Once Upon a Forest was first presented by The Children's Theatre Company for the 2002-2003 season.

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8 Actors playing children that are crossing the forest and they have different other roles. The characters include:

Actor 1: Snow White
Actor 2: Stepmother 1, Maiden, Elf, Wolf
Actor 3: Stepmother 2, Princess, Dwarf 1
Actor 4: Dog 1, Brother 1
Actor 5: Tailor, Dwarf 2
Actor 6: Hunter, Hans my Hedgehog, Dwarf 3, Giant 2
Actor 7: Dog 2, Brother 2, Soundmaker
Actor 8: Stepmother 3, Dummling, Giant 1

Also: a seven-headed dragon, redcaps, dwarfs, huntsmen, wolves, pigs and other unidentified creatures all over the place.

Sequence of Scenes:
1. Parade
2. Leaving Home
3. Edge of the Forest
4. Little Tailor I, maiden 1
5. Three Brothers
6. Into the dark Forest
7. Snow White
8. Ashputtel Intermezzo
9. Little Tailor 11, maiden 2
10. Hans my Hedgehog
11. Other Edge of the Forest, maiden 3
12. Dragon
13. Palace
1. Parade (Prelude)

Behind a red curtain 30 centimeters above the ground we seefeed shoes walking from right to left, dancing, hopping, doubting, stopping. Music.

Fairy-tale trailers told by shoes under the curtain in this sequence:
- 8 pair of children shoes and white socks, running, stopping, turning 2 times, leaving one pair behind
- 3 times Ashputtel sweep the floor, 3 pair of wooden shoes
- Dragon feet
- Red shoes which cannot stop dancing
- Prince shoes wandering around
- 3 princess shoes with 3 golden balls
- One pair hopping, followed by the dragon feet again, a dragon-scream, he eats the child, and drops one shoe

2. Leaving Home

The group enters, before the curtain, all on socks, as children.

Actor 1       Once upon a time...
Actor 2       when wishing still helped
Actor 8       lived at the edge of a large forest, a little boy
Actor 2       and a little girl
Actor 6       and a big boy
Actor 1       and a big girl
Actor 5       and a young man
Actor 3       and a young woman and a father
Actor 6       a severe father
Actor 8       yes and a dear one
Actor 7 and a father who was ill, and a mother

Actor 1 ... she was dead ...

Actor 6 and a mother who wasn't dead

Actor 4 and three brothers, and a king and a queen

Actor 1 a step-queen

Actor 2 and a giant

Actor 5 three giants

Actor 3 no those live in the forest far away... there (points to the side)

Actor 7 in the deep dark forest

Actor 8 Thank goodness!

Actor 2 and a dragon

All Shhh

Actor 2 A dragon that eats... (she holds up the little shoe)

All Shhh!

Actor 6 When you're scared of something, don't talk about it.

Actor 2 just go after it!

All Shhh! Not yet.

Actor 1 In short: we... .

Actor 3 we live at the edge of the forest.

*They sing a short medley, the curtain goes up, you see a small house.*
Medley #1

Over the river and through the woods
Oh how the wind doth blow.
It stings the toes and bites the nose
As over the fields we go.

Off we go into the wild blue yonder.
'This train was bound for glory, this train.
This train was bound for glory, this train.
We've got the whole world in our hands.
We've got the whole world in our hands.

Over the river and through the woods
Oh how the wind doth blow.
It stings the toes and bites the nose
As over the fields we go.

Actor 3 I want to start

Actor 1 Me too...

Actor 6 Who else? No one...

Actor 6 does a counting-game. Actor 3 says all the time: I wish, I wish, I wish. Actor 1 wins. Actor 3 walks angry away, the others follow her. Actor 1 puts on her Snow White dress and starts. She has snow, blood, a hand full of black feathers and a golden key. Someone put a golden box on the floor.

