return to that rehearsal due to the issues I had to deal with. The rest of the cast rehearsed and went home while I was still talking this out with the mother. It was decided that this girl would not be at rehearsals for one week. I agreed and didn’t think any more about it. Tomorrow I will most likely need to call the boy’s parents and see what they think about this situation. This is where the director turns teacher and has to deal with other issues outside of the production realm.

What a day!

November 4, 2003

Matt, our pianist, was here today and so we worked on some musical issues first. Pricilla worked individually with soloists and then the few groups in which parts are required for in this show. This was our vocal warm-up for the day.
Rehearsal was centered on Act I, scenes 4-5 with Matt playing for us on stage. Everything went well and we got the timing down better on some of these songs.

I am concerned that I did not yet hear from the boy I had to deal with yesterday. I am trying to give him time to tell his parents first. Then I will step in and talk to them. I try to have the students take the responsibility on issues like these. They need to own up to their own mistakes. We will just have to wait and see, but if I do not hear by tomorrow, I am planning on re-casting the role with Brandon, who has been a sort of understudy for all of the main male leads. His part as the Steward can easily be replaced with someone outside of this cast. I will decide tomorrow.

November 5, 2003

Warm-ups were energetic and useful today. I think the cast is in need of getting rid of a lot of excess energy lately and warm-ups seem to help. After vocal warm-ups, we got down to work and had a productive rehearsal of the first two scenes of Act II. We worked on “Your Fault” today and I had them just do it as lib like they were just walking around blaming each other. It was exciting to see such energy they all brought to it. It almost choreographed itself! That was a great exercise in letting them explore the real meaning of the song and the way each character points the blame toward another. A good character development exercise! After that we tried to clean up the blocking and make it work with levels and triangles and focus on which one is receiving the blame. I am happy with this song now.

The discipline issue is still not resolved. No word from the boy’s parents. The students have told me that he plans not to tell them for fear of their punishment. I need to call and find out. I will try and talk to him first thing tomorrow.
November 6, 2003

Entrances are muddy. I had to go over their blocking many, many times today.

Why can’t they write important blocking and other things down? I have a huge supply of pencils, all sharpened and ready for use. I demand they write it down, I watch them do it, but then they don’t bother to read their notes! What is that all about?

Dentist appointments, etc., and we are missing Shauna...hard to rehearse without a Baker’s Wife. Also missing some to flu!!! I told them to get flu shots...I did! The most frustrating thing about high school theatre is the absenteeism! It kills rehearsals and makes the process slow to a snails crawl.

I have asked the Mr. Harris, the Orchestra director, when they plan to get together...nothing firm yet. I am hoping they are rehearsing. They had better be! Mr. Harris assures me they will be OK...but, I feel insecure. Why do these two that work with me seem to constantly let me down?

Choreography is a mess! Not a lot of big dance numbers, but I need Emma to take this on...I have not got the time to do it all! Opening number, “Into the Woods”, isn’t too bad...it does need MORE...it is too plain!

I hate having people missing! This day is a waste of time! I call rehearsal off early out of frustration and anger and I went home too.

November 7, 2003

I finally replaced my Rapunzel’s Prince with Brandon today, after talking with James. He said he would rather not be in the show than to face his parents, so I let him go. It is Brandon’s senior year and he has been learning the part all along, I hope he will do well.
We did the exercises that Wess taught us in Shakespeare class this summer on purposefully making each ending of each sentence louder than the beginnings of sentences. If the kids can remember to do this, come performances, I believe this will help. We have been making this a regular warm-up for all of our rehearsals in order for it to really work, and the kids do not like it! We also slowed down each line and over articulated them. The kids hate this too, but we are working on making every line in this show understandable!

Had trouble with Narrator’s positions and blocking again. I am not sure where he should be on stage…a part of the story or totally separate or a blend. Today I tried them all and still can’t make up my mind!

It is a Friday…maybe I am getting overly tired…when do I get a rest?

November 8, 2003

Techie Saturday! Jon and Chris were here early today! The set looks like it is really going to be wonderful and together earlier than any show I have ever done (which really is a complement). It is either due to this thesis project or hiring a scenic designer that works miracles. I think it must be both!

We worked on finishing, covering and painting the main three platforms. A parent brought in a carpet remnant and some carpet pad last Saturday and we got them all covered today. Roofing nails worked better than the staple gun…we found this out after a solid day, last week, of stapling with not good results. I think the platforms are going to work just fine now. We covered them with muslin, after the carpet, and painted them. Paint does not work on plain carpet…too absorbent.

Lighting colors and textures were finalized today. Jon will go to work on the light plot for the show now and my tech crew kids will begin to get some things hung and
ready next week after school. Jon is such a wonderful talent and leader to the tech kids. It is amazing how hard they work and how much more they learn with a professional to guide them!

We finished rigging the trees and worked on the camouflage netting tree tops. I am not sure I see Chris’ vision yet...But I know he understands the concept and will do a wonderful job of making my dreams come true. The trees will be made of fabric to move and grow from the floor up, like the pop-up book design I want. I wanted Lycra fabric, but Chris says it will be too loose. After much discussion about what kind of leaves...we have decided on pages of books. This fits right in with the concept. It will be wonderfully symbolic and we can even drop them from the sky without worry about hurting anyone.

We finally decided on painted muslin hung by tie rope and some sort of camouflage stuff for the canopy. This type of forest will react wonderfully when we need the earthquake effects as the giant walks. It lends a lot of flexibility and bounce to what we want to see happen.

A long day of working, but we accomplished many things! I am tired, yet enthusiastic about what I see taking place.

November 10, 2003

No School today...it is an in-service day. But, I took it off as a sick day to rehearse!!! The kids met at the PAC at10:00 and we rehearsed until 4:00PM. We got a lot accomplished today!

Another in-service day, but most teachers worked in their own classrooms on grades. A few meetings needed me in attendance, but we held rehearsal anyway with the help of one of the moms, who came in to baby-sit while my student director ran rehearsal.
It was a wonderful long day of getting caught up with all of the little things we have left for more time. This was a great day for working on the “acting”! We made it through the whole show!!!

November 11, 2003
Veteran’s Day... No school, except for us! Rehearsal was from 10:00 until 4:00 today. It was great to have an extra day to run the show again without interruptions.

We made it through the whole play again and it gets smoother every time we do it! I am so encouraged. The acting is good but, still some botched lines and missed entrances. I had them do a “fast forward” exercise again on getting those lines and cues moving faster. This show simply can not drag!

We began to use the set more today. As pieces were finished we whisked them on and got the actors used to them. Props have been used more extensively too. The big books need to be moved on and off just so the tech crew gets faster at doing it. They are heavy and tall and require two techs to move them.

I am thinking of making the tech crew the seven dwarves so they will be in costume and in character when they move scenery. I have a mom that is looking into shirts with the names of the dwarves on the back. This is in keeping with the fairy tale concept.

The rehearsal was long, productive and we accomplished much!

November 12, 2003
Warm-ups today were wild and very physical. We did Kitty want a home” which gets them up and moving. The vocal warm-ups were calm and we spent more time on correct breathing today. I also had them walk while doing some of the warm-ups to help with coordination.
Act I scenes 1-3 were our main focus today. We tried to flex the trees in the earthquake scenes and I think it is going to work and give a nice special effect when we get the lighting added to it. Tech crew continued to work on sound and lighting and finishing up the set pieces that need some finishing touches.

November 13, 2003

We warmed up with a relaxing tape today and I think this helped with some anxiety issues some students have been telling me they are feeling. Grades have fallen, parents are on the warpath, and they are in need of getting more rest...which is difficult during the last few weeks of production. These kids are running low on sleep and I am afraid of the viruses that are going around the cast. Everyone seems to be sick with something. Better now than closer to production, I guess!

Again the finale is rough...I can’t seem to get them all to fit on the stage with the platforms. It is hard to dance on those because of the steep angles. I am going to have to either move the platforms off for the final scene in Act I, or figure out a different way to fit them all on the platforms somehow. Oh, so many mysteries to solve...so little time!

The acting was fine today, but the cues are still too slow! We need more warm-ups on getting those cues to get picked up faster.

November 14, 2003

Before we warmed up today, I talked to the cast about getting their auto biographies that need to be written for the program. We took the time to work on those together. After vocal warm ups, we worked on cues and trying to overlap them. I used the Witch and Rapunzel to show how to pick up cues and split them into their smaller groups to work together. They got the idea and now see the importance of it, but sometimes it is the music that slows them down.
This will be our biggest challenge...to keep the pace moving without leaving the orchestra in the dust. Speaking of the Orchestra...I had a chance to bring a few of the violinists and other members in to let them set in the audience and listen to the cast rehearse with the piano. Matt was wonderful and he pointed out the crazy musical cues that are the most difficult. It was a good thing to have them come in today and watch, before we have them added to our rehearsals in the next weeks. What would I do without Matt? I am going to make sure Mr. Harris comes in and listens too. This is a great idea!

November 15, 2003

Techie Saturday and what a lot of work we accomplished today! A big group of parents came in to paint and help with other projects that we were just not getting finished. They were wonderful and we finally got the forest hung and the platforms completed. We have been using this scenery unfinished and that is why we haven't been able to finish it. Saturday's are it.

Jon worked with the students on lighting design again and they were so busy all day they hardly took time for lunch. It is going to be some wonderful lighting design! The gel colors are so rich and we have hung almost every light we own, which is a lot!

Chris worked with the parents and kids to get the forest completed and ready for some testing of its flexibility. It worked great; except we ripped some of the trunks by pulling fly too tight and they had to be fixed. The Wal-Mart muslin I purchased for eighty-eight cents a yard did not hold up very well. I guess you get what you pay for! All's well in the end, we just shortened the tree trunks a little and they were as good as new. Chris also helped with the rigging of the harnesses to fly the Baker and Jack into the tree in Act II. This was very educational and the actors took their first flight on stage. Everything needed tweaking and that will be next Saturday's project to perfect.
November 17, 2003
This begins technical rehearsal week along with regular rehearsal. I try to include the tech crew in some of the warm-ups to create a feeling of working as a team. It is fun to watch the cast atmosphere change when we add them to our cast; it changes the dynamics for the better. The tech crew lecture was given...they are to be listened to and respected. They run the show and what they tell you to do is law. I find it is always good to get them all on the same page before you try to run a technical rehearsal. Actors like to think they are in charge...they need to know their place.

Rehearsal was slow due to the addition of light and sound cues that the cast was not used to and the tech people were not good at yet. It is a stressful week! I hope tomorrow goes better than it did today. We add the orchestra soon and that in itself will be a nightmare. This too shall pass, and the show will be wonderful...keep telling yourself that Pam!

November 18, 2003
We began to use the tech crew in their roles as dwarves today moving the scenery and I even tried to just plant them on stage, in the forest, like they belonged there. I am not sure about this...I will have to wait and see if it really adds or detracts from the overall concept. The tower has problems getting in its place, something is in the way or it is tight space back there. Chris will have to check it out and see if something can be done.

Rehearsal was centered on scenes four and five of Act I today, with a lot of extra work on the choreography for the finale. I am worried this is not going to get to be very smooth. We do not have the greatest dancers!
More orchestra members set in with us today and grouped around the piano with Matt. He is the heartbeat of the show... without him my actors can not do anything... do I have a back up? NO... I am thinking I had better get another pianist lined up, just in case!

Cues are still too slow, but some of it really has to do with the music. I do not know if this can be fixed! I will discuss this with David Harris tomorrow.

November 19, 2003

Act II, scenes 1 and 2 were on our schedule today. After warming up we went full throttle into it and did these scenes almost three times through! They can see the light at the end of the tunnel now. Time for goofing off is no longer there. I can see the commitment level growing stronger. I think the talk of when the 5th Avenue is planning to be here has really got them excited. They all want to impress those evaluators.

Tech worked on lighting again today and we began to use some of it to get an idea of what the scene might look like. Mr. Wiser is getting the microphones ready and we will be able to use those tomorrow! That will add another fly in the ointment. I hope they work. Sound cues are a mess! I am relying on Mr. Wiser to get this together and I have never worked with him before! I am really nervous about this. Sound is such a huge part of a good musical. I have to trust someone that I have never worked with before and I do not do that well! What choice do I have? None, I know nothing about sound!

November 20, 2003

Parent Teacher Conferences were scheduled for today. So, I scheduled an all day rehearsal... my boss was NOT happy. She stormed in and demanded I return to the gym and sit there all day to talk with the parents of my other students. I called in a parent to help me out and the kids rehearsed without me. I hate trying to do my full-time job and a
show! How thin can I stretch? Not to mention the humiliation of having your boss drag you back into reality…the job I really do get paid to do!

Well…I am so happy that this happened. They went through the whole show in record time today. I need to leave more often! Using the sympathy card really does something to get them motivated. They figured out that they can do this show without me, which is what I needed them to see! Miracles happen in the weirdest ways.

November 21, 2003

Of course the cast is back to their old dragging of the feet during rehearsal time. Yesterday’s lesson is forgotten, but I at least KNOW that they are capable of getting through this whole musical in less than five hours…that is good!

We worked on Act II today and I am impressed with the scene where the giant talks to them all. They are showing good signs that they can work as an ensemble. The emotions are very believable and not overdone. I am pleased with the progress. Now, if the other problems with technical stuff would go away…I could rest easier.

The posters came today and they are cool. I had to get a bunch of people, parents and students, to go out into the community and get the posters up! We are lacking in good publicity, even though I have a responsible mom doing it…it is very difficult to get people to drive all the way out to the outskirts of Covington to see a high school play.

November 22, 2003

Techie Saturday is here at last, a time to fix everything that went wrong during last weeks rehearsals and a time complete those last remaining projects, like the giant’s foot!

I am really stressed, but I am so tired it is hard to tell. That is good. I hope that no one could sense my anxiety. Chris did come up to me a lot today and ask me if I was
alright. I hate that. That means I am letting it show through! Yes...I am just fine...really...I am! Don't worry about me guys, just keep working!

We held an all cast rehearsal today too. While the tech crew worked on set, lighting, and sound, the cast and I went into my room and worked on acting, singing, and cues. It worked out to be a good time to clean up the choreography problems too. That terrible finale in Act I is now looking presentable. I still do not know why it has been such a pain. Emma and I rearranged some people and made three groups that are not all together. It looks better and they are not tripping over each other as much.

After lunch we went in and helped with tech stuff and forgot about the other problems of the day. It was good to see cast members working with tech to get the job done. That is the team work I try to instill. 

November 24, 2003

It is the Monday before Thanksgiving break, so we held a late rehearsal including the pit orchestra. Not bad for adding the orchestra this late. I think having them in for the last few weeks during rehearsal helped more than anything. They are actually pretty good. A little slow. The actors are having a hard time watching the conductor, so I think we will have to raise the pit level and get the piano up higher. The kids know Matt and can follow him easier than Mr. Harris. Until they are all up to speed that will be what need to be worked over and over...those entrances and cues!

