**A Blue Teapot and Abbey Theatre Co-Production**

**Into the Dark Woods**

**By Charlene Kelly**

**A Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture Commission**

**Programme notes for Audio Described Performance**

**Black Box Theatre, 17th September 2022, 3pm**

Welcome to the introductory notes for **Into the Dark Woods**. The play is directed Petal Pilley with Set Design by Sabine Dargent. Costume Design is by Charmian Goodall, Lighting Design by Barry McKinney and Sound Design is by Jason Scott. Original Composition is by Sean Doherty.

This audio-described performance lasts for approximately one hour with no interval.

**ABOUT THE SHOW**

A prince is tired of being controlled by his father. Heartbroken, he runs away into the woods. Cold and alone, he calls out for help. A girl, also lost, is charmed into leaving a safe and familiar path. Hunted by darkness their way out is uncertain.

**ABOUT THE SET**

The Black Box is a large warehouse sized black box with tiered seating. It has a high roof and there is plenty of black space surrounding the audience seating and the stage.

At the back of the stage is a screen approximately 3.5 metres high made up of 5 panels each just under a metre wide making it about 4.5 metres wide. There is a fairy tale meets art nouveau style to the design of the set. Wooden carvings frame the silvery grey screen. At times, they appear to be trees but other times the light hits the bronze gold painted upon them and they turn into an ornate frame around an antique mirror.

The floor of the main stage is a semicircle, the horizontal end at the front of the stage, the curve connected to the curve of the back screen. The floor of the stage is a light purple with splashes of silver paint upon it. It is set at a slight angle so that the higher end is by the back screen. It’s ever so slight – a short step from the ground either side at the back is where the characters sometimes step up onto the main acting area. If you were to walk on the purple floor you would feel a soft cushioning layer unlike the hard black cement floor that surrounds it.

To the right of the back screen set on the black floor is a high throne, the back of the throne reaching level with the top of the backscreen. Decorated with swirls of art nouveau gold bronze pattern to match the elegant pattern on the back drop. It takes a ladder to reach the royal green cushion that sits upon the throne befitting of a monarch.

Set apart from and to either side of the mainstage nearer the front are two chaise longue sofas big enough to fit three people. The one on our left upholstered in royal green, the one on our right upholstered in deep purple. Both are adorned with the same golden bronze art nouveau motif. Both sofas are facing in towards the mainstage. Between the stage and the sofa to our left is an archway, a portal that the actors step through into the fairy tale. This archway is a simple frame adorned with the art nouveau motif.

The atmosphere is enhanced by dramatic lighting to represent a dark evening in the forest with dark greens and purple’s. Swirls of light fall onto the silver screen and floor the suggestion of the moon peeping through the trees, other times darker swirls of cloud from a stormy night. Neon light sometimes peeps in from under the back screen as if from under a doorway.

**ABOUT THE CAST & COSTUMES**

**The King** played by **Midie Corcoran** clambers up the ladder to sit on his throne with determination and some difficulty, wearing a deep purple mantle or kings cloak that is so long it drags behind him at least by a metre. This cloak is adorned with thick gold embroidery and sequins. As you can imagine it is no mean feat clambering up to one’s throne with such a heavy cloak. But climb it he does.

The King is somewhere around the age of fifty, with long wavey hair that rests below his shoulders. Dark brown with whisps of grey which are also evident in his beard. He’s a king prone to frowning and slouching. Underneath his cloak he wears three quarter length trousers that are called breeches, they are a dark reddish brown. Underneath which he wears white stockings and brown ankle boots. He wears a dark brown buttoned up dress jacket with a swirling paisley pattern that shimmers. A white lace collar and golden buttons down the front of it. Sometimes The King wears a purple velvet royal cap that falls to one side.

His son **Prince Edward** played by **Kieran Coppinger** is a man in his twenties. He wears black trousers and a crushed velvet grey/blue buttoned up jacket fit for a prince, with buttons that sparkle. A jacket adorned with cream rope lace set on a black background. The collar of his princely jacket trimmed with a band of purple and gold that is matched in the edge of the sleeves. The back of Prince Edwards’s jacket is made of cotton with a silver and dark blue print. Prince Edward wears black pumps on his feet. His thick brown hair has a wave in it. Edward has down syndrome and he moves with confidence.

The Kings **Footman** played by **Paul Connolly** is a calm character that attends to this father and son duo. He wears black trousers and pumps with a uniform of grey woollen gents tail coat trimmed with gold embroidery on the sleeve, collar and torso along with a grey pill box hat.

There is a **Magical Queen** who doesn’t live in the palace. The actor who plays her is called **Emer Macken.** The Magical Queen is a port in a storm with her grounded but ethereal presence. She moves elegantly, almost as if she’s floating. She has long dark grey hair with white dreadlocks. She wears a long crushed velvet dress in forest green, brown and gold that shimmers, finished off with a thick belt around her waist.

There is a **Monster** in this show played by **Patrick Becker.** He is a small middle-aged man with a strong presence. He wears grey trousers and a long sleeved black top and sports a short Mohican haircut. Patrick Becker also plays a tree.

**Sharon**, a character we find wandering the forest is played by **Jennifer Fox**. Sharon is a young woman about the same age as Edward. She’s quite a bit shorter than him and makes up for it in bravery. Sharon moves about the place nervously and determinedly. She wears a blue, green and yellow dress with a flower and leaf print running through it made from cotton, it rests about her shins. Sharon’s auburn hair is cut in a long bob.

Sharon’s **Grandmother** is played by **Mary Monaghan McHugh**. Grandmother wears blue jeans, grey ankle boots, a royal blue long sleeved top, over which she wears a crushed velvet scarf with waves of navy blue, purple and light blue running through it. Grandmothers grey hair is pinned up in a loose bun.

The **trees** in the forest are played by members of the ensemble. **Cormac Crawford** - a broad shouldered young man, **Valerie Egan** a gentle looking young woman with long auburn hair held away from her face with an off white ribbon, **Grace O’Brien** who appears to be the youngest of the cast, she has long blonde hair in a ponytail. Lastly **Michael Hayes** who appears stoic. The trees express themselves through their movement, communing with the wind and their natural environment. All but Val wear long off white linen coats that have been tie died to match the colours of the set. Although the coats are similar, each tree has an individual stamp to it – whether it be a collar, a colour or a wider sleeve. Val wears a wraparound skirt made from the same material that fixes about her waist with Velcro and a long sleeved top that fits on over her blacks and also fixes at the front with velcro. They all wear black pumps.

At the beginning of the show, many of the cast members can be seen wearing jeans and black t-shirts with a blue teapot logo upon them. Some members of the cast will be greeting you as you enter the black box, you won’t know that they are cast members at that time.

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That concludes the introductory notes for **Into the Dark Woods**. They were prepared by Mo Harte who will be describing the show. Audio description is provided by Arts & Disability Ireland with support from the Centre for Disability Law and Policy (CDLP), University of Galway and The Arts Council.

For updates about audio described and captioned performances, text **ACCESSARTS** to **51444** or head to **www.adiarts.ie** for more information.

Thank you. Go raibh maith agaibh.