The Chipstead Players

INFORMATION PACK AND AUDITION NOTICE



"Once upon a time…"

Welcome!

We hope this information will be useful to you if you are thinking of auditioning for this exciting production.

'Into the Woods' is so much more than a re-telling of Grimms' fairytales. Indeed, they merely act as a vehicle to allow the exploration of far deeper themes, especially that of the reality of human desire when dealing with the unintended consequences of a wish being granted. A synopsis of the plot and main themes is provided in a separate section below.

Dialogue is much more limited than in the traditional 'plays with songs' that the society has chosen over recent years. Consequently, the show's real strength comes through strong characterisation delivered in equal measure by dialogue and the use of the medium of music as the way to deliver the drama i.e. 'acting through song'. This doesn't mean that the quality of the singing isn't important; rather it is just that the way songs are delivered should be entirely in keeping with the character being portrayed.

The show has recently played in larger venues such as 'The Bridge Theatre' and the West End's 'Noel Coward' Theatre. However, the themes in this show play very well in an intimate setting and this is something to be particularly explored in our production. There is much subtlety delivered in the dialogue and lyrics which would play well in a small venue.

All of this will be explained in more detail during the introductory evening on 17 November (7:30pm) where there will be an opportunity to read through the script, listen to the music and find out more about the show. We will hold this event in the auditorium rather than the rehearsal room.

In the meantime, we have included some important information below about our approach which we hope will be useful.

We have a fabulous technical team raring to go. Our aim is to deliver an exciting, mystical set, atmospheric lighting and effects, dazzling costumes and a full orchestra courtesy of professionally produced backing tracks of a live band!

The following pages provide details around key dates, a synopsis of the story and audition requirements. The actual pieces and support materials are in the appropriate folders on the google drive.

Key information

(Please note that this production is for adult cast (18+ years).

Dates

'Read through': Tuesday 17th November 7.30pm – in the Auditorium

Audition music sessions: **Note: split timings for each session so nobody has to hang around for too long!**

Tuesday 24 November 7:30-10:00pm - Rehearsal Room
(Female roles 7:30-8:45 / Male roles 8:45-10:00pm)

Sunday 29 November 6:00-9:00pm - Rehearsal Room
(Male roles 6:00-7:30pm / Female roles 7:30-9:00pm)

DEADLINE FOR AUDITION APPLICATION: 29 NOVEMBER

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Auditions: Thursday 3 December 7:30-10:00pm - Auditorium
Sunday 6 December 6:00-9:00pm - Auditorium

Audition call-back: Thursday 10 December 7:30-10:00pm – Auditorium (only if needed).

Rehearsals:

Music: From 22 Jan - 9 April 2027 (FRIDAY only)
Staging: From 15 April - 4 July 2027 (TUESDAY / THURSDAY, not Friday from this point)
SUNDAYs from 16 May 2027

(NB: No rehearsals on 26 March / 2 April / 13 April)

Performances: **6-11 & 14-17 July 2027**
Matinees: 11 and 17 July at 2pm
Evening Shows: 6-11 & 14-17 July at 7:30pm

Fees

Membership £30
Show fee: £35

Key contacts

Director/MD: Guy Norris – guy.norris0@gmail.com (07393 475751)

PA: Emily Cooper – emily.coopps@gmail.com (07598 748013)

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Schedule

In terms of the auditions, they have deliberately been scheduled earlier than usual for Chipstead Players, as we want to provide enough time to learn the music before the staging rehearsals begin. We aim to have a complete cast in place before Christmas 2026 so that individual dialogue learning can begin. This is also why we have divided the rehearsal period into two distinct sections:

- **Between late January and early April**, we have scheduled one rehearsal a week (Friday night) exclusively dedicated to learning all company and smaller group music. In parallel, we will be working on an individual basis for those with solo or smaller group musical numbers throughout January and February. These will be by agreement and specific arrangement with those concerned. The aim is to provide enough time for consolidation of all the music before staging begins in mid-April.

- **Mid-April onwards,** the staging rehearsals will be on a Tuesday and Thursday evenings (i.e. NOT Fridays from this point onwards). Given the nature of this production, there are many scenes involving a few characters or small groups etc, so we will not be requiring everyone's attendance at every rehearsal. However, we will produce a detailed schedule so that you know when you are called and would ask that every effort is made to be available for these.

Please don't let the length of the rehearsal schedule put you off. It is simply to ensure that the cast is comfortable and confident: we will ensure that you are only called when needed!

Synopsis

Into The Woods is a magical, imaginative adventure with a moral and political point of view. Employing sophisticated artistry and innovative craft, the show's creators lead the audience on a journey to the darker side of fairy tales as they explore the pain of growing up, communal responsibility, and the values we pass on to our children.

