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**Stephen Sondheim and Musical Characterization**

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Abstract  
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Stephen Sondheim inherited the legacy of the American musical theater tradition from his predecessors and mentors, Oscar Hammerstein II, Bert Shevelove, Milton Babbitt, Nadia Boulanger, Leonard Bernstein, and Hal Prince. In his shows, Sondheim takes every dimension of musical construction to a high level of complexity and sophistication. The tempo, key signature, time signature, rhythm, and dynamic markings all change frequently and interplay with each other and with the lyrics to create deeply layered complex characters and interactive relationships between characters. The actors are significantly informed of this complexity and who their characters are by these musical elements.

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## Sondheim

### Introduction

In 2011 an invitation came to me to audition at Atlanta's Alliance Theater for the role of Little Red Riding Hood in *Into the Woods*, a musical with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930). Before the audition, I made sure to learn her most important solo, "I Know Things Now". Little Red sings this song after her encounter with the wolf and explains how this event in her life forced her to learn to grow up. When looking at the music, I noticed how complicated it was to learn. There were many accidental notes (notes that are not in the key the song is written in), shifting rhythms, and frequent key changes. My love for Sondheim as a dramatic composer and my knowledge of his meticulous music writing made it clear to me that instead of following the custom of singing musical theater songs with free or looser interpretation of the written score, the better to put an individual singer's "stamp" on the music, I needed to sing the song exactly as it was written on the page. I practiced for hours on this one song, making sure that I was staying precisely true to the written music, with all my interpretive approach corresponding to the composer's shifts in tonality and rhythm.

The next day, I went to my audition. I saw many girls go into the room for two minutes, and then leave. I went in and sang a song from another musical that I felt comfortable singing at auditions. Jody Feldman, the casting director, liked my voice and asked me to sing a couple of the songs from the show. After singing three other songs, she asked me if I knew "I Know Things Now." I sang the song with accuracy, using this accuracy to find the emotions I needed for the performance. When I finished Jody exclaimed, "Well, you just got every little note and rhythm in that song, didn't you!" I explained how important I felt it was to stay true to the way Sondheim intended the music to sound. Although she was looking for someone older than I was, her surprise and excitement over my audition led to many callbacks for the part of Little Red. Not only did Jody push for me to be considered for as long as possible, but she invited me to audition for five more shows that summer alone.

In a filmed teaching session that Sondheim agreed to do regarding his theater songs at Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London in 1985, he corrected the students on their musical accuracy. A boy sang “My Friends” from *Sweeney Todd*, a song at the beginning of the show when Sweeney finds his old shaving razors, and realizes he can use them to kill Judge Turpin, the villain of the piece, who stole Sweeney’s daughter Joanna and raped Sweeney’s wife after transporting him out of London for 15 years for a crime he did not commit. The song was in a minor key and began with a simple rhythm pattern. When the boy sang the song the first time, he sang with rubato and movement to moment shifts of energy. Sondheim stopped him and explained that the beginning of the song should have a trance-like quality when he finds “friends,” or razors. Sondheim said:

The reason that I wrote this rhythmically so squarely is because he’s falling into a state of semi self-hypnosis, so it must have that feeling as opposed to conversation. The songs we’ve been working on so far this afternoon are all about conversation. This is exactly reversed. This is non-conversation. This is a ritual. (Wo)

Sondheim set the musical rhythm here to give the actor understanding about how the character was feeling at that particular time. The student learned the importance of examining and trusting what the music was telling him.

I have come to the conviction that Stephen Sondheim’s theater music requires a different interpretive technique than that of most American musical comedy composers. Where the songs of Rodgers and Hart, or Cole Porter, or Irving Berlin, or Jerry Herman were written in a manner that invited strongly individual vocal stylings from the likes of Ethel Merman or Frank Sinatra or Carol Channing or other unmistakable vocal personalities, Sondheim composes for a more meticulous singer who can respond to his precise composition with equally precise, true-to-the-score performances. Earlier musical comedy tunesmiths left considerable room for star performers to “finish” an open-ended composition. Much American musical theater, as Bruce Kirle (1948-2007), a Broadway director, argued, are “open and fluid, subject to a great deal of variation, even subversion, in the way they are



can be quite independent from the original intentions of their authors” (Kirle 1). Sondheim, on the other hand, like a twentieth-century opera composer, composes complex and fully realized characters through many easy-to-overlook details. The premise of this study is that the truth in Sondheim is in the details of the musical composition.

## Chapter 1 – Stephen Sondheim and the American Musical Theater Tradition

More than most musical theater composers, Stephen Sondheim writes with an expert awareness of American musical theatre tradition. This tradition, extending nearly 250 years, encompasses many loose forms: ballad opera, pasticcio, comic opera, minstrel shows, and vaudeville are among the forms that modern musical theater, and Stephen Sondheim in particular, actively inherits.

There were two forms of musical theater in the 1700s in France, England, and Germany, one serious, one light. The ballad opera, a particularly important form of light opera, was a parody of the pretentiousness of serious, traditional Italian opera. It could be put together with limited resources because it consisted of stories that were often borrowed and of popular songs of the day with new lyrics written for them. *The Beggar's Opera* of 1728, with a libretto, the text for the show, by John Gay (1685–1732) and music arranged by John Christopher Pepusch (1667–1752), was a smash hit.

By 1735, the English colonies in North America had their first musical show: *Flora*, a ballad opera from England. *Flora* was performed in a courtroom in Charleston, South Carolina on February 8, 1735 (Lubbock 753). Since this performance, the musical theater tradition in America has been growing, evolving and achieving. The people in the colonies enjoyed the romantic plots that had become popular in Europe. In this new place, the colonists had great dreams and expectations for the new lives they would lead. Because the theater of romance turned the ordinary into the unique, it appealed to the colonists because it suggested they reach beyond their dreams. They wanted singing, acting, and dancing to invest its, “idea with a radiant emotional power [giving] sentiment the wings to soar above reality” (Kislan 3). Musical theater embodied this spirit because it brought together playwriting, music, design, dance, movement, and acting in order to lift the emotion to a higher level (Grant 13). Instead of showing life as it is, the theater of romance presented life as it should be.

Because colonists in the United States inherited from England language, custom, and sophisticated taste in art, European forms also dominated musical theater activity in colonial America.

catalyst for multiple new entertainment forms because of the growing desire to win over the audience with a popular music program. Audiences in the New World enjoyed comic operas borrowed from England as well, which were shows with original music, comedy, and a happy ending. These differed from operas in that there was more dialogue in the shows (as opposed to recitative, sung dialogue that adopted the patterns of speech), and difference from ballad opera in their use of new rather than borrowed music. Because of the higher amount of spoken text, good actors were important. Instead of using the talents of the people easily accessible, touring companies of comic operas traveled through the colonies so that many people could see the talent of particular actors.

During the Revolution, theater was banned in America, but British soldiers in New York in the later 1700s performed ballad operas. *The Blockheads*, published in London in 1782 and brought to America, was said to contain songs of various musical masters from Europe. This categorized this work as a pasticcio. Once theater was again acceptable after the Revolution, the pasticcio became the more popular art form. Pasticcios differed in that the writer and producer chose music written by famous composers to win over the audience with popular tunes (Kislan 16).

Writers of theater continued to write what was popular to audiences into the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the minstrel show. The minstrel show was a variety show performed by white performers in black face makeup to portray the “dim-witted” black slaves of the time. The shows portrayed black slaves, who lived on large plantations owned by white families, as unintelligent and happy to remain as slaves. Theater attendance decreased because of the Panic of 1837, the financial crisis in America. In 1843, four blackface performers performed at the New York Bowery Amphitheatre to try to make money (Koenig 1925). They called themselves the Virginia Minstrels, and they were a success. The structure of the show was loose. They sat together singing songs and making jokes. The rise of the popularity of these low-grade, crude shows corresponded with the rise of the abolitionist movement. Northerners wanted to better the lives of the blacks in the South, however from the shows it was difficult to understand how slaves felt because some were portrayed as happy and some as oppressed. In the

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a change from troublesome realities of the Reconstruction period to the beginning of the Gilded Age. Because of the economic growth, higher members of society wanted extravagant shows, which the minstrel show did not produce. Taking the idea of variety acts from the minstrel show, the popular entertainment grew into Vaudeville. The Albee Theater in Brooklyn, which opened in 1925, was a grand theater made for the performances of the best in vaudeville (Kislan 39). The minstrel shows paved the way for burlesque musicals created by vaudeville comedians like Weber (1867-1942) and Fields (1867-1941), and the specialty act portion of minstrel shows brought forth the revue, which also organized the elements being used in both Vaudeville and Burlesque (Kenrick 1). The Revue gained popularity at beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its own identity as an art form. It combined music, dance, and topical, satiric sketches. An important element of the Revue was the scenic and costume spectacle.

Along with the rise of burlesque, vaudeville, and the revue, contemporary European forms of comic opera continued to be in high demand. The American premiere of Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore* at the Boston Museum in 1878 was the most popular of imported musical theater entertainment of the time. Within one year, there were over ninety touring companies of the show in the United States. Because *Pinafore* came from England, the libretto was in English so audience members felt more included in the show than when they viewed the imported operas from other European countries. Also, the careful crafting of Gilbert and Sullivan made the scenes, lyrics, and songs all part of a stylistic whole, which made the show clear to the audience (Kislan 95). This led to a desire to see integrated shows, a concept that was developed in France, Germany, and England in the mid-nineteenth century with operettas, or light operas. The operetta was like comic opera in that it had music, light subject matter, and spoken dialogue. However, the operetta was different from comic opera in terms of tone, and exploited "all the ingredients of nineteenth-century romantic theatre," incorporating elements such as love, music, dance, and adventure (Kislan 96). They were performed on the legitimate stages in the district of Manhattan that was coming to be known as Broadway. However, the operetta became

people prefer to be confronted with new realities, as opposed to looking backward to old-fashioned ideals. People were no longer interested in the grandeur of extravagant escapist spectacle, which allowed a shift in popularity to contemporary urban music, ragtime and jazz. Ragtime music style rose to popularity between 1897 and 1918 for its syncopated rhythms. It began as dance music in African American communities in St. Louis and New Orleans before it was published and become popular sheet music for the larger population. In 1917 jazz began to capture more attention. Also beginning in black communities in the Southern United States, jazz differed from ragtime in that it was created out of mixing European and Africa musical traditions. During the Great Depression, jazz was constantly played on the radio, and it helped to express people's worries over the financial crisis.

As the popularity of the revue declined during the Great Depression, the musical comedy found its place on Broadway. The writers of musical comedy realized the enjoyment of dramatizing current events as the revue did, so they borrowed this element, even though the subject matter was less romantic. This created the topical musical comedy in the late 1920s. The team of Buddy DeSylva (1895-1950), Lew Brown (1893-1958), and Ray Henderson (1896-1970) were the lead writers of the topical musical comedy. They wrote *Good News* in 1927, which was a comedy about college life. They also wrote *Flying High* in 1930 about aviation. They knew who their audience was and made sure not to write about topics that would be controversial. In 1932 DeSylva left the others and wrote *Take a Chance*, a musical about the pre-prohibition period in New Orleans, starring Ethel Merman (1908 – 1984). Her performance of the hymn “Rise and Shine” established her as an important Broadway performer (Smith 153). George Gershwin (1898 – 1937) was finally recognized as a leading music-maker with his show *Oh, Kay!* in 1926, which dealt with the topical subject of bootlegging. His music proved that he could handle exploring a range of situations from upbeat to heart throbbing. This was also true for composer Cole Porter (1891 – 1964), but he focused his attention mainly to the music and lyrics. The team of Richard Rogers (1902 – 1979) and Lorenz Hart (1895 – 1943) came onto the scene with their musical satire *A Connecticut Yankee* in 1927, a musical play inspired by the writing of Mark

Jerome Kern (1885 – 1945) began to thrive, finding his gift in “the direction of sentimental and nostalgic evocations bordering upon the province of operetta” (Smith 157.)

Flo Ziegfeld (1867 – 1932), who created the theatrical revue, the *Ziegfeld Follies*, in 1907, commissioned Kern to write the score for *Show Boat*, a musical with book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II (1895 –1960). Hammerstein had spent twenty years under the apprenticeship of Otto Harbach (1873 –1963), a lyricist and librettist writing for operettas, who believed that songs should be woven into the plot of a show. Harbach taught Hammerstein about the importance of effective lyrics. In 1921 they collaborated on Hammerstein’s first Broadway project *Always You*, where Hammerstein, with the help of Harbach, wrote both the book and the lyrics. Now Hammerstein’s new show was a dramatization of the Edna Ferber novel, *Showboat* (1926). Kern knew there had to be a change from the topical formula that prevailed, and he wanted have more substance in the musical theater work. He argued for the book to play a principal role in the constructing of the show, because he felt the play had the ability to combine the forces of music, lyrics, and performance into one powerful unit. Kern applied these ideas in *Show Boat* (1927), the highest achievement in musical theater of the 1920s.

Hammerstein’s book, for the first time, examined the human and moral concerns that showed characters that were the “truest people the musical stage had ever represented” (Smith 158). Hammerstein’s libretto for *Show Boat* drew from Kern, “one of the most dramatic and consistently melodic scores in the popular lyric theater repertory” (Kislan 117). The show was a sensation. In a time when a show could sustain itself on having one hit song, this show produced several. After *Showboat*, Hammerstein wrote *Music in the Air* with Kern in 1932, which explored the romances of four characters. Although the plot material was not modern in conception, the integrity of its form required the music to be so intimately related to the circumstances of the book that even so charming a song as ‘Egern on the Tegern See’ did not mean enough outside its context to become especially popular in its own right” (Smith 158).

Hammerstein was sacrificing an older mode of success to a new ideal of dramatic integrity.

Rodgers admired Hammerstein’s dramatic ambition for the musical comedy. When Rodgers and

and not write shows to get people's minds off the Depression. In 1940 they wrote *Pal Joey*, a gritty urban musical play based on sketches by John O'Hara (1905 –1970) for *The New Yorker*. O'Hara created incredibly life-like characters, and *Pal Joey* was surprisingly dark for its time. Additionally, a strong focus of the show was the dancing, with Gene Kelly as Joey, which had not been given as much attention before.

