

ENTERTAINMENT

Musical 'Into the Woods' casts complex spell

Performance will please viewers young and old, realist and idealist

By Ming Rodrigues
Emerald Reporter

A refreshingly innovative musical hits town this weekend.

Into the Woods, a 1988 Tony Award-winner from musical theater-master Stephen Sondheim, opens this season's On Broadway series at the Hult Center today and Saturday.

This is not your regular song-and-dance musical. First, *Into the Woods* provides a sophisticated insight into the human inner psyche, clever enough to grip an adult, yet enchanting enough to charm any child.

Second, the interesting twist in the tale lies in the characters whose ventures prompt the audience to look deeper into themselves by way of the fun and enchantment for which musical theater and fairy tales are famous.

Look out for familiar childhood fairy tale friends from the Brothers Grimm: Cinderella, Prince Charming, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Snow White, the wicked witch, Big Bad Wolf and Jack, of the beanstalk fame, as they are brought together in an original, evocative story and embark on a journey of self-discovery.

As they venture beyond "happily ever after", the characters find that they must grow up, face their dreams, hope and fears and take responsibility for themselves, forge a moral code from grays rather than blacks and whites and, most crucially, join forces to slay the Giant who's out for their blood.

Into the Woods is a work of artistic ambition and creativity, with more of the magic reinforced than lost in the juxtaposition of a make-believe realm with real, modern themes.

The show's music is equally stunning. Sondheim and director James Lapine, whose first collaboration was "Sunday in the Park with George," cross the boundaries of traditional musical theater with operatic, production-stirring music and recurring motifs that reveal the inner truths of characters and important plot information.

Sondheim, who wrote lyrics for *West Side Story* and *Gypsy* and the music for *A Funny Thing Happened on*



Courtesy photo

Into the Woods, a sophisticated musical drama featuring fairy tale characters, will be staged at the Hult Center today and Saturday.

the Way to the Forum, *A Little Night Music*, *Follies*, *Company*, and *Sweeney Todd*, won a Tony Award for this musical score.

In addition, the original cast recording of the music also won a Grammy last year.

"This is a different musical with a style all its own," said Margaret Lawrence, assistant director of programming at the Hult Center. "It is more sophisti-

cated, dealing symbolically with the emotional forces that go on inside us all. But it's not an adult musical, the fairy tale touch makes it spellbinding, colorful entertainment for all ages."

Showtime is 8 p.m. Tickets are on sale for \$22.50, \$18.50 and \$15 at the EMU Main Desk and the Hult Center, or call 687-5000. There is a limited number of discount tickets for students, seniors, and groups.

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