Snow White Once upon a time, in midwinter, (sprinkles a handful of snow onto the stage) my mother sat spinning. A crow flew past her window and cawed. (makes the sound of a crow, black feathers) It startled her and she pricked her finger.
Aww.
Three drops of blood fell from her hand. (drops three drops of red onto the snow). "If only I had a child as red as blood, as white as snow. As black as the wing of a crow." She had me. And then she died. My hair is black. My lips are red. My skin is white. These are strange colors to wish on a child. I wonder if I am what she wanted? (holds up a small key) She gave me this key. Where there is a
key, there must be a lock. (She kneels down to open the box, but as she does 3 Stepmothers enter with 2 dogs. Snow White moves away from them. Fear and music.)

Stepmother 1 I have the perfect nose.
Stepmother 2 It is not too big.
Stepmother 1 It is not too small. It’s perfect.
Stepmother 3 Yeah, it’s perfect.
Stepmother 2 Did I mention my forehead? My forehead is the perfect distance between my hair and my eyes.
Stepmother 3 Perfect. I’m sure you’ve heard? That everyone’s face is asymmetrical? (All laugh) Not mine.
Stepmother 1 No, not mine (laugh)
Stepmother 2 No!
Stepmother 1 My cheeks are the same rosy red.
Stepmother 2 As my mouth.
Stepmother 3 My cheeks are red.
Stepmother 2 To match the mouth.
Stepmother 1 Yeah.
Stepmother 3 Perfect.
Stepmothers Isn’t mummy beautiful? Sweet Doggie, zhou, zhou?
Dog 1&2 Yes... . . Mummy is beautiful.
Stepmother 1 Isn’t Mummy the most beautiful in the entire world?
Dog 1&2: Yes... Mummy is beautiful... But...

_The 3 Stepmothers begin to transform into hags._

Stepmothers: But?!

Stepmother 1: What?!

Dog 1: Snow White.

_The Stepmothers are outraged “Snow White No, Not Her, Not Snow White, etc.” They stamp and shout._

Dog 2: Snow White is the most beautiful in the entire world.

Stepmother 1: I’ll have her heart brought to me.

Stepmother 3: I’ll eat it.

Stepmother 2: I’ll have her lungs brought to me.

Stepmother 3: I’ll eat her.

Stepmothers: She can’t be beautiful when she’s dead.

_Stepmothers start to laugh, echo all over. They move across the stage toward Snow White._

Stepmother 2: Hunter...

Actor with hunter’s hat, shakes, try to hide.

Stepmother 2: You...

Hunter: Yes.. .ma..ma..madam

Stepmother 2: Take Snow White to the forest and...
Once Upon a Forest

Makes movement and sound of cutting throat and taking out the heart. She laughs with an echo. The hunter runs off, and Stepmother 2 walks off in the other direction. Snow White is hiding somewhere in the corner. The Tailor enters.

Tailor Hello!

Snow White, frightened, runs away. A couple of actors start with garden-scissors to make the sound of the Singer.

Tailor Hello! Come in! Welcome to my shop! Here I am the tailor, here I am the King. As King, I say, Hello! Come in! What do you want? What you want, I can do. You want double seams? I give you double seams. You want satin facing, I give you satin facing. Anybody can want anything because I can do anything! What you want, I can do. It's what I do! And I do it all, with my Singer, my Singer sewing machine, the finest machine in the world. (shows how - the scissor-choir starts and stops.) Today, for instance, I was hungry, a little hungry from all the sewing. There I was, hungry, a hungry tailor, and a hungry tailor is not an effective tailor. So what do I do? I'm hungry, I eat, It's who I am, it's what I do. I take some bread, spread a little jam and Bam! Suddenly flies! (makes flies sounds) Buzzing and flying! Flying and buzzing! (makes flies sounds again) So I take my yardstick, And smack! I kill the flies! One, two, three, four, five, six, seven! Seven flies! Who knew? One, perhaps. Two at the most. But seven? Never in the history of all the tailors in history has there been a tailor with such extraordinary aim! Seven flies in one blow! Amazing, no? Hero material, that's what I am! (Reading and showing his belt) Seven in One Blow. The world should know, no? Seven in One Blow. Goodbye, shop. Goodbye Singer. World, here I come!

Hans My Hedgehog peers out between proscenium walls.

Hans Hello.

The tailor runs away.