In the early 1940s, both Hammerstein and Rodgers were interested in making a musical based on the folk play *Green Grow the Lilacs* by Lynn Riggs (1930). When Kern refused to work with Hammerstein on this project and Hart refused Rodgers, the two decided to collaborate. With this show, which premiered in 1943, Rodgers and Hammerstein looked to further the important aspects of a musical that were established in the writing of *Show Boat*, such as vitality of the text and artistic commitment to the themes of the material. The decision to write *Oklahoma!* in dialect with imagery from the specific lives of the characters, which was explored in *Show Boat* with the black characters, helped to link song to the character and the dramatic situation. This integration of the song into the character, story, tone, and situation was revolutionary. Also, the local colors and humble setting and characters contrasted with the serious nature of the plot and its action was influential.

Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* inspired a generation of imitators: Alan Jay Lerner (1918-1986) and Frederick Loewe (1901-1988) in particular became Rodgers and Hammerstein's artistic peers and competitors. Even old hands wrote in the new more dramatically integrated mode: Irving Berlin (1888 – 1989) wrote *Annie Get Your Gun* in 1946, which integrated its songs into the characters singing them in a way Berlin had never done before. These writers redirected the evolution of musical theater and inspired younger craftsmen, such as Leonard Bernstein (1918 –1990), Jerry Bock (1928 –2010), and team John Kander (b. 1927) and Fred Ebb (1928 – 2004), to do the same.

Oscar Hammerstein II was neighbor to Stephen Sondheim while Stephen was growing up. When the two met, Hammerstein had not yet began his career with Rodgers, and at this time was known for “a romantic, florid kind of theater, more operetta than musical comedy” (Secret 37). Hammerstein,

difficult home life. When Sondheim was ten years old, his father left his mother, who emotionally neglected Stephen throughout his childhood. Stephen found support from the Hammerstein's and was considered a member of the family. Hammerstein was Stephen's "surrogate father; he love Oscar, and if Oscar had pursued any other profession, Sondheim believed, he would have followed him blindly" (Secret 51). Hammerstein saw the potential in Sondheim as a lyric dramatist, and became his mentor and model. Sondheim learned from Hammerstein that one must write from the truth and choose each word carefully to strike a balance between saying too much and not enough. Unlike in poetry, Hammerstein felt that lyrics needed to be repetitious in order to be understood by the audience. Hammerstein also taught Sondheim that a song should be singable and should be "sincere, representing one' own feelings and experiences [because] listeners were not fooled and would reject false sentimentality" (Secret 52). He explained that a song must have a beginning, middle, and end, and that songs speak character just as much as dialogue does. He taught him that the dramatic situation has to change from the beginning of the song to the end. The character has a problem, comes to a decision about the problem, resolves that past decision, and moves forward different than before. While Sondheim was still in college, Hammerstein gave Sondheim the project of writing four musicals of varied parameters. The first was to take a great play and turn it into a musical. The second was to take a bad play and turn it into a musical. The third was to take a non-dramatic work and adapt it into a musical, and the fourth was to create an original musical. These exercises became the basis for Sondheim's preparation for a professional career. By the time Sondheim was a senior, he began to write the last of the exercises: the original musical. The show was called *Climb High*, and was about a guy who Sondheim knew and did not like at Williams who wanted to become an actor. When Hammerstein read Sondheim's musical, he was concerned that none of the characters were likeable. Hammerstein explained that the main character must have redeeming qualities so the audience will want him or her to succeed. However; Sondheim, who felt like an outsider, wanted to write about what he knew, just as Hammerstein told him to do.



After graduating from Williams college in 1950, Sondheim studied with the composer Milton Babbitt (1916 –2011), who was very interested in the mathematics and complexity of songs and felt that composition was “subjugated to a preordained order of notes, rhythms, and intervals” (Secret 85). They shared a love for Jerome Kern and his ability to create a tiny motif that would continue throughout a show with slight variations. Nadia Boulanger (1887 – 1979), who was the “guru of choice for expatriate American composers,” taught Sondheim how to write and use complex harmonies (Grant 179).

In 1955, when Sondheim was twenty-five, he was introduced to the composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein. Sondheim auditioned to work on *West Side Story*, and was hired as the lyricist for the show. This was his first apprenticeship and first big break. Working closely with Bernstein, Sondheim saw how Bernstein layered his music and how he fearlessly used classical sophistication in contemporary songs. In 1958 Sondheim was hired to write the lyrics for *Gypsy*, starring Ethel Merman. Sondheim wanted to write the music as well, but Merman insisted that someone with more experience write the music. Because of this, Sondheim did not want to work on the project but Hammerstein told him how valuable it would be for him to write for a star. They hired Jule Styne (1905 –1994) to write the music and Sondheim worked closely with Arthur Laurents, who wrote the book. From *Gypsy* he learned the anti-sentimental use of sinister subtext and ironic cheerfulness, which invites the audience to think counter to the words the characters say. This idea is a concept that is further explored throughout his career.

In 1965, Rodgers and Hammerstein were working on their new project *Do I Hear a Waltz?* with a book by playwright and librettist Arthur Laurents (1917 –2011). However, by the time the project came together, Hammerstein has died, so Laurents and Mary Rodgers, Richard Rodgers’ daughter, asked Sondheim to write the lyrics for the show. This was Sondheim’s chance to write like Hammerstein, but Sondheim’s growing resistance to sentimentality in lyrics clashed with Rodgers’ idea for the music and lyrics, which re-dedicated Sondheim to writing his own music as well as lyrics. Although the show was not a success, Sondheim found lessons to be learned from the working writers

on dramatic writing. He explained that a theatrical songwriter should build the drama into a song the same way a dramatist builds the drama into a scene because this will keep the story continuous. Along with Hammerstein, Sondheim learned from Bert Shevelove (1915 –1982) when working on *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), which was the first Broadway show for which Sondheim wrote the score. Sondheim also worked on *The Frogs* (1974), a loose adaptation of a Greek comedy by Aristophanes, which was first performed in Yale University’s gymnasium’s swimming pool. Shevelove showed him that good ideas demanded clear expression, so he should never “sacrifice smoothness for cleverness” (Kislan 149).

After Bernstein, the next major influence on Sondheim’s work was director and producer, Hal Prince (1928). Prince attended the University of Pennsylvania at age 16 and then served in the United States Army in post-World War II Germany. At the beginning of the 1950s, Prince worked in the theater as an assistant stage manager to legendary Broadway director and producer George Abbott (1887 –1995). He co-produced the successful show *The Pajama Game*, which won the 1955 Tony for Best Musical. Like Kern, Prince was not interested in presenting shows that were “just musicals,” so he created the structure of the “dark” or “anti-musical”, using concepts taken from the New York 1954 version of Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) and Kurt Weill’s (1900-1950) *The Threepenny Opera* (Hirsch 1). Prince loved the dissonance in the music and the themes of betrayal and moral corruption. Both Prince and Weill alerted a lot of American artists to the possibility of irony and skeptical subtext to an otherwise cheerful or polished performance. The first major directorial success of Prince was *Cabaret* by Kander and Ebb in 1966, in which he exercised his new taste for dramatic seriousness and complexity. The song and dance of the show was juxtaposed with the “contaminated” society of Berlin before the start of the Third Reich (Hirsch 1). The show portrays the denial and cheerful refusal to deal with the facts of the people during this time. This denial is connected to high-spirited songs, so the audience’s musical enjoyment is implicated in the sickening time period that is being depicted. Along with being dark-toned, *Cabaret* is considered a concept musical, meaning that Prince made the central

on the action in the narrative frame makes this a concept musical, even though it contains a traditional linear plot. This was an innovation that Sondheim was interested in exploring. In 1970, twenty years after the two met, they produced *Company* together.

*Company* was Sondheim's first masterwork. Unlike *Cabaret*, *Company* was considered a "pure" concept musical, because the plot was not linear, there was no connection of time between scenes, and the central idea was the unifying element. Sondheim was interested in stories that were difficult to tell because they did not have a linear form. Through his work with writers of many styles he was able to find what was important to him in his own work. Between 1970 and 1981 Prince and Sondheim collaborated on six musicals. After *Company* was *Follies* in 1971, which was structured in a similar way, with songs alluding to the 1940s. Another triumph for the pair was *A Little Night Music* in 1973, which had a traditional plot. Sondheim wrote the score mostly in waltz time to connect the feeling of the show throughout. *Pacific Overtures* in 1976 explored the westernization of Japan. Sondheim wrote an operatic score for the collaboration with Prince on *Sweeney Todd* in 1979, which explored the idea of cannibalism (Miller 190). With a book by George Furth (1932–2008), *Merrily We Roll Along*, written in 1981, was thought to produce some hit songs, showing Sondheim's range of abilities. Unfortunately, the play did not succeed and it dissolved his partnership with Prince, which led Sondheim to think of quitting theater, but instead he decided to collaborate with off-Broadway playwright and director James Lapine (1949), who was interested in visual and avant-garde elements in theater. Their first collaboration was *Sunday in the Park With George* in 1984. For this show, Sondheim wrote music that evoked the pointillist style of painter George Seurat, who is the focus of the play. The two went on to produce *Into the Woods* in 1987, an adaptation of Grimm fairy tales, which had thematic elements running through the piece to evoke particular emotions in the audience, and *Passion* in 1994, a show focused on obsession, illness, and manipulation, which Sondheim conceived himself. In 1990, Sondheim wrote the music and lyrics to *Assassins*, with book by John Weidman (b. 1946), a revue-style show about men and women plotting to assassinate Presidents of the United States. His final full-length

two brothers traveling across America during the Alaskan Gold rush. Unfortunately, the show did not receive positive reviews, which argued that the music was old-fashioned. However, Sondheim was complimented on his ability to incorporate dark motifs into sounds that had a brighter musical content.

Sondheim writes songs for the theater because he believes the song must serve dramatic purposes. His songs depend on, and are very specific to, the dramatic situation. Before his time, the Broadway musical was geared toward what the audience wanted to hear, which always included a happy ending. This worked for Rodgers and Hammerstein, because they wrote after World War II, a time of seeing a progressive future for the country and for people. They believed in this idea, but Sondheim did not. The America that Sondheim lived and wrote in was disillusioned, media-savvy, hip, and skeptical. Growing up as a gay man, Sondheim felt like an outsider to the heterosexual romances that grounded Hammerstein. Hammerstein told Sondheim to write only what he believed in, so he found new ways to construct the musical (Kislan 150). While his predecessors decided that the book meant the story, Sondheim took it to mean the idea, or the concept that allows for a unified theater art. He resisted easy sentiment and musical appeal, and wrote characters who would sing modestly if it suited their role. Sondheim avoided techniques that were sure to make his work popular outside of the theater in cover recordings. By avoiding these techniques, he found his own innovative form, using complex lyrics and characterization, variety in rhythm, harmony, unexpected intervals, and writing very specifically to the situation. Sondheim frequently wrote lyrics that contradicted the character's true feelings, to show the difficulty of human emotion. The choices that Sondheim made in writing his music were primarily to reveal in song through meter, rhyme, rhythm, and melody, the complexity of the character (Kislan 151). Sondheim's yearning for learning and understanding has led him to be a keen synthesizer of his influences to create his own artistic style. In an interview with PBS NewsHour, Sondheim said:

I'm interested in all kinds of craft. I love to read about people doing things...the process is always what interests me. I'd be interested in reading about oyster farming, I'd be interested in reading about horse racing, things I know nothing about providing it's specific and detailed and

it's a craft that somebody is passionate about and wants to convey it. I love learning and that seems to me the best way to do it is to have one practitioner tell you what goes in it. (Brown)

Sondheim's ability to synthesize, his sophistication, his intricacy, and mastery of the old theatrical and musical forms, pose challenges for the performer. Sondheim's songs are distinguished by complexity, and the complexity is both dramatic and musical. His writing is musically complex because it is dramatically complex and incorporates dramatic situations that are interwoven into the overall structure of an integrated score. These complexities of content are expressed through specific features of rhythm, harmony, motive, word-painting, and musical word emphasis. Although the reception of Sondheim, at first, has been that his lyrics are good but his music is undernourished, with the passing years, the complexity and dramatic subtlety has given him more popularity. Because his music has been under researched, I wanted to write about the importance of dissecting Sondheim's music to fully understand his characters. The best way to realize the fullness of what Sondheim has written is to prepare the songs noticing, incorporating, and interpreting the details, the unexpected features, and the apparent eccentricities of the musical writing with the same precision with which one might study the verse patterns in Shakespeare. This masterful writer demands an extra measure of analysis, sensibility, and skill from the performer. An actor working on Sondheim has to be willing to submit fully to his careful writing.

## Chapter 2 – MUSICAL & DRAMATIC ANALYSIS: Selected Songs From *Company*, *Follies* and *Into The Woods*

I plan to test my thesis by analyzing key songs from *Company*, *Follies*, and *Into the Woods*. I have examined the songs through time signature, rhythm, tempo, dynamic markings, and key signature in the vocal scores from the shows. For the openings of all three shows, I have analyzed both the accompaniment and the sung line through time signature, rhythm, tempo, and dynamic markings. The opening number was then analyzed through key signature. I next chose two additional songs from each musical and analyzed one through time signature, rhythm, tempo, and dynamic markings, and the other through key signature. Through this analysis, I have related what is occurring musically to what the character is saying. I plan to show how the intricate connections between these categories give information to the actor about who the character is.

### COMPANY

Piano reduction vocal score by Robert H. Noeltner (Range Road Music, Inc., 1970)

*Company* (1970) is a musical comedy that is based on a book by George Furth (1932-2008), an American actor, playwright, and librettist, with music and lyrics both written by Sondheim. The plot centers on Bobby, a single man who lives in New York City who cannot commit to a single woman, leaving him unmarried at age 35. He finds himself puzzled by but drawn into the mystery of lasting relationships. The characters include five married couples with whom he is close friends, and his three girlfriends. The first couple we meet is Sarah, a bold woman who has been trying to diet, and Harry, who has been trying to stop drinking. They taunt one other about the issues they both have with staying on the right track. Bobby is seen next with Peter, an Ivy League man, and Susan, a southern belle, who appear to be the perfect, loving couple. Bobby jokingly says that Susan is so charming that he wants to

know that they are getting divorced yet continuing in some manner as a couple. In a third scene, Bobby brings marijuana to the home of Jenny, an uptight woman, and David, a hip man. Jenny smokes with the two men, even though she professes to be a square, but experiences little effect. The next couple presented is Amy and Paul who, after living together for many years, are getting married. Amy is completely panicked and explains all of the reasons why she cannot get married, but later realizes she wants to be with Paul. The last couple to meet is Joanne, who is very rich, has a biting tongue, and enjoys telling stories of her ex-husbands, and Larry, her latest husband. Three relationship plots are intertwined: Bobby's relationship to the married couples, his pursuit of marriage, and the marriages distinct from Bobby. Because this is a concept musical, the plot does not follow a linear path or a specific chronological order, but consists of vignettes that are linked by the celebration of Bobby's 35<sup>th</sup> birthday.