It is so nice to have a lengthy practice, but tiring too. I could see the exhaustion on their faces, cast and crew members alike. I hope this week will not make any of them so run down that they catch a germ! We worked until 9:30 tonight...that is late!

Tomorrow will be better, it always is! Gosh, I am an optimist!
November 25, 2003

Another long rehearsal with all tech and orchestra elements combined. These are the tough rehearsals and so draining on everyone! We were much better with cues, but still dragging the tempo. I had a long talk with Matt and Mr. Harris and they say they are not dragging it...they blame it on the actors. I am the great go between...I told them to both speed it up. That seemed to help, but we need more speed.

The blocking looks all bunched up because they are trying to stay in their light. I must ask Jon to fix that so they can move farther down stage and utilize the stage the way I blocked it. He will not like that...it will mess up his texture lighting, I can hear it all now! Too bad, who is the director here? Me!

The scenery moves on and off too slow, we need a tech rehearsal just to get that down...this Sat, or Sun.? I must schedule one! The platforms are coming on and off at the wrong times. I need to talk to Samantha and her crew to work on this problem!

November 26, 2003

This was a half day before Thanksgiving break. We held another late night rehearsal including the pit orchestra and adding the technical aspects as much as possible. Adding the technical aspects of any show is a huge and daunting task, but these kids did a professional job. They were observant and froze the action when it was necessary to adjust something like a light of a microphone of even a piece of scenery. They had their note books around their necks and took down individual notes when told to do so from the conductor, technical directors, or myself. You would have thought they were working at the Paramount Theatre, The 5th Ave., or even on a Broadway stage. I was extremely proud of the behavior on stage and backstage.
No rehearsals were planned during the Thanksgiving holidays, so we had to get as much accomplished as possible in order to feel ready to open the following week on Dec. 3rd. Saturday was to be a tech rehearsal only and that is why this day and night of rehearsing was so important. We worked late into the night and had a complete run-through of the entire show. There were a lot of mistakes, but we made it through and everyone did their job. Many notes were taken and I plan to thoroughly go through them for everyone one Monday’s dress rehearsal.

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving and I plan to cook all day for my family and then get myself back in here on Friday morning to finish up the major set issues...like the painting of the houses/books that must be completed, etc... If it takes all weekend, we must finish the things that we have not gotten around to yet. I have a long list. Some parents and my faithful tech crew have committed to being here too...I am not alone, thank goodness!

November 28, 2003
This was a work day and that is what we did. I am so tired, yet we got many things checked off the main list. Tomorrow Chris and Jon will be back in to help with the technical run through of the show and the lighting plot must be finished tomorrow. I have asked some students to come in again and help if they can on these big projects. I think we will have a good sized crowd tomorrow too. Today was very successful, but we need more time!

November 29, 2003
This was out Final Technical Rehearsal without the cast and orchestra. The scenery was set backstage and the tech crew went through each scene and timed themselves to try and cut the scene change times down. Chris was here to help with this, but I notice he tried to get them to take the lead and do it themselves. If something just
didn’t work, he would stop them and ask them to think of a better plan of attack. It took
time for this, but it was a valuable learning experience for the students. I am so glad he
helped them to help themselves.

Jon did not have as much patience with the kids as Chris did. He gets very upset
with them and forgets who he is working with sometimes. He expects a lot out of them
and they do their best to please him, but sometimes it is not enough. I had to step in
twice to remind him that they are not professionals. He does get a bit wound up and
forgets the importance of the process. My lighting tech, Paxton, will be running the light
board and has done most of the work, but Jon has a hard time turning it over to him. I did
have to intervene and ask him to let Paxton run the show for the tech rehearsal. He did,
but when a problem arose, he would take back the control of the board. I asked Paxton if
her learned how to handle the problems and he said he already knew how, but Jon didn’t
give him a chance.

The sound issues were still very huge. I absolutely hate the expensive Sendheizer
microphones we were duped into buying last spring. The old lapel mics are not as
sensitive and seem to do a better job. I did not rent enough mics from PNTA, after being
promised some from the church that rents the Kentlake PAC every Sunday. They did not
follow through on their promise and let me in the lurch without enough microphones. It
is Christmas and PNTA has no more rentals to rent. The cast will have to double up on
some of the mics. Mr. Wiser is doing a great job, but there are so many problems still to
be worked out before opening night!
December 1, 2003

Dress rehearsal was OK. Nothing great, still a lot of mistakes and very slow, but I am hoping we learned many things from it. Sound, lighting, and set issues are still my number one concern.

The kids are doing a great job with their acting and the orchestra is playing faster, although not fast enough. There are still pauses in the cues and I am certain it is because that music is so difficult; the orchestra is taking it slow.

The lobby was decorated tonight by my costume mom and her daughter who plays Cinderella. It is beautiful and good for advertising. I wish the posters were up in more places, but there was some misunderstanding with our rival high school and they have been tearing down our posters all over town and putting up theirs for The Crucible, which runs the same time as our show. I am unable to do anything about all of this, so I will just have to accept it as fate. What a mess.

Well, it is going to be close as to whether or not we have a great show. There are always big doubts before opening night. We still have tomorrow night to pull it all together. I have faith in my kids...we will be OK!

December 2, 2003

The final dress rehearsal went well with only a few major glitches. Rapunzel’s wig is not finished. Some of the tower and mother tree is not painted. I noticed the book/houses still have a few things to be completed, but the orchestra is moving up the pace and the acting is superb! I think we might have a show. The costumes are great and the colors are wonderful. We had some trouble with the fog machine again, but I think it can be repositioned to improve the look we want.
I am going to bed before I fall over at the computer. Today, my job was finished. It is all up to the students from here on out. I turned it all over and thanked them for all their hard work to make my dreams come true...and they have! I can rest...in peace!

December 3, 2003
Opening Night! Finally, we made it! Not a sell out crowd, but around 350 seats were filled. That is great for us. We don’t normally get that many on opening nights.

Everything went well. I think the pace was slow and that will fix itself as the run progresses. The kids were pleased with their performances. Only a few major bobbles that I noticed, some skipped lines and an occasional glitch in the scenery changing. The overall effect was exactly what we envisioned it to be and then some. The colors, the subtle things we did to make Act II unique to Kentlake audiences, and our overall concept was met. I liked our version of this show and many other people were in agreement. They said many nice things to the students after the show and to me too. It obviously hit the mark.

So, now a night of well deserved rest! And on to our second night with a slightly different cast. To bed...to sleep...to recharge the batteries.

December 4, 2003
Wind Storm...no power! NO SHOW!!! I almost died trying to get to work this morning...trees falling all around the car. It wasn’t until about 8:00 AM that I began to worry about the show. I finally heard over the radio that school was cancelled, which was great because I could not get there! I finally maneuvered my way around four different routes and got to the school. It was deserted. My principal greeted me and informed me about the cancellation of the production that night. She asked me to try to get a hold of the cast and crew to let them know, but all of the phones were out too.
What a huge mess. After about an hour or two I gave up and tried to get home. Most of
the roads were still blocked with debris and it took me a long time to get safely home. I
was upset, but knew there was nothing I could do about this.

December 5, 2003
Wind Storm…no power! NO SHOW AGAIN! Frustrating, but no power, no
lights, no heat, and no revenue to help pay the bills for this production. I will just sit tight
in my cold house and wait! This is the pits!

December 6, 2003
Wind Storm…no power! NO SHOW AGAIN! Wow, what a lovely situation.

Today I waited for the power company to make the school a priority…yeah, right, on a
Saturday?

December 7, 2003
Power was finally restored on Sunday around 10:00 AM…but, no show scheduled
today! I am concerned. We stand to lose a lot of revenue! How will the performances
be after such a long rest? When will we reschedule the three missed shows? I guess I
will just have to accept this as an “ACT OF GOD”! I will meet with my boss on
Monday…if the power stays on that long.

December 8, 2003
Power on and it is show time tomorrow! Well, we had a quick run through
without the orchestra after school today. The only good thing that I can see from this
disaster is we have all gotten a lot of much needed rest! The cast and crew are ready to
go and their energy levels are way out there! We plan to hold a special wind storm, half
price show tomorrow night to help make up some of the lost revenue. I think the whole
school has bought the cheap tickets today and it may be a big crowd for a Tuesday night.
We will just have to do the best we can do and hope to make back the money spent to
produce this musical. Other rescheduled shows will be on the weekend, we will do a
Saturday and a Sunday matinee now. Not great, but the next week is the week before
Winter break and the PAC is booked solid. I do not like winter musicals, too much
money at stake to mess with the weather and its unpredictability in the Northwest.

December 9, 2003
WOW, we were almost sold out tonight! I guess everybody felt sorry for us and
decided to show up to help get our money back on this one! That was a real boost to our
self-esteem and pockets. I hope the next shows have good crowds too!

Nothing but rave reviews! We are a hit. I had so many people tell me that they
loved it, and that they don’t usually like Sondheim’s musicals, but this one was
wonderful. The complements were greatly appreciated by all of us. I think this night
might be the kid’s best energy level night due to the anxiousness of not doing the show as
planned. They were poised and ready to go. Fingers are crossed for the next nights!

We had some trouble with a few lines and the pace was a little slow. Not bad for
all that lost time to perfect the show. I am proud of everyone.

December 10, 2003
The 5th Avenue Theatre people were supposedly coming tonight...or at least they
requested tickets to be kept at the door. I did not have any time to worry about it and I
didn’t see anyone in the audience that looked like evaluators, but who knows? It was a
good night although the growth of the forest in Act I sis not go well. It has some trouble
rising. The crew had to take it down and bring it up again. I think it got hung up on the
mother tree set piece. I will work it out tomorrow before the show and try to get the crew
to see what can be done. It was not that noticeable to the audience, but I really hated it. I
know the kids were panicked back stage. They are such a good crew! I hate for them to feel bad about their part of this show. The rest of the set performed wonderfully.

The orchestra is still dragging it a little. I went backstage during intermission and told my actors to try and speed it up, to force the orchestra to go faster. I think they gave it a shot, but Act II tempo is not as slow as Act I and it was hard to notice a difference.

This was not a big crowd tonight! I am very concerned about the money issues...even though I can not do anything about it. Publicity is fine and word of mouth is bringing in a lot of new faces. I can not worry about this any more; it is a waste of my energy. I am going to bed!

December 11, 2003

What a great audience we had tonight! The kids could feel the energy and it made a huge difference in the pace of the show. We cut off about twenty minutes! I think my talk to Dave Harris did a little bit of good. I also asked Matt to help keep Dave up to speed. The music was a lot better, more energy, more spunk, and more fun to listen to. The cast told me they also noticed it. I told them to thank the orchestra members and to especially thank Mr. Harris and Matt.

During vocal warm-ups before each show, we end with a chance to tell someone in the cast what you think they did well on in the last show. It makes a lot of people feel better about their own talent they bring to this cast. We brought in the orchestra tonight and thanked them before the show...maybe that had some positive effect? I think so, but I can’t prove it. Compliments are very important.

Well tomorrow is another day and hopefully another good audience. We will see...time to get sleep!
December 12, 2003

This was the best night of my life! OK, at least it was up there with a few others that were fulfilling and meaningful. Derek was here to evaluate the show, so was another group of 5th Ave. people, and some of my very dearest friends were here too! Heidi flew in from Philly and surprised me. It was a great night for the kids too! They were so wonderful to me during warm-ups. They told me they wanted to make my dreams come true and promised me to give it their best performance yet...and they really did! I am so very pleased and proud of them. I hope someone got a video of this night as I have been filming the others and my student that did the work could not be here tonight...of all nights. I saw a parent taking some footage. Maybe there is some evidence somewhere.

The set performed at its highest level yet. The crew was right on with their cues and even the sound was better than it had been. Microphones are such a pain especially in musicals. Mr. Wiser was right on tonight and the cast members all thanked him afterward.

The only regret I have is that I did not have enough time after it was over to thanks the kids. I will take some special time to do that tomorrow during warm-ups. I am going to sleep well tonight. A lot of tension was relieved having to do this show for Derek. I was very nervous, but he had a little talk with the parents and my cast and crew and he told them some nice things. I felt very proud of them all and of myself for surviving this ordeal. The kids were thrilled to give Derek a tour of the PAC, catwalks and all. We are truly blessed with a fabulous facility. We often take it for granted.

Now to bed, to sleep, for real this time! It truly was a magical night!
December 13, 2003

Saturday matinees are hardly ever worth doing. It was an OK crowd, but hardly enough to pay the royalties. This was not our best performance either! It got slow again and dragged. And the worst part was when the cast decided to play some little jokes. I thought they had had so many compliments last night that they were beyond this behavior. I was wrong! I did go back stage during intermission and let them know of my extreme disappointment in them. That did seem to work as the garbage backstage was over with after that. Why do they do this junk? I guess they are just kids, and I forget that fact sometimes. I sure hope they got it worked out of their system tonight! For their sake!

Saturday night performances are usually pretty good and this was the case tonight. Ruth was there to support me and she brought a lot of her parents and students to see the show. I am glad it was smooth, much better than earlier today! I feel like the energy is lagging, maybe it is just me. I know mine is! Any way I was pleased with the show tonight, much smoother than the matinee was.

The kids are really tired and getting kind of sad as they do toward the end of the run. Tomorrow will be draining. Just one more and it is all over. Then the grieving process begins. I twill be very hard to let this one go and move on. I have never put so much into a show both physically and mentally. I am too old for this stuff; retirement must be right around the corner? Anyway, tomorrow will be rough.

Going to sleep now...good night sweet diary...parting is no such sorrow...I am pooped!
December 14, 2003

Final Sunday Matinee was 2:00 in the afternoon today. It was added to the original performance list due to the power outage. So, our last night’s performance would have been our last had it not been for the storm damage. I am still worrying about the money we stand to loose. Today’s crowd was really good, but was it enough? I know the budget was high for this show as it is in every musical. We have to make it up, or we will be forced to do a dorky show next spring in order to sell tickets. I wanted to try some Shakespeare! I hope the money issues will work out OK in the end. I won’t have the final results until a couple of weeks after the show, which will be after Winter Break. The ASB cashier is not known for her speediness in getting the final money figured out for us.

I loved my roses and my gift certificates as usual, but the CD the cast and crew gave me was truly special, it is a bunch of songs about wishes. I cried and thanked them a lot. They really did make my dreams come true. I have said this before, but I really mean it; this group was above the norm! They really were special and their talents were amazing. Only a few behavior problems and the rest was easy. It was a nice change from previous casts. They deserve the credit for this great show. They did the hard work. They made me so very proud to be their director, teacher and friend.