As the intricate, absorbing plot unfolds, a childless baker and his wife, cursed by a wicked witch, go off into the woods in hopes of ridding themselves of her evil influence. There they encounter Cinderella, her Prince, Little Red Ridinghood, the Wolf, Jack the Giant Killer, Rapunzel, and other fairy tale characters who are attempting to realise wishes of their own.

By the end of Act I, everything seems to be blissfully, happily resolved. But a destructive, vengeful force looms in the woods which leads to tragic consequences in the second act, bringing the characters to a painful, but hopeful resolution.

Filled with unexpected twists and insights, *Into The Woods* is an exploration of the frailties of human nature. Subjects as diverse as the promise of perfect love, the foolhardiness of questing for material goods, and the loving but difficult relationship between parents and children are considered in a landscape shaded with psychological undertones.

With tenderness and laughter, Sondheim and Lapine bring us through a maze that mirrors the complexity of everyday existence. Like the characters in *Into The Woods*, we end this journey aware of the moral consequences of our actions and the power of tolerance, community and shared sacrifice.

"I wish…"

Audition Process

You will have seen on the 'key dates' page that we have set out a process which we hope will be useful. The pages that follow here set out all of the roles we are auditioning for in December. The linked files contain:

- **Scripts:** these have been scanned and annotated so it is clear what you need to prepare. Please print these off or come with them on your tablet / phone etc. You will NOT be expected to have learned the dialogue. We are much more interested in your characterisation, so we don't want to give you the extra worry about remembering lines!

- **Scores:** again, these have been scanned and annotated so you can see what music you need to prepare. Again, this is not a memory test. We are really interested to see how you characterise the delivery of the song.

- **MP3s:** we have prepared TWO MP3s for each song. The first is an extract of the Broadway version so you can see how it is fully delivered with the orchestra. This is just for reference, so please feel free to deliver your own interpretation; they certainly did!

  The second is a piano accompaniment with the cues you need, so you can sing it through yourself. Please note: we will be using this recording in the audition so please familiarise yourself with it as much as possible.

As a general note, we want the audition process to be fun but also to provide us with the information we need to be able to make appropriate decisions. So if you go wrong, PLEASE don't worry. We can re-start or help you pick up whichever is the most helpful. Importantly, we may well not ask you to deliver all of the audition material. Please don't take this the wrong way: it is just that we will have heard enough to be able to make our decisions!

<u>Music run-throughs</u>

You will see that we have scheduled a couple of rehearsals in November to support your preparation. These are not mandatory at all. If you feel confident enough without attending, then this is fine. If you do want to attend, please note the specific timings for male and female roles on each date. We have done this so that nobody has to hang around for long.

<u>Characters / Ensemble</u>

The following pages provide all the information you need to prepare for the auditions. You will note that we have not put exact age ranges on the characters. This is deliberate. This show can be played in so many ways, so we want to allow for flexibility. But of course, our main aim is to ensure appropriate age ranges that work across the entire cast.

<u>Importantly</u>, it is worth noting that there is no separate 'ensemble' for this show. At key moments, all the individual characters form the ensemble. So bear in mind that every individual role will also participate in those sections.

So good luck, and remember:

"Anything can happen in the woods!"

CLICK HERE FOR LINK TO AUDITION PIECES

CHARACTERS

The Baker (A lead singing and acting role. Baritone. Broadly middle-aged).

Unlike some other caricatures, he represents a fully-human, fully flawed persona which endears him to our audience. A somewhat timid, honest and cautious man, wishing to become a father and support his family, he is otherwise not overly ambitious and not worldly-wise and believes in playing by the rules.

Increasingly, we see his confidence grow and, with it, the love for his wife and the hope that their future family could bring. Ultimately, he is broken with the grief of his wife's death, but he digs deep to find the courage to face a new world, accepting that he can no longer be self-sufficient and is thus prepared to accept help from those around him.

Dialogue:

- pp66-69. From "Good fortune…" to "… and hungry little girls. Go!"
- pp160-161. From "Wait until my mother hears…" to "No, don't kill him".

Song:

- It Takes Two: Bar 48 to end
- No More: Bar 79 to 109.

Baker's Wife (A lead singing and acting role. Mezzo Soprano).

More ambitious, practical and dominant than her husband, she is one step ahead of him and rather directs his actions. Nevertheless, our audience should like and support her, especially her partnership with her husband in seeking the future happiness of a family life. Gregarious but perhaps a little self-centred, she believes rules are there to be broken if the situation requires it: "If the end is right, it justifies the beans!"