OPENING: Lyrics – See Appendix A

OPENING: Accompaniment and Sung line analysis of time signature, rhythm, tempo, dynamic markings

The opening number, entitled *Company*, begins with a time signature of 6/4 in both the accompaniment and sung line. 6/4 means that there are six beats per measure and the type of note of those six beats is a quarter note. Each character addresses Bobby separately with the pet name they use for him. These pet names either extend for two eighth notes- “Bob-by”- or four eighth notes-“Bob-by-ba-by.” The name the character is called gives the actor information of his or her relationship to Bobby. This continuous calling of his name, along with the quickness of the eighth notes in this time signature show the actors that these characters are somewhat frantic. This idea is solidified when David breaks the repetition and says “Bobby, we’ve been trying to call you all day.” To emphasize this first full line of the show, Sondheim changes the time signature to 4/4 and adds a crescendo for the accompaniment. Since each measure now has two fewer beats, the frantic energy increases to show the increase in worry

sound as if they are leaving him messages on the telephone and the lines further the actor's awareness of the men's and women's relationships to Bobby. For example, Sarah is the only character who uses "I" instead of "we" in her sung line to Bobby. This suggests her assertiveness and that she may have a relationship with Bobby separate from the couple's relationship to him. Everyone continues to sing over one another and the music continues to crescendo until the music changes to 4/4 and everyone sings together in harmony. At this point, the music is marked forte, making what they say more demanding of attention. They are all saying the same words, showing that there are aspects of all of the couple's relationships with Bobby that they share: "Bobby, come on over for dinner!/We'll be so glad to see you!/Bobby, come on over for dinner!/Just be the three of us/only the three of us!" The couples then say "We love you" and the dynamics quickly change from forte to piano, which makes the couples sound more caring and soothing than before.

The accompaniment, continuous throughout the entire song so far, has a driving beat of six even quarter note chords when the music is in 6/4, and then 4 even quarter note chords when the music is in 4/4. The quarter note chords are grouped in two, where the first is slurred to the second and the second is staccato. These chords are played by a vibraphone, which is a member of the percussion family that makes a vibrating sound. We can infer that these repetitious quarter note chords being played on the vibraphone are acting as the dial tone to Bobby's phone because they continue like this until Bobby begins to sing.

Bobby then sings on his own about what it means to have friends and company around him. The music continuously changes from 4/4 to 6/4 and the dominating rhythm is still constant quarter notes; however, the first two measures of quarter notes are accented and unconnected, showing a change from the dial tone rhythm. Bobby's sung line follows suit by having six quarter notes in a row to start the phrase. When the music is in 4/4, Bobby's sung phrases are four measures long, meaning sixteen beats per phrase, and when it is in 6/4 the phrases explain the activities he does with his friends and the phrases are three measures long and have eighteen measures per phrase. Composers generally change



phrase to three measures instead of four when the music changes to 6/4, the discrepancy between counts in these two time signatures is two beats. This slight change of the amount of beats makes the music feel uneasy. The actor could see this as Bobby not really enjoying the activities he shares with his friends, such as “deep talks, long walks, [and] telephone calls,/ Thoughts shared, souls bared, private names, all those photos up on the walls.” The addition of two extra beats could also show how many meaningless activities he does with his friends, and adding more beats adds to the monotony because he can’t say them all in only four beats. This contrasts with the upbeat sound of the music, showing that perhaps Bobby feels he must hide his ill feelings about doing all of these activities.

When Bobby begins to talk about his friends again-“those good and crazy people my friends/those good and crazy people, my married friends”- the dial tone rhythm comes back in. By bringing back the dial tone whenever the friends are spoken about or the friends are singing, this becomes a motif for the friends trying to call him, thus emphasizing the jarring distance between Bobby and his friends. This time, the friends sing again with phrases on top of one another as before and then sing again all together in harmony. At the ending of the song Sondheim brings the same music and lyrics back as when Bobby sang by himself about what it means to have company, but now everyone is singing together in unison. This theme of bringing back song phrases is a theme that continues throughout the show, giving this sense of constant repetition and monotony. By repeating this same music, Sondheim could want to show Bobby’s friend opinions on this same topic and now, instead of Bobby singing about his friends, his friends are singing about themselves. With this comparison, the actors should wonder, do Bobby’s friends think of company in a different way than Bobby does? Do they enjoy all of these things that seem trivial to Bobby? The unison singing gives this section commitment, so do the actors see this as the characters feeling good about the company they keep? Does Bobby necessarily feel one way and all of the friends feel another way? The accompaniment at this point still switches between 4/4 and 6/4, which tells the actor that some characters may enjoy company and others may not. By looking at the musical text closely, the actor then sees these options that are laid

contrast of opinions on one topic are themes that are prevalent throughout the show. Sondheim does not fully explain how each character feels in this opening number because he wants the *concept* of the musical to be what comes across. From this inability to know exactly what Sondheim wants each character to feel in the beginning, he shows the actor that his or her role in the show is to allow the concept, which is how to interact with company living in New York City, to be realized, and that they are parts of a whole that allows this concept to be explored.

#### OPENING: *Company*: Key Signature Analysis

The opening song stays in major keys, but very frequently the key bass notes, the lowest note being played and what the rest of the music is constructed upon, are not that of the root of the key. The opening starts in D $\flat$  major; however, the bass note never resolves to the tonic (D $\flat$ ) but instead continues steadily on A $\flat$ , which is the dominant tone of D $\flat$  major because it is the fifth note in the scale. This A $\flat$  continues in the bass line throughout the couples speaking over each other. It never resolves to the tonic. This helps to enhance the confusion of everyone speaking at once. The key changes to C major when everyone sings in unison, which sounds more cheerful. Sondheim continues with the dominant in the bassline, which is now G, so although the key sounds nicer and the actors are singing one-third higher than they were before, the dominant in the bassline continues to cause a contrasting feeling or subtle, unresolved harmonic tension. Bobby then sings by himself and the key *stays* in C major. However, just as Bobby begins to sing, Sondheim finally resolves to the tonic (C) in the bassline on the word “Phone,” perhaps showing Bobby’s acknowledgement that his friends have been repeatedly calling him. The tonic has not been heard before Bobby begins to sing. Sondheim could be trying to show that Bobby is the protagonist of the story by lightening the sound of the music as he begins to sing. This resolution to the tonic also illuminates what Bobby sings, which is “Phone rings, door chimes, in comes company!” This is the first time we have heard Bobby sing and have heard the title word of the show. Perhaps Sondheim does not change the key, as he did when there was a change

finally resolving the chord could be heard clearly. For the actor, the key staying the same could be showing Bobby's connectedness to his friends, who sang in this key right before he begins. However, the actor can see that Bobby also has separation from his friends because although he is connected with them through key signature, he does not sing with them. Also, as was explained earlier, the time signature continues to switch from 4/4 to 6/4 at this point, with line phrases having a difference of two beats. So, now that the key has finally resolved itself, the time signature is the element that is unsettling the music, showing that even in tonic resolution, there is still restlessness because Bobby may not enjoy the activities he does with his friends.

Once Bobby finishes singing on his own, and the couples and girlfriends sing over one another again, the key moves up to E  $\flat$  major. Sondheim switches back to the dominant here in the bassline, which is B  $\flat$ . As they continue to sing, the key becomes less clear because in some measures the dominant and the tonic are eliminated. The more these characters continue to sing on top of each other, the more confusing it is to hear, which is expressed through a more ambiguous key. Once the couples and girlfriends begin singing in unison, the key changes to D major and the dominant, which is A, is present throughout. However, once they begin to sing the same part Bobby sang previously, Sondheim, as before, does not change keys, but simply changes the bass note from the dominant to the tonic, to stabilize the harmony. Repeating the words Bobby previously sang defining company has a different connotation when everyone sings it together, because they are referring to themselves. At the very end of the song when everyone sings "company!/ company/ company! Lots of Company!/ Life is company!/Company!" Sondheim switches to the tonic, and the key signature for this section is entirely in 4/4. The women, who sing the highest note, sing an A, the dominant. For the first time in the song, the key and time are clear and consistent, showing the actor that along with the feelings of contradiction they might feel, they also feel sure about themselves at some points as well. It is important to note that Bobby is no longer singing with them at this very point, showing that perhaps the doubt is coming from him. As explained in the first analysis of the song, the actors have many choices to play with, and can

character does not like the company he keeps, he could show a change for the ending when everything becomes cheery and clearly tonic. Perhaps the actor could have this change because through describing the elements of what company is, he learns that he or she actually does like the company around him. The actor could also make the choice at the end of the song that perhaps he wants to conform to the group and pretend that he or she is content to hide inner feelings. As discussed earlier, Sondheim allows this room for interpretation and choices, showing that the characters are a means to explain the bigger concept of the show. Because of this, the actor has options for how the character feels at certain moments, as long as the choices continue to illuminate the concept and themes of the show.

#### “Another Hundred People”

In the middle of the first act, the audience is introduced to Bobby’s three girlfriends. He meets April first, who is a flight attendant and not very bright. Kathy, the next girlfriend, meets Bobby in a cleared area in the park because she loves how it is out of place in this City, just as she is. They both admit that at the beginning of their relationship they would have wanted to marry each other. However, Kathy tells him that she is moving back to Cape Cod to get married to someone else. In contrast, Marta, the last of the girlfriends, loves everything about New York, and voices her outspoken opinions on how New York is the center of the universe. Throughout his encounters with the three women in the park, Marta sings about the dirty, crowded, and exciting New York City.

“Another Hundred People”: Lyrics: See Appendix B

“Another Hundred People”: Accompaniment and Sung line analysis of time signature, rhythm, tempo, dynamic markings

The song begins in 4/4 and the dynamic is *piano*. There is an indication of tempo, which says that the song should begin at 112 beats per minute (BPM). This tempo would be considered moderately fast. Another note at the beginning of the music is that it should be played *dolce e leggiero*, which

move back and forth between the left and right hand of the piano, which means the notes are continually changing from high notes to low. To organize this jumping around of notes, the same grouping of notes is repeated every three measures, which gives the music a rolling effect. The sung line is also in 4/4, has phrases in groups of three, and also has almost constant eighth notes. However, two eighth notes are tied together, making one quarter note on the key words in each phrase, which are “train”, “ground”, “bus”, “around”, “plane”, “us”, “train”, and “bus.” Sondheim places the modes of transportation in which people come into and leave New York on the held notes to emphasize the endless business of coming to and going from New York. After looking at the lyrics, it is clear that the rolling sound of the accompaniment relates to the movement of these means of transportation. The constancy of quick eighth notes in both the accompaniment and sung line throughout the song help to create this sense of hurry and abundant movement, which is characteristic of New York City.

The pattern of long held notes coinciding with the key words continues, but now the words fall under a new category. These words, “strangers”, “work”, “play”, “stare”, and “stay”, describe *who* is in New York and *what* their purposes for being there are. After the who, what and how are explained, Marta sings with *un poco crescendo*, “And every day/the ones who stay,” slowly with quarter notes and held dotted half notes for “day” and “stay” to set up to explore what the people do who decide to remain in New York.

At this point the song dynamic is mezzo piano, which suggests the rolling train sound that the accompaniment is trying to emulate, is getting closer. The music goes back to the original constant eighth note pattern in both the accompaniment and the sung line, except for the words that describe what people in New York do together. These unflattering words or phrases, “find”, “crowded streets”, “guarded parks”, “rusty”, “dusty trees”, “battered barks”, “walk”, “postered walls”, “crude remarks”, land on quarter notes, which makes them stand out from the quick eighth notes that surround them. The accompaniment of the next section of text, now in *mezzo forte*, begins each measure with a glissando, which makes it seem as though the “train” created by the music is finally approaching. This

“parties”, “friends of friends”, “never know”, “pick me up”, “meet you there”, “let it go”, “get my message”, “looked in vain”, “doesn’t rain,” showing this constant negotiating and canceling of plans. At the end of this section Marta sings “Look, I’ll call you in the morning or my service will explain,” which is written completely in eighth notes, which gives the line a hurried, uncaring feel. By constantly giving a longer note value on the keywords that describe life in New York, Sondheim shows the actor Marta’s personal views on this matter. The last phrase of this section quickly changes to mezzo piano in the accompaniment and piano in the sung line and says “and another hundred people just got off of the train,” all in eighth notes. This shows that the accompaniment “train” has approached, has dropped off people, and has left again. These sections continue to repeat themselves after Bobby meets with each girlfriend to show the constant coming and going in New York, and the busy crowding of interchangeable women moving in and out of Bobby’s life. Although Marta is observing and remarking on the dysfunctional and impersonal aspects of New York, the rhythm in her singing is hurried, just like the sound of the “train” in the accompaniment. From this, the actor can see that Marta is part of the City and wants to stay. In this song, the actor sees how Marta belongs in New York because her own personality is like the busy feeling of the song. By being woven through Bobby’s meetings with the three girlfriends, the actor sees the constant rotation of girls. This gives less importance to each girlfriend because they come and go through his life as the train comes and goes through New York. The actor playing one of the girlfriends can see that by being directly compared to the other girlfriends, what she represents and what Bobby sees in her is important, because she is helping to show the overall concept of the company people keep. Marta represents the girl who can also not settle down because she is used to the New York lifestyle of always having something new. In this way, Bobby and this girlfriend are the two characters who initially portray elements of New York within their personalities. Marta loves everything to be fast paced, new, and interesting, and Bobby cannot commit because there are constantly so many options of women to choose from. By putting this song into the show at the point when Bobby is beginning to realize he wants a deeper relationship, we feel the monotony of the

constant coming and going of girls in Bobby's life. The actor playing Bobby can see that Bobby is getting tired of having many girlfriends at this point in the show.