Central Washington Theatre Department must receive my thanks too. Without the four years I have spent over there in Ellensburg working my behind off, learning new things, and some new tricks, I would not have had the power or tools to do such a great job on this show. They have been my inspiration to achieve excellence. I have learned much and am truly grateful for all of the guidance!

Thus ends my diary for the production of Into the Woods December 2003.
Central Washington University
Theatre Arts Graduate Program

Thesis Project/Production Performance Evaluation

Student: Pamela Cressey

Under consideration: Direction of Into The Woods.

Evaluator’s Name: Derek R. Lane

Title: Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts

Place of Performance: Kentlake High School

Date of Viewing: Friday, December 12, 2003

Description of Venue: Proscenium w/slight apron, pit, side stages

Description of Concept: Cressey forces the literal forest, required in the play, to work on another level—a “forest of the mind”. Each of the characters goes on both a physical journey through the literal forest, and an emotional journey in the mind as they learn about themselves. Each of the characters must undergo a “rite of passage” as they trek through uncharted territory. Cressey pushes the concept even further by creating characters set in a modern world (high school students) that in turn interact with the fantasy world’s storybook characters.

Description of the Actual Production Direction and/or Realized Design of sets, props, costumes, lighting, and sound: Cressey’s Into the Woods was an entertaining, imaginative, and fun production that bordered on being a “techno-fandango”, but was grounded with practical solutions to the significant challenges of the play. This is true of both the direction and the design choices.

How did the production direction or design implement the ideas expressed in the concept statement? This was one of the strongest productions (in terms of design unity) that I have witnessed at this level. The choices made in both the direction and designs appeared grow out of the concept statement. I will speak to particular choices in a subsequent statement.

Appropriateness of choice of script for abilities of performers, audience, venue, and/or academic setting? Excellent choice for the caliber of students available, the resources available to the department, and the academic setting. Also, the production was appropriate for the venue and audience.
Address the following if applicable: clear delineation of units of action, motivated blocking, visually interesting composition, visual expression of metaphor, use of picturization in storytelling, clear and believable characterization, adequate use of body and voice, unity of production elements, creative problem solving.

Clear delineation of units of action: Exceeded expectations in this area. A nice, clean presentation. Offered up the play in bite size morsels. Each scene attempted to have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Motivated blocking: One of my quibbles with the production is that the less experienced actors’ had trouble motivating their blocking. Eric Hagreen as Jack had particular difficulty in this area. With this in mind, it was easy to see that Cressey worked hard in this area – as much of the blocking appeared to be rather organic.

Visually interesting composition: Excellent stage pictures. Cressey seems to have a designer’s sensitivity when it comes to creating visually interesting moments on stage. Her visually arresting moving compositions in this journey play are a testament to her ability as a designer. Excellent work in this area.

Visual expression of metaphor: Another area of strength. The little picture book wagons opened up to reveal the story. The pathways created by the careful placement of scenic units helped the journey aspect of the production. Most importantly, the scale of the architecture echoed the idea that we are also in a forest of the mind.

Use of picturization in storytelling: No quibbles here. The story of the play was told even without the dialogue.

Clear and believable characterization: Bluntly, this was the largest problem in the production. I know that it is very difficult to cast young actors who can sing the part and act the part with honesty and sincerity – but that should be the number one goal of any theatrical production. The two worst culprits were Jack and the Baker. First, the Baker’s characterization was too over-the-top to be believable. Secondly, Jack had a nice voice, but absolutely no ability to create a believable character. In the first case, I believe it was the character voice the actor playing The Baker used. In the latter instance, it was casting. Although it is always a tough call, especially with Sondheim, it might have been wise to cast someone who could act the part, rather than sing it. Other actors had various levels of success in believability. It is difficult when playing “storybook characters” to not fall into the trap of making them two-dimensional. In a play like Into the Woods you might start there, but the audience has to see that metamorphosis into real, flesh-and-blood, people. Without honesty we do not care for the characters - and then we risk losing the impact of the story.

Adequate use of body and voice: Good work overall. Cressey was wise to cast a dancer in the role of the cow – what fun! The challenge of singing Sondheim is tough at any level – especially at the high school level. Valiant attempts were made to do it, though. Most actors made strong vocal choices, and it was clear that much work went into the
physical creation of the characters. Costume choices helped many of the characterizations.

**Unity of production elements:** As previously mentioned, this was one of the strongest areas in the production. The palette, the line, shape, proportion, textures, and the use of the space were all harmonious. Excellent work in this area.

**Creative problem solving:** Kudos to Cressey and the gang for solving the significant challenges of the production. Taking advantage of the fly space to create the Forest, and, subsequently, the destruction of the forest, was brilliant. The giant’s approach was well conceived, imaginative, and a simple solution to the problem. The one choice that I felt was a last-minute solution, was the Giant’s shoe. Using a two-dimensional flat did not seem to fit into the world you had previously created. I felt that another scenic choice or a lighting effect could have been more effective.

**Within the confines of this particular performance venue, was this production satisfactory or unsatisfactory?** Satisfactory. Nice work overall!
Self Evaluation

When I first began to think about which play would be the right choice for my thesis project; I had to follow the parameters that the Theatre and Music departments of Kentlake high school had discussed before the end of the 2002-2003 school year. We decided to produce our yearly musical in the fall instead of the usual spring production time frame. We agreed to try it and see if this time was a better choice for us. I therefore had to choose a musical, as I was to do my thesis project in the fall of 2003.

My drama students, for the most part, are also active in the school choir. They had asked me to choreograph a medley of songs from Sondheim’s Into the Woods for their spring concert. As we worked together on this material I began to appreciate the wonderful things this musical had to offer. The students began to ask me if this musical could possibly be our next production.

At first I thought it might be too difficult, what with the vocal challenges there were, but after seeing them perform the songs at their spring concert, I knew it was the right choice for all of us. I have never regretted the day I made that decision. Yes, it was a difficult show to produce, but it was also one of the most rewarding. We, as a dedicated team of students, professionals, parents and teachers, put many long hours of hard work into the production of Into the Woods and each member of this team walked away with a respect and love of James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim’s music and wit, a realization of what really can be accomplished through a seriously committed group effort, and the pride in themselves and each other to have met a difficult challenge head on and completed it with such irrefutable success.
Making a list of your strengths and weaknesses is a good thing to do on a regular basis. It is kind of like counting your blessings, you are grateful for the few good things that you do possess! I know that I am known for being a bit random. I have always been this way, so I can’t really try to hide it. I have to work to be able to focus when it is necessary. My students get frustrated when I jump from one thought to another without warning. As an artist I fly around the set working on everything all at once and get little done. I have trouble completing one project before I get going on another one that grabs my immediate interest. I do not know how to fix this about myself, but I have learned to surround myself with concrete people that keep my feet on solid ground. My husband is my rock, he gives me that stability and rational perspective I am lacking and I can see a different side to things. I do not like this at times, but I know it is absolutely necessary. I do this during my shows too. I surround myself with students that help me to focus and constantly remind me to finish one project before jumping to another. This type of student is usually my student director. Krysti Wiser was my quiet rock for this show and I give her credit for trying to keep me focused and on task.

When I cast a show, I have the ability to see things others do not see at that time. I can see future potential in an actor who can’t see it in themselves yet. Casting is a true gift and I believe it is one of mine. The students never agree with the cast list when I first post it, but as time goes by they all remark about how I was right and they never saw that in that individual. I like to think I am good at relationships and my interactions with other people never feel uncomfortable or contrived. I am honest and I try to tell students why they sis not get the part. I also try to help them see what it is that caused them not to get it. They do eventually come back and thank me for my honesty, well, most of them
do. I believe I cast *Into the Woods* well. There was much debate early on as to whether I did or not, but I think I proved it in the success of the show.

Kids know when you really do or do not care about them. My students know that I do and that I would do everything in my power to help them succeed. They know that I will never lie or fill their heads with false hopes. My love for them is real and they feel safe in this environment, safe and secure enough to take risks with their acting or their creative impulses. They stick their neck out, try new things, and learn new skills while knowing they will not be ridiculed or rejected by me. This is my best strength. It is the one that makes me do this job when I know I will never get rich or famous from it.

There were storms and tribulations that came upon the set. We dealt with them with few tears because we knew we did everything possible to prepare, and some things are not our fault. This show was researched, analyzed, scrutinized, and planned more than any show I have been involved with in the past. And I have come to the conclusion that this is a good thing! I know I baked at all of the studying it took and especially all of the time it took, but I have seen the light! This research and time spent before production made all the difference in having a good show to producing a masterpiece. The planning and research made everything else go smoother. I felt prepared and ready to rehearse each and every day. I will continue to go through this process for the rest of my directorial life because it makes a better finished product and a less stressful road to that end. The proof is in the many positive remarks, given verbally and in writing, from students, friends, and colleagues. I have included many of them in the final pages of this thesis project.
In conclusion, I have learned a great deal going through this process. A heart felt thank you goes out to the Central Washington University Theatre Department and its entire talented and well trained staff for the four fabulous summers of intense learning that I have received. I did not do it for the degree. I did it because; after each summer, I came away from that place a better teacher, a better actor, a better technician and a better person.
Final Cast List
Into the Woods Revised 10-6-03

Student Director: Katie Rice replaced with:

Krysti Wiser

Narrator: Vincent Humphrey II

Cinderella: Cameron Quinn

Jack: Eric Hagreen

Jack’s Mother: Rachel Jacobs

Baker: Justin Fincher

Baker’s Wife: Shauna Hagreen

Cinderella’s Stepmother: Stefni Mauer

Florinda: Amy Bissett

Lucinda: Cassey Kirk

Lucinda: Lindsey Halverson

Cinderella’s Father: Matt Lesinski

Little Red Ridinghood: Allison Swienty

Witch: Lauren Kottwitz

Cinderella’s Mother: Kristine Sprague

Mysterious Man: Matthew Lincoln

Wolf Voice: Jared Rinehart

Wolf Actor: Joshua Wiser

Granny: Catlin Obom

Rapunzel: Kori Loomis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Actor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rapunzel’s Prince</td>
<td>James Wood (replaced with)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brandon Jeffrey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cinderella’s Prince</td>
<td>Jared Rinehart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steward</td>
<td>Brandon Jeffrey (new actor)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dylan Farmer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giant</td>
<td>Caitlin Obom</td>
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<td>Snow White</td>
<td>Nicole McCarthy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Krysti Wiser</td>
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<td>Sleeping Beauty</td>
<td>Cassy Kirk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sarah Fraiman</td>
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<td>Cow</td>
<td>Emma Theseinvitz</td>
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<td>Big Birds</td>
<td>Shannon Quinn</td>
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<td>Genevieve Gallagher</td>
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<td>Christina Seeker</td>
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<td>Adriana Rose Weber</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby</td>
<td>Brandon Wiser</td>
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Play draws audience into fairy-tale world

Hard work pays off: 'the show is impressive and full of talent'

The Baker's wife, the Steward and the Baker (Shauna Hagreen, Dylan Farmer and Justin Fincher, respectively) argue during a scene from "Into the Woods." Photo courtesy of Ken Loomis.

"This cast worked together as a team. The show is only as good as its weakest member," said Cresey.

All the characters acted well and were emotional and dramatic, which added a certain flare to the already colorful and talented cast. The characters made little jokes, adding a little spice to the fairy tales. The Witch, Little Red Riding Hood, and the mysterious man have such an ability to become their characters. They played their parts just right. The princes, Baker, the Baker's wife, Jack, and Jack's mother also showed an unmistakable talent for acting and singing.

'This play came out to be more than I wanted or what I expected!' Please see "Into the Woods" on page 16.

Local author to visit in January

Author Chris Crutcher will be visiting Kentlake on Jan. 13, 2004. He will be speaking to Sandy Cato's English classes.

Crutcher is the author of six popular young-adult books, including "Running Loose," "Ironman," and "Stolen!" He has also written a suspense novel, a collection of short stories featuring characters from his previous works, and, most recently, an autobiography titled "King of the Mild Frontier: An Ill-Advised Autobiography."

In addition to an award-winning novelist, Crutcher has also worked as a teacher, therapist and child protection specialist.

Emily Horton
Staff Reporter

Evanscence filled the speakers as people of all ages started to fill the seats of the theatre. The lights dimmed; throughout the crowd people hugged each other and silence came over the room as the curtain rose. The opening set was very creative, consisting of large books with the titles of all the stories on the spines. The tech members, most wearing the name of the seven dwarfs on their shirts, came onto the stage and opened the books into stories with little clips at the top starting with "once upon a time."

"Into the Woods" began at Kentlake on Dec. 3. The production ran until the sixth and then continued from the tenth to the thirteenth. It was inspired by the book written by James Lapine and the music and lyrics are by Stephen Sondheim.

"I am so proud of this cast and crew," said director Pam Cresey. "They have given more of themselves and their time than I asked of them and the hard work paid off. The show is impressive and full of talent."

Through the 25-person cast, the costumers were very creative, but especially unique were the Costumes of Cinderellia, Cinderella's stepmother, the Witch, Milky White the cow, and the falcons.

Both lighting and sound were striking. There were no bad seats in which people couldn't hear or see the play perfectly. The lights were many different shades of colors. They made the stage look like a real forest. The trees, branches, and the rocks were so exact it looked like a sunset in the theatre.
Continued from page one

hoped for," said Cressey.

In the second act, the argument with the giant was greatly amusing. When the giant is killed, a huge foot comes down, showing the giant falling. Fog came onto the stage as the giant died, adding a mysterious effect. Toward the ending the Princes sang a song together, "Agony," that was incredibly clever and made everyone in the audience laugh.

After everyone says goodbye to the victims of the giant, they start summing up all the lessons that they learned throughout the story.

Like the Baker, who learned not to run from his guilt, Cinderella says she shouldn't have married the prince. Little Red Riding Hood said she shouldn't have wandered from the path and maybe Jack shouldn't have stolen from the giant, and that people shouldn't waste time trying to find someone to blame.

"The prettier the flower the farther from the path," says Little Red Riding Hood.

Thousands of dollars were lost because of the windstorm, so the play went on for a few days later than originally planned. The next play Cressey is thinking about producing is a British Comedy called "Noises Off."

"I will miss this cast and crew," said Cressey. "I will never ever forget them and what joy they brought to me."

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Evansen filled the audience as people of all ages arrived to fill the seats of the theatre. The front sections were almost completely full. The lights dimmed; throughout the crowd people hushed each other and silence came over the room as thetain rose. The opening set was very creative, consisting of large books with the titles of all the stories on the spines. The tech members, most wearing the names of seven dwarfs on their shirts, ran onto the stage and opened books into stories with little
Dear Pam,

You should feel so encouraged about your production. First of all, what an amazing space to perform in. I'm sure you know how fortunate you are to have such a well-equipped space. What you did with the trees and the big foot was astounding and I love your vision in connection with all of it. You think big, but you were also able to facilitate the dream! Good work.

