

SAN FRANCISCO  
**PLAYHOUSE**

Press Release

For immediate release

May 2014

Publicist: Anne Abrams [goanne@comcast.net](mailto:goanne@comcast.net)

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## INTO THE WOODS

**Stephen Sondheim (music and lyrics) and James Lapine (book)**

**Directed by Susi Damilano**

**Music Director: Dave Dobrusky**

**Choreography: Kimberly Richards**

June 24<sup>th</sup> to September 6<sup>th</sup>

Previews June 24 – June 27 at 8pm

Tuesdays through Thursdays at 7pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm

Saturdays at 3pm and Sundays at 2pm (except 6/29)

**PRESS OPENING: Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at 8pm**

San Francisco, CA (May 2014) – **San Francisco Playhouse** (Artistic Director Bill English & Producing Director Susi Damilano) concludes its provocative eleventh season with *Into the Woods* by **Stephen Sondheim** (music and lyrics) and **James Lapine** (book).

What happens after “happily ever after?” Fractured fairy tales of a darker hue provide the context for *Into the Woods*, which deconstructs the Brothers Grimm by way of “The Twilight Zone.” While the faces and names are familiar, Cinderella, Rapunzel, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack in the Beanstalk and company inhabit a sylvan neighborhood in which witches and bakers are next-door neighbors, handsome princes from once-parallel fables are competitive (and equally vain) brothers, and all the stories intersect through unexpected new plot twists. Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine’s beloved musical intertwines classic fairytales with a contemporary edge to tell stories of wishes granted and “the price” paid.

**Susi Damilano** (Director), **Dave Dobrusky** (Music Director) and **Kimberly Richards** (Choreographer) will team up to bring a fresh twist to this familiar tale by adding a time-travelling boy, **Ian DeVaynes** to the Bay Area cast that features: **Louis Parnell\*** (Narrator), **Safiya Fredericks\*** (Witch), **EI Beh** (Baker’s Wife), **Keith Pinto\*** (Baker), **Tim Homsley\*** (Jack), **Joan Mankin\*** (Jack’s Mom), **Monique Hafen\*** (Cinderella), **Becka Fink** (Cinderella’s Stepmom), identical twins, **Lily** and **Michelle Drexler** (Cinderella’s Stepsisters), **Noelani Neal** (Rapunzel), **Corinne Proctor** (Red), **Ryan McCrary** and **Jeffrey Adams** (Princes/Wolves) and **John Paul Gonzales** (Steward).

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## Into the Woods, cont'd:

**James Lapine** (Book) has also worked with Stephen Sondheim on *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Passion* and *Sondheim on Sondheim*. He directed the first revival of *Merrily We Roll Along* at LaJolla Playhouse in 1985. With William Finn he has collaborated on *Falsettos*, *A New Brain*, *25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and *Little Miss Sunshine*. Other Broadway credits: *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Golden Child*, *Amour*. He has written the plays: *Table Settings*, *Twelve Dreams*, *Luck, Pluck & Virtue*, *The Moment When*, *Fran's Bed* and *Mrs. Miller Does Her Thing*.

**Stephen Sondheim** (Music and Lyrics) wrote the music and lyrics for *Saturday Night* (1954), *A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum* (1962), *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964), *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *The Frogs* (1974), *Pacific Overtures* (1976), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), *Assassins* (1991), *Passion* (1994) and *Road Show* (2008) as well as lyrics for *West Side Story* (1957), *Gypsy* (1959) and *Do I Hear a Waltz?* (1965) and additional lyrics for *Candide* (1973). Anthologies of his work include *Side By Side with Sondheim* (1976), *Marry Me a Little* (1981), *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow* (1983), *Putting it Together* (1993/99) and *Sondheim on Sondheim* (2010). He composed the scores of the films "Stavisky" (1974) and "Reds" (1981) and songs for "Dick Tracy" (1990) and the television production "Evening Primrose" (1966). His collected lyrics with attendant essays have been published in two volumes: "Finishing the Hat" (2010) and "Look, I Made A Hat" (2011). In 2010 the Broadway theatre formerly known as Henry Miller's Theatre was renamed in his honor.