“Have I Got a Girl For You”

This song occurs two songs before “Another Hundred People.” Bobby has just visited Jenny and David and sees how much they care for each other. Bobby begins to feel that everyone is finding a mate but him. In “Have I Got a Girl For You” his male, married friends try to set him up with girls with whom he can have one night stands, so the husbands can live vicariously through their single buddy.

“Have I Got a Girl For You” Lyrics: See Appendix C

“Have I Got a Girl For You”: Key Signature Analysis

The song begins with the exact same pet-naming of Bobby and singing over each other from the opening of the show, showing the constant repetition in their lives that Sondheim wants to accentuate. The key is D  $\flat$  major and the bass note is the dominant (A  $\flat$ ), just as it was before. When everyone begins to sing in unison, the key switches to C major, with the dominant (G) as the prevalent note in the bassline. The only difference in this section is the words. The couples say in unison “Bobby come on over for dinner!/ There's someone we want you to meet!/ Bobby, come on over for dinner!/ This girl from the office/ My niece from Ohio...It'll just be the *four* of us/ You'll love her.” This sets up this song differently from before. Instead of everyone asking Bobby to do different activities with just him and the couple, as they did before, all of the couples are asking to fix him up with a girl. This gives great insight into the characters because it shows that finding Bobby a woman is a hobby they all share.

The next section changes drastically to a darker sounding key. By looking at the key signature, the key appears to be either B major or G# minor, B major's relative minor key. Because the key bass note is F#, which is the dominant of B major, one could speculate that this part is in B major; however

or minor key. The fact that the sung line has many Bs in it, which could be the tonic, it becomes clearer that the key is in B major, but has minor undertones. This could suggest to the actor that there is a contrast between the good cheer of the men and the beginning of Bobby's worry about finding a mate. Larry is the first of the men to sing and he explains how he has a great girl for Bobby to meet. Although the lyrics sound as though Larry is trying to be helpful, the music suggests that he may have something up his sleeve. The first accidental notes in this song appear in the last two measures of Larry's phrase. Sondheim adds in a C# to the chords, which implies a switch of keys. But instead of changing the key signature, Sondheim adds flats to E, A, and B natural, and writes natural symbols in front of the notes that had been made sharp by the key signature, making the key sound as though it is suddenly in E b major, which is two steps up from B major. However, Sondheim also continues the C# from the previous two measures, but changes it to its equivalent note in flats, which is D b. This changes the key to E b major mixolydian, which means that the seventh note in the scale is flattened. At this point, Larry's scheme is revealed because he says "Dumb! And with a weakness for Sazerac slings/ you give her even the fruit and she swings./ The kind of girl you can't send through the mails." Larry wants to live out his desire for a drunken one-night stand through his single friend. The music at this point sounds cheerier than the music before, because the tonic is being played in the bass. The meaning of the words is contradictory to the sound of the music; however, the flattened 7<sup>th</sup> in this mixolydian key is the only note that makes the music sound a bit off. This sound begins on the word "dumb" and ends when he finishes describing the girl. This D b hints at the unhelpful advice of Bobby's friend. The actor playing Larry should be aware of this change to a cheerier sound when discussing the drunken girl he wants his friend to sleep with. This could be showing his overwhelming excitement to live vicariously through his friend, and his feeling that he is helping his friend out. The actor playing Bobby, in contrast, must be aware of this light music that is luring him into thinking sleeping with this woman is a good idea. At this point in the show Bobby is realizing he wants more than meaningless one-night stands, but his male friends try to persuade him to continue on his single path. It is important for the actor playing



section, “Call me tomorrow, I want the details,” switches back to the key signature marked, B major, to separate in sound the description of the girl, to illuminate the description and to show the excitement surrounding it.

In the next section Peter tells Bobby about a girl he needs to meet. The song changes to C major, but with the G dominant bass note and minor undertones, just like when Larry mentioned his girl. The music sounds darker again, showing that Peter too is trying to help Bobby continue his old habits, but Bobby realizes he wants more. Just as before, two measures before the description of the girl, Sondheim alludes to a key change, placing an F# in the accompaniment. He describes her as “Smart! She’s into all those exotic mystiques: The Kama Sutra and Chinese techniques./ I hear she know more than seventy five...” Sondheim adds sharps to F, C, and G, but keeps the D natural, making the key in E major mixolydian solely under the description of the girl, which begins with “smart!” and ends with “seventy five,” just as it was when Larry sang. This key is two steps above C major, so the key change relationship here is the same as in Larry’s section. Again, by bringing the key up two steps, it adds to the brighter sound of the key change, even though the flattened seventh note, D natural, alludes to Bobby’s worry about the bad advice he is being given.

In this next section, each of the husbands speak over one another, as in the opening and the beginning of this song, telling Bobby he must meet a girl his friend has found. Because D b major has become the key used when multiple characters sing phrases over one another, the key changes back to this, which was the original key of the song. The husbands then sing in unison, “Boy, to be in your shoes what I wouldn’t give./ I mean the freedom to go out and live...And as for settling down and all that...” Again, Sondheim does not change the key signature of the song on the word “Boy” but turns G b , A b , and D b into natural notes, meaning non-augmented or diminished notes G, A, and D, to raise the key two steps, and diminishes the seventh note of the scale, making the key F major mixolydian over these phrases. Here the men try to convince him that he is lucky because he is single and free, but Sondheim again flattens the seventh note of the scale, to show Bobby’s growing reservations. The song

last note, on “at”, is D, the tonic. This is the only place in the song where there is complete harmonic stability, showing this is the last attempt to lure Bobby into desiring the single life. This shows the actor a change in Bobby. At the beginning of the play he would have been interested in these women, however now he must be tricked into considering them through upbeat, harmonically anchored music. The actors in this song should be aware of the role they play to explain the changes Bobby is going through. For example, the actors playing the husbands should give an emotional tone during the parts that have minor undertones that show their desire to live through Bobby with their fantasies. Larry and Peter, when describing the girls, should notice the brighter tone of the song at this point and think about why there is this change. Do they want to convince Bobby in a new way that sounds less threatening? Are they so excited at the prospect of Bobby living out their fantasies and thus sing brightly? The actor playing Bobby must be aware of his role in these changes of tone as well. When the music sounds darker, the actor may want to wonder whether Bobby is beginning to see that the husbands are being bad influences. When Larry and Peter describe the women and the keys sound bright, except for the mixolydian seventh flattened step, the actor playing Bobby could perhaps see that this flattened step is his reservation and realization of the bad influence they are having on him. The actor can decide how he feels about his friends at this point, whether he is angry that they want him to make bad decisions or whether he is worried that they might persuade him.

## FOLLIES

Piano reduction vocal score by Robert H. Noeltner (Range Road Music, Inc., 1971)

*Follies* (1971), with music and lyrics by Sondheim and a book by James Goldman (1927-1998), is a musical about a reunion in an old Broadway theater that is being prepared for demolition. It features the performers of the “Weismann Follies,” a musical revue based on the historical Ziegfeld Follies, that performed between World War I and World War II. The main characters are two couples, Buddy and Sally Durant Plummer and Benjamin and Phyllis Rogers Stone, with unhappy marriages. When Sally and Phyllis were showgirls in the Follies, Sally was in love with Ben and, despite their marriages to other people, is still in love with him as they come to the reunion, thirty years later. Many of the former showgirls perform their songs that were in the original act, and the book numbers speak of midlife crisis, nostalgia, and obsessive behavior.

OPENING: “Prologue”, “Overture”, “Beautiful Girls” Lyrics – See Appendix D

OPENING: “Prologue”, “Overture”: Key Signature Analysis along with Accompaniment and Sung line analysis of time signature, rhythm, tempo, dynamic markings

Although there are no sung lines in the “Prologue” and only one line in the “Overture”, the music notes exactly when certain characters enter the scene. The actor can learn of the ranking or importance of his or her character through the order of entrance, and they should also take note of what the music does the first time each is introduced to the audience. This analysis will briefly describe what the music does in these two pieces, and provide more detail about the music at the points of the characters’ entries onto the stage. I will analyze the key signature along with the time signature, rhythm, tempo, and dynamic markings of the accompaniment and sung line. Since the music here has no sung line, I will analyze key signature along with the other the other categories to explain what is happening in the music relating all of the elements at once.

Although Sondheim’s style is to have frequent time changes in a song, the entire “Prologue” is in

slowly in 3. The dynamics are drastic throughout the piece, changing from *piano* to *forte* without a crescendo in between, and changing from *forte* to *mezzo piano* with diminuendos that only extend through the measure before the next change. Writing the entire song in the waltz time signature and using dramatic dynamics show that Sondheim is writing in the style of the 1940s, when the Weismann musical review was performing. He abandons his own style to set the tone for the show, which gives the actor a sense of the style of the Weismann musical review each character was once a part of. At measure 46 of the “Prologue” ghostly figures of the women’s past selves enter. At this moment, according to the key signature, which shows two sharps (F and C), it appears as though the key switches from G major to D major. However, the music does not sound bright enough to be D major since there are few accidental notes. Because of this we must see if the song perhaps in a mode. The bassline notes alternate between G and D. Since the key does not sound as though it is in D major, I played the key on the piano starting with G, the other note in the bassline. Although G major has all natural notes except for F#, I played it with C# as well, as it showed in the music. Since C natural is the fourth note in the scale of G major, and in this case it has been augmented or raised a half step, this shows that the key here is in G major, but in Lydian mode, which raises the fourth step. Sondheim uses G in Lydian mode because it sounds more unsettling than using a major or minor key. It pairs perfectly with the entering of the ghosts.

Sally enters alone at the end of the “Prologue” and is the only character to do so. Just as she enters, the music becomes much simpler. While the rest of the piece displays almost constant eighth notes, this part has held low chords with constant higher quarter notes. The key also becomes clearer. Before Sally enters it is unclear whether the key is in E♭ major or its relative minor, C minor. It begins to sound as if it is in C minor, but, as the music progresses, it settles to E♭ major with C minor undertones. Once Sally enters, the music becomes completely clear that the key is E♭ major, so the music sounds sweet and anchored. The music here is peaceful and even, which may be a comment on how Sally is feeling walking back into a place she once knew so well. The actor could also suppose that

speaks here is “It’s going to be a lovely party. I’m so glad I came.” As soon as she finishes this line the music swells from mezzo piano to fortissimo in a matter of two measures, and there are forceful dotted half note chords for the last seven measures of the song. Again in this last section, although the key signature with two sharps suggests D major, the unsettling sound of the music leads to a conclusion that it is again in G Lydian mode. Sondheim allows Sally’s speaking part to be separated from the unsettling G Lydian mode, by writing her section in a clear E♭ major and book ending it with G Lydian mode. Perhaps Sondheim repeats the G Lydian mode at the beginning and end of Sally’s entrance and seeking to make it clear that Sally is an important character in the show by framing this section. It could also mean that Sally does not see any bad in coming back to the theater and only sees excitement so her music is tonically strong and major, but the music around her speaking alludes to problems that may arise with this reunion. From the little information we have received so far to understand Sally as a character, it is difficult to discern the exact reason for this drastic change. Is it foreshadowing anger or distress or nervousness that Sally may have later in the show? Does the music change around her because she is simpler than G Lydian mode music? Is Sally too simple to realize the problems that are to follow? Sally loves a married man (Ben) who is not her husband and is coming back to the place where Ben and Sally spent loving time together in their youth. It appears as though Sally is not able to see that coming to a party where Ben will be, still loving him and hoping he loves her back, could have a disastrous outcome. Then when Sally speaks, she shows her inability to understand this, which contrasts with the accompaniment that foreshadows the conflict that will arise.

The “Overture” begins in 4/4 with a note to play a moderate tempo, which makes this song much faster than the “Prologue.” The overture remains in 4/4 for its entire duration, except at one point that has a note saying “Double time feel,” which means that the time signature is still in 4/4, although the music is played twice as fast. These two types of times are characteristic of jazz music. The key signatures throughout the song are clear, major keys, until the first sung line at the end of the piece. Judging from the bright sound of the music and the influence that jazz had in the 1940s, this was

begins. However in this case, the show has already begun and characters enter during the overture, which allows the music to double as background music for the party at which they are arriving. Phyllis and Ben enter together, and the key signature is a clear A major because the bassline notes alternate between the tonic (A) and the dominant (E). However, after four measures the key changes to D ♭ major with sharp and flat accidentals, blurring the key. The actor should notice this change, because at the moment they enter the music sounds cheerful, making it seem as though they are a lovely married couple. However, the change to the muddier key suggests there may be underlying problems in their relationship or they could be reacting to seeing the theater again for the first time in thirty years. They may be upset with its condition or the theater may bring back thoughts of their hidden regrets. The only character not to enter the stage at this point is Sally's husband Buddy. The actors playing both Sally and Buddy must decide why they do not enter the room together, whether it is because Buddy went to get them drinks or was parking the car and Sally was too excited to wait for him, or that Sally did not want to walk in with Buddy because she did not want him there when she found Ben. Just before he enters, the music changes to 2/4, the key changes to an unsettling G major with a constant dominant in the bassline (D), and Buddy's young self from the 1940s enters. He sings the first sung line of the show with no music underneath: "Hey up there,/Way up there,/Whaddaya/say up there?" He sings in three syllable groupings of two sixteenth notes and one eighth note with a fermata, which allows the actor to hold the note for however long he or she feels is appropriate. When Young Buddy says, "Whad-da-ya," Sondheim writes triplet eighth notes, to make the sung line have the same emphasis as if it were spoken. The fermatas on each "there," the last syllable of the other three groupings make it sound as though Young Buddy is calling for someone. Since he is calling "up there" in the theater and his sung line is sweet and cheery sounding, we are led to believe he is calling for Young Sally to come down. The ghost shows us the nature of Sally and Buddy's relationship when they were younger. Young Buddy calls for Sally showing his desire and his efforts to see her. This shows us that when they were younger, Buddy pursued her; however, although they are now married, we do not know yet the exact nature of the

comparison between their relationship in the past and their relationship in the present. The actual Buddy enters right after and the music finally resolves to G, the tonic of the scale. This moment is significant for the actor to note because the music reflects the change from Buddy's young, ghost self to his real self. This suggests to the actor that Buddy is a sweet man. Since Young Buddy sings in a major key, showing his good character, perhaps Sondheim wants to show the actor who plays Buddy that he has not changed much since his youth. He is still genuine and still loves Sally.