Dialogue

- pp48-49 From "Hello there young man" to 'Well… possibly".
- pp135-137 From " I suggest we find that boy now…" to "Yes".

Song:

- Maybe They're Magic (all)
- Moments in the Woods (Bars 1- 44)

Cinderella (Large role. Soprano).

Although downtrodden, she is the embodiment of care and compassion for others. Although rather innocent in the ways of the world, she harbours a deep desire to craft a new life for herself. Over time, we see her increasing strength and resilience of character, rejecting the very thing she sought from the beginning. For her the key is importance of supporting those around her and shared humanity.

Dialogue:

- pp156-159 From "Now what are we to do" to " And I, the faraway Prince".

Song:

- No One is alone - Part 1 (all)
- On the Steps of the Palace (Bar 24 - 36)

The Witch (Large role. Alto / Mezzo soprano).

A complex character: seemingly to be feared. The devil's advocate, she dares to 'say it as it is', with no time for social conventions or the frailty of human emotions. Although physically transformed into her younger, beautiful self, as time passes we realise that her personality has been twisted: she was ill-treated and disowned by her mother and was aiming for a better life. But her past overshadows her and ultimately she disappears 'home', despairing of human hypocrisy.

Dialogue:

- p135 From "I hope the giant steps on them all" to "serve him to the giant for lunch".
- pp143-144 From "Look who I found" to "He's going to the Giant and I'm taking him".

Song:

- Witch's Lament (all)

Cinderella's Prince (Large cameo role. Tenor).

Young, virile and vital! A real opportunity to create an arrogant, entitled, utterly self-seeking but hugely comic individual. Always aiming to 'get one up' on his (slightly) younger brother, he is very much a caricature, and, like his brother, he is handsome and he knows it! A well-spoken philanderer (perhaps a bit RP) he cannot understand why others should expect him to be bound by the inconvenience of moral standards and ethical behaviour! Cocooned within his comfortable royal existence, he is unaware of real-world hardship or responsibility. In essence, he was 'raised to be charming, not sincere'!

Dialogue:

- pp69-70 From "Ah, there you are, good brother" to "Yet one has".
- pp158-159 From "Hello" to "And I, the faraway Prince".

Song:

- Agony (bars 1-16, 33-49)

NOTE: this role normally doubles with the WOLF, so we have allowed for both, or the Prince only on the Audition form. Please ensure you tick the right box!

The Wolf (Tenor - small cameo)

Important note:

This character is normally played by Cinderella's Prince. However, we may consider casting this as a separate role.

Tenor. As expected, a nasty, vicious character who presents as charm personified! Possibly well-spoken until the mask slips…!

Dialogue:

- pp43-44 From "Good day, young lady" to "Unhh".
- p54 From "Good day, Grandmother" to "The better to eat you with!"

Song:

- Hello Little Girl (bars 21-55)

Rapunzel's Prince (Medium cameo role. Tenor).

A handsome young man, very much like his brother with all associated attributes! Probably the younger of the two, he tries to outwit his brother to cut him down to size, but never really succeeds! Again, he is handsome, entitled but perhaps not very bright or aware of the harsher realities of the real world. Very much 'out for himself'!

Dialogue:

- p52 From "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, what a strange name" to " let down her hair to me".
- pp69-70 From "Ah, there you are, good brother" to "Yet one has".

Song:

- Agony (bars 17-49)

Narrator / Mysterious Man (Large role. Baritone).

As the Narrator, he is both a sympathetic and sage storyteller, guiding our audience through the interweaved complexities of the plot. The dialogue suggests he holds certain opinions about the characters, but he is always on the outside. Perhaps older than many of the characters, thus displaying the authority of age.

As the Mysterious Man (some quick changes involved), he interacts with the Baker throughout, much to the Baker's annoyance. Late in the play, we see his vulnerability when he is revealed as the Baker's father and, having deserted him when he was a baby, his aim throughout has been to be reconciled to his son. Again, the power of family ties and shared humanity are central to the empathy required by this role.

Dialogue:

- As Narrator: pp128-131 From "The Giant, who was nearsighted" to "I'm not the lad".
- As Mysterious Man: pp153-154 From " I thought you were dead" to "...aren't you making the same mistake?"

Song:

- No More: (as Mysterious Man): bars 33-68

Little Red Ridinghood (Medium to large role. Alto / lower soprano).

There is nothing 'little' or insignificant about her character, and more to her than just the seemingly sweet and supportive granddaughter. Whilst young and initially naïve, at the same time she presents as an independent tomboy with plenty of energy and vitality. Nevertheless, when she discovers she is all alone in the world, she ultimately shows her vulnerability and need for friendship and the company of others.

