

**Group: Perins School Theatre**  
**Show: Into The Woods**  
**Venue: The Grange Festival, Hampshire**  
**Date: 21 July 2024**  
**Director: Marilitsa Alexiou**  
**Musical Director: Perry Ralls**  
**Choreographers: Megan Coates, Ellie Mills**



**INTO THE WOODS** is a fairytale musical with words and music by Stephen Sondheim. The baker and his wife are a childless couple who try to obey instructions from the witch so as to undo a fertility curse. They have to collect four objects from the characters and in this production, we follow the lives of four narrators who are children evacuated during World War 2. The show opened with their evacuation and from the outset, we knew we were in for a mind-blowing show; the massive stage at The Grange was filled with cast. The show opened with an awesome introduction on the multi-level stage and the huge stage was filled with the principals, community choir, ensembles, dancers: nymphs and flowers.

**The programme:** The programme gave very clear information about the production, cast, production team. There were messages from the Director, CEO Perins MAT and the Head of School. The programme was a colour A4 which went into great detail regarding the design concept, with production photographs and list of songs, cast photos and an interesting article (with photos) regarding the making of the promotional film.

**Scenery/Set/Properties:** The action moved around the stage which had been designed, built and decorated with textures to evoke the feeling of the city, country and woodland. The props were excellent and well used by the cast. The Grandma's bed (Red Riding Hood) scene that transformed into the innards of the wolf (and back again), and the use of a bicycle with a cow's head, was particularly inspired and inventive. The appearance of the giant and her billowing dress was a breathtaking moment and deserves special mention.

**Costume:** The costumes were excellent, well thought out, giving each character individuality and there was great attention to detail. The nymphs' costumes, floaty and beautifully portraying woodland colours and the flowers with their green bodies and brilliant red headwear were just stunning. The Ugly Sisters were knock out in their outstanding, exaggerated costumes and other characters were easily identified by their traditional garb, i.e. Red Riding Hood and her red cape and the Wolf in his hunting red. The costumes represented a complete break from reality.

**Lighting and Sound:** The lighting was effective throughout and well controlled and inventive with various patches of colour enhancing scenes; warm purples and greens in the woodland scenes, red when the story got grisly and light and dark as appropriate. The booming sound of thunder, an air raid, an earthquake or the appearance of the giant was staggering and reverberated throughout the auditorium. Tori Eglin's vocal direction and hard work ensured that the students and adult choir together brought depth to the performance and were a joy to hear.

**The Production:** Every member of the cast impressed with their assurance. It is impossible to mention everyone who deserves credit, as they all do, but my memorable moments include Leo Tan as the Wolf who created some creepy moments with his evil and expressive body language, Isaac Gilberton's line as Cinderella's Prince "I was brought up to be charming not sincere" made me roar. Olivia Nash's solo was spell binding with her rich, soaring vocal lines and Molly Boyd-Platt was engaging and petulant as Red Riding. Into The Woods is a beautiful and complex musical, with jaunty, repetitive and catching songs performed by confident and accomplished performers. Marilitsa Alexiou's direction and choreography from Ellie Mills and Megan Coates were complemented by the Musical Direction by Perry Rawls; together with a talented cast, they created some magic and gave the audience an evening of life, love and promise told in a sometimes hilarious and occasionally sombre style but always hitting the right notes. Massive congratulations are due to all involved in this show that delivered to a professional standard on all levels.

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