“The Road You Didn't Take”

Although Sally is dazzled by Ben's financial success in life, Ben sings “The Road You Didn't Take,” wondering if he made the right choices and if he should have chosen a different path.

“The Road You Didn't Take” Lyrics – See Appendix E

“The Road You Didn't Take”: Accompaniment and Sung line analysis of time signature, rhythm, tempo, dynamic markings

The song begins in 3/4 with a tempo of 90 beats per minute (BPM). This tempo is considered a “walking” tempo, which seems appropriate for a song about walking down one's path in life. A harpsichord plays constant sixteenth notes that go up the scale for two, three, or four notes, and then down the scale for two, three, or four notes. There is no exact pattern, except that the notes jump around, which sounds confusing to the ear. The accompaniment has no clear path and continues to bounce around, giving the actor a sense of Ben's internal worries that he may not feel comfortable to express or does not realize are there.

Ben's sung line at the beginning mainly consists of eighth notes and some dotted eighth notes, which contrast with the fast pace energy of the accompaniment. The music changes to 2/4 when Ben says “You take one road/ You try one door.” In this section of the song, every note he sings is a measured out eighth note, which shows his assuredness in what he is saying. However, the actor must

Ben sounds sure, he may be covering up some doubt. He sings “There isn’t time for any more/ One’s life consists of either, or./ One has regrets which one forgets/ And as the years go on.” At this point in the song, Ben sounds certain that life takes one path and that we forget about the other choices we could have made, and the accompaniment reiterates this certainty by stopping the constant eighth notes and instead having a bell double his voice part, meaning the bell plays the same notes he is singing, but octaves higher. The actor should notice this change in the accompaniment because it now matches what Ben is singing. This could show that Ben really is sure at this point, but it could also show that he is making a point to sound sure and the music helps this by reinforcing what he is singing. In the next section, Ben continues to assert that he has no regrets, but doubt is creeping into his mind. There is a clear struggle happening for Ben, which is reflected in the lyrics and the music. He sings “The road you didn’t take/ barely comes to mind,/ Does it?” “The road you didn’t take” consists of all quick sixteenth notes, which, along with the words suggests Ben’s agitation. He is setting up the line to either say that “the road you didn’t take” does matter or does not. Ben says that it “barely comes to mind,” is sung with all even quarter notes with mind being held a full measure, and the accompaniment doubling his sung line, showing his confidence in his thought. However, while holding “mind” longer, he begins to wonder if what he said is true, and sings quickly with sixteenth notes, “Does it?” It is important for the actor to notice that Ben cannot decide how he feels, and there should be a clear change through the long note on “mind” when he realizes how unsure he is. He next sings, “The door you didn’t try,/ Where could it have led?” which has the same rhythm as “the road you didn’t take barely comes to mind,” but now he sounds more unsure because he is asking a question. The actor should think about whether this changes the rhythm of slow quarter notes from sounding confident to sounding as though he needs time to think about the questions he has. Ben then sings, “The choice you didn’t make/ never was defined./ Was it?” in the same manner as the previous phrases. The actor can make a choice here and decide whether he uses the same rhythm because he is still trying to convince himself that he has no regrets and then wavers by the end, asking “Was it?” or if the rhythms now have a different meaning that does not



exude confidence, but show his worry. At this point in the song, Ben is still trying to hold onto how he felt at the beginning of the song, but the more he sings about it, the more his doubts intrude.

By the middle of the song, he begins to realize that he worries about the paths he didn't take. He sings "The lives I'll never lead/ couldn't make me sing" as he sang the previous phrase and then in quick sixteenth notes sings "Could they?...Could they?...Could they?" The actor can see that Sondheim is showing his path to breaking down because Ben asks the question three times, as if he wants an answer. The questions here, as opposed to the questions at the end of phrases earlier, can no longer be interpreted as rhetorical, showing that he is truly confused and worried. There is a crescendo to forte to show his frustration. By the end of the song, the accompaniment again has constant sixteenth notes, showing his growing worry as the song progresses. However, the dynamics change to *mezzo piano*, because he is not as frustrated anymore and has come to a new conclusion: "The roads you never take go through rocky ground, don't they?/ The choices that you make aren't all that grim./ The worlds you never see still will be around, won't they?" These phrases also continue the same rhythms as before, but the softer dynamics give them a different feel. The actor can see that Ben has calmed himself and has some new thoughts. In these phrases, Ben decides that although there are many paths he could have taken, he chose his path for a reason and it was good, so he can forget about who he could have been. The words and music show confidence here, as in the beginning of the song, but the actor must notice how the soft dynamics still make him sound less sure of these new claims. In the last three measures, the confidence then changes. There is a *ritardando*, meaning the music slows down, while he says, "The Ben I'll never be, who remembers him?" still with the same rhythm as before, but slower. The *ritardando* here shows the actor that Ben is singing words that do not express how he feels. Although he is saying that there is no point in thinking about the Ben who he could have been because he will never exist, he slows down, showing the actor that Ben is thinking about "The Ben [he'll] never be," wondering who he could have been. The accompaniment is just one chord, and on "him" the music changes to piano, making the note sound weaker. Ben realizes that he could have been happier if he had chosen a different path. The actor

must notice this struggle that Ben faces throughout the song because Sondheim gives the character a full journey with a new realization by the end that cannot be fully realized without studying the music.

### “In Buddy’s Eyes”

Sally tells Ben about her dull, suburban life with Buddy. However, she tries to convince Ben and herself that it has not been so bad because of how much Buddy loves her.

“In Buddy’s Eyes”: Lyrics – See Appendix F

“In Buddy’s Eyes”: Analysis

The key in the introduction, or the beginning of the song before the singer begins, is very ambiguous. Because the key signature shows no sharps or flats, it would seem as though it is either in C major or A minor; however, parts of it sound major and parts sound minor. Also, the sporadic accidental flats give this music no key at all, which makes the music sound confusing. Although nothing has been sung yet, the actor should notice that the song is already setting up confusion, and it is important to notice whether a change occurs when the character begins to sing. Once Sally begins to sing, the key signature still remains without flats or sharps, but the accidentals are reduced to just F#, meaning the key could either be G major or its relative minor, E minor. Although the accompaniment is unclear in itself, the brightness of Sally’s sung line makes it clear that the key is G major. This continual confusion in the accompaniment contrasts with the brightness of Sally’s sung line. This is similar to when Sally spoke at the beginning of the show in the “Prologue” and the music around her speaking was off but when she spoke it was simple and sweet sounding. According to the choices the actor makes in that piece, the actor could see this as showing Sally’s continual misunderstanding of the trouble she is going to cause, or that she knows what she is doing but is trying to cover it up, or that she is too unthinking to consider any unintended repercussions to her actions. She sings “Life is slow, but it seems exciting ‘cause Buddy’s there./ Gourmet cooking and letter writing and knowing Buddy’s there.”

with her. There are also no accidental notes in the accompaniment, leading the actor to wonder if she actually does feel happy with her life. However, she begins to think more about what she does every day and sings, “Every morning, Don’t faint, I tend the flowers/ Can you believe it?/ Every weekend I paint for umpteen hours.” At this point the accompaniment bass note is E, which would lead one to believe the key has changed to G major’s relative minor, E minor. However, Sondheim adds four accidental sharps, F, C, G, and D sharp, which are the amount of sharps in E *major*, which is a minor third down from G major. This makes the key sound as though it has minor undertones because of the transition to a key that is a minor third down. The minor undertones pervade this section of accompaniment and sung line. This shows the actor that the tone that was expressed in the introduction has come back, and that Sally does perhaps resent her quiet life. However, since the key is still major and not minor, the actor can see that Sally feels that she should be happy with her life, but feels that she is missing something, and the music reflects this by dropping the key a minor third to another major key.

Sally’s frustration becomes more apparent through her lyrics in the next section. She sings “And, yes, I miss a lot, living like a shut in/ No I haven’t got cooks and cars and diamonds./ Yes, my clothes are not Paris fashions.” The key signature continues to have no sharps or flats, but now the accidentals B, E, A, D, G, and C flat are added, which would suggest that the key is either G  $\flat$  major or E  $\flat$  minor. However, because there is a constant D  $\flat$  in the bassline, which is neither the dominant nor the tonic of either G  $\flat$  major or E  $\flat$  minor, the accompaniment suggests that this is in D  $\flat$  major, with the tonic in the bassline. This would show a pattern, because D  $\flat$  major is a minor third down from the last key, E major, showing that he continues to move the key down a minor third. By lowering the key another third down to another major key, the actor can see that Sally is still trying to act as though she is happy with her life, which is evident by the major key, but is not able to hide her true feelings with the minor third drop of keys. There is a sinking feeling in the tonality of the music. Sondheim then continues to show Sally’s true emotions adding a C flat to the accidentals, which is not in the key of D  $\flat$  major. D  $\flat$  major has B, E, A, D, and G flat, but does not have C  $\flat$  in it as the music does here.

diminished, one is led to believe that this key is D ♭ major mixolydian. The accepted feeling of a mixolydian key is thought to be uniting pleasure and darkness, according to Guido of Arezzo (991/992-1050), a musical theorist of the medieval era (Barnett 241). The music reflects her growing distress and inability to hide how Sally feels by using D ♭ major mixolydian instead of D ♭ major.

In this next section, Sally explains about how Buddy feels about her, singing “But in Buddy’s eyes, I’m young, I’m beautiful./ In Buddy’s eyes, I don’t get older.” On the word “Buddy’s” the music finally changes key signature to show B ♭ and E ♭, which suggests the key is either B ♭ major or G minor. The key signature, along with the tonically anchored bassline and sung line, make it clear that this section is in B ♭ major, which is a minor third down from the last key, D ♭ major mixolydian. This shift down a minor third continues to make the music sound sadder, however, at this point the key switches to a solid major key. The actor can see that Sally sounds happy about how Buddy feels about her, but still moves keys down a minor third, because a bit of her true feelings creep through. She breaks through the act when she sings “So life is ducky and time goes flying/ And I’m so lucky I feel like crying and---.” An accidental D ♭ comes in to confuse the key and emphasize Sally’s inability to pretend she is happy. The accompaniment also places a constant C natural in the bassline. This note is the second note in the B ♭ major scale, which clashes with the repeated B ♭ sung by Sally here, which shows the actor the increase in her struggle to pretend.

Sally again sings about how Buddy feels about her, mustering up the strength to lie about her happiness with Buddy once again, and the key is dropped down a minor third from B ♭ major, into G major. The music here is tonically strong, making it sound bright and happy, but the drop of a minor third still shows her inability to hide her feelings entirely. The actor should think of why Sally cannot fully hide her feelings. Is she too simple to be able to do so? Is she trying as hard as she can, or does she want her true feelings to be shown? Sally finally sings, “Nothing dies, And all I ever thought I’d be,/ the best I ever thought of me,/ is every minute there to see in Buddy’s eyes.” From these words it is difficult to discern her internal feelings about what she is saying. The music continues to be tonically

mode. In this key, certain chords sound minor and others sound major. This, along with the lyrics, shows Sally's continual worry that Buddy loving her may not be enough for Sally to love him back. The actor should make the choice between expressing that she can't hide her true feelings, or that she does not want to.

## INTO THE WOODS

Vocal score prepared by Tony Esposito, Dave Jessie and Jeff Sultanof (Rilting Music, Inc., 2010)

*Into the Woods* (1987) is a musical with music and lyrics by Sondheim and book by James Lapine (b. 1949), about a series of the Brothers Grimm fairy tales, focused in each case on a character's wish fulfillment. These tales are interwoven with the central and original tale of the Baker and his wife, who go on a quest to overcome the curse of sterility that was put on the Baker's family by Rapunzel's witch, the antagonist of the play. The couple must go into the woods and find "the cow as white as milk, the cape as red as blood, the hair as yellow as corn, and the slipper as pure as gold", which are obtained from characters in the familiar fairy tales Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Ridinghood, Rapunzel, and Cinderella.

OPENING: Lyrics – See Appendix G

OPENING: Accompaniment and Sung line analysis of time signature, rhythm, tempo, dynamic markings

The opening of *Into the Woods* introduces the Narrator, Cinderella, Jack, the Baker, the Baker's Wife, the Stepmother, Florinda and Lucinda (Cinderella's stepsisters), Jack's Mother, and the Witch to the audience and shows the relationships between the tales and between the characters within a tale. There are eight parts to this extensive opening song. The first part presents all of the characters together, except for the witch, with all of the stories interweaving and characters singing over one another. The next five parts present the tales individually. Because Sondheim presents all of the characters twice in the opening, the parts where the tales are addressed will be analyzed separately, since these parts give the actor the most information about the character.

The beginning of the song introduces the characters and what they are wishing for. It immediately sets the tone for the show by having a bright tempo of metronomic marking 132 BPM,

that says “Risoluto,” meaning the music should be played in a bold manner. The accompaniment is in 4/4 and has constant quarter note chords, meaning four chords per measure, that are to be played “sempre staccato,” meaning the duration of the note should be as short as possible. The combination of these elements gives the music a strong, marching feel. Although the accompaniment is played in 4/4, the sung line is in 12/8. This means that when counting out the measure, there are three notes to every one quarter note in the accompaniment. Because there are so many characters singing on top of one another, Sondheim writes the sung line in 12/8 in order to have more options of rhythms to make each character part different and heard through the confusion.

Part 2 is Little Red Riding Hood’s section. She goes to the Baker’s house to buy some sweets and bread to bring to her grandmother. Although the time signatures for both the accompaniment and sung line remain the same, along with the marching staccato quarter notes in the accompaniment, the tempo of the music is raised from 132 BPM to 138 BPM, which puts it at the top of the range of tempos that are considered “marching” tempos. There is also a note that the marching quarter notes are to be played “leggiero,” meaning lightly and delicately, and another note: “jauntily.” These adjectives that describe the music also perfectly describe the character of Little Red Riding Hood. Sondheim is clearly making a point here to describe the character through the music. In the sung line, the notes jump all over the scale and there is a use of notes with varied durations, from quarter notes, to eighth notes, to dotted notes. This tells the actor more about Little Red’s personality, because she has little order to what she is singing. However, the constant march that happens underneath keeps her on task to get to her grandmother’s house, and does not allow her hurried excitement, shown through the sung line, to stop her. Since her story is about having a path but following other impulses, the contrast of regular accompaniment with disorderly singing hints at her central conflict. In Red Riding Hood particularly, it is important for the actor to sing precisely in order to capture, and not neglect, her erratic energy.