Hans Thank you for coming behind the stove today. I have been here for (he tries to count) One, two, fourteen, eleventeen, seventy years. I'm not what they call pretty. Sorry... My Dad wanted a child.
Father (off) How I long for a child.

Hans But they got me. Hans my Hedgehog. I stay back here. Dad brings me a piece of barley every day. That's about it. Thanks Dad. . .

Father (off) I wished for a child, but I got a hump-backed rodent. He's good for nothing! I wish he would die.

Hans I get the feeling my Dad doesn't really want me around. So, I've gotten an idea. I will leave forever. I will go and live in the forest. I just need two things: a rooster, a hurdy gurdy... (some-one brings in the hurdy gurdy Hans sings: you are my sunshine.) and maybe (he tries to count) One, two, eleven, um.. One, two, five... One, two... two pigs. (someone else brings in the pigs) Then I'll straighten my quills and be on my way. Don't worry, Dad! Sorry...

Hans moves across the stage to join the others. Brother 1 passes Hans.

Brother 1 (to Hans) Hey, little fellow! (Brother 1 reaches out to pat Hans on the head and gets pricked by Hans' quills) Aaaahhh!!

Hans Sorry.

Brother 1 Get out of my way, you spindle-nosed spine ball. I am on a very important mission. I have to save my father. He's dying. If I find the cure, he'll give me everything - all for me alone, and I'll be set. (Brother 2 enters)

Brother 2 Hello, Brother! Are you ready? We're off!

Brother 1 We?

Dummling (off stage) Brothers . . .?

Both (To Dummling, still offstage) It's Dummling... ugh!

Dummling (off stage) Wait for me

Both Stay back! Farther! Ten or twelve feet!
Brother 1  Look! Ants!

Brother 2  Tons of ants!

Both  (To Dummling who wants to enter) Stay Back!

Brother 2  Watch this. (He wants to step on the ants.)

Dummling  (Running half-way onstage) Don’t!!

Both  Go! Get back there and stay there. (Dummling goes) Back more. Ten or twelve feet. Go! Go! Go!

Brother 2  What’s the harm? They’re just ants. Watch this... (He starts to spit on the ants.)

Dummling  (Running on and throwing himself over the ants to catch the spit) No! Don’t!

Brother 2  What are you doing, Dumbkopff? Eeww. Now you’ve got spit on your hands!

Dummling  (On the ground with the ants.) Are you okay, little ants? Don’t worry, they do that to me all the time. They’re just trying to prepare you for life.

Brother 1  They’re just ants, Dumb-a-Lum-Dumb, stupid and useless like you.

Dummling  Dear, dear, dear ants... . Can I ask you something?

Brother 1  Poor little Dummling, lost his little, little brains. Father is dying, go home. Go, go, go...

Dummling  No!

Brother 1  Oh?

Dummling  I want to save father. He is the only father I have, and I don’t want him to die. Please little ants help me. My brothers say that I am a good for nothing dunce, but my dad says...
Father  
(Off stage) Dummling, you may not be clever, but you are kind.

Dummling  
Thanks, Dad! I love you! (Father off stage coughing.) He sounds bad. Please little ants, help me. (He listen to the ants.)

Brother 1  
(Starts laughing) You stay with your little friends, good-for-nothing-child.

Dummling  
...The water of life.

Brother 1  
The water of life, what?

Dummling  
The ants say: the only thing that can save father is the water of life.

Brother 1  
The water of life.

Dummling  
What's that? (Listens) Oh... it's magical water. Better than any doctor. Better than any cure, and when you drink this water you will live forever.

Brother 1  
Okay. Where is it?

Dummling  
(listens to the ants) Somewhere... 

Brother 1  
Somewhere... 

Dummling  
... into the forest..

Brother 2  
Okay, let's go.

Brother 1  
What do you mean, let's go? I'm the only one going. I'm the oldest. It's my job to save Father. You keep an eye on Dummling.

Brother 2  
Ahhh! I, don't want to stay with him; let me come with you.

Brother I  
No way.

Brother 1 joins the others. Brother 2 tries to follow him. Brother I pushes him down.
Once Upon a Forest

Brother 1  Stay!

_Dumpling helps Brother 2 to stand up._

Brother 2  Don’t touch me, you Dumb Dope!

