

Sixth Night of The Arts: Maybe they're magic

Capital Playhouse takes us "Into the Woods"

By Christian Carvajal

For The Weekly Volcano on September 8, 2010

Three years ago, my beloved girlfriend, then completely unknown to me, was at the Capital Playhouse's Live Theatre Week performance of *Sweeney Todd* I attended. Small world, right? A romantic "meet cute?" Nope, we didn't talk that night and wouldn't for several months, but Capital Playhouse has decided to help fate along this time. If you and your plus-one have never been to the Playhouse before, your tickets will be two-for-one Oct. 22 in honor of Arts Crush.



Stage and musical director Troy Arnold Fisher (*West Side Story, Oklahoma!*) speaks truth when he calls *Into the Woods* "one of Stephen Sondheim's finest, and definitely his most accessible, theater pieces." In other words, if you've never caught a show at Capital Playhouse before, now's your chance for a great first lesson in modern musical theatre. It's a fractured fairy tale with a surprising left turn in Act II, and if you don't walk out humming at least one of the songs, then something is broken.

"The ensemble," Fisher teases, "is a nice mix of Playhouse favorites, plus some new faces to the Olympia scene. ... Jeff Kingsbury is playing the narrator. That's a director's choice, not the artistic director's prerogative." Kingsbury is the artistic director of Capital Playhouse. He is also, as Fisher says, "one of Olympia's very finest character actors," as demonstrated by his fine work as Daddy Warbucks last spring. "The oldest cast member, who plays Granny, is in her late 80s, with Seattle Opera credits. The youngest cast members, playing Jack and Little Red, are high school students who are part of our training program, Kids at Play. The Wolf, Rapunzel's Prince and the Baker are actors new to both the Playhouse and Olympia theater." Fisher's also quick to rave about his company's considerable technical staff, including set designs by Bruce Haasl and costumes by Audra Merritt. "As an expected feature at the Playhouse, much appreciated by our audiences, yet, sadly, oft overlooked by theater critics, the production will be accompanied by a 12-piece pit orchestra featuring some of Olympia's finest instrumental talent." Sorry, Troy. I'm guilty as charged.

As for dinner arrangements, Capital Playhouse beat us to the punch. It already has a program in place called Theatre with a BITE. Here's the way it works: You pay one price for your show ticket and meal at Budd Bay Café, Cicada, Mercato or Ramblin Jack's. When you arrive at the restaurant, you'll be served your choice of five or more

entrees, plus bread, soup or salad and dessert - gratuity included. Dinner is paid for; just walk to the show. The program's set up especially for couples, so that part of Date Night is taken care of as well.

So what to do afterward? Cathie Shaughnessy, the business manager at Capital, recommends Swing Wine Bar. It's a favorite of many patrons, as it's open till midnight on weekends. I'm a Swing fan as well. Try the artisanal caramel goat cheese ... it's as fantastic as Sondheim's dreamscape.