Part 2A shows the story of Cinderella and the Stepsisters. In the first part, Cinderella’s stepmother throws a pot of lentils into the fireplace and tells Cinderella that if she can pick them all out

state, summons the help of birds to help her pick the lentils from the ashes. In this part, the birds have completed their task and Cinderella allows them to leave. Cinderella sings “Fly birds, back to the sky,” and the time signature is in 6/4. The accompaniment plays six even quarter notes and the tempo is now 160 beats per minute (BPM), which is very fast. However, when Cinderella sings, the music sounds slow and gentle because she sings long half notes and quarter notes and the dynamic is piano. In the next three measures Cinderella sings “Back to the eaves and the/ leaves and the/ fields and the-” In the first measure, the time signature changes to 4/4, making the measure two beats shorter. The next two measures are in 3/4, removing another beat, and there is a crescendo. The combination of the shorter measures and the crescendo makes the music swell. It sounds as though she is back in a trance to talk to the birds, telling them to fly back home. Cinderella is then cut off by her two stepsisters who order her to help them get ready for the party. The music is now *mezzo forte* and there are constant eighth notes, meaning six very quick notes per measure, in both the sung line and accompaniment. The stepsisters sing six syllables per measure, while Cinderella sang three at most, and Cinderella sings for five measures while the Stepsisters sing for twelve. This demonstrates the differences in their personalities and temperaments. The actor playing Cinderella must show how this instance upsets her more than it has in the past. She normally would allow the stepsisters to act rudely towards her, but she has more resentment at this point because she wants to go to the ball that the stepsisters are invited to. Cinderella then begins to sing in the same hurried manner in which the stepsisters were singing, while the sisters talk to each other. She is reminding herself that although the stepsisters treat her poorly, it is important to continue to be kind to them. Cinderella begins to doubt this sentiment and sings “What’s the good of being good if everyone is blind and you’re always left behind?” Cinderella adopting the stepsisters’ singing rhythm could mean that she is upset and has more she needs to say, or that she may be slightly mocking the way in which the stepsisters communicate. Cinderella’s singing is interrupted again, because the score says that Florinda, one of the stepsisters, slaps Cinderella in the face. The music makes it sound as though the stepsisters noticed that she had a slight bit of aggression or claiming their



lives and privileges by adopting their quick singing style, which angers Florinda enough to slap Cinderella.

In Part 3, the Witch is introduced for the first time, and she tells the Baker and his wife about the sterility spell she cast on them. She tells the story of the Baker's father taking greens and magic beans from the witch's garden to feed his pregnant wife. The music is in 4/4 and the accompaniment still has the marching quarter notes, but now they are not staccato, to give them a weightier feel. The witch tells the story, but in rhythm, making it sound as if she is rapping. This is notated in the music with "x's" on the music staff to show that the actor must speak, and not sing, in rhythm. Sondheim also notates when the actor should use a higher or lower part in their vocal speaking range by writing the x's higher or lower on the staff. She mainly speaks in eighth and sixteenth notes, allowing her to sing many syllables. Since the witch does not have notes to sing, we do not know what her singing voice sounds like, which would make her sound less scary. The actor playing the witch should notice that she is the only character whose singing voice we do not get to hear, which shows her roughness.

In part 4, Jack's mother demands that Jack wake up and realizes that they have no money and will soon starve. She sings "Jack, Jack, Jack, head in a sack,/the house is getting colder, this is not a time for dreaming." Although she tells Jack that he should not be dreaming the music, which is *mezzo piano* and in 4/4, is to be played and sung "cantabile," meaning in a smooth style. The accompaniment plays legato eighth notes that float from one note to the next, and all of these aspects together make it sound like a lullaby. This informs the actor about the relationship between Jack and his mother. She does not know how to talk to him to get her point across, because she sings in a dream-like manner telling him to stop dreaming. The actor should notice this and question whether she has the ability to parent her son in an effective way. It could also mean that Jack's mother is a dreamer herself, meaning Jack inherited this trait from her. She sings that, "your father's not back," which makes it sound as though he has been gone for a long time and she still believes he will return. However, since Jack's father has left his son and wife for such a long time with no food or money, it seems as though he will

not be coming back, even though Jack's mother cannot accept it. The actor must see that Jack's mother cannot get through to her son because she dreams just as much as he does.

Parts 5, 6, and 8 can be skipped because they involve characters who have already been discussed; however, the content of the story in part 5 helps to understand part 7. In part 5, the Witch tells the Baker and his wife that in order to have the curse reversed, they must go to the woods and bring her back the cow as white as milk, the cape as red as blood, the hair as yellow as corn, and the slipper as pure as gold before the chime of midnight. In part 7, the Baker prepares to go to the woods, and this is reflected in the accompaniment because it goes back to the 4/4 marching. He tells his wife, who wants to come with him to help, that he will not allow her to. The sung line is in 12/8 and the two sing in quarter and eighth notes. They sing the same rhythmic lines and sing back and forth, overlapping slightly. They both sing the same rhythmic lines to show that they are married, or perhaps that they have similar temperaments. They sing back and forth, with the Baker saying his wife must stay home and his wife saying she wishes to help. These lyrics, along with the overlapping of singing lines makes them sound as though they are bickering, yet very closely connected, which gives insight to their relationship.

#### “Opening”: Key Signature Analysis

Part 1 of the opening is in G major with no accidental notes. However, the dominant, which is D, is in the bassline throughout, making the chord structure sound weaker. Making the dominant the bass note of the chord means that the chord has been inverted from the original chord, which always has the tonic in the bass. By inverting the chord to make the fifth note, or the dominant, the bass of the chord, the spacing between notes in the chord is not as even as in the original chord and the tonic is not present, making the chord sound less strong. This contrasts with the strong marching beat, showing that although the key is major and the beat is strong, not everything is perfect. Because all of the characters are wishing here, it makes sense to weaken the chord to show that uncertainty of wishing for something.

her youth and cheery nature. Part 2A, involving Cinderella and her stepsisters, continues in E ♭ major. In the sung line, there are no accidentals so it sounds sweet, just like Cinderella. This is contrasted in the accompaniment because there is a constant switch back and forth between E ♭ and E natural. Since the notes are only one half step from each other, when constantly playing them back and forth, it sounds eerie, alluding to the trance she is in. But, Sondheim keeps Cinderella's sung line with no accidentals to show that although she is in the trance-like state, she is still a sweet and genuine character. When the Stepsisters begin to sing, the key signature changes. According to the key signature, the key is either in F major or D minor, but there are so many accidental sharps and flats that it is difficult to tell. Because there are some C naturals in the bassline, it seems as though it is in F major, because C natural is the dominant of that key. However, the large amount of accidentals makes the key completely muddled, which contrasts with the clear sung line of Cinderella. This shows the actors playing the stepsisters that their characters are muddled and confused, just as the key is. It also sets up right away that Cinderella is a good character and that the stepsisters are wicked.

The witch raps in part 3, and since there are six flats in the key signature, one would think that it is either in G ♭ major or the relative minor key, E ♭ minor. However, the key has been completely obliterated by the augmented triad Sondheim puts in the chord in the accompaniment as the witch enters. An augmented triad is a chord of three notes where the first note is exactly two steps from the second, and the second is exactly two steps from the third. It sounds neither major nor minor, but it is a terrifying-sounding chord, frequently used to evoke magic, which is perfect for the witch's entrance.

In Part 4, with Jack and his mother, Jack's mother speaks lines trying to get through to her son. At this point, the music is clearly in E ♭ minor, showing her anger. Since yelling at him does not seem to work, she begins to sing, and the key changes to the relative major key, G ♭ major. She tries a nicer approach to get Jack to understand the crisis they are in; however, she sings as though it is a lullaby and tells Jack to stop dreaming, which probably confuses him. This shows that Jack's mother does not know how to get through to her son or that she dreams as much as much as he does. In part 6, when the Baker

which is D  $\flat$ , instead of the tonic, weakening the chord structure. Sondheim makes the key major to show that they are good characters, but then puts the dominant in the bassline to show their current annoyance with one another. Sondheim is making quick character sketches, but is virtuosically shifting keys and rhythms to make striking cameos that vividly set up a variety of stories.

“Stay With Me”: Lyrics – See Appendix H

“Stay With Me”: Accompaniment and Sung line analysis of time signature, rhythm, tempo, dynamic markings

When the Witch realizes that her daughter Rapunzel, who has been locked in a tower for her entire life, had a visitor, the Witch sings “Stay With Me” to explain to Rapunzel why she does want her out in the world. At the beginning of the song, the Witch yells at Rapunzel for what she has done. Once she realizes that this approach will not get her point across, she tries calmly singing to her, just as Jack’s Mother did with him. This analysis will deal with the Witch’s second approach, since the earlier analysis dealt with her when she is terrifying.

The music is in 4/4 when the Witch sings with her second approach. It says that the sung line should be sung *piano* but intensely, because although she tries to be sweet, she wants to get her point across. The accompaniment has a note that says “legato ma agitato,” which means connected, but restless and agitated, and despite this agitated music there are continual eighth note chords. The music has frequent crescendos and diminuendos going back and forth from mezzo piano to piano, which emphasizes the agitation. It is as if the witch keeps wanting to raise her voice, but stops herself. Like the accompaniment, the witch sings in eighth notes, because she has a lot that she feels she needs to say, but holds out the last note of each phrase, to allow Rapunzel time to take in what she is saying. When the witch says “Stay with me,” she holds the “me” for two measures, as if waiting for Rapunzel to agree, and at the end of the second measure the accompaniment plays a drastic mezzo forte quarter note chord. The witch is angry that Rapunzel does not agree yet and continues to sing the reasons why the world is

showing her growing internal agitation. The witch then sings, “Stay at home/ I am home,” and increases in volume. Once she says, “Who out there could love you more than I?/ What out there that I cannot supply?” she is singing forte. On the first “there” the time signature changes to 3/2, meaning there are now three half-note beats per measure, making the music much slower. She holds “there,” “I”, “there,” and “supply” for half of each measure, giving the witch longer to show her anguish over her daughter wanting to leave her. It as if she is screaming because her heart is breaking. The music then goes back to *mezzo piano* and 4/4 time because the witch feels defeated as she sings “Stay with me,” holding out the last note for two measures. The witch then sings “Stay with me, the world is dark and wild/ Stay a child while you can be a child,” while the accompaniment plays sweetly in piano. Here the song goes back to the original melody, but instead of being written in eighth notes, Sondheim writes in quarter notes, making it take double the time to sing the phrase, making it sound as if she is begging Rapunzel to stay. The final phrase that the witch says is “With me” and “me” is held for two measures along with a *ritardando* in the accompaniment, giving her the last chance to plead. Although the witch is a bad mother for wanting to shut her daughter away from the world, the music makes it clear that she truly loves and cares for Rapunzel, and thinks that she is doing the right thing for her daughter. This song gives more insight to the character and makes her multidimensional. The unsettling rhythms particularly express her desperate sincerity in the midst of her disturbing possessiveness.

“Giants In The Sky”: Lyrics – See Appendix I

“Giants In The Sky”: Key Signature Analysis

Jack describes the adventures he had when he climbed up the beanstalk and entered the land of the giants.

The song begins with a clustered held chord that has no key, which is jarring and exciting. Jack then says “There are giants in the sky!/ There are big tall terrible giants in the sky!” and by the key signature and sung line, it is clear that the sung line is centered around F minor, even though the

that this is bad news; however, the music then changes to the relative major key, which is A ♭ major, and the music is tonically anchored with no accidental notes. Jack describes what it was like when he first climbed up the beanstalk and realized he was alone and free to do whatever he wanted. Although the tonal center of this part is A ♭ major, there is a bit of coloring from the relative minor key, F minor, showing that although he feels free, he is still a bit hesitant. Jack then realizes that he is not alone and that there is a “Big tall terrible giant at the door.” The key moves down a minor third to F major to show his fear. However, the key is bright and completely tonically anchored, which leads us to believe that although he thought he should be scared, he was not because he was not in danger. Jack explains that a lady giant gave him food and a bed and held him close in her arms. He sings “And you know things now that you never knew before,/ not till the sky.” Jack realizes that his impression that giants are bad was wrong and he has now learned what motherly affection feels like.

He then sings that just as he felt comfortable with his new friend, a bigger, scary male giant comes along. The key goes back to A ♭ major, but it is colored with the relative minor to show that he is growing, “really scared being all alone.” Here Sondheim adds accidental B flats and A flats, and turns other notes into naturals, to confuse the key and to show his growing worry. At this moment, Jack realizes that he longs to be home, even though he does not own much, so he steals what he can and scrambles down the beanstalk. Once he makes it to his house and sees his mother outside, the key changes to a clear, tonically anchored F # major, and Jack sings “The roof, the house, and your mother at the door./ The roof, the house, and the world you never thought to explore.” The music sounds exactly as it did when he described the kindness of the lady giant, showing the relation he has made between the two women. Jack then says, “And you think of all of the things you’ve seen,/ And you wish that you could live in between,/ And you’re back again only different than before,” showing that he realizes there are positive and negative elements to living in his limited, familiar world and living in the greater, bigger world of the giants. He decides he wants some of both. At the end of the song Jack sings “There are giants in the sky” and one more phrase in the manner he used at the beginning of the

song. But by his next phrase, the music goes back to sounding major to show how his opinions on giants have changed. Jack then shows how he has now made his own informed opinion of the giants by ending the song and singing “There are big tall terrible awesome scary wonderful giants in the sky,” using positive and negative adjectives that describe what he thinks of them. On the last word of the song (“sky”) Jack sings a high, forte, two-measure held F #, the tonic of the key. The actor playing Jack should notice the excitement that exudes from the music by having him end in such a loud and solid way. Jack is proud of what he has learned, and it shows his growth from the beginning of the song. The music and lyrics are married perfectly showing Jack’s emotions every step of the way. Sondheim does this to show that in this song Jack bares all of his feelings and leaves nothing unresolved, because he verbalizes and examines all of his feelings. Before this song, it is easy to think that Jack is not very smart, but the music shows how he becomes a critical thinker through his journey to the sky.