How truly cool that you have so many people that can sing so well. And what very tough music to learn and handle well, and they did. A huge body of material that you thought through in detail and worked hard to attend to all elements of the show. I'm sure you saw things that didn't work technically, but to be--seeing this for the first time and being aware of how many mics you were using--I felt it was pretty flawless from an audience perspective. Your kids held their presence in a most professional manner and it was obvious that you had taught them to do so. They also had a sense of camaraderie that was communicated from one to another.

High spots for me were, of course, the two princes--and the Baker's wife. They--understood the humor and she had depth and variety in a challenging role--she showed professionalism in all ways.

Thanks for the hard work and such a daunting task of producing this difficult play. The audience loved it and even the very noisy--before the show girl--quieted down for everything on stage. Good work, friend--and break a leg for the rest of the show--hope to see you on January 11th at 2:00. Gwen

-----Original Message-----
From: Cressey, Pam
Sent: Sunday, December 07, 2003 10:07 AM
To: Gwen Mansfield
Subject: RE: Break-a-Leg, friend!!!!!!!!!

Hi Gwen,

I tried to call you on Friday to tell you about the power outage and no show for us! We just got power back today, Sunday. Anyway...I asked your ticket lady to save two seats for today's matinee, but I am coming down with a bug and feel yuckie...I do not want to spread germs to you or your cast either, so could you hold two tickets for the 14th matinee?? I really want to see your show, and my daughter Allison is coming with me. I am praying yours is going well. Has George seen it yet? Derek is coming to see mine on the 12th or 13th. I just hope we can reschedule the three shows we didn't get to do, money is worrying me a lot!

Anyway...God bless and keep you rested and free from too much stress...ha ha! Break a leg or twelve!

Pam

-----Original Message-----
From: Gwen Mansfield
To: Cressey, Pam
Cc:
Subject: RE: Break-a-Leg, friend!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thanks--all our tickets are sold out--but if you tell me which Sunday 7th or 14th I will make room--just for you or will there be two? Tell your kids to break a leg as well--we have talked of your group frequently--with high regards.Gwen

-----Original Message-----

Pam, I attended the play on Sunday, and want to compliment you and the cast and crew for a great production. Into the Woods is one of my favorite plays, and yours was the third live production I've seen of it, as well as the video of the Broadway production. Thanks for a wonderful evening, and congratulations to you and the entire crew on a wonderful accomplishment.

John Knutson
Director of Accounting and Payroll
Your production was stunning. You work magic with those kids, the sets, the costumes, the blocking. I wanna be like you.

Kudos
Anne

http://olweb.kent.k12.wa.us/exchange/pressey/Inbox/Into%20the%20FAME!.EML?Cmd=0... 12/29/2003
What adjective better describes your production than awesome.

I had never seen the story before. The sets are magnificent, the acting superb.

Pam you have some fabulous kids.

What a treasure. Ok, treasure may not an adjective. Stay off my back HJ.

Staff, if you have not been you need to go.

Four shows left. Friday, Saturday (2) and Sunday
I am so glad that I took the time to see the production "Into the Woods" last night. It is a wonderful play and it shows all the hard work that went into this production by Pam Cressey and all her students.

I highly recommend it and I hope you go see it.

Happy Holidays!
The play is a "must-see" for all. I was awestruck by the incredible talent on display, the well-crafted sets, accompanying music, and, well... just everything! I can't imagine how much hard work went into this production. Kudos to the cast, crew, and musicians.

Cyndi
Cressey, Pam

From: LaSala, Cynthia
Sent: Wednesday, December 10, 2003 9:12 AM
To: KL All Staff
Subject: "Into The Woods"

The play is a "must-see" for all. I was awestruck by the incredible talent on display, the well-crafted sets, accompanying music, and, well...just everything! I can't imagine how much hard work went into this production. Kudos to the cast, crew, and musicians.
Cyndi
To echo Ken's accolades last week, I highly recommend to all a night out at the musical this week. Pam and her cast, crew and pit have worked their booties off. The set in itself is a sight to behold.

allison
BRAVO!

What a wonderful performance. The students were terrific; so talented and so professional. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Can't wait for the next production.
Into the Woods was extremely entertaining. From the many songs, to the wisecracks, to the hysterical costumes, this play kept you engaged from beginning to end.

All the actors seemed totally professional and knew how to keep your attention. (Actually, I thought no one could keep the attention of the audience better than our own Matt Lincoln; who played a crazy old hermit-kind of character.)

The set design was absolutely enchanting. It was as if you didn’t have to imagine what everything looked like because it was handed right to you. One of the little tricks they used to make the scenery come alive was hanging shiny cloth from the ceiling and letting it touch the ground. With the colored lights upon them, these yards of cloth were transformed into spooky, weathered trees.

The costumes complemented the scenery as well; making it convince you that you were right there in the story itself.

I believe that magic was the focus of this performance so I put a wizard on my page.
Into The Woods was an amazing play to watch. Not only did it have a good story line, but the sets and costumes were amazing as well. The opening scene has amazing giant books that are turned around to reveal some of the most beloved fairy tales of all time. Cinderella's book opens to a scene of her cleaning around the hearth wearing tattered rags. Jack, from Jack and The Beanstalk, is inside a book that displays a kitchen scene with his mother and the cutest character in the play, Milky White the cow, whose makeup is absolutely perfect. The third book opens to expose a “childless baker and his wife”. One of my favorite performances of the night was from the witch. She had an amazing voice and was really in character! Even when her wig fell off she just kept going and covered it up flawlessly. The two princes in the story did a wonderful job staying in character and being full of themselves (maybe they practiced that a little too much...☺). The details in the sets and costumes made the play seem like it was being done by a professional acting troupe instead of a bunch of high school kids. Every single aspect of the show was amazing, albeit a little bit long and drawn out in the second half. All in all I enjoyed watching the play and thought it was put together very well.

Amanda, Me, Dylan as "The Steward", and Amanda
Into the Woods is the first play I have ever been to, but I thought it was pretty boring. It wasn't exciting at all and it was too long and drag out. I think that it could have been a lot better if there were a few exciting scenes and better songs. Though, there are more good things than bad that I saw. I think the overall singing from the actors and actresses were good. The acting was well done; there weren't any mistakes and I thought Little Red Riding Hood had very funny facial expressions. The costumes were very original and fit each character well. My favorites were the witches at the end when she got pretty, Cinderella's ball gown and shoes, and the princes who were also funny. Lastly I think the setting was very creative and was well lighted. It fit the forest scenes well, and the storybooks were very creative and worked well with what was going on. Overall I think that even though there were flaws like the play being too long, drag out, and boring there were many other good things such as costumes, acting, and the setting.
Into the Woods
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The play, *Into the Woods*, was a great one with clearly lots of hard work put into the acting, set design, and costumes, each having specifics I observed and enjoyed.

First, the acting, which I'd definitely give a thumbs up. My favorite actors were Little Red Ridinghood and the Mysterious Man. I really like how she put attitude and her own hint of humor in her voice: “You talk to birds?” was one of my favorite lines, that she said in Act 2, scene II. In addition, Matt was hilarious! I liked how he was all stooped over and his repetition line, and in that voice! Basically, it was clear the actors were putting their all into their characters.

Next, the set design. I thought the books out of which the characters came in and out very clever, making it more clear that the characters were coming together from different stories. I also like the giant’s death at the end and her foot coming down onto the stage. Props of such size and creativity kept me interested and surprised.

Finally, the characters’ costumes. The costumes fit the characters very well, I thought. I especially liked the witch’s transformation and the prince costumes. They seemed to fit in the same time frame in history, and were all very interesting, like the rags Cinderella wore, for example.
I found “Into the Woods” to be a delightful twist on Grimm’s fairy tales. Characters portrayed in the show seemed very experienced in acting and did an amazing job of relating to their roles. I also enjoyed listening to the orchestra. The fact that they had to follow the actor’s lines and play along with their singing is challenging.

Actors and actresses in “Into the Woods” were in my opinion very well suited for the roles they played. I liked how all the tales tied into each other, as the characters interacted with and helped each other through their difficulties. Some of my favorite scenes included ones with interaction between the Baker and Little Red Riding Hood. The Baker’s desperation for a child and Red’s love for her cape provided for excellent dialogue.

The scenery and costumes were very exquisite and I much enjoyed the professionalism shown in the set. The giant books with the stories were extremely decorative and really added to the effect of the story. I liked the choice of costumes, as well. My favorite was Emma Theanvitz’s cow costume, her makeup and facial expressions added to it a lot, too! Besides that, I liked the Prince’s and Matt Lincoln’s (the Old Man/Baker’s father) costumes.

The first Act of “Into the Woods” was impressive, but I didn’t enjoy the second as much. In my opinion, the story was just a little too odd for my taste. When the giant kept killing everyone, it was very surprising and threw me off. However, I still enjoyed parts of it.

Overall, I really enjoyed “Into the Woods”. The chosen actors and actresses did a great job, and the scenery and costumes were very realistic!
Into The Woods

Kentlake High School's performance of Into The Woods was very well done. But the first half was more entertaining the second half. It had a very nice set. It opened with books with the spine towards the audience with the titles of the books that the play with have to do with, which would later open up into a house and also where the actors were. One of the actors that stood out to me was Justin Fincher who is a junior. He played the Baker, which the play revolved around. Also all the actors did a very nice job with their singing and their lines. The orchestra also did a very nice job with the music.
Dwarves, giant books rolling around, singing, Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk! This is what students were introduced to as the play, Into the Woods, started at Kentlake high school. This play was a magical and fun adventure of a simpleton baker going on a quest into the woods to get the things that a witch demanded from him in order for him and his wife to bear a child.

The play was attention grabbing throughout the entire two and a half hours or so with the blending of everyone’s all time favorite fairytales and modern day humor. All your treasured fictional characters could be found on the Kentlake stage, including Cinderella and her wicked family, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel, Jack (of Jack and the Beanstalk), and Little Red Riding Hood. It was obvious that all the students involved in this masterpiece were dedicated and motivated to making this one of the best Kentlake productions of all time. I especially liked how Cinderella’s story was taken from the Grimm’s version and made more appealing to an older audience and might get people who don’t know the Grimm version interested in the author’s stories. I also thought it more appealing to an older audience and wasn’t monotone, but had emotion put into what the characters were feeling.

The set was also very organized with the acting and stagehands perfectly timed together. The art design was well thought out giving the audience the emotions of what was happening on stage, for example the dark colors put into the woods. All the costumes were simple, but fit everyone’s character very nicely. Nothing was overdone and nothing was out of place with the garments. I thought everything with the play was done perfectly and depicted how well our school’s drama program is benefiting our high school’s entertainment factor.
Kentlake's drama program presents "Into the Woods," directed by Pam Cressey. The outstanding performance transformed and combined classic fairy tales to create a new and exciting theatrical production. The performance combined the stories of Jack and the Beanstalk, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and others to create a story about the importance of family and what lengths someone will go to finally have a family of their own.

The performance began with an introduction of all the stories and some background information needed to tell the story. After the introduction, they began to bring the stories together with goals that needed help to be accomplished. Cinderella wanted to go to the ball; the baker and his wife needed to collect, a white cow, a red cape, hair the color of corn, and a golden shoe for the witch to lift the curse placed upon the baker; Jack and his mother needed to sell "Milky White." Little Red Riding Hood needed to go to grandmother's house. The baker's quest for the items needed had its ups and downs. The baker's good-heartedness put more pressure on the baker to succeed, to fulfill his wife's dream of having a family.

"Into the Woods," directed by Pam Cressey, has put a new twist on classic tales that everyone can enjoy. Many actors and actresses filled the very talented cast. The combination of old and new kept the audience interested in the performance.
"Into the Woods"

Family

Nicole Ihrig
You can never change a first impression, and for the cast and crew of "Into The Woods" that is a blessing. From the moment the curtain was drawn and the set was revealed I was hooked. An incredible background for a truly incredible performance, the set of the play performed by Kentlake's very own dramatic society was breath-taking.

I must admit I am not exactly partial to musicals, but I did enjoy this one. I offer little criticism, though one is that the variety of the songs seemed to be lacking; I walked away with the same tune that was followed through most of the performance still ringing in my ears. And I have to say, it seemed like there was one song too many, the performance topped 3 hours! However, it was well-worth the time (and money!) spent.

I was most impressed with the heartfelt performance of Lauren Kottwitz as the witch, the beautiful singing of Cameron Quinn as Cinderella, the hysterical antics of Brandon Jeffrey and Jared Rinehart as Cinderella and Rapunzel's Princes, and of course, a mystical and shocking performance by Matt Lincoln as the Baker's Father. At last, the crew must have been phenomenal, because the effects were better than any I have ever seen live, and the costumes were great.

In conclusion, I deem "Into The Woods" an inspiring success.
Into the Woods, what a play! Going into it all I herd was long and boring. Could the Reviews have been more wrong? The set was superb to say the least the trees would sway when the wind blew, the giants leg, and the lighting iced the cake. I also thought the acting was done well. I did not hear one bad singer in the bunch. It was even like the characters fit as I imagined the would, little red ridding hood looked like little red riding hood, Jack looked like Jack, and Cinderella looked like, well you get the point. I also thought it was cool how they had little biographies. The only thing that could have made this play better would have been that word at the bottom of the T.V., but at the bottom of the stage in this case, so I could sing along. This being the first time I have been to a musical it feels like I have something to set the bar to.
Into the Woods was an all-around enchanting production, put on by students and staff from our own Kentlake Highschool. Justin Fincher, a junior at Kentlake, delivered a humorous and captivating performance as the baker, never letting the audience down with his unique and entertaining antics. Emma Thesenvitz was clearly among the crowd favorites and had the audience laughing throughout the play as Milky White, a comical cow.

The set was clearly the product of hard work and creativity, maintaining interest and perspective throughout the changes in scenes. Overall, Into the Woods was a smashing success that kept the audience on the edge of their seat and will surely set a new standard and bring anticipation for Kentlake productions in years to come.

Olivia Branham

Please note:
This signature has been redacted for privacy concerns.
I went to see the play Tuesday, December 9, 2003. Generally, I was impressed. I don't go to many plays, but I did go see "Twelve Angry Men" at Cedar Heights last year. Compared to that, "Into The Woods" was killer. Everything about it blew "twelve Angry men" out of the water: the acting, lighting, the set, the music, everything.

First off, the acting. I thought that the Hagreens, Shauna and Eric both did beautiful jobs. The baker, Justin Fincher, did a stellar job. Not only with singing, but acting too. It might be bias since I am friends with them, but I thought Dylan Farmer, Kori Loomis, and Rachel Jacobs all did great jobs. Cameron Quinn and Lauren Kottwitz performed wonders with singing. Casting made some pretty good decisions.