_Brother 2 pushes Dumpling down, he falls. Music._

_Princess-enters with ball, singing to it, the brothers watch._

Princess  You are my sunshine, my only sunshine
You make me happy
When skies are grey...

   Good morning, dear ball. It’s a beautiful day. (calling out) Does anyone want to play? Anyone?

_She looks at the brothers, brother 1 and 2 want to go Dumpling wants to play but is pulled back by his brothers, they leave._

Princess  Well, ball, I guess it’s just you and me again. Daddy is busy ruling. Mommy is busy arranging. Everyone else is busy with something they find better than playing with a princess. Even a princess with the most beautiful, breathtaking, brilliant ball ever brought into being. (She makes the ball bow. Then bows back) You are quite welcome, kind sir. Still. As wonderful as you are, ball, it would be nice to have someone to talk to. Someone who, when I rolled you, ball, would roll you back. I would say, "Look lively, friend! Here comes ball!" (Caught up in the image she rolls the ball, hard)

All  Oh no!

Princess  Come back, ball! That’s the forest! The we-are-never-ever-I-promised-my-parents-supposed-to-go-in-there forest! It’s dangerous out there, but I can’t let my poor ball stay out all alone. (calling out) I’m going into the forest! (no answer) Don’t try to stop me! (no answer) Fine. When I am eaten by a wild beast or starve to death, then they will miss me. Just one step... into the deep, dark forest.
Princess (Singing) You are my sunshine, my only sunshine
You make me happy when skies are grey
You'll never know, dear, how much I love you
Please don’t take my sunshine away.

3. Edge of the Forest

You see the house going away and you see the forest 1/3 way on stage. The golden ball is going in first and then the group as children enters the forest. They sing The Leaving Home Medley.

Leaving Home Medley

All

Over the river and through the woods
Oh how the wind doth blow.

These boots are made for walking.
And that’s just what they’ll do.
One of these days these boots are gonna ...

Climb every mountain
Off we go into the wild blue yonder

Follow your dreams.
This train is bound for glory, this train.
This train is bound for glory, this train.

On the road again.
Just can’t wait to get on the road again.

Rolling, rolling, rolling
Keep those doggies rolling.
Rawhide.

We’ve got the whole world in our hands.
We’ve got the whole world in our hands.

Hey! Walk like an Egyptian!

Happy trails to you.
Until we meet again.
All (Medley cont.) These boots are made for walking.
And that's just what they'll do.
One of these days these boots are gonna walk, walk, walk...

*The characters enter one by one. Snow White enters followed by 3 huntsmen.*

Snow White I have to go into the forest because my father married my stepmother.

Huntsmen Go! Run! Get lost!
Go! Run! Get hide!
Go! Now!

*Snow White enters the forest. Huntsmen kill an animal and take its heart and lungs. They exit the woods, passing... Hans my Hedgehog entering playing hurdy gurdy.*

Hans If I can make it on my own my father will be proud of me. Hope to see you again Dad. Sorry, don't worry and thanks. *(sings)* You are my sunshine...

*A group of Redcaps enter greedily eating fruits or whatever pass through.*

Brother 1 enters.

Brother 1 When I find the water of life father will give me everything... All for me, alone. I'll just let my feet do the walking.

*Brother 2 is sneaking behind him. Dummling wants to take the hand of Brother 2: he pushes him back.*

4. Little Tailor 1, maiden 1

*Group enters with the Tailor. Group goes back and leave Tailor behind, alone. Suspenseful sounds made by one actor.*

Tailor Hello, hello. Where are you? I'm not scared. I'm Seven in one Blow, you know. The world should know, no? Seven in One Blow. Amazing, no. Seven in one Blow.
A giant drops three big candies. Big sound. He walks over to it and looks way, way, way up.

Giant voice is loud and low.

Tailor  Hello! You’re very tall. I didn’t bring my yardstick but...

Giant  (cutting him off.) You are now my servant.

Tailor  Perhaps. For a small fee, I do what ever...

Giant  (cutting him off) No fee. You work. Or you die. Come closer (the tailor does) Closer. Closer. I’m thirsty. Fetch me a pitcher of water.