## CONCLUSION

Stephen Sondheim inherited the legacy of the American musical theater tradition from his predecessors and mentors, Oscar Hammerstein II, Bert Shevelove, Milton Babbitt, Nadia Boulanger, Leonard Bernstein, and Hal Prince. The tradition was varied but for the most part, musicals were simple and easy to understand. Villains were evil, lovers were in love, comic relief was funny. The music provided a vehicle for communicating the plot and revealing simple emotions. Sondheim's musicals are about the complexity of human emotion, characters, and situation. Even when characters appear simple, Sondheim shows many layers of emotion for each character that modulate and change greatly during the course of the play. The music itself is the primary vehicle used to inform the actor of this complexity and of the journey that they will take during his or her performance.

Sondheim takes every dimension of musical construction to a high level of complexity and sophistication. The tempo, key signature, time signature, rhythm, and dynamic markings all change frequently and interplay with each other and with the lyrics to create deeply layered complex characters and interactive relationships between characters. The actors are significantly informed of this complexity and who they are by these musical elements. These singing actors must come to understand the direction that the interplay of these elements communicates. Key changes suggest subtexts that the words and tunes do not show. Rhythmic variation shows changes in underlying energy as well as emotional transitions and words and phrases are made jarring or comforting. Simple musical beauty is complicated or withheld or weighted with crucial emotional meaning. Sondheim frequently repeats music or rhythms within the same song, but with different lyrics or different characters singing. By doing so, he shows the direct relationships between characters and the growth that they experience from the beginning of a song to the end. Very frequently the character sings one idea through the lyrics, and the music suggests something completely different. It is as if the music displays the complex internal feelings of the characters that they either don't know they have, or do not feel comfortable sharing with



characters, such as Bobby in *Company* and Ben in *Follies*, the characters ultimately make choices that change their destiny, which may or may not be what they wanted. When characters are made emotionally unavailable, the audience feels a distance from the story being told, and the audience is aware they are watching a show; however, this contrasts with the high emotion brought forth through the songs as the characters try to understand what they want and what they feel. Sondheim gives specific instructions in the music relative to how the character should feel because the complexity of each character relates to the complexity of the others, and all of the characters together help to realize the concept and the story. The actor playing a role in a Sondheim musical must study the music carefully to understand how their character fits into the overall picture, as Sondheim envisioned it.

Appendix A – *Company* OPENING Lyrics

ROBERT'S FRIENDS [variously]:

Bobby...Bobby...Bobby baby...Bobby bubbi...Robby...Robert darling...Bobby, we've been trying  
to call you.Bobby...Bobby...Bobby baby...Bobby bubbi...

Angel, I've got something to tell you.

Bob...Robbo...Bobby love...Bobby honey...

Bobby, we've been trying to reach you all day.

Bobby...Bobby...

Bobby Baby...Angel...Darling...

The kids were asking--

Bobby...Bobby...Robert...Robby...Bob-o...

Bobby, there was something we wanted to say.

Bobby...Bobby bubbi...Sweetheart...Sugar...

Your line was busy.

What have you been up to, kiddo?

Bobby...Fella...Bobby...Sweetie...

How have you been?

Stop by on your way home.

Seems like weeks since we talked to you!

Bobby, we've been thinking of you!

Drop by anytime.

Bobby, there's a concert on Tuesday.

Hank and Mary get into town tomorrow.

How about some scrabble on Sunday?

Bob, we're having people in Saturday night.

Bobby...Bobby...Bobby, baby...

Whatcha doin' Thursday?

Bobby...Angel...Bobby bubbi...

Time we got together, is Wednesday all right?

Bobby...Robbo...Bobby honey...

Eight o'clock on Monday.

Robby darling...Bobby, fella...Bobby baby...

[Together]

Bobby, come on over for dinner!

We'll be so glad to see you!

Bobby, come on over for dinner!

Just be the three of us,

Only the three of us--

We loooooooooooooooooooooove you!

ROBERT:

Phone rings, Door chimes, In comes Company!

No strings, Good times, Room hums, Company!

Late nights, Quick bites, Party games, Deep talks, Long walks, Telephone calls.

Thoughts shared, Souls bared, Private names, all those photos up on the walls--

"With love."

"With love" filling the days,

"With love" seventy ways,

"To Bobby with love"

From all those good and crazy people, my friends!

And that's what it's all about, isn't it?

That's what it's really about,

Really about!

[April, Kathy and Marta enter.]

FRIENDS & GIRLFRIENDS [variously]:

Bobby...Bobby...Bobby baby...Bobby bubbi...Robby...Robert darling...Bobby...Bobby...

Angel, will you do me a favor?

ROBERT:

Bobby baby... Name it, Sarah...

Bobby bubbi...

Listen, pal, I'd like your opinion...

ROBERT:

Try me, Peter...

VARIOUS:

Robbo...Bobby love...Bobby honey...Bobby, there's a problem, I need your advice...

ROBERT:

Amy, can I call you back tomorrow?

VARIOUS:

Bobby... Bobby Baby...Angel...Darling...Just half an hour...Honey, if you'd visit the kids once or twice...

ROBERT:

... Jenny, I could take them... to the zoo on Friday...

VARIOUS:

Bobby bubbi...Sweetheart...Sugar...What's happen to you?Bobby...Fella...Kiddo...

Where have you been?

Stop by on your way home...

Bobby, dear, I don't mean to pry... Susan, love, I'll make it after

Bobby, we've been thinking of you... seven if I can...

Drop by anytime... Sorry, Paul, I made a date with

Larry and Joanne...

WIVES:

Bobby, dear, it's none of our business...

HUSBANDS:

Lookit, pal, I have to work Thursday evening...

WIVES:

Darling, you've been looking peculiar.

HUSBANDS:

Bobby boy, you know how I hate the opera...

WIVES:

Funny thing, your name came up only last night...

ROBERT:

Harry...David...Kathy...I...

GIRLFRIENDS:

I shouldn't say this, but...

ROBERT:

April...Marta...Listen, people!...

WIVES:

Bobby, we've been worried, you sure you're all right?

HUSBANDS:

Bobby...Bobby...Bobby baby...

Did I do something wrong?

HUSBANDS:

Bobby bubu, bobby fella, Bobby, Bobby...

FRIENDS & GIRLFRIENDS [together]:

Bobby, come on over for dinner!

We'll be so glad to see you!

Bobby, come on over for dinner!

Just be the three of us,

Only the three of us--

We LOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOVE you!

Phone rings, Door chimes, In comes Company!

No strings, Good times, Room hums, Company!

Late nights, Quick bites, Party games, Deep talks, Long walks, Telephone calls.

Thoughts shared, Souls bared, Private names, all those photos up on the walls--

"With love."

"With love" filling the days,

"With love" seventy ways,

"To Bobby with love"

From all those good and crazy people, my friends!

Those good and crazy people, my married friends!

And that's what it's all about, isn't it?

That's what it's really about,

Really about!

HUSBANDS:

WIVES & GIRLFRIENDS:

We LOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOVE...

ROBERT:

You I love and you I love and you I love and you I love

And you I love and you I love and you I love!

I love you!

ALL:

Company! Company! Company!

Lots of Company!

Years of Company!

Love is Company!

Company!

Company!

Appendix B – *Company* “Another Hundred People” Lyrics

MARTA:

Another hundred people just got off of the train

And came up through the ground,

While another hundred people just got off of the bus

And are looking around

At another hundred people who got off of the plane

And are looking at us

Who got off of the train

And the plane and the bus

Maybe yesterday.

It's a city of strangers,

Some come to work, some to play.

A city of strangers,

Some come to stare, some to stay.

And every day

The ones who stay

Can find each other in the crowded streets and the guarded parks,

By the rusty fountains and the dusty trees with the battered barks,

And they walk together past upholstered walls with the crude remarks.

And they meet at parties through the friends of friends who they never  
know.

"Do I pick you up or do I meet you there or shall we let it go?"



"Can we see each other Tuesday if it doesn't rain?"

"Look, I'll call you in the morning or my service will explain."

And another hundred people just got off of the train.

It's a city of strangers,

Some come to work, some to play.

A city of strangers,

Some come to stare, some to stay.

And every day

Some go away

Or they find each other in the crowded streets and the guarded parks,

By the rusty fountains and the dusty trees with the battered barks,

And they walk together past upholstered walls with the crude remarks.

And they meet at parties through the friends of friends who they never know.

"Do I pick you up or do I meet you there or shall we let it go?"

"Did you get my message? 'Cause I looked in vain."

"Can we see each other Tuesday if it doesn't rain?"

"Look, I'll call you in the morning or my service will explain."

And another hundred people just got off of the train.

And another hundred people just got off of the train,

And another hundred people just got off of the train,

And another hundred people just got off of the train.

Another hundred people just got off of the train.

Appendix C – *Company* “Have I Got a Girl For You” Lyrics

FRIENDS:

Bobby...Bobby...Bobby baby...

Bobby bubbi...Robby...Robert darling...

Bobby, we've been trying to reach you...

Angel, I've got something to tell you...

Bobby, it's important or I wouldn't call...

Whatcha doin' Thursday?

Bobby, look, I know how you hate it and all...

But this is something special...

Not that you don't know a lot of lovely girls, but

Bobby, come on over for dinner!

There's someone we want you to meet!

Bobby, come on over for dinner!

This girl from the office...

My niece from Ohio...

It'll just be the four of us...

You'll loooooooooooooooooooooove her!

LARRY:

Have I got a girl for you! Wait till you meet her!

Have I got a girl for you, boy!

Hoo, boy!

Dumb! And with a weakness for sazarac slings!

The kind of girl you can't send through the mails!

Call me tomorrow, I want the details.

PETER:

Have I got a chick for you! Wait till you meet her!

Have I got a chick for you, boy!

Hoo, boy!

Smart! And into all those exotic mystiques--

The Kama Sutra and Chinese techniques.

I hear she knows more than seventy-five.

Call me tomorrow if you're still alive!

HUSBANDS:

Have I got a girl for you! Wait till you meet her!

Have I got a girl for you, boy!

Hoo, boy!

Boy! To be in your shoes what I wouldn't give!

I mean the freedom to go out and live!

And as for settling down and all that,

Marriage may be where it's been, but it's not where it's at.

Whaddya like? You like coming home to a kiss?

Somebody with a smile at the door?

Whaddya like? You like indescribable bliss?

Then whaddya wanna get married for?

Suddenly taking off to explore?

Whaddya like? You like having meals cooked at home?

Then whaddya wanna get married for?

Whaddya wanna get married for?

Whaddya wanna get married for?

Whaddya wanna get married for?

Appendix D – *Follies* OPENING: “Prologue”, “Overture”, “Beautiful Girls” Lyrics

“Prologue”

SALLY (Spoken)

It’s going to be a lovely party. I’m so glad I came.

“Overture”

YOUNG BUDDY

Hey, up there, ‘Way up there,

Waddaya say up there?

Appendix E – *Follies* “The Road You Didn’t Take” Lyrics:

BEN:

You're either a poet

Or you're a lover

Or you're the famous

Benjamin Stone.

You take one road,

You try one door,

There isn't time for any more.

One's life consists of either/or.

One has regrets

Which one forgets,

And as the years go on.

The road you didn't take

Hardly comes to mind,

Does it?

The door you didn't try,

Where could it have led?

The choice you didn't make

Never was defined.

Was it!

Dreams you didn't dare

Are dead.

Were they ever there?

Who said!

I don't remember

At all.

The books I'll never read

Wouldn't change a thing,

Would they?

The girls I'll never know

I'm too tired for.

The lives I'll never lead

Couldn't make me sing.

Could they? Could they? Could they?

Chances that you miss.

Ignore.

Ignorance is bliss--

What's more,

You won't remember,

You won't remember

At all,

Not at all. You yearn for the women,

Long for the money,

Envy the famous

Benjamin Stones.

You take your road,

The decades fly,

The yearnings fade, the longings die.

You learn to bid them all goodbye.

The blessed peace...

At last you come to know:

The roads you never take

Go through rocky ground,

Don't they?

The choices that you make

Aren't all that grim.

The worlds you never see

Still will be around,

Won't they!

The Ben I'll never be,

Who remembers him?



Appendix F – *Follies* - “In Buddy’s Eyes”: Lyrics

SALLY:

Life is slow but it seems exciting

'Cause Buddy's there.

Gourmet cooking and letter-writing

And knowing Buddy's there.

Every morning--don't faint--

I tend the flowers. Can you believe it?

Every weekend I paint

For umpteen hours.

And yes, I miss a lot

Living like a shut-in.

No, I haven't got

Cooks and cart and diamonds.

Yes, my clothes are not

Paris fashions, but in

Buddy's eyes

I'm young, I'm beautiful.

In Buddy's eyes

I don't get older.

So life is ducky

And time goes flying

And I'm so lucky

I feel like crying,

I'm young, I'm beautiful.

In Buddy's eyes

I can't get older.

I'm still the princess,

Still the prize.

In Buddy's eyes

I'm young, I'm beautiful.

In Buddy's arms,

On Buddy's shoulder

I won't Bet older.

Nothing dies.

And all I ever dreamed I'd be,

The best I ever thought of me,

Is every minute there to see

In Buddy's eyes.

Appendix G – *Into The Woods* - OPENING: Lyrics

NARRATOR

Once upon a time

CINDERELLA

I wish...

NARRATOR

in a far-off kingdom

CINDERELLA

More than anything...

NARRATOR

lived a fair maiden,

CINDERELLA

More than jewels...

NARRATOR

a sad young lad

JACK

I wish...

NARRATOR

and a childless baker

JACK

More than life...

CINDERELLA & BAKER

I wish...

NARRATOR

JACK

More than anything...

CINDERELLA, BAKER & JACK

More than the moon...

BAKER'S WIFE

I wish...

CINDERELLA

The King is giving a Festival. BAKER & WIFE

BAKER

More than life...

JACK

I wish...

CIDERELLA

I wish to go to the Festival.

BAKER

More than riches...

JACK

I wish my cow would

give us some milk.

CINDERELLA

And the Ball...

BAKER'S WIFE

More than anything...

JACK

Please, pal-

I wish we had a child.

BAKER'S WIFE

I want a child...

JACK

Squeeze, pal...

CINDERELLA

I wish to go to the Festival.

JACK

I wish you'd give us some  
milk or even cheese...

CINDERELLA

I wish...

