

“No One Is Alone” at Mater Dei’s Into the Woods  
written by Ellie Smallwood, a senior at Tesoro High School

A stunning tribute to the late composer Stephen Sondheim, Mater Dei’s Into the Woods is a beautiful story of fairytale characters journeying into the unknown to find a missing piece of themselves, and finding each other along the way.

The Witch, played by Piper McClave, begins as a hunched old woman, snarling at her neighbors as she tells them of the curse she placed upon their family. Her bedraggled and haggard appearance matches her frighteningly powerful persona, pushing them back with the magic of her wooden staff. However, her villainous character persists after her appearance transforms into a beautiful enchantress. In addition, McClave’s vocal stamina and stability are not to be overlooked, and she maintains her excellent ability through consistent movement during the song “The Last Midnight.”

Played by Shyler Satina, Jack is a young and adventurous boy who sells his cow for magic beans that let him climb to a kingdom in the clouds. In the song “Giants in the Sky”, Satina sings with childlike curiosity and wonder about the creatures atop the clouds, and raises his vocal inflections to show his juvenile nature. After Jack’s mother is killed, Satina lowers his tone to an older, more mature voice and shifts from his spry and bubbly walk to be more grounded in his reality. Satina’s portrayal of Jack is a heart wrenching yet inspiring show of youthful innocence and hope, showing Jack’s maturity shift throughout this performance.

Stage Management, led by Brooke Carmody, sets an incredible example of Stephen Sondheim’s precision and attention to detail throughout this production. With 250 lighting cues, 12 spotlight cues, and over 100 audio cues, Carmody does not miss a beat. In addition to the difficulty of these cues, Carmody plays the voice of the Giant in the second act while still maintaining the show.

Deck crew lead Catherine Eddy works closely with Stage Management to cue the movement of this large, complex set, all without written blackouts or scene changes. The deck crew efficiently handles the moving set, including a 17-foot retractable beanstalk for Jack, giving a magical life to the scene that could only be a witch's work.

Mater Dei’s Into the Woods combines stunning technical work with emotionally connected portrayals of characters to make a beautifully creative production.