Tailor  A giant fellow like yourself? A whole river is more like it. (Tailor turns to run away.)

Giant  Wait! I’m not finished. I am also hungry. Kill me two pigs.

Tailor  Is that all? Two pigs? That’s not even an appetizer for a man of your size. I’ll fetch you forty wild boars. (Tailor turns to run away.)

Giant  There’s more! I’ll need a dozen logs to cook them on.

Tailor  For forty wild boars you’ll need more than that. I’ll tear down that entire stand of trees and build you a fire.

Giant  You, Pipsqueak? (A giant laugh that shakes the whole stage.) What makes you think you have the strength?

Tailor  I’m Seven in One Blow!

Giant  Seven? Seven what?

Tailor  Seven fellows as demanding as you.

Giant  I want to see you. Climb this tree.

Tailor  Just a moment. To meet, face to face, such a significant man as yourself, I must prepare! Shine my shoes! Straighten my jacket! (He bends down and picks a handful of grass and puts it inside his jacket.) Shhh! A few blades of grass, to tickle the nostrils of a giant!
Once Upon a Forest

Tailor (He climbs the tree) Alright, my good man! Up we go! Look at me, a tailor who can fly! Flying! Another one of my many talents. (The tree is lifted into the fly space???) Such a nose you have! Like the rock of Gibraltar! A little tickle, right here, and... .

The giant begins to sneeze. A big noise. Falling leaves all over. The lights change. The giant drops the tree and the Tailor scrambles down.

Tailor Back to earth again! Again, I am the King of the Blows, no? First the flies, now the giant’s nose! Okay, it's a bad pun, but it's who I am, it’s what I do.

Giant Where are you, filthy speck?

Tailor You can't see me? You don't need a tailor, you need an optometrist! A pair of spectacles would give you new perspective... .

Giant Enough! You’d better run for your life!

Tailor Running for my life, another of my many talents! Goodbye!

The Giant screams as the Tailor runs off. Maiden enters.

Maiden (sung) The long and winding road. (spoken) Save me! Please! Hello?! (sung) Listen. (offstage voices sing: "ooo ooo ooo") (spoken) Anybody?! I don't want to die! (sung) Won't you listen to my story? (offstage voices: "ooo ooo ooo") (spoken) Why me? All alone? Alone in this deep, dark forest. Why? Save me! Please! Anyone...

Smoke, feet and sound of the dragon, the children run through the woods.

5. Three Brothers

Dwarves 1, 2, and 3 with flippers and a lot of snow on their back enter the woods together with an elf. Small change of trees. A stump on stage that can transform into a chair. Brother 1 walks on.

Dwarf 1 Hello Friend. Where have you come from and where are you going?
Brother 1  None of your business.

Dwarf 1  I thought you looked tired.

Brother 1  I'm in a hurry.

Dwarf 1  Rest a moment on this trunk.

Brother 1  Alright. Just a minute.

*He sits. The dwarf transforms the rock into a chair.*

Dwarf 1  A rock is not as good as a chair for resting.

Brother 1  You're right about that.

Dwarf 1  Would you mind taking the snow of my back?

Brother 1  My hands are freezing. Do it yourself.

Dwarf 1  Yes yes. *(Brother 1 pulls food out of his knapsack and eats greedily.)* Mmmm. Mmmm. What do you have there? Wouldn't you like to share? Share a little with a dwarf who gave you a chair?

Brother 1  Hey. No way. It's mine. You're old enough to get your own.

Dwarf 1  Yes yes.

Brother 1  I'm on my way to find the water of life for my father who is dying. Do you know where to find it?

Dwarf 1  No.

Brother 1  Then get out of my way. I'm leaving.

Dwarf 1  Snow you wouldn't clear. Food you wouldn't share. For your father do you truly care? You may think you're going, but you're staying right here.
The dwarf turns Brother 1 to stone. Snow is falling on his head. He is transforming the chair into a rock. Brother 2 walks on.

Dwarf 2 Hello Friend. Where are you coming from and where are you going?

Brother 2 None of your business.

Dwarf 2 I thought you looked tired.