There were a lot of cool lighting effects. The backdrop looked impressive when the orange lights shown through it as if it were morning. That was a great idea.

The set design was excellent. The rocks and trees in the forest were pretty real looking. I also liked the whole idea of having open books as smaller sets for each story. I think Ms. Cressey must have worked pretty hard on this part of the show.

I suppose all reviews include cons as well as pros of a performance. My one critique is this: I personally thought the play could have been stopped at the intermission. It wrapped up all the loose ends and I actually thought it was over, but then they were like, "Stick around for Part II." Part II just took the first story (which was over) and added a second problem to solve.

To sum up the play in one word, I would say it was: IMPRESSIVE. Good job to the cast and crew.
Into the Woods is a play about 5 stories: Jack and the Beanstalk, The Baker, Cinderella, Rapunzel, and Little Red Riding Hood. The stories were all joined together and were changed up a little. The characters all interact with each other and play roles that were not intended for them. The old man was supposed to give Jack the beans, but the Baker and his wife gave him the beans in the play. The play was about 3-4 hours long, and it was really good. I didn’t expect the actors to be as good as they were, but the price was surprising. I don’t really like going to plays, and I have not gone to a lot, but when the next one comes out, I will surely go.

The stage and background was good, I liked it. The stage was well made and I definitely liked the rumbling, it really seemed like they were having an earthquake.
I felt this was an awesome play, which was performed by a number of well skilled high school students. The lighting was exceptional and made the woods come to life. The players played their parts with feeling and passion. Even my sister, Rachel Jacobs, Jack's Mother became the part and was not recognized by my mother. I'm so glad that I was able to see the play, it meant so much to see my sister up on stage performing her heart out. Thanks to Mrs. Cressey for giving her such a great part to play.

Into the Woods
By: Sarah Jacobs
The musical Into The Woods is considered the hardest production to put on. For Ms. Pam Cressey’s thesis she chose to put on this production. The Into The Woods production that was put on by Kentlake was a breathtaking show if the music and acting didn’t catch you then the set design, lighting and special effects would. Into The Woods is a musical compiled of classic fairy tale of Cinderella, Jack, and the Beanstalk, Rapunzel, and Little Red Riding Hood. This musical is incredible to begin with, but there is always room for improvements or even changes to better enhance the story to the audiences benefit. The set design was very creative and in some areas a challenge to put together. At the beginning the characters each start out in their own book which is their story. When the characters head into the woods you see the woods grow before you. Along with many other set designs and effects I especially enjoyed the shaking of the trees that helped show the movement felt by the characters because of the giants and their movements. Along with the lighting and the sound effects the audience could really feel and see the movement of the giant. For the actors cast in this play they fit their character well and their singing was heavenly. Rapunzel with her rocker wig was delightfully entertaining it fitted well with the character with her fits of insanity. Overall this was one production that if you didn’t go and see it then we defiantly missed out. The show was magnificent. Hopefully this production will be nominated and awarded many awards form 5th Avenue.

Review By: Lyndsay Watt

The Tech Crew moves the sets in Dwarf shits and hats.

Pausing from putting make-up on actors

Ms. Cressey takes a picture with me.
Into the Woods was by far one of the best plays put on by the Kentlake’s drama club. The play had a creative spin of many fairy tales. In this musical, fairy tales such as Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Little Red Riding Hood, and the Baker and his wife all tie in together as one.

The play was based on a baker and his wife whom wanted a child, but could not have a child because an evil witch had cursed their house. The witch accused the baker’s father of eating her garden and that was his punishment on their house. One day the witch approached the baker and his wife to tell them that if they want a child they must find these four items: a cow as white milk, a cape as red as blood, a shoe as pure as gold, and hair as yellow as corn.

The baker and his wife found all of the four items and she soon had a baby. But there were bigger problems in the land. Jack had killed a giant and his wife came down from the land above. It was quiet the adventure following along with the characters from each fairy tale. Although few characters died, it was interesting how they all relied on each other to survive.

As for my view of the play, I thought it was a wonderful play. It was really cool how it all tied in. The character that especially admired was Rachel Jacobs who played Jack’s mother. The whole “spoon” thing was very entertaining. Altogether, I enjoyed the play but it should have ended at the intermission.
Into the woods was a very well done play. Through the play we see the characters grow and mature. The basic moral is that everyone needs to work together to accomplish what needs to be done. We watch as the characters realize that everyone has something to offer. The sets were very impressive, with giant books opening in the beginning to lead you into the story. The costumes were also very well done. They not only fit the time but they represented what the character was feeling. The casting was done well; the actors seemed to understand and did an excellent job in their portrayals. Every one of the actors had a beautiful voice and was a pleasure to listen to. It was very apparent that lots of time and effort went into this play. All I can say is Good Job!
Being one of the first high school plays I've ever seen, Into the Woods really blew me away. The scenery was simply amazing. The acting was great, and despite a few sound problems here and there, it was a great play overall.

Although the story was strange, the actors and actresses did an amazing job filling the shoes of such fairy tale characters as Cinderella, Jack or Little Red Riding Hood. The music was well done also, and the complicated music was sung well. There were a few noticeable slip-ups here and there, but they were able to recover quickly.

Out of everything though, I would have to say the scenery impressed me the most. Everything from the backgrounds, to the lighting was great. They were able to keep most of it simple, but at the same time it worked great and added some humor in some cases such as the use of the stick horse.

In the end, Into the Woods was a very impressive production and extremely well done. It has the humor for the young adult audiences, the familiar fairy tale characters for the younger children, and an interesting and catchy story for the older folks. I am definitely looking forward to the next Kentlake performance, and would recommend this play to almost anyone.
Review of Into the Woods
By: Michelle Mathews

Truthfully, I probably wouldn't have gone to see Into The Woods unless it had been offered to me as an extra credit assignment. Before the show, I didn't know much about the Kentlake drama department or its past productions, but I was shocked as soon as I entered the theater because the stage looked like a professional set. The musical began with an overview of the main stories that later came together to form a sort of "dark side" to the usually sunny fairytales we grew up with. The singers were extraordinary; their abilities surpassed what I expected from people my age. I enjoyed the first half because funny moments randomly occurred. My favorite part was the fit thrown by "little red riding hood". The fact that even stage crew had costumes on added an even more professional feel to the production. The play ran rather long and at about intermission I was ready to go. I felt they could have presented the same story in half the time to hold the audience's attention and keep them involved until the end. I haven't spent much time in theater but the acting seemed well rehearsed and precise, again above the level of high school students. It was fun to watch the people I see on a daily basis dressed as a character who allows them to be more outgoing, goofy or spontaneous then they usually are. Overall I enjoyed Kentlake's 2003 musical Into the Woods. The cast, stage and music fit together to form something that shows off the finest abilities of our school.
"Into the Woods," preformed by our very own Kentlake Drama troupe in December 2003, was an excellent rendition of classic stories. A few stories included were "Cinderella," "Jack and the Bean Stalk," and "The Little Red Riding Hood," added with a twist of some other stories of which I am not familiar with.

Visually, the play was incredibly done. From makeup and costumes to a smoke machine and the lighting effects, everything was created perfectly and executed in the exact same fashion. The overall effect it created was astounding; I don’t think anyone could disagree with me. Some may not have liked the fairy-tale story, but they can’t deny that it wasn’t visually appealing.

I was also sitting toward the back-left side of the center section in the theater, right next to where the lighting effects were being controlled. I talked with Paxton Means who was in charge of those lighting effects, and he informed me that it was a great deal of work, even though it did get slightly boring watching the play over and over.

One of the greatest props they used, in my opinion, were the 'books' that turned into the onstage props/setting for the characters in the play. It was a great idea, considering the theme of the play. They had several different ones, including one for Jack and his Mother’s house, two different ones for Cinderella’s house, one served the purpose of the Baker and his Wife’s house, and another was the house of Red Ridinghood’s Grandmother.

The costumes and makeup the actors were wearing really had an effect on the visual appearance, especially Matt Lincoln’s and Kori Loomis’ performances, which I thought were exceptional. All the actors and actresses, as well as the stage and tech crews, did a phenomenal job on the production, making it a very enjoyable experience for me.
I thought that "Into the Woods" was overall a very good play. The set design and casting was all very impressive. I thought that the backdrops, props, and stage sets were very well designed. It was a nice change to see such significant changes in the backdrop in just a high school play. The lighting and audio was also well done. The light crew never missed a beat through the entire play. However, there were several times that I thought it was a little hard to hear the voices of the performers or to understand them. But overall, they were very clear spoken and easy quite easy to hear.

My one complaint about the play was its length. I thought that the first part was very well scripted and entertaining, however, the second half became a bit droll. I think the play could have ended at there intermission. But, despite the fact the second half the play, had a good message, even if it was a little hard to understand. As far as I could tell it was that we are stronger together than alone, but, I am not quite sure what Little Red Riding Hood's sudden transformation to the Goth dog collar was. And despite the scene with the narrator being killed by the giant being a bit of comic relief, I don't think it was necessary or well placed since it was a more serious part of the play.

Overall, I thought that the cast and sets were excellent, however, despite the fact that the play was a good one, I think a better one could have been chosen that would have better complimented the actors and actresses...
Student Evaluation

Kentlake High School’s fall musical was “Into the Wood” by Stephen Sondheim. As the Student Director of this show, I was able to work with all of the different aspects of the production: from behind the scenes to on stage. As I worked with Pam Cressey, I was able to learn and develop a passion for theatre. Pam was an excellent director. She made the cast and crew work so that we would make it our own show, that we loved doing everyday.

As the weeks and months went on, the acting became better and better, from the constant help and support of the director. The technical/behind the scenes part of the production was absolutely fabulous. We had hired a professional set and lighting designer to help give us counsel and advise as to how sets work and how to make them look professional. Through the weeks of 6-7 hours every Saturday, the sets and the lighting came together into an enchantress on stage. When it was finished, the stage had transformed into the woods. It really brought a new perspective to the show.

Although she doesn’t think so sometimes, Pam Cressey was the one who helped us bring this show to life. She counseled us as both cast and crew to work together to make it our show. This in turn allowed us to become a family.

Student Director

Krysti Wiser
Student Evaluation

Kentlake High School’s fall 2003 production of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine’s *Into the Woods* was the experience of a lifetime. I couldn’t have asked for a more pleasurable and fulfilling play to perform in. The true soul beneath the show was Mrs. Pam Cressey. The blood, sweat and tears that she put into this monster of a production were the driving force behind its success. She taught me more about what is involved in professional theatre in three months than I had learned over the past seven years.

I have been involved in six of Mrs. Cressey’s other shows, in minor roles and major roles, chorus and walk-ons, and in *Into the Woods* I saw more passion, energy, focus, and pure imaginative thought come from that woman than I ever have. She put all of herself into this production. If only to justify her extraordinary work, I worked harder to make this show a success than any other.

Mrs. Cressey, with all of her directing mastery – in my opinion, at least – is only human, and she had off days, just as the rest of the cast did. Sometimes she was slow, sometimes she was distracted, but only because she invested so much of her life into every component of the production. Her determination to perfect the set, lighting, and acting in this play was an inspiration to me. Perhaps we didn’t reach what a “real company” would call perfect, but because of Mrs. Pam Cressey, we fulfilled our very highest goals. This made us a stronger company, and I, for one, have never seen one more professional.

Lauren Kottwiz
Into the Woods
By;
Jenny Maurer

With the cast of teens that truly bring to life the charters they play
Into the Woods is a hit.

Since September the cast, crew, and Cressy have been working
endlessly to put on the best show ever. With the normal stress of the
judges from 5th avenue, they have more stress to deal with; because this is
Cressy’s thesis, for have masters in drama.

Even with the disaster of the “great winds”. Which caused the
cancellation of three plays. This does not stop this cast and crew from
putting on a spectacle of magic, love, sorrow, and joy.

When the certain rise you feel as though you are thrown into a tiny
kingdom at the edge of a dark and scary wood. The set is so well done
you all most feel bad knowing that it will be torn down. The actors bring
the wacky tale to life. With a show stealing cow an evil witch, two
“charming” princes, a very mysterious man, and even more charismatic
charters it’s hard not to become in wrapped by the story.

With a story of a small village of people wishing and dreaming,
they all set of for the woods to get their wish. One by one they, run into
each other they help each other to get their hearts desirer. When all seems
right and every wish has been granted it turns into “a world of chaos”
when a giant comes to avenge her husband’s death.

People of all ages will love this show. So if you did not get the
chance to see this wonderful piece of theater, I guess you will have to do
the second best thing and go see it on Broadway.
As I traveled into the woods on opening night, I had low expectations for the play. Due to the fact that I am in the theatre class sixth period I saw the extreme amounts of preparation that went into the play. Now I'm not trying to say that they didn't get their work done, I'm just saying that there was so much work to do, that a lot of it was done at the last minute. However, I was exceedingly surprised by the final product and very pleased with the end result. I can honestly say I'm so proud of everyone who was involved and they did a tremendous job.

I have seen this play done numerous times as we watched it last year in orchestra, and in the beginning of the year in theatre. Miss Cressey's take on the play had a little twist from the original version. She had Vincent, the narrator, be a typical, All-American, kind of kid. Also, she displayed many other social "group" or stereotypes of those groups and how people within them act. This added a meaning to the somewhat chaotic intermingling of different fairytale plots. The part I enjoyed the most from this Kentlake version was definitely Lauren's job as the witch! She was amazing, and I'm not quite sure how she managed to remember all her lines, especially for her first scene with the baker and his wife, but she did, and I'm very proud of her for that. I am not attempting to downplay any one else's efforts, but she definitely did a great deal of work, and displayed a great deal of talent.

There were so many humorous parts of the play as well. The place where the princes did the sort of runway poses as they sang their song of their woes of love was so incredibly hilarious that I almost fell out of my chair. Also, when red riding hood and her grandmother climbed out of the wolf, it was very funny. The granny, though she had a small role, added a lot because of the way she climbed out-irritated and almost sarcastic. The most hilarious part of all however, was not intended to be as attention catching, and only was in the first showing, as I was later told by Miss Cressey, was the part of the cow. Emma did an amazing job and had so much character to her part even though she had no lines at all. I applaud her on that, for her part was truly well done.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the play, and I feel it was the best play that I have seen Kentlake produce. Everyone that was involved did an amazing job, and I'm very glad that they decided to include the second act, as most schools do not introduce this section of the story to the audience, they simply end with the first act. Bravo to Miss Cressey, Bravo to the cast, and Bravo to the parents and techies who made this production possible, it was a success!
On December 14, 2003 I attend the play Into the Woods produced by Kentlake’s fine drama members. I was especially eager to watch this play because last year I was a member of the concert choir which, as a project took on the musical Into the Woods to perform for one of our concerts. Mrs. Cressey was kind enough to volunteer her time to block some of the number. She had wonderful ideas then and I could only imagine what she would cook up for the play.