BAKER'S WIFE

I wish we might have a child.

I wish...

I wish...

STEPMOTHER

You wish to go to the Festival?

NARRATOR

The poor girl's mother had died,

STEPMOTHER

You Cinderella, you wish to go to the festival?

FLORINDA

What, you, Cinderella, the Festival?

The Festival?!

What, you wish to go to the Festival?

ALL THREE

The Festival?

The King's Festival?

NARRATOR

And her father had taken for his new wife

STEPMOTHER

The Festival...

NARRATOR

a woman with two daughters of her own.

FLORINDA

Look at your nails!

LUCINDA

Look at your dress!

STEPMOTHER

People would laugh at you-

CINDERELLA, STEPMOTHER, & STEPSISTERS

Nevertheless,

I/she still want/s to go to the Festival

And dance before the Prince.

NARRATOR

All three were beautiful of face, but vile and black of heart.

Jack, on the other hand, had no father, and his mother-

JACK'S MOTHER

I wish...

Well, she was not quite beautiful-

JACK'S MOTHER

I wish my son were not a fool.

I wish my house was not a mess.

I wish the cow was full of milk.

I wish the house was full of gold-

I wish a lot of things...

You foolish child!

What are you doing with a cow inside the house?

JACK

A warm enviroment might just be  
what Milky White needs to produce  
his milk.

JACK'S MOTHER

It's a she!

How many times must I tell you?

Only shes can give milk!

BAKER'S WIFE

Why, come in, little girl.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

I wish...

It's not for me,

It's for my Granny in the woods.

A loaf of bread, please-

To bring my poor old hungry

Just a loaf of bread, please...

NARRATOR

Cinderella's Stepmother had a surprise for her.

STEPMOTHER

I have emptied a pot of lentils into the ashes for you.

If you have picked them out again in two hours' time,  
you shall go to the ball with us.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

And perhaps a sticky bun?...

Or four?...

CINDERELLA

Birds in the sky,

Birds in the eaves,

I the leaves,

In the fields,

In the castles and ponds...

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

And a few of those pies... please...

CINDERELLA

Come, little birds,

Down from the eaves

And the leaves,

Over fields,

Out of castles and ponds...

JACK



CINDERELLA

Ahhh...

Quick, little birds,

Flick through the ashes.

Pick and peck, but swiftly,

Sift through the ashes,

Into the pot...

JACK'S MOTHER

Listen well, son. Milky-White must be taken to market.

JACK

But, mother, no- he's the best cow-

JACK'S MOTHER

Was! Was! SHEEEEE'S been dry for a week.

We've no food, no money,

and no choice but to sell her.

JACK

But mother...

JACK'S MOTHER

Look at her!

There are bugs on her dugs.

There are flies in her eyes.

There's a lump on her rump

Big enough to be a hump-

JACK

But-

Son,

We've no time to sit and dither,

While her wither's wither with her-

And no one keeps a cow for a friend!

Sometimes I fear you're touched.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Into the woods,

It's time to go,

I hate to leave,

I have to, though.

Into the woods-

It's time, and so

I must begin my journey.

Into the woods

And through the trees

To where I am

Expected ma'am,

Into the woods

To Grandmother's house-

Into the woods

To Grandmother's house-

BAKER'S WIFE

You're certain of your way?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

The way is clear,

I have no fear,  
Nor no one should.  
The woods are just trees,  
The trees are just wood.  
I sort of hate to ask it,  
But do you have a basket?  
Into the woods  
And down the dell,  
The path is straight,  
I know it well.  
Into the woods,  
And who can tell  
What's waiting on the journey?  
Into the woods  
To bring some bread  
To Granny who  
Is sick in bed.  
Never can tell  
What lies ahead.  
For all that I know,  
She's already dead.  
But into the woods,  
Into the woods,  
Into the woods  
To Grandmother's house

CINDERELLA

Fly, birds,

Back to the sky,

Back to the eaves

And the leaves

And the fields

And the-

FLORINDA

Hurry up and do my hair, Cinderella!

Are you really wearing that?

LUCINDA

Here, I found a little tear, Cinderella.

Can't you hide it with a hat?

CINDERELLA

You look beautiful.

FLORINDA

I know.

LUCINDA

She means me.

FLORINDA

Put it in a twist.

LUCINDA

Who will be there?...

CINDERELLA

Mother said be good,

That was always their advice.

So be nice, Cinderella,

Good, Cinderella,

Nice good good nice-

FLORINDA

Tighter!

CINDERELLA

What's the good of being good

If everyone is blind

And you're always left behind?

Never mind, Cinderella,

Kind Cinderella-

Nice good nice kind good nice-

(Florinda slaps Cinderella hard across the face.)

FLORINDA

Not that tight!

CINDERELLA

I'm sorry.

FLORINDA

Clod.

NARRATOR

Because the Baker had lost his Father

and his Mother in a baking accident...

Well, at least that's what he believed,

he was eager to have a family of his own, and was concerned

BAKER

Who might that be?

BAKER'S WIFE

We've sold our last loaf of bread.

BAKER

It's the witch from next door!

BAKER & BAKER'S WIFE

We have no bread.

WITCH

Of course you've got no bread!

BAKER

Then what is it you wish?

WITCH

It's not what I wish! It's what you wish!

(points to Baker's Wife)

Nothing cooking in there now is there?

NARRATOR

The old enchantress told the couple she had  
placed a spell on their house.

BAKER

What spell?

WITCH

In the past, when you were no more than a babe,  
your Father brought his young wife and you here to this cottage.  
They were a handsome couple,

You see, your mother was with child,  
and she had developed an unusual appetite.  
She took one look at my beautiful garden,  
and told your father that what she wanted more than  
anything in the world was

(rapping)

Greens, greens and nothing but greens:  
Parsley, peppers, cabbages and celery,  
Asparagus and watercress and  
Fiddleferns, lettuce-!

He said, "All right,"

But it wasn't, quite,

'Cause I caught him in the autumn

In my garden one night!

He was robbing me,

Raping me,

Rooting through my rutabaga,

Raiding my arugula and

Ripping up my rampion

(My champion! My favorite!)-

I should have laid a spell on him

Right there,

Could have changed him into stone

Or a dog or a chair...

But I let him have the rampion-

In return, however,  
I said, "Fair is fair:  
You can let me have the baby  
That your wife will bear.  
And we'll call it square."

BAKER

I had a brother?

WITCH

No! But you had a sister.

NARRATOR

But the witch refused to tell him anymore of his sister.

Not even that her name was Rapunzel.

WITCH

I though I had been more than reasonable.  
And that we all might live happily there after.  
But how was I to know what your father  
had also hidden in his pocket?  
You see, when I had inheireted that garden,  
my mother warned me that I would be punished  
if I were to ever loose any of the BEANS!

BAKER & WIFE

Beans?

WITCH

The special beans.

I let him go,



He'd stolen my beans!  
I was watching him crawl,  
Back over the wall-!  
Then bang! Crash!  
And the lightning flash!  
And- well, that's another story,  
Never mind-  
Anyway, at last  
The big day came,  
And I made my claim.  
"Oh, don't take away the baby,"  
They shrieked and screeched,  
But I did,  
And I hid her  
Where she'll never be reached.  
Your father cried,  
your mother died.  
And for extra measure-  
I admit it was a pleasure-  
I said, "Sorry,  
I'm still not mollified."  
And I laid little spell on them-  
You, too, son-  
That your family tree  
Would always be a barren one...

No!!

WITCH

So there's no more fuss

And there's no more scenes

And my garden thrives-

You should see my nectarines!

But I'm telling you the same

I tell kings and queens:

Don't ever never ever

Mess around with my greens!

Especially the beans.

JACK'S MOTHER

Now closely to me, Jack. Lead Milky-White to market and  
fetch the best price you can.

Take no less than five pounds.

Are you listening to me?

Jack Jack Jack,

Head in a sack,

The house is getting colder,

This is not the time for dreaming.

Chimney stack

Starting to crack,

The mice are getting bolder,

The floor's gone slack,

Your mother's getting older,

And you can't just sit here dreaming pretty dreams.

To wish and wait

From day to day

Will never keep

The wolves away.

So into the woods

The time is now.

We have to live,

I don't care how.

Into the woods

To sell the cow,

You must begin the journey.

Straight to the woods

and don't delay-

We have to face

The marketplace.

Into the woods to journey's end-

JACK

Into the woods to sell a friend-

JACK'S MOTHER

Someday you'll have a real pet, Jack.

JACK

A piggy?!

JACK'S MOTHER

(groan)

Meanwhile, the Witch, for purposes of her own,  
explained how the Baker might lift the spell;

WITCH

You wish to have

The curse reversed?

I'll need a certain

Potion first.

Go to the woods and bring me back

One: the cow as white as milk,

Two: the cape as red as blood,

Three: the hair as yellow as corn,

Four: the slipper as pure as gold.

Bring me these

Before the chime

Of midnight,

In three day's time,

And you shall have,

I guarantee,

A child as perfect

As child can be.

Go to the wood!

STEPMOTHER

Ladies.

Our carriage waits.

CINDERELLA

STEPMOTHER

The Festival-!

Darling, those nails!

Darling, those clothes!

Lentils are one thing but

Darling, with those,

You'd make us the fools of the Festival

And mortify the Prince!

CINDERELLA'S FATHER

Our carriage is waiting.

STEPMOTHER

We must be gone.

CINDERELLA

Good night, Father.

I wish...

BAKER

Look what I found in father's hunting jacket.

BAKER'S WIFE

Six beans.

BAKER

I wonder if they are-

BAKER'S WIFE

The Witch's beans! We'll take them with us!

BAKER

No! You are not to come.

I know you are fearful of the woods at night.

BAKER

No! The spell is on my house.

Only I can lift the spell,

The spell is on my house.

BAKER'S WIFE

No, no, the spell is on our house.

We must lift the spell.

BAKER

No. You are not to come and that is final.

Now what am I to return with?

BAKER'S WIFE

You don't remember?

The cow as white as milk,

The cape as red as blood,

The hair as yellow as corn,

The slipper as pure as gold-

BAKER

The cow as white as milk,

The cape as red as blood,

The hair as yellow as corn,

The slipper as pure as gold...

NARRATOR

And so the Baker, reluctantly, set off to meet the  
enchantress' demands.

CINDERELLA

I still wish to go to the Festival,  
But how am I ever to get to the Festival?

BAKER

The cow as white as milk,  
The cape as red as blood,  
The hair as yellow as corn-

CINDERELLA

I know!  
I'll visit Mother's grave,  
The grave at the hazel tree,  
And tell her I just want to  
Go to the King's Festival...

BAKER

The slipper as pure as gold...  
The cow, the cape,  
The slipper as pure as gold-

BAKER'S WIFE

The hair-!

CINDERELLA & BAKER

Into the woods,  
It's time to go,  
It may be all  
In vain, I know.  
Into the woods-

I have to take the journey.

CINDERELLA, BAKER & WIFE

Into the woods,

The path is straight,

You know it well,

But who can tell-

BAKER

Into the woods to lift the spell-

CINDERELLA

Into the woods to visit Mother-

BAKER'S WIFE

Into the woods to fetch the things-

BAKER

To make the potion-

CINDERELLA

To got to the Festival-

CINDERELLA, JACK, JACK'S MOTHER, BAKER, WIFE

Into the woods

Without regret,

The choice is made,

The task is set.

Into the woods,

But not forget-

Ting why I'm on the journey.

(Little Red Riding hood Joins)



to get my wish,

I don't care how,

The time is now.

JACK'S MOTHER

Into the woods to sell the cow-

JACK

Into the woods to get the money-

BAKER'S WIFE

Into the woods to lift the spell-

BAKER

To make the potion-

CINDERELLA

To go to the Festival-

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Into the woods to Grandmother's house...

Into the woods to Grandmother's house...

ALL

The way is clear,

The light is good,

I have no fear,

No no one should.

The woods are just trees,

The trees are just wood.

No need to be afraid there-

CINDERELLA & BAKER

ALL

Into the woods,

Without delay,

But careful no

To lose the way.

Into the woods,

Who knows what may

Be lurking on the journey?

Into the woods

To get the thing

That makes it worth

The journeying.

into the woods-

STEMOTHER & STEPSISTERS

To see the King-

JACK & MOTHER

To sell the cow-

BAKER & WIFE

To make the potion-

ALL

To see-

To sell-

To get-

To bring-

To make-

To go to the Festival-!

Into the woods!

Into the woods!

Into the woods,

Then out of the woods,

And home before dark!

Appendix H – *Into The Woods* - “Stay With Me”: Lyrics

WITCH

Don't you know what's out there in the world?

Someone has to shield you from the world.

Stay with me.

Princes wait there in the world, it's true.

Princes, yes, but wolves and humans, too.

Stay at home.

I am home.

Who out there could love you more than I?

What out there that I cannot supply?

Stay with me.

Stay with me,

The world is dark and wild.

Stay a child while you can be a child.

With me.

Appendix I – *Into The Woods* - “Giants In The Sky”: Lyrics

JACK

There are Giants in the sky!

There are big tall terrible Giants

in the sky!

When you're way up high

And you look below

At the world you left

And the things you know,

Little more than a glance

Is enough to show

You just how small you are.

When you're way up high

And you're own your own

In a world like none

That you've ever known,

Where the sky is lead

And the earth is stone,

You're free, to do

Whatever pleases you,

Exploring things you'd never dare

When suddenly there's

A big tall terrible Giant at the door,

A big tall terrible lady Giant

sweeping the floor.

And she gives you food

And she gives you rest

And she draws you close

To her Giant breast,

And you know things now

that you never knew before,

Not till the sky.

Only just when you've made

A friend and all,

And you know she's big

But you don't feel small,

Someone bigger than her

Comes along the hall

To swallow you for lunch.

And your heart is lead

And your stomach stone

And you're really scared

Being all alone...

And it's then that you miss  
All the things you've known  
And the world you've left  
And the little you own-

The fun is done.

You steal what you can and run.

And you scramble down

And you look below,

And the world you know

Begins to grow:

The roof, the house, and your Mother at the door.

The roof, the house and the world you never thought to explore.

And you think of all of the things you've seen,

And you wish that you could live in between,

And you're back again,

Only different than before,

After the sky.

There are Giants in the sky!

There are big tall terrible awesome scary wonderful

Giants in the sky!

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