

Musical puts adult spin on fairy tales

By KEELY WYGGONK
STAFF WRITER

PREVIEW

You'll hear a slightly different version of the fairy tales you grew up with when the Actor's Company presents Stephen Sondheim's "Into the Woods" at the Village Players playhouse in Birmingham weekends July 23-31.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Village Players renovation fund.

The award-winning musical puts an adult spin on such popular Brother's Grimm tales as Cinderella, Jack and Beanstalk, and Little Red Riding Hood.

"The woods represents the world, in order to get what you want, you have to go into the woods to get it," said director Michael Gravame, 28, who founded the Actor's Company in 1985.

"If you want the pleasantness of life, you've got to encounter wolves. You can't have the good

without the bad. Cinderella wants to be the prince, she thinks he's perfect, but she finds out he's not," Gravame said he picked this show because the music and story are incredible.

"It's not that well-known. A lot of people haven't heard it," he said. "It's ingenious the way the fairy tales are entwined in the story. The characters become real people."

Besides directing, Gravame plays the part of the Baker, one of 15 characters in the show.

Nancy Potts of Rochester Hills portrays the witch. "She's a pivotal character. She has a selfish wish. She lost the magic beans and becomes ugly and old. She convinces the baker to steal the magic beans to become young and beautiful, but then she loses her magic powers."

"INTO THE WOODS"

Theater: The Actor's Company in cooperation with Village Players of Birmingham, at the Village Players playhouse on the corner of Chestnut and Hunter, two blocks south of Maple in Birmingham.

Curtain times: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, July 23-24, 2 p.m. Sunday, July 25, and 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, July 29-31.

Tickets: \$12, call 644-2076.

Potts said she likes the two-sided nature of her character. "I get to be old and ugly and young and beautiful on stage," she said.

Tania Velinsky of Rochester portrays Jack's mother. "She's a single mother with a son and no money. She tells her son to sell their last possession a dry cow, and he comes back with beans,"

said Velinsky. During the play you'll find out what happens to Jack's mother after Jack accumulates wealth.

"In fairy tales everything is black and white," said Velinsky. "There are good people and bad people. In this show, the characters learn that nothing is all bad or all good. In real life there's a lot of gray."

Velinsky said "Into the Woods" is enjoyable because there are a lot of talented people in the cast, a lot of interesting music, a lot of pageantry, and some very funny parts for adults.

"Everyone changes at the end of the show," said Gravame. Everyone is wiser, they'll be more cautious when they go into the woods. Here's an example of how one character changes, she says — "A stotted pup can't hold much soup, but it can catch the potato."



Folk band: The Balduck Mountain Ramblers, named the Detroit area's best folk band twice, will perform at the Summer Concert Series in Southfield on July 28 at the historic Burgh Gazebo.

Big band, folk band to present concerts

The Southfield Parks and Recreation Cultural Arts Division will be presenting the Johnny Trudell Big Band in the Southfield Concert in the Park Series 7 p.m. Sunday, July 25, and the Balduck Mountain Ramblers 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 28, in the Summer Concert Series.

The Johnny Trudell Big Band concert on July 25 at the Prudential Sunbowl, behind the 3000 Prudential Tower in Center, off Civic Center Drive,

Southfield, will feature a free celebration of music from the 1940s and 1950s Swing era. Concert-goers should bring lawn chairs or blankets. In case of rain, the concert will be moved to the Atrium of the 3000 Prudential Building.

On July 28, the Balduck Mountain Ramblers will present a free concert at the historic Burgh Gazebo at Berg Road and Civic Center Drive in Southfield.

Entertainment for all ages at bluegrass festival

Make plans to attend Northville's 17th Annual Folk and Bluegrass Festival, 1-3 p.m. Sunday, July 25, at Ford Field, one block north of Main Street, one block east of Sheldon (Center) Street.

Tickets are \$8 in advance, \$10 at the gate. Children under 12, \$3, infants free. Advance tickets available at Ticketmaster outlets,

645-6666 or Giftfinder Music, 302 E. Main, Northville, 349-9420. Bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on.

Event proceeds will benefit medical research for Huntington's Disease. The disease claimed the life of Donna Jarski, festival founder Tom Rice's sister in 1974. Rice held his first Folk and Blue-

grass Festival outside his Giftfinder music store in 1977 to raise money for the fight against Huntington's Disease.

Here's a schedule of entertainment at the main stage.

- Division Street, 1 p.m.
- Joel Mabus, 2 p.m.
- Michael Smith with Anne Hills, 3 p.m.

- David Roth with Anne Hills, 4 p.m.
- Neil Woodward, 5 p.m.
- Nichigraas with Bobbie Lewis, 6 p.m.
- Tom Paxton with Anne Hills, 7 p.m.

There will also be entertainment for children at a special kid's stage.



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