I was very pleased to see the end product of everyone’s efforts. As the play started the scenes captured my attention. They were so will put together and extremely creative. I thought the design of the opening backdrop was very original. Since the play revolved around a number of stories the books emit the feeling of reading the book and getting a glimpse into each tale. But by far by favorite background were the woods. The uses of cloth to make the trees in the background was great, it made them seem far off and dark. Also by using fabric to create some of the trees it looked more realistic because they seemed less uniform. The addition of real tree branches created good texture compared to the other elements used. Another reason why I liked the cloth trees was when the Giant came they could shake from the “vibration” making it more realistic. My favorite part of the whole play was when the giant came while the books sets were out and all the pages flow out of the books. I thought this part was really cool because the “vibrations” were destroying the books and they were falling apart, which was very dramatic.

Putting the scenery aside all the actors did a wonderful job. My favorite characters were Jack and the Beaker’s Wife. I thought that Eric and Shauna Hagreen did a great job in both acting and signing. Also I really like the cow because it was very creative how they made the part into a role. Even in the movie version of the play they didn’t have a real person playing the part they just carried around a cardboard cut out. I bet poor Emma was so sore after standing in that position for that long. But she did a really awesome job.

In conclusion, I thought the performance by Kentlake was far better than the movie version. For one reason we had much better backdrops and lighting. Also we had better props, such as Milky White which wasn’t even real in the movie. Finally I think that the performance of Jack and Little Red Riding hood were much better. The actors at Kentlake conveyed the role better. Little Red Riding hood’s role was very hard to bring across without becoming too annoying, which Nicole McCarthy was able to portray unlike the actor in the movie.
Into The Woods

Into The Woods is a mix of classic fairy tales entangled in to one story. The characters from Cinderella, Little Red Ridding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, Baker and the Baker’s Wife and Rapunzel come together to fight a merciless giant. The stage enchants you with the life like trees and the ingenuity of the set designs. The lights had the ability to mimic dusk or rays of light filtering through the woods. The characters were memorable from the humorously charismatic princes to the eccentric Rapunzel. My favorite part of the play would be the princes and their dilemmas with the princesses and the song Agony. It was very creative the way they showed the giants presence by the shaking of the trees and in the end the huge foot showing the downfall of the giantess. It was a great performance and I congratulate the cast and crew, a job well done.

The plays only fault would be that there is too much play. At intermission the play attendees are ready to leave assuming that the play has concluded. It seems that the writer at the last minute decided to prolong the play. I would recommend seeing the play, but not after a tiring day.
Into the Woods

Being a part of the Into the Woods production was one of the best experiences that I have ever had. For one this was my first musical and it was very entertaining. Coming into this play I knew that it would be my last drama performance. My sophomore year I was in The Miracle Worker and last year I was in Inspecting Carol. Both of these were fun plays, yet they weren’t demanding by any means. In those plays I learned my lines pretty fast and they didn’t require any musical work. Into the Woods required hours of work and I had to go over my lines constantly so that I didn’t mess up. Into the Woods was phenomenal!

I think that the best thing about this play was must definitely the actors. In the past some of the cast members didn’t get along with other members, but in this play everyone got along. It was amazing seeing everyone off stage congratulating one another after they had delivered their lines. If someone messed up onstage we were like a family and when they got off stage we were right there to lift them up. It was that camaraderie that aided in the success in the play. With emotions high and anxiety low we were all able to do our best and make this play something special. When certain funny parts in the play arose if you weren’t in it you were off stage watching it happen. It was great watching everyone cheer for each other. Jealousy was an emotion that wasn’t present.

When Fifth Avenue came to critique our play it didn’t matter. Everyone gave all that he or she could and that is all that we could do. The best thing about this is that I felt we were helping Mrs. Cressey to live out her dreams as a director. As a matter of fact we were not aware when Fifth Avenue came to our play. We just made sure that we gave our best at all times. It came as a shock to us all when we found out that they had made an appearance.

Into the Woods was a great play that had many touching parts as well as nice mixture of comedy. The Princes were a riot while the Baker was more serious and a leader. All of the characters played huge parts in this play. It was truly and ensemble type of performance, because if one person was gone it wouldn’t have been able to continue. My role as the Narrator was pretty crucial, because I had to tell the story.

With this being my last play I am truly happy to say that I was apart of something magical. Everyone was friendly and everyone pulled their own weight. I can leave this play without any regrets. I wish all of my fellow cast mates and Mrs. Cressey the best of luck in all of their endeavors.
The most recent musical, *Into the Woods*, featured brilliant chemistry by its actors, a captivating set and props and memorable characters combined in a collage of fairy tales.

Although she didn’t have a vocal effect on the performance, Emma Thesenvitz did a superb job looking appropriately bored and conveyed a general distain for the silly humans who ran about collecting various representations of different fairy tales. This included her character, a cow named Milky White.

Arguably, the most memorable characters may have been the two princes most charming who admittedly were raised to be “charming, not sincere.” Their futile attempts to find the perfect princess ended in blindness, unhappiness and a quickie in the woods with the baker’s wife for one lucky prince.

Their search showed the unhappiness, which came with material things. Each prince searched for the most perfect, most beautiful maiden. When they eventually found what they were looking for, each discovered that what they wanted was actually more. Beauty and charm proved not enough to satisfy the voids in their lives that they attempted to fill. Their searches only resulted in continued “Agony!” as the two concluded that “the harder the catch, the better the prize?”

Lauren Kottwitz, who played the part of the witch, brought enthusiasm and the perspective of a concerned mother to the character. Despite her rather extreme methods, it was apparent that she truly cared for her adopted daughter, Rapunzel. Thanks to the narrator, Vincent Humphrey, the young woman’s true identity is revealed to the audience. This maiden is the forgotten sister of the peasant baker. When she was a child, her father was forced to give her to the witch in payment for stealing vegetables, specifically magic beans, from her precious garden.

Eric Hagreen performance as the rather dim-witted, annoying Jack seemed at times not to fit the atmosphere of the play. His seriousness for the role belied the foolish character he was cast to play.

To compliment the colorful performances, the set was complex and added a new dimension to the show. The moving books holding individual scenes from each fairy tale where amazing in their intricate construction. In addition, the dwarves moving the books to and from offstage provided an almost seamless transition from scene to scene.

Later in the production, the forest scenes made the average viewer wonder at the hours of work, which resulted in the intricate scenery. Similarly, the lighting was excellent and set the scene, bright for lighter moments in the play and darker for more serious scenarios.

In all, the first half of the play was enjoyable and seemed at times to resolve itself in the first act. By the time new problems had been invented, the attention of the audience had waned. Meaning, the second act at times seemed superfluous and as though it only attempted to continue to hold the audience’s attention.

In conclusion, the play was well cast and the set was amazingly intricate however, at times the writing of the play itself seemed to sabotage the best efforts of the cast.
"Into the Woods" Critique

I saw "Into the Woods" on Tuesday night, and it instantly became one of my favorite productions ever. It's probably the best Kentlake has done, second maybe only to "Inspecting Carol." The combination of honed acting skills, an amazingly believable set and an enjoyable story made this play very, very fun.

Each actor fit his or her role perfectly. I loved seeing my friend Emma as a cow – she was one of the funniest characters, and she didn't even say a word. Lauren was the quintessential witch, and Cameron was perfect as Cinderella. Those two also have fantastic singing voices. Kori Loomis was hilarious as the bitterly unhinged Rapunzel. Both princes were played with foppish, slightly eccentric brilliance. I laughed out loud at "Agony," especially the bit about having dwarf problems and "Ah, well... back to my wife!" The rest of the cast, especially Jack, his mother, the narrator, Little Red Riding Hood and the baker and his wife, was spectacular as well.

In addition to superb acting and singing, the set was almost unbelievable. The crew used the PAC's lighting capabilities to their fullest. The forest could be either foggy and dark at night, or sun-streamed and cheerful in the daytime. Of course, the giant's foot was definitely the coolest set piece I've ever seen in a high school production. The way the entire set shook in synchronization when the giant moved was also pretty impressive.

The only drawback is the length. The show could have feasibly ended after the first act. Although the second act was just as funny and well done was the first, near the end the audience started to lose interest, simply because it was past all of our bedtimes.

Other than the length issue, I thoroughly enjoyed every part of "Into the Woods."
Student Evaluation

Kentlake High School's fall musical was "Into the Wood" by Stephen Sondheim. As the Student Director of this show, I was able to work with all of the different aspects of the production: from behind the scenes to on stage. As I worked with Pam Cressey, I was able to learn and develop a passion for theatre. Pam was an excellent director. She made the cast and crew work so that we would make it our own show, that we loved doing everyday.

As the weeks and months went on, the acting became better and better, from the constant help and support of the director. The technical/behind the scenes part of the production was absolutely fabulous. We had hired a professional set and lighting designer to help give us counsel and advise as to how sets work and how to make them look professional. Through the weeks of six- seven hours every Saturday, the sets and the lighting came together into an enchanted forest on stage. When it was finished, the stage had transformed into the woods. It really brought a new perspective to the show.

Although she doesn't think so sometimes, Pam Cressey was the one who helped us bring this show to life. She counseled us as both cast and crew to work together to make it our show. This in turn allowed us to become a family.

Student Director

Krysti Wiser
Into the Woods is deeper than the average musical, and much more challenging. Stephen Sondheim has a reputation for composing very difficult, almost operatic music and writing moving lyrics for productions such as Sweeney Todd: the Demon Barber of Fleet Street and West Side Story. Into the Woods is no exception. Based on a set of fractured fairytales, (Grimm style,) by James Lapine, the musical follows the dramatic rise and fall of the characters in well-known favorites such as Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood, and Rapunzel. Each story has a set of new and humorous quirks for the first act, which ends ‘happily ever after,’ but the second act drags the cast back “into the woods” to battle a giant and face reality.

I think the most powerful change in character can be seen in Cinderella. She begins as the epitome of book-wormish, head-in-the-clouds innocence. Abused by her stepmother and sisters, and neglected by her alcoholic father, she spends her life escaping into fictional worlds and communicating with her dead mother via a tree and a flock of helpful birds. She wishes for a festival, not a prince, and getting more than she bargains for only sends Cinderella into a comical state of confusion. At one point, she would rather “run along home... where there’s nothing to choose, so there’s nothing to loose...” than face an existentialist world. Cinderella would rather relinquish all control over her own life than be responsible for herself. Yet she must mature drastically to endure the trials of the second act.

As a princess, Cinderella attempts to quell her rising doubts about her happiness, as do the rest of the cast. The severity of a visitation from above, by the wife of the giant murdered by Jack in Act I, sends everyone back “into the woods... to see what the trouble is.” It is not long before Cinderella finds that her mother is dead, (again,) her husband has committed adultery, and her new home has been “set upon by the giant.” Before she has a moment to swallow her grief, she must mother two other orphans and help defeat the giant before “she will destroy half the kingdom.” The maturity she grasps while singing comfort and guidance to Little Red Riding Hood, assuring her that “no one is alone,” is the most powerful change in any character throughout the play. Although she seems to have come full circle by the final song – beginning and ending the show with the same “I wish!” – Cinderella is now cleaning houses happily.

This is the most amazing show I have ever been a part of. The cast has been so motivated, talented, and supportive throughout the production. We tackled a show that no other public high school would even dream of touching, (any that do will always limit themselves to the first act,) and despite having a significantly shorter amount of time to prepare the show, we began with a sturdier grasp on it than ever before in Mrs. Cressey’s history. Even the windstorm, a reminder of the giant, did not halt our passion. I will miss the encouragement of my fellow cast members: all friends now despite any previous conflicts. This production also created the tightest and purest bonds, which made it all the more painful closing night as Mrs. Cressey tearfully said goodbye to the seniors.

I am very proud of my own accomplishments during the show. Not only did I master some of the most difficult music in the play, which was significantly above my alto range, I overcame the stage fright that attacked me last year when I spontaneously developed asthma. More than anything, I appreciated the heart-felt comments from my fellow thespians as to how my acting has finally blossomed. Although I have a long way to go, I now have a renewed hope that I will be able to reach my goals.
Hearing beforehand that this was the best production Kentlake has ever put on, I was very excited to experience it. I was also aware that this was apart of Mrs. Cressey’s thesis, therefore more than ever was her blood, sweat and tears, probably literally at times, put into the final product. It was also exciting to see my peers, who I have classes with everyday, show off their talents, which may not usually be displayed otherwise. I was very impressed with students such as Shauna Haygreen, Brandon Jeffery, Cameron Quinn, Emma Thesinvitz, Jared Rinehart, and many more. Their ability to make dialogue come alive was amazing.

Before the play even began, I couldn’t help but stare at the beautiful scenery and props. It was apparent that countless hours were spent painting, sawing and designing the set, making the opening visually stunning and captivating. I especially liked the opening of the books; it was a twist on separating the characters in a way that they were still very connected but it was not confusing when they would talk about their different lives. I would also like to compliment the choice of the cast. All of the main characters were extremely talented singers which is essential in a musical because bad voices can turn an audience off very quickly. Furthermore, the energy from each character was definitely shown and gave the impression that they were aware of what their character would be thinking and feeling during that time.

The next scene is an effective change with the morbid forest and other dreary characteristics. This really set the tone for the situations the characters were in. One thing I really liked about these forest scenes was the way that the characters were intertwined instead of remaining separate in their different story lines. As new characters were introduced, there was also never a feeling of being overwhelmed with too many people in one scene; there was always only a few characters so that the audience could follow along easily. The first half ran very smoothly, without any noticeable mistakes from the cast. The second half was equally as good, however, I did not like the music or plot of the second half nearly as much. It was even more farfetched than the beginning and became too surreal.

I would say that my favorite part of the play would have been the song between the two princes. Not only was the song very simple and sweet, both guys did a nice job with their blocking and their voices also blended very nicely together. The worst part of the night, though, would have been the lack of audience. Without people in the audience, the actors get more nervous and have a hard time feeding off their energy. Granted, it was a Thursday night, I would have liked to have seen more people come out for the play.

Overall, I was VERY impressed with every aspect of the performance and I could tell that when run flawlessly, as it had almost been done that night, it would have been close to the caliber of any adult performed version of “Into the Woods.” Nice job cast, crew and especially Mrs. Cressey!
Extra Credit Into the Woods Critique

This year's musical, Into the Woods, was exciting, well performed, and a joy to be a part of. For the third year in a row, I was a member of the pit orchestra for the musical, and this year was just as fun, if not more interesting, as the last two years. This year brought a new first for me because I played a new instrument. Having the opportunity to show off my new skills in a wonderful production was awesome.

