

# Fairy-Tale Characters Make Music Together in Sondheim's 'Woods'

■ The cast of UNC's Pauper Players put a spell on the theater with their new play.

Does "happily ever after" ever really happen?

Just ask Cinderella, who found her handsome prince, only to lose him when he ran off with Sleeping Beauty (the tramp!). Or ask Little Red Riding Hood, whose granny was saved from the wolf—and was stomped on by a giant instead.

**ROBYN TOMLIN HACKLEY**  
Theater Review  
"Into the Woods"

UNC's Pauper Players tackled this tumultuous topic in the Stephen Sondheim musical "Into the Woods" last weekend. The show, directed by 1994 UNC graduate Bing Cox, effectively combined superb musical talent and precise comic timing to keep the audience under the performers' magical spell all evening. The complex plot followed several characters from fairy tale literature, combining them into one story line. Each character went off into the mystical woods searching for their happily ever after, only to find out what happens after one gets one's heart's desire.

The show had an ensemble cast, with no real "stars," but several of the actors had especially noteworthy performances. The baker and his wife, played by sophomore Sean Williams and senior Janine Loeb, were cast superbly as a grounding force for

*Prince Charming, played by junior Tally Sessions, combined machismo and good posture with a dash of Pee Wee Herman (before the fall) to good comic effect.*

The show, which at times resembled Mr. Toad's Wild Ride. The cursed couple were told by the wicked witch played by senior Tamara Davis Williams that the only way for them to have a baby was for them to go into the woods and find "a cow as white as milk, a cape as red as blood, hair as yellow as silk and a slipper as pure as gold."

It just so happened that these items were in the possession of other characters: the cow with Jack from "Jack and the Beanstalk," played by freshman Mark Kaley; the cape owned by Little Red Riding Hood, played by freshman Carey Kotsionis; the hair of Rapunzel, played by junior Tiffany Ballance; and the slipper from Cinderella, played by junior Mary Cameron Van Graafeiland.

The show was narrated by junior Nigel Williams, whose lisp and pomposity was reminiscent of a young Alastair Cooke.

The most unlikely character stole the show. Davis Williams, as the infamous storybook witch, told the couple to gather together the objects so she could break the spell that transformed her from a beautiful temptress into a withered old hag.

Bent double for much of her time on stage, Davis Williams combined superb physical dramatization and stage presence to make a memorable villain. In the song "The Last Midnight," her flawless singing and charismatic presence held audience

members in their seats and under her spell. Under senior Michael Meyer's capable direction, musical performances were the strongest part of the show.

Confining by a seemingly inadequate theater, cast members managed to use every inch of the stage to enthrall its captive audience for the duration of the show. Set designer and first-year graduate student David Underwood created effective forest scenery. The costumes designed by freshman Mindy Marts helped transport the playgoer to a magical place where beans grew into mile-high vines and golden locks of hair were ladders.

A wolf in grandmother's clothing, played by second-year medical student Jay Reynolds, gave a sexual undertone to his hunger for Kotsionis' Little Red Riding Hood. Kotsionis was precocious and cute, looking and sounding as if she'd just stepped off the set of an "Annie" production.

Prince Charming, played by junior Tally Sessions, combined machismo and good posture with a dash of Pee Wee Herman (before the fall) to good comic effect. His voice and 40-watt smile charmed, indeed. Sessions engaged in a fit of male brooding with junior Michael Rhyme, as his brother, in the song "Agony," which kept the audience in stitches.

Van Graafeiland's Cinderella was flanked by a phalanx of blonde ambition in the form of her stepmother, junior Kristie Patton and stepsisters played by freshman Beth Troutman and senior Kimberly Woods.

Junior Mark Nicholson was enchanting as a mysterious forest sprite later revealed to be the baker's father. His zen-like riddles and advice gave the audience something to puzzle over with the characters on stage.

On a cold night, "Into the Woods" was a truly heartwarming experience.

# New Lab! Production Needs Fine-Tuning

■ "Lovers" success depends on steady timing to hold audience's attention.

"Lovers," the current production at the Lab! Theatre, begins by creating an atmosphere packed with great possibilities, which is coupled with a great soundtrack.

The play, written by Brian Friel and directed by junior Megan Martin, is set in Northern Ireland in 1966. Here two very different couples play out their courtship against a backdrop of strong communities and strong Catholicism. The play is essentially a series of long monologues, as individual characters spin out the stories of their past and consider those of their future. The pace is necessarily slowed down by such soliloquizing, and the success of the production hinges on the steady timing and thorough concentration by each actor necessary to hold the audience's attention. With a bit more fine-tuning, the Lab!'s production of "Lovers" could achieve this timing and concentration; as it stands now, however, watching it feels like watching a mid-production rehearsal.

LILY THAYER

Theater Review  
"Lovers"

While many of the performances are lovely, they lack the solidity and consistency that a little more work could produce. Matters are further complicated by the ambitious undertaking of Irish accents by the actors.

