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**STAGEStheatre Presents Lapine and Sondheim’s Epic Fairytale *Into The Woods* June 15-July 21.**

Fullerton CA—**STAGEStheatre** is proud to present ***Into The Woods***, the first of two musical offerings in their 27th season directed by Jill Johnson, with musical direction by Gabrielle Maldonado. James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim take everyone’s favorite storybook characters and bring them together for a timeless, yet relevant, piece… and a rare modern classic. The Tony Award-winning book and score are both enchanting and touching.
The story follows a Baker and his wife, who wish to have a child; Cinderella, who wishes to attend the King’s Festival; and Jack, who wishes his cow would give milk. When the Baker and his wife learn that they cannot have a child because of a Witch’s curse, the two set off on a journey to break the curse. Everyone’s wish is granted, but the consequences of their actions return to haunt them later with disastrous results.

Helming this “giant” undertaking is director Jill Johnson. “A few years ago, I saw a reimagined version of ***Into The Woods*** at the Globe theatre in San Diego. I was so inspired by it, that when it went on tour, I took my friends to see it in Los Angeles. So many times musicals are produced the same way over and over. But seeing it reimagined opened the creative flood gates to unlimited possibilities. Milky White the cow is played by actor instead of a cardboard cut out. What. That was just the beginning!

Still, this show was always different to me and floating about in the back of my mind and I always thought of the show as a psychological bait and switch, a gateway to adolescence and its complicated truths. Act I had magic beans. Act II had disillusionment, responsibility, and loss. You got from one to the other through the woods, as good a metaphor as any for the big brutal world. Even the shifts in tone were a lesson: amid despair, a dry one-liner (“I was raised to be charming, not sincere”); after an act of courage, ethical revisionism. What I learned from “Into the Woods,” most of all, was ambivalence. It’s in every song, undermining prepackaged morals. (“Isn’t it nice to know a lot?” Little Red sings to herself. “And a little bit not.”) No one in musical theatre does ambivalence like Sondheim, and usually no one tells you what it is until after you’ve experienced it. So you see, I had to slay this giant.”

The musical debuted in San Diego at the Old Globe Theatre in 1986 and premiered on Broadway on November 5, 1987, where it won several Tony Awards, including Best Score, Best Book, and Best Actress in a Musical (Joanna Gleason), in a year dominated by The Phantom of the Opera (1988). The musical has since been produced many times, with a 1988 US national tour, a 1990 West End production, a 1997 tenth anniversary concert, a 2002 Broadway revival, a 2010 London revival,[1] and in 2012 as part of New York City's outdoor Shakespeare in the Park series.

Starring in ***Into The Woods*** are: Audrey Bivens, Briana Bonilla, Tucker Boyes, Justin Budds, Justin Keane Crawford, Hayden Mangum, Cameron Patrick Murray, Melissa Musial, and Carrie Ryder.

Tickets for ***Into The Woods*** are $32.00, $30.00 for students and seniors. Performances are June 15- July 21st, Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00. For reservations please visit our website at [www.stagesoc.org](http://www.stagesoc.org)

About **STAGEStheatre**: Celebrating its 27th year in business, **STAGEStheatre** is one of Orange County’s most innovative community theaters. It produces nearly 15 productions annually, showcasing local playwriting, acting and directing talent. **STAGEStheatre** is, and will continue to be, dedicated to the development of the artist. It is located at 400 E. Commonwealth in Downtown Fullerton (between Lemon and Balcom).

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