Into the Woods was, in my opinion, the best musical in my three years here at Kentlake. The cast was really into the show and they knew their parts inside and out. It was fun to see how the play evolved as the time went by. From the first practice to opening night I saw some great transformations. It took a lot of hard work and dedication from everyone involved in the play to make it the success it turned out to be. The professionalism of the cast and crew really surprised me. There was many a night when the orchestra left practice at 9:00 and the cast was only through with one act. This meant that the cast and crew, along with the director, had to stay long into the night to get a full run-through of the play. I never once heard any of the cast members complain. Being able to do the play was a great honor for them and anyone could see that they would do anything to make Into the Woods run smoothly.

When the "great winds" came the day after opening night, I got kind of scared. I was worried about whether or not the cast would be affected by five days without rehearsing or performing the play. Amazingly, nothing bad happened, and the second "opening night" went off without a hitch. Even the audience wasn't affected by the windstorm. Sure, the weeknight shows weren't quite as full as the weekends, but there was still a good amount of people at every show.

I loved hearing how the audience reacted to the play. After the second night of performances, you think you know just about every spot where the audience tends to crack-up or exclaim, "GROSS!" But the audiences this year were quite unpredictable. The only thing that remained the same night after night was the compliments that I heard at intermission and at the conclusion of the show. Sitting in the orchestra pit did not allow me to actually watch the action going on onstage, but from the reaction of the people who attended, I get the feeling that it went quite well.

I am very glad that I had the opportunity to work with the drama group again this year. Participating in the school musical has always been a treat and I will miss Mrs. Cressey's productions in the coming years. I am thankful to the cast for having fun every night, because it gave the orchestra something to look forward to. All in all, Into the Woods was a big success and I enjoyed every minute I spent working on the project.
Kentlake drama, under the direction of Pam Cressey, has outdone itself with the production “Into the Woods.” Bursting with the promising talent of aspiring actors and actresses, coupled with Cressey’s effort to produce a top-notch show for her Master’s degree thesis this was the best show Kentlake has had in three years. A 10 dollar ticket price did not do the show justice; the performance was priceless.

The best element of the show by far was the acting. Each actor and actress (the narrator, Vincent Humphrey, included) performed flawlessly, speaking clearly and audibly, and using convincing body language and facial expressions. Typically “amateur” (I hesitate in using that word- it was so professional) performers tend to have “cheesy” actions that they include in an effort to convince the audience. This was not so- there was no overacting whatsoever from the incredible actors and actresses gracing the stage. Each one seemed to have his/her heart in the performance, providing comfort for the audience and believability for the actors and actresses.

Aside from the ability to perform convincingly, the actors and actresses enhanced the show with beautiful singing. Never before have I attended a Kentlake play with such wonderful vocalists. Cameron Quinn, Lauren Kottwitz, Eric Hagreen, and Kori Loomis, among others, were able to demonstrate their awesome voices and provide additional points of amazement. The accompaniment by the Chamber Orchestra aided the singers. Not only did it provide the basis for the songs, in doing so it set an effective tone for each scene.

Despite a few setbacks (the huge books getting stuck onstage during the change of scene, a squeaky microphone, and a fallen tree), the cast did an incredible job. All actors and actresses were cool under the stressful circumstances and went on with the performance seeming oblivious to the somewhat chaotic surroundings.

All in all, “Into the Woods” was the best performance by Kentlake drama in three years. The acting was phenomenal and professional and the vocalists along with the Chamber Orchestra were awe-inspiring. The show was not worth a penny less than 10 dollars and, frankly, the show was worthy of a higher ticket price. Cressey’s Master’s thesis was most definitely a masterpiece.

(I still have some of the songs stuck in my head!)
Student Evaluation

Into the Woods will always remain in my mind as one of the most fabulous experiences I have had the honor to be a part of. Despite the difficulty of a Sondheim production, we began the performances more prepared, (and pumped,) than ever before, thanks to Mrs. Cressey's hard work. She let us know - through her dedication even more than her impassioned speeches - how important this show was to her. As actors, we were encouraged to do research – including soul-searching – in order to construct our dynamic character on all levels. She wanted us to "bloom" as actors, and pushed us to discover the feelings within ourselves instead of mimicking an existing performance. All the while, she was there to guide us towards the story she had imagined, (after more research than any of us could even fathom,); it became a team effort that was all the more valuable of an experience. Throughout the rehearsals we truly became a team, a family, an ensemble - an uncommonly strong version of the common thespian phenomenon. She set the bar high with her own example by showing us the professionalism, and the heart, that she expected us each to contribute. Mrs. Cressey is our shepherd, guiding us to a better production; I have never seen a director so passionate about her play and the meaning that we, as her sheep, must understand while performing. Her passion for this play, (whether she was caught up in the emotions while imparting the play's theme, or overwhelmingly excited over seeing her creation come to life onstage,) often brought her to tears. How could such deep dedication for this production, as well as theater in general, not result in wild success?
Mrs. Cressey is always bursting with ideas that seem impossible, but she is not out of her mind. “I want the Rabbi to speak real Hebrew,” for Fiddler on the Roof, “I want 76 trombones” for The Music Man, “I want a forest to grow out of the stage,” for Into the Woods. All of these requests seem laughable to those who do not know Mrs. Cressey. I do know her. I saw our gentile Rabbi reciting real scripture, the entire pit orchestra becoming a marching band, and the woods raising around my head. She may seem scatter-brained, but it is only because her mind is so full of creative genius; sometimes it seems like she is not only a director, but also a miracle worker.

Although she may, at times, seem insane, Mrs. Cressey is the breath of sanity in many of our lives. I could relay innumerable stories of how our cast became a family for which she is the matriarchal head, of her role as councilor to our many woes, or of the lives I know she has improved through her influence. This could be heard from any member of the cast, however, so let me share a story of Mrs. Cressey’s success in my life. After developing stress-induced asthma last year, I began struggling with my life-long dreams of acting. Music and theater had been my life, but when a little bit of pre-performance jitters could halt my ability to sing, or even speak clearly, my self-confidence was crushed. The day Mrs. Cressey cast me as Cinderella, my excitement was soon replaced by dread. For an alto, the range of her voice is intimidating; for an asthmatic alto: terrifying. Knowing how important Into the Woods was to her future, I feared the momentous effect of my doubtless failure. Yet when I voiced these concerns, she reflected nothing but undying faith in my underlying ability. She trusted me with a formidable portion of one of the most important projects of her entire life. I was deeply honored. For me, this added inspiration made me work all the harder; I put more into this
show than any previous endeavor in my entire life. It was, by no means, easy. For the music, I had to learn the theory behind the challenging rhythms and kick my solo range up the better part of an octave. For my acting, I did hours of research and scrutinized videos of my performance. Yet I still did not have a hold of my part; I needed the help of my director. She put the heart into my performance, giving me a purpose to be passionate for. More importantly: her faith in me restored my confidence, and renewed my goals in life for a career in the performing arts, (with slight changes). Mrs. Cressey’s work has made me consider a career as a high school teacher. If I could change even a single life in the way she has saved hundreds, I would feel that my existence had worth.

Cameron Quinn

Senior at Kentlake Highschool

Please note:
This signature has been redacted for privacy concerns.
Into the Woods

Special Thanks to Mrs. Diana Pratt, Principle of Kentlake High School, for her support in putting on this production.

Kentlake Performing Arts
Dec. 3-6 & 10
INTO THE WOODS

Technical Production Team

DIRECTOR
PAM CRESSEY
KRISTI WISER
PAM CRESSEY
CHRIS ANDERSON
JON LANGRELL
PAXTON MEANS, LUKE MURCHISON,
ANDREW JOHNSON
DAVID WISER
LUKE MURCHISON, MATT JOHNSON
SAMANTHA BIRKLID
SHARA JOHNSON
SHARA JOHNSON, MIKAELA YAGER
SAMANTHA BIRKLID, BETH FREDERICK,
DAVID GUPTILL, ANDREW JOHNSON,
MATT JOHNSON, SHARA JOHNSON,
KONNER MCFALLS, PAXTON MEANS, EVAN
MOURO, CRAIG MURCHISON, LUKE MURCHISON,
SHANNON QUINN, MEAGAN SHEADEL, CAROLINE WATKINS,
LINDSAY WATTS, MIKAELA YAGER, (ADULT HELPERS)
CHRIS ANDERSON, MOLLY ANDERSON,
TAMMY HAGREEN, GREG HALEVERSON, KYM QUINN
KYM QUINN, CINDY CANNON, TAMMY GREEN, TONI MAURER,
SARA THEISEN-VITZ, SHANNON QUINN
KRISTINA CALDWELL, PAM CRESSEY
DIANE LINCOLN
DEBRA HUMPHREY
CAMERON QUINN
FRANK RINEHART, KYM QUINN

Musical Production Team

MUSIC DIRECTOR
PRISCILLA BALDOCK
PIANIST
MATT TURNER
ORCHESTRAL DIRECTOR
DAVID HARRIS
ORCHESTRA
KRISTA CURRER
VIOLIN
STEPHEN FESLER
VIOLA
JESSICA BERGEHENS
CELLO
BREANNE LAWLER
BASS
MEECHA DARE
FLUTE
LINDSAY HAHN
CLARINET
NATHAN HAGENEIER
BASOON
KENDRA WEAVER
FRENCH HORN
ASHLEY WISER
TRUMPET
TAYLOR GUILLAN
Percussion
BRANDON SMITH
SYNTHESIZER
JIM FULKERSO
KIRSTEN HECKELSMILLLER
ROBERT BURGET
ADAM MCCAFFREE
ANLI JIAOT

SNACK ORGANIZER
KYM QUINN, CINDY CANNON, TAMMY GREEN, TONI MAURER,
SARA THEISEN-VITZ, SHANNON QUINN

PROGRAMS
Cast (in order of appearance)

NARRATOR
CINDERELLA
JACK
MILKY WHITE
JACK’S MOTHER
BAKER
BAKER’S WIFE
CINDERELLA’S STEPMOTHER
FLORINDA
LUCINDA
CINDERELLA’S FATHER
LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD
LITTLE BIRDS
WITCH
CINDERELLA’S MOTHER
BIRDS
MYSTERIOUS MAN
WOLF
GRANNY
RAPUNZEL
RAPUNZEL’S PRINCE
CINDERELLA’S PRINCE
STEWARD
GIANT
SNOW WHITE
SLEEPING BEAUTY
DWARFS
PIGS
LITTLE BLUE BIRDS

Musical Numbers

ACT I

Scene 1:
1. Prologue: Into the Woods

Scene 2:
2. Cinderella at the Grave
3. Hello, Little Girl
4. Guess This Is Goodbye
5. Maybe They’re Magic
6. Our Little World
7. I Know Things Now
8. A Very Nice Prince
9. First Midnight

Scene 3:
10. Giants In The Sky
11. Agony
12. It Takes Two
13. Second Midnight

Scene 4:
14. Stay With Me
15. On the Steps of the Palace

Scene 5:
16. Ever After

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Scene 1:
1. Prologue: So Happy

Scene 2:
2. Agony
3. Lament
4. Any Moment
5. Moments In The Woods
6. Your Fault
7. Last Midnight
Samantha Birkild (Stage Manager) is returning for her third Kentlake production. She was prop mistress / puppet master in "Inspecting Carol" and she made her stage managing debut in "The Music Man." She would like to thank the 80's for making awesome movies and Dad, Mom, and Jake for loving her.

Amy Bissett (Florinda) a junior, was last seen as Zanetta Shinn in “The Music Man.” She enjoys listening to the Burgundy Top Hats. She wants to be an actress when she chooses a profession. Emily and Anna are neat! And thanks to my parents, I love you guys.

Christina Caldwell (Choreographer) is a senior at KL. She has been seen in “The Music Man” and “Fiddler on the Roof.” Christina has been on the KL dance team for three years, Captain this year. She would like to thank Mom, Dad, sister, Grandma, and everyone else who has supported her throughout all of her years of dancing.

Dylan Farmer (Steward) a junior, was last seen as Marcellus in “The Music Man.” Dylan is currently playing the Stewart and hopes to give an exceptional performance.

Justin Fincher (Baker) is a junior at Kentlake. He has been in eighteen different shows, working with about four different theaters, mainly however with Ivanhoe Performing Arts Theater. Justin has also been a two-time All State choir member.

Sarah Fraiman (Sleeping Beauty) is a senior at Kentlake.

Beth Frederick (Tech) is a sophomore at KLHS. This is the first play she has been in since elementary school. Being a tech is one of her favorite things to do. She plans to do it for many years to come.

Genevieve Gallacher (Bird) is a sophomore at KL. She was previously in “The Pink Panther Strikes Again” at CHJH, and is excited for her first KL play. She is also on the ROTC Drill Team. Much thanks to her family (especially Mom,) and her great friends.

“The best thing about the future, is that it only comes on day at a time” Abe Lincoln

Eric Hagreen (Jack) is a freshman at Cedar Heights. He was in The Music Man here at KL and was in other plays at CHJH. His hobbies include singing, playing piano and paint balling.

Shauna Hagreen (Baker’s Wife) a senior, is enjoying her fourth show with Director Pam Cressey. Her last role was Mrs. Paroo in last year’s musical, “The Music Man.” Shauna is the Thespian Society president here at Kentlake.

Lindsey Halverson (Lucinda) was last seen as Gracie in “The Music Man” and Little John in “....Robin Hood.” She loves singing, dancing, and acting with a passion. She’d like to thank her parents and Nick for all their love and support. “Acting is not being emotional but being able to express emotion.” - Thomas Reid

Vincent David Humphrey II (Narrator) a senior, was previously seen in “Inspecting Carol” and “The Miracle Worker.” This will be his final play. Vincent is currently President of KL ASB. He loves the show “Recess.” He would like to thank his parents and above all God.

“I’ll see you tomorrow Crispin, tomorrow” from “Daddy Daycare”

Shara Johnson (Tech) is a sophomore at KLHS. Although you don’t see her on stage she roams around back stage as one of the prop managers. This is her first year in drama and she hopes it won’t be her last.

Cassy Kirk (Sleeping Beauty / Florinda) is enjoying her second play. She was last seen as Gracie Shinn in “The Music Man.” She played Mary-Lou in VCS’s Bye Bye Birdie. She’d like to say thanks to her family and to her friends. She loves you and she’ll miss you.

Andrew Johnson (Tech) is a junior this year at KL. He has worked most aspects of Tech, and will be working fly during the show.

Matt Johnson (Tech) is a sophomore at KL. This is the first play he has participated in. Matt is enjoying the behind the scenes work.
Kori Loomis (Rapunzel) a junior, has loved performing since she could walk. She was Chava in “Fiddler on the Roof.” She is also a member of the award winning vocal quartet “Aves de Canción,” and the 2003 All-State Choir. Kori loves music and would like to pursue a career in the arts. She would like to thank her friends and family for supporting her through the years.