**Susi Damilano** (Director) is co-founder and Producing Director of the San Francisco Playhouse where she directed *A Beheading in Spokane*, *Den of Thieves*, *Wirehead\** and the West Coast Premieres of *Honey Brown Eyes\**, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Coronado*, *The Mystery Plays*, *Roulette* and the world premiere of Daniel Heath's *Seven Days*. (\*nominated for SFBATCC Directing award.). Also an actor, she is a five-time recipient of the Bay Area Theatre Critic Circle Award for Principle Female Performance in *Abigail's Party*, *Harper Regan*, *Bug*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, and *Reckless*. At San Francisco Playhouse she has also appeared in: *Coraline*, *Slasher*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Landscape of the Body*, *First Person Shooter*, *Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train*, *The Crucible*, *Kimberly Akimbo*, *Our Town* and *The Smell of the Kill*.

**Dave Dobrusky** (Music Director) returns to San Francisco Playhouse for his fifth production as Musical Director. Others include *Camelot*, *Putting It Together*, *Man of LaMancha*, and *My Fair Lady*. When not working with the Playhouse, Dave is the Resident Music Director at 42nd Street Moon Theatre where he has played, arranged, orchestrated and conducted almost 100 classic / forgotten musicals, including cast recordings of Cole Porter's *Leave It to Me* and Jerome Kern's *The Cabaret Girl*. Dave is from Albuquerque, studied at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and has appeared with many Broadway divas including Rebecca Luker, Faith Prince, Emily Skinner, Nancy Dussault, and Andrea

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## Into the Woods, cont'd:

**Kimberly Richards\*** (Choreography) launched her versatile career forty years ago as an actress, aerialist, choreographer, comedienne, dancer, director, and illusionist. She co-starred (with Louis Parnell) in the SF Playhouse's first production, *It Had to Be You*. Her choreography for the Playhouse: *Animals Out of Paper*, *Coronado*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *First Day of School*, *Landscapes of the Body*, and *Abe Lincoln's Big Gay Dance Party* (with Tom Segal), which won Best of Fringe at the 2009 NY Fringe Festival, and *My Fair Lady* for which she won the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award. Other Bay Area choreography includes *Miss Sally's Speakeasy Revue* (Belrose); *Private Eyes* (DreamStackers); *Tommy* (One World Productions); *Heaven*, *The Mineola Twins*, *Popcorn*, and *Pterodactyls* (SF Actors Theater). Kimberly's Las Vegas choreography includes *Lady and the Outlaws* (Country Club Casino), and *Too Hot to Handle* (Flamingo). Since 2001 she performs the hit one-woman show *Late Nite Catechism* across the continent.

Founded by Susi Damilano and Bill English in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** was described by the New York Times as "a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around," and deemed "ever adventurous" by the Bay Area News Group. Located in the heart of Union Square's Theater District, **San Francisco Playhouse** is the city's "Off-Broadway" company, a powerful intimate alternative to the larger, more traditional city venues. **San Francisco Playhouse** provides audiences with the opportunity to experience professional theater close up, produced by top-notch actors and with world-class design. The company has been awarded a range of accolades for acting, design, and production including the *SF Weekly's* Best Theatre Award and *The Bay Guardian's* Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award. Presenting a diverse array of plays and musicals, **San Francisco Playhouse** produces new works as well as re-imagined classics, "making the edgy accessible and the traditional edgy." The company's 2012-2013 Season marked its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and as it moved to a newly renovated venue, *The San Francisco Chronicle* raved that "the company that lived a hand-to-mouth existence for its first few years has become the little playhouse that could. It quickly established a reputation for attracting some of the Bay Area's best acting and directing talent, as well as for its exciting play choices. And with its bold Sandbox Series, it's become a player in developing new works as well." **San Francisco Playhouse** is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, designers, directors, theatergoers and writers converge to create works that celebrate the human spirit.

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## Into the Woods, cont'd:

### FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

- WHAT:** What happens after Happily Ever After? Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's beloved musical intertwines classic fairytales, with a contemporary edge to tell stories of wishes granted and "the price" paid.
- SHOWS:** Previews June 24–June 27 at 8pm, Opens June 28<sup>th</sup> 8pm  
Tuesdays through Thursdays at 7pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm  
Saturdays at 3pm and Sundays at 2pm (no matinee 6/28 & 6/29)
- WHERE:** **The San Francisco Playhouse**  
450 Post Street (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Kensington Park Hotel, b/n Powell & Mason)
- TICKETS:** For tickets (\$20-\$120) or more information, the public may contact The San Francisco Playhouse box office at 415-677-9596, or [www.sfplayhouse.org](http://www.sfplayhouse.org).