

Into the woods – intertwines the plots of several fairy tales, exploring the consequences of the characters’ wishes and quests.

Listen to the end of ‘The Prologue’ (from 12 minutes) where the main characters (The Baker & Wife, Cinderella, Jack, Little Red Riding Hood) set off into the woods for different purposes. Comment on the following elements:

<p>Melodic Writing and Text Setting</p>	<p><i>‘I wish’ - ascending a tone motif</i> <i>Short motifs are repeated then extended</i> <i>Repeated phrases</i> <i>Overlapping lines</i> <i>Syllabic</i> <i>Mix of conjunct and angular</i></p>
<p>Texture</p>	<p><i>Ostinato accompaniment - melody and accompaniment</i> <i>Layering of vocal lines creates counterpoint</i> <i>Solo vocals and unison chorus</i> <i>Solo woodwind fill in lines</i></p>
<p>Rhythm and Metre</p>	<p><i>Compound time - starts triple then becomes quadruple at ‘Into the woods.’</i> <i>Frequent use of dotted rhythm</i> <i>Use of rhythmic displacement</i> <i>Clear on the beat accompaniment throughout</i></p>

Stephen Sondheim (1930-)

- Friends with Jimmy Hammerstein- son of Oscar Hammerstein
- Oscar become a surrogate-father, influencing him profoundly and developing his love of musical theatre.
- Received classical training at college but also met regularly with Milton Babbitt (teacher at Princeton) to analyse musical theatre works.
- After college worked on television, some musical theatre and as a lyricist, particularly West Side Story (Bernstein) and Gypsy (Styne)
- However, he wanted to write both music and lyrics so from the 1970s, he collaborated with successful producer/directors.
- Notable works include:
 - Company (1971)
 - Follies (1972)
 - A little night music (1973)
 - Sweeney Todd (1979)
 - Into the woods (1988)
 - Assassins (1990)
- His musicals often had a dark and dramatic edge and his music is characterised by angular melodies, chromatic lines, fragmentary and repetitive phrases, intricate vocal writing and choral polyphony.
- Sondheim was versatile in his style and able to write to suit the mood and character for each musical.