Stefni Maurer (Step Mother) a senior, is a drama fiend and is having a grand old time in this production. Her career will continue to flourish as it has and so on. She'd like to thank the potatoes and her mom. Hi Mom. Also Aaron.

Nicole McCarthy (Snow White / Little Red Riding Hood) was last seen as Zaneeta Shinn in KL’s “The Music Man.” She is the secretary of Drama club and wants to be an actress. Footloose forever Sam! “Screws fall out all the time, the world’s an imperfect place” – The Breakfast Club

Paixton Means (Tech) a junior, is enjoying his second year being a tech. Make sure to say Hi to him on your way in – he’ll be at the light board. “If it doesn’t fit, use a bigger hammer.”

Evan Moore (Tech) is a freshman at CHJH. This is the first play he has worked on. Evan enjoys Broadway and seeing shows. He likes to be active and to be in the theatre. Evan would like to thank his parents and other techies for letting him join so late in the play. He hopes that he can do this again.

Craig Murchison (Tech) is a sophomore at KL. He has been doing drama since the 7th grade when he was in “Fiddler on the Roof.” Craig enjoys being a Techie and like acting too.

Luke Murchison (Tech) is a sophomore at KL. This is his 2nd year in drama. Luke won't be visible during the play, but if you look up and beyond the light you will see him running the spotlight. He would like to say “Thank you Mom and Dad for bringing me food when we had to stay late to work on the set.” Quote: “It was his fault!”

Caitlin Obom (Granny / Giant) a freshman, was last seen as the fourth Juror in “Twelve Angry Men,” and the Evil Princess Joan in “The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood.” She is “really outlandishly happy” about her first Kentlake production.

“He possessed a mind, not twisted, but actually sprawled” – Douglas Adams

Cameron Quinn (Cinderella) a senior, is a proud member of the award-winning ensemble Aves de Canción, and enjoyed the All-Northwest Honor choir last year. Her past productions include “Once Upon a Mattress” and “Fiddler on the Roof” where she was Hodel.

“Once you have tasted flight you will walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward” - Leonardo da Vinci

Shannon Quinn (Bird, Tech) a sophomore, is enjoying her first Cressey production. When Shannon isn't on stage, she can be found with paintbrush in hand. She was last seen as a Panther in “Pink Panther Strikes Again” at CHJH, where she was the Stage Manager.

Jared Rinehart (Cinderella’s Prince / voice of wolf) a junior, is enjoying his second KL production. He was previously Motel the tailor in “Fiddler on the Roof.” Jared is the State Junior Councilor for the Jurisdiction of Washington, in his fraternity “The Order of DeMolay.” He would like to thank his parents for their constant support.

“I'll see you on the stage!”

Christine Seeker is 3 1/2 years old. She is appearing for the first time on stage, as a bird and a child in the musical “Into the Woods.” She enjoys attending St. Jim’s Preschool and playing with her friends. She loves her sister Elizabeth and playing with Bardies.

Elizabeth Seeker is playing the parts of a child and a bird. Elizabeth is making her stage debut in this production of “Into the Woods.” She is 7 years old and is in the first grade at Cedar Valley Elementary. She enjoys dancing and playing with her friends and sister Christine.

Meagan Shadel (Tech) is a freshman at Cedar Heights. She plays bass for Orchestra and Jazz band. She loves being artistic and using her creative skills. Meagan would like to thank everyone on the tech crew for helping her fit in so well. This is her first play but hopes that it won't be her last.

Allison Swienty (Little Red Riding Hood) a freshman, enjoys reading, singing and acting. She has been in three musicals “Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat,” “Once Upon a Mattress,” and “Hello Dolly.” Allison also participates in Cedar Height drama, both acting and as make up tech. She would like to thank Mom for doing her and her family for their patience.

Emma Thessenvitz (Milky White) is a junior at KL. This will be Emma’s second Cressey production, she was last seen in “The Music Man.” Prior to her theatrical debut, Emma was part of a small dance company for twelve years specializing in ballet and jazz.

“You can pretend to be smart, but you can't pretend to have wit.”

Caroline Janelle Watkins (Tech) is a sophomore at KLHS. She has been in six musicals at chun and three school plays. Her favorite movie is “The Sound of Music” when she grows up she wants to be a nurse. Caroline enjoys singing, playing her flute, seeing shows, and being with people.
Adriana Rose Weber, who just celebrated her 2nd birthday, is playing the parts of a child & a bird in "Into the Woods". Already a Kentlake play veteran, she made her stage debut at 1 1/2 months as a Motel & Tzqietel's baby in "Fiddler on the Roof". She also appeared as a villager and mini band member in Kentlake's "Music Man" when she was 18 months old. Adriana is the daughter of Kentlake alumni David and Alyssa (Forbes) Weber. She loves books, playing with her toys and her yellow blanket. She loves being on stage with all of her friends and family for their love and support.

Lyndsey Watt (Tech) a sophomore, is working tech for her first KL production. She has been acting since she was seven. Lyndsey working behind the scenes last year at CHJH as Asst. Director. She would like to thank all her friends and family for their love and support.

Krysti Wiser (Student Director / Snow White) is a senior at KL. This is the first play that she has been in. Krysti would like to thank her parents and the rest of the cast for all of the support that they give. "If you're going to do something, you have to do it well, or there is no use doing it at all."

Mikaela Yager (Props Manager 1) a sophomore, has been doing drama for 8 years and attended a Drama School from the 2nd - 7th grades. Last year she was props manager at CHJH in "The Pink Panther Strikes Again." Mikaela would like to thank her parent for always getting her to and from drama practice no matter the time.

Again we are at the end of another fabulous theatrical production here at KL, and there are so many people to thank, so many people to praise for their hard work, and so many people to remember for their support. I am proud to say our Into the Woods will go down as one of Kentlake Drama's finest musicals due to the passion of all of those involved. The amazing support from my family has been my saving grace. Steve, Allison, and Jason have given up their wife and mom for many hours. My husband, Steve, has done laundry, cooked meals, and taken care of everything I couldn't find the time to do. I am very thankful to him for his love and for all he does to help me achieve my dreams! This show has been especially draining because it was my thesis project for my Master's degree from Central Washington University. So, thank you "Dear", for everything you have done to keep me going! I love you.

To my wonderful hard working parents...WOW, what would we have done without you? Kim Quinn, our costume mom, did an amazing job with the help and long hours of sewing and creating of our other moms. She went above and beyond, spending many extra hours on all of the details of the show. I am so thankful for her support and encouragement and especially her passion for theatre. Our lighting designer, "consultant" as he wants to be called, Jon Langrell, is amazing and talented. "Less is more" is his mantra, and I try to follow his wisdom. What a wonderful opportunity for our students to work and learn from a real professional. Likewise, Chris Anderson stepped in and gave valuable input on the concept design and then taught the kids how to make the concept a reality, professional scenic construction. He is the "master" of creating magic out of scrap wood and muslin! He also taught the students how to rig things that fly and grow. The kids have learned so much, and have fallen in love with these talented and amazing guys! Thank you Jon and Chris for all you have done for us!

There are many more people to thank, yet no space to do so in this playbill! Please know the KL Drama students and their director are so very thankful to all of you who have taken the time to help us in some way or other and for your tremendous support this important endeavor. Mr. Sondheim summed it best in his song "No One Is Alone". If we had to do this without any support from other individuals we would never succeed. This production is only as good as all of you who pay the ticket price which buys the lumber, the paint, the fabrics, the lighting materials, the sound rentals, the professional support, the props, the costumes, and the royalties required to produce a musical of this caliber. We are grateful that we are not "alone".

Thank you!
Pam Cressey
Kentlake Drama, nominated for 12 5th Ave. Theater Musical Awards, presents

**Into the Woods**

Book by James Lapine

Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Directed by Pam Cressey

Dec. 3-6
& 10-13

7PM Curtain

Kentlake Performing Arts Center

$50.00 Pre-sale
(OK via Cash/Check)
$10.00 at the door
$6.00 Seniors & Children Under 10

7405 NE 350th St, Kent, WA  Information call (253) 375-4090  www.kentlake.edu/artscenter
Kentlake HS Drama, nominated for 15 5th Ave. Theater Musical Awards, presents:

**Into The Woods**

Book by James Lapine  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Directed by Pam Cressey

December 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13  
7PM Curtain

$8.00 Pre-sale (KLHS Cashier) $10.00 at the door  
$6.00 Seniors and Children under 10

Kentlake Performing Arts Center  
21401 SE 300th St, Kent, WA

Information (253) 373-4659  www.kentkl2.wa.us/kwl/kl/index.html
## Projected Expenditures

### Into the Woods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th>Projected</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Balance</th>
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# Projected Expenditures

*Into the Woods*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
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</table>
Kentlake High School Audition Form

- Please fill out this form completely
- You must have a parent or guardian
- Sign this form to be eligible to participate or be
- Able to accept a role in this show

INCOMPLETE FORMS WILL
INVALIDATE YOUR AUDITION!!!
(Please print clearly and how you wish your name to appear in the program)

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) Last Name First Name

Address: __________________________ Phone #’s Home (___) - ______

______________________________ Work (___) - ______

______________________________ Cell (___) - ______

Circle The Following
Gender: Male Female
Voice: Bass, Baritone, Tenor, Alto, Mezzo Soprano, Soprano
Circle Preference: Acting Tech Student Directing
Role Preference (If Acting) Major Minor Walk-on
Job Preference (If Tech) Lights Sound Fly Costumes Props
Make-up Stage hand
Other: Publicity Tickets Advertisement Programs

Class Schedules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Per. 1</td>
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<td>1 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per. 2</td>
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<td>Per. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per. 6</td>
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</table>
PLEASE LIST WHO YOU WOULD CAST FOR THE FOLLOWING ROLES AND A BRIEF DESCRIPTION WHY

NARRATOR/ MYSTERIOUS MAN-

CINDERELLA-

JACK-

JACK'S MOTHER-

BAKER-

BAKERS WIFE-

CINDERELLA'S STEPMOTHER-

FLORINDA-

LUCINDA-

CINDERELLA'S FATHER-

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD-

WITCH-
CINDERELLA'S MOTHER-

WOLF-

GRANNY-

RAPUNZEL-

RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE-

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE-

STEWARD-

MILKY WHITE (COW)-

BRIDS (5 PUPPETEERS)-

****THANK YOU FOR YOUR IMINPUT, IT WILL BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION BY THE DIRECTOR****

ANY OTHER COMMENTS-
Into the woods
Props

Baby – baker + wife
Harp - Jack
Bug – Witch
Suitcase – Baker + LRRH
Wicker satchel – Steward
Umbrella – stepmother
Carpet bag – Cyndi’s dad
2 blind canes – stepsisters
2 dark glasses (sun glasses) – stepsisters
Small sack – witch
Leaves + twigs
Staff – steward
Scarf – Bakers wife
Beans – witch
Giant’s forehead + mane of hair
Milky white- Jack
Harp—Jack
Horse- Cyndi’s prince + steward
2 golden slippers – florinda + Lucinda + Cindy
Toe – Florinda
Heel – Lucinda
3 knifes – baker + stepmother +LRRH
Twin babies – rapunzel
Cane – witch
Bean stalk
Bean – baker
Scissors – witch
2 Sacks of gold –mysterious man
Hen – Jack
Golden egg – Jack
Cape of wolf skin – LRRH
Bean – baker’s wife
Shoes – Baker’s wife
Imposter cow – Baker
Sword – the princes
White powder- Imposter cow
Dirt - milky whites grave
Puff of glitter – witch
Silver goblet – witch
Over sized money sack- Jack
Gold pieces – Jack
Red cape – LRRH
Long strand of hair – Baker’s wife
Black lantern + staff – Steward
Rope – milky white
Basket – LRRH
Scarf – Baker
Bed – wolf
Blood- wolf
Lantern – milky white
Loaf of bread – baker
Pot of lentils – stepmother
Sticky buns – LRRH
Apple- LRRH
Cookies – LRRH
Chair – witch
Hunting gear – Baker
Shawl - Cindy
Carriage – stepmother + sisters
2 buckets – Cindy + Jack
Scrub brush- Cindy
Milking stewal Jack
Baking silver ware – Bakery
Hand fans – step sisters
Corn – Baker
Flowers- LRRH
Clubs- Jack + baker
Baby toy – Baker
Purse – Jacks Mother
Hanky chief – Bakers Wife
Into the Woods

McCall's 4151

Act 2

Witch
Into the Woods
Butterick 6195

Florinda
Into the Woods
Butterick 6195

Lucinda
Into the Woods
Butterick 3713

Cinderella

Act I-II
Wedding

Act II
Cape
Into the Woods

Simp. 55 & 2

Baker's Wife
Into the Woods
Simp: 5925

Apron added for scenes in Bakery

BAKER
Into the Woods
Simplicity 5843

Rapunzel

Act I

Act II
"Cow"
Milkey White

Pattern McCall's 8953
+ additions

Must open to swallow

Hang on rear

Wood
Into the Woods
Butterick 3723

Cinderella's Prince
Into the Woods
Butterick 3723

Rapunzel's Prince
Act I - Scene 1

3 Buildings:

Once upon a time...

Jack & Dorothy

Cinderella

Left White

Scream
once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Dusty old books
- Clean up dust
- Your memories

Rapunzel’s book

Once upon a time...

Lists of:
- Props
- Costumes
- Scenery
- Sound effects

Muslin pieces on big piece platforms
50/50 glue-ecurers
Beginning of musical - lots of books - leaves - pages of books - fall littering the stage - destruction of books of story - of happy ever after and searching through pages.
Color-Bled Magical Colors!

Scenery
- Trees
- Levels
- Giant Houses - 3
- Tower
- Bean stalk
- Giant Tree

Symbol for Giant - Shadow, hand, foot?

}
There was once a girl who lived with her father and his new wife and her two daughters. Her mother had died...
Lady Giant's Foot
Act II Scene 2
Rapunzel's Tower
Rapunzel's Tower
top of tower

Cadam law
KENTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS:

Into The Woods
Wolf's bed
Act I

Scene 1 - White scrim down
Once upon a time...
3 houses in front of scrim
Apron - Garden - witch underground
-Props - house items - bakery items, etc.
Cow

Scene 2 - Into the Woods -> scrim up-houses off
Reveal - Woods
BACK platform & ramp
2 side platforms - off
\[ 8 = 2(2.83x) + [-2(2.83x)] \\
5.66x + (5.66x) = 8 \]
- Muslin
- Erosion
- Bureau
- Comando

PRE-SIZED

CATHEDRAL

SCREW OR SAND BAGS OR STAGE SCREWS

Disney Trees!
Cinderella's House

Dusty old books
- Clean dust off your memories -

Once upon a time...
Baker's House

Once upon a time...
There once lived a childless baker and his wife...
Once lived a childless baker and his wife...
when her work was done, Cinderella slept among the ashes and cinders...