As Maggie, a seventeen-year-old Catholic schoolgirl preparing to marry Joe (Matt Haverkamp) in two weeks and to be a mother in seven months, Jennifer Quintenz is earnestly convincing. With her red hair and lithe form, she embodies hope, anxiety and immaturity, all mingled with the frank responsibility of a young woman suddenly finding herself in adult reality.

Haverkamp is equally earnest as the studious Joe. He is bright-eyed, adept at the physical caricatures with which Joe amuses Mag, and less adept at remembering lines and his accent. Haverkamp's emotional responses are compellingly mutable: when she distracts him as he studies, Joe accuses Maggie of "trapping him into marriage," but later he reveals himself to be just as excited and in love as is Maggie. His is the volatility of a young man finding himself in a very unexpected situation. The story of the young lovers (labeled "Winners" in the program), is narrated by a man (Ted Shaffner) and a woman (Michele Vazquez) of Ballymoor, two people intimately familiar with the emotions of the town. Both Shaffner and Vazquez put in solid performances, watching and reacting as the couple cavorts on their hill, even as they give an increasingly alarming account of what later happens to Maggie and Joe. If the hopeful, just-starting-out Maggie and Joe are the winners, then Andy and Hanna, a working-class couple in their 40s, are most certainly the "Losers." Their story is narrated by Andy (Lance Chase) himself in an accent that

seems alternately Irish and Cajun. The couple married only four years ago, yet any early spriteliness and love, especially on the part of Hanna (Anne Cone), has quickly been eroded by embittered resentment toward Hanna's mother. Mrs. Wilson, an invalid, spends all her time engaging in fanatical devotion to St. Philomena and destroying her daughter's peace with a huge handbell.

Shelley Butler plays her as the pursed-lipped caricature of elderly piety and selfishness that she is. As Cissy Cassidy, the prim and pious next-door neighbor who comes each night to pray with Mrs. Wilson and prey on Hanna and Andy's sanity, Marianna Matthews is equally a caricature—wide-eyed and clutching at her cardigan. The "Losers" segment, though more elaborate in its staging, is decidedly less complete—more fragmented and less convincing—even as it unsettles with its dim world view. This is more the fault of the playwright than of the director or actors, however. But this production is marked by a curious low comedy: Hanna, usually a frump sitting on the couch knitting, finds herself unable to resist Andy when they are courting, yet her transformation into the epitome of ravenous amorosness provides comic relief when and where it should probably not be provided.

Each act of "Lovers" at the Lab! ends with a projection of the biblical description of love: "Love is patient..." This Lab! production could benefit from just such patience.

## DEGREES

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gree programs over a year ago because of a low number of graduates. Only about 16 students had graduated with bachelor of music degrees and only 18 with bachelor of music education degrees in the last three years, Huff said. Freshmen entering the music department this year were required to enter into the new degree program.

The board also recommended cutting the bachelors of Portuguese and Italian degree programs. Frank Dominguez, chairman of romance languages department, said that while few students majored in one of the languages, several students double majored in the two languages.

Dominguez said the department would lobby the BOG to keep the programs. Interim Provost Richard Richardson

said if the cuts were made, the University would offer a degree in romance languages which would allow students to focus on one particular language.

The BOG also proposed eliminating the bachelor of arts degree in astronomy.

Thomas Clegg, chairman of physics and astronomy department, said only a few students had graduated with the degree in the past. "In the last three years there have been no students in that program," he said.

However, he said he thought UNC should keep the degree program because it would not cost additional money.

Richardson said he did not think the degree changes and eliminations would harm the University. "This is a continuing cleaning up program," Richardson said. "As we talk about future programs we are going to have to be attentive to new programs and evaluate the old."

## VICE CHANCELLOR

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functioning well despite the lack of formal, permanent leadership.

"But that's a reflection of the ability of Student Affairs that it's all moving along very smoothly," he said.

But the lack of permanent leadership

kept the division from planning for and reaching its long-term goals, Birdsall said.

"It's a question of whether longer range planning and decisions can be made," he said. "Students have expressed interest and concern, and that's understandable."

Birdsall would not say whether he had received complaints from students or faculty because of the prolonged search.

## JOURNEY

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culture.

The second dance was a traditional Korean drum dance performed by the Elim Academy of Spring Lake Assembly of God Church from Fayetteville. The third dance was a Korean Angels' dance also performed by Elim Academy.

The finale was a fashion show encompassing various costumes of the diverse Asian countries. The show was performed by members of ASA. After the costumes had been displayed, each person came forward and spoke in the language of the country they were representing.

"I enjoyed the many dances and songs," said Lora Walters, a sophomore from Durham. "It was an interesting look at a different culture. It's obvious that they put a lot of work into it."

Allison Crowder, a sophomore from Salisbury, said she also enjoyed the evening. "I thought it was an interesting way to learn about the many different cultures in Asia and how they are all unique," she said.

Huang, a senior from Hickory, said that he felt the night was a success. "We managed to pack the house," he said.

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