Dialogue

- pp52 -53 From "Hello there little one" to "I rather a wolf than you any day".
- pp159-160 From " They're almost finished" to "…very unhappy with these circumstances".

Song:

- I know things now (Bars 1-34)

Jack (Large role. Tenor).

Young and innocent, immature and, out of necessity, rather controlled by his mother! Often reckless, quick to judge, and unaware of the consequences of his actions. However, he learns as the play progresses, and we ultimately seen him mature (a little!) into a more kind-hearted young man.

Dialogue:

- pp86-87 From " What a beautiful cape" to "I'll get that harp, You'll see".
- pp117-118 From "I'm off to market Jack" to "I promise".
- pp160-161 From "Wait until my mother hears…" to "No, don't kill him".

Song:

- Giants in the sky (Top to bar 36, and 51 to end)

Jack's Mother (Medium role. Alto).

Middle-aged, long-suffering and utterly despairing of her son's stupidity! Very aware of their current financial difficulties, so fixated on making a better life for Jack and herself. When she comes into money, she adopts a more imperious 'nouveau-riche' persona, dismissive of others' difficulties with quite a change in appearance!

Dialogue:

- p93 From "There's a dead giant in my back yard" to "… I would suppose".
- pp117-118 From "I'm off to market Jack" to "I promise".
- pp131-132 From "Jack is just a boy" to " …we'll get you for all you've done, we'll…"

Song:

- Act 1 Opening, Part 5 – "Jack, Jack, Jack: head in a sack".

Cinderella's Stepmother (Small cameo. Mezzo soprano).

A strong presence needed here. According to the Narrator, like her daughters, she is 'beautiful of face, but vile and black of heart'! Espousing the very essence of Austin's Mrs Bennet, she is driven to present her daughters at court and secure royal favour through position and marriage.

She is quite indifferent to the world around her and at times can be quite haughty and spiteful; certainly Cinderella's presence in her house is a fearful inconvenience and the thought of her rising above her station totally unimaginable! She pushes her husband (Cinderella's father) around quite a bit (he just seems 'in the way'). But she is very set on her appearance which must at all times reflect the height of fashion, even if to us it seems more than a tad excessive!

Dialogue:

- pp134-135 From "Life was so steady" to "Not always".

Song:

- Darling those nails! (bars 1-9)
- Children will listen (p345 bars 72-93)

Lucinda / Florinda (Cinderella's two stepsisters) Small cameos. Soprano.

Cinderella's young, 'eligible' step-sisters. Somewhat loud, selfish, brats who treat Cinderella abominably. A good cackle / filthy laugh would be helpful (along with that of her stepmother)! Always appear together as a double-act, and it is definitely 'all about me'! Roles important in ensemble.

Dialogue:

- p77 From "Where did he go" to "He wants to compare our hair to corn".

Song:

- Children will listen (p345 bars 72-93)

Steward (Small cameo. Baritone).

Potentially any age. One for the rulebook and protecting the interests of the royal family against the 'little' people. Although rather pompous, he certainly doesn't take any responsibility for what he says or does: as he points out, "I don't make policy, I just carry it out!" Could be played in a variety of ways: whilst he says little, his presence is important and comical! Role important in ensemble.

Dialogue:

- pp91-92 From "Stop!" to "Oh..."

Song:

- Children will listen (p345 bars 72-93)

Rapunzel (Small cameo. Soprano).

Young woman, locked away from the world. She wishes to be a free spirit, hungry for adventure and freedom and irritated by her mother (the Witch). Love interest to one of the princes. Role important in ensemble.

Dialogue:

- p122 From "Rapunzel! What are you doing here?" to "There's a giant running about".

Song:

- Ahhh! (p94 bars 1-4 and p335 bars 26-29a)
- Children will listen (p345 bars 72-93)

Granny (Small cameo. Alto).

Whilst an old lady, there is nothing frail about her. Far from being 'ill in bed' as explained by Red Ridinghood, she is lively and one to be reckoned with. Her bloodthirsty nature is quite a shock to the Baker when he frees her from the wolf. There is no solo singing but this role supports the ensemble numbers.

Dialogue:

- pp55-56 From "What a fright" to "I'm a baker!"

Song:

- Children will listen (p345 bars 72-93)

Cinderella's Father (Very small cameo. Baritone).

Stooge to Stepmother, downtrodden and rather pushed around. Weak and unable to support Cinderella against his wife, you feel he has an honesty that he has passed to his daughter. There is potential for comic timing here. Although no solo singing is required, this role supports the ensemble numbers.

Song:

- Children will listen (p345 bars 72-93)

Note: the voices of both the Giant and Cinderella's Mother will be added later in the production schedule.