Brother 2 I'm in a hurry.

Dwarf 2 Rest a moment on this trunk.

Brother 2 Alright. Just a minute. (Dwarf transforms it into a chair.)

Dwarf 2 A rock is not as good as a chair for resting.

Brother 2 You're right about that.

Dwarf 2 Would you mind taking the snow of my back?

Brother 2 My hands are freezing. Do it yourself.

Dwarf 2 Yes yes.

Brother 2 pulls food out of his knapsack and eats greedily.

Dwarf 2 Mmmmm. Mmmmmm. What do you have there? Wouldn't you like to share? Share a little with a dwarf who gave you a chair?

Brother 2 No way. It's mine. You're old enough to get your own.

Dwarf 2 Yes yes.

Brother 2 My father is dying. I'm trying to beat my brother to the cure. You know anything about it?

Dwarf 2 No.
Brother 2
Then get out of my way. I'm leaving.

Dwarf 2
Snow you wouldn't clear. Food you wouldn't share. For your father do you truly care? You may think you're going, but you're staying here.

_Dwarf 2 turns Brother 2 into stone, snow is falling on his head. Dummling enters._

Dwarf 3
Hello Friend. Where have you come from and where are you going?

Dummling
I'm looking for my brothers. And trying to save my father.

Dwarf 3
Rest a little moment on this trunk.

Dummling
Alright. Just a minute.

_The Dwarf turns the rock into a chair._

Dummling
A trunk is not as good as a chair for resting.

Dwarf 3
You're right about that. Would you mind taking the snow of my back?

Dummling
Of course I don't mind! (He starts to clear it.) There sure is a lot of snow on your back, poor old man. Hey look! It's the little ants! They are carrying away the snow.

_Disco-ball, dream-music, all 3 dwarfs take off the coat with snow._

Dummling
Thank you very much little ants. (Dummling pulls food out of his knapsack.)

Dwarf 3
Mmmm. Mmmm. What do you have there? Wouldn't you like to share? Share a little with a dwarf who gave you a chair?

Dummling
Of course, you can have it all.

Dwarf 3
Your Father is dying. You are on your way to the water of life?
Dummling  How do you know?

Dwarf 3  I know.

Dummling  I have to save my father; he is the only father I have, you know. I'm just a boy, I still need him. But I don't know if I'll ever find the water. I'm stupid and useless, that's what my brothers say.

Dwarf 3  Very well. Snow you cleared. Bread you shared. For your father you truly care. In light of these kindness, Friend, Your life is spared. *(He hands a sword to Dummling.)*

Dummling  A sword! I've never had a sword.

Dwarf 3  Look at the blade of this sword. In the reflection of your eye, you will see a map. Follow the map and you'll find The water of life.

Dummling  *(Getting up and hugging the Dwarfs)* Thank you very, very much. Nice to meet you! Hope to see you again. Happy Birthday and A Merry Christmas. Thanks again and so long farewell and... *(sings)* Somewhere, over de rainbow... we'll meet again don't know when or... One day I'll fly away... *

*Dwarf 3 puts him in the right direction. He staggers off with the sword. He touches the brothers with the sword one by one, they come to life.*

Brother 1  Hey Dummling, wait for me.

Brother 2  Hey, wait for me.

Brother 1  Stay back, you. Ten or twelve feet! Go, go, go... .

6. Into the dark Forest

*Expectation-medley sung by the children. The trees are moving.*

Expectation Medley

All  Over the river and through the woods
     Oh how the wind doth blow.
(Medley cont.) Off we go into the wild blue yonder

Good, good, good, good vibrations.

I see skies of blue and clouds of white
The bright blessed day
The dark sacred night
And I think to myself what a wonderful world.

I'm picking up good vibrations.

Something's coming
I don't know ... what it is,
But it is ... gonna be great.

Oh happy day.
Oh happy day.

It's only just out of reach ...
down the block ... on the beach ... under a tree

Oh what a beautiful morning.

This train is bound for glory, this train.
This train is bound for glory, this train.

Something's coming
I don't know ... what it is,
But it is ... gonna be great.
(Oh happy day.)
Could be ... who knows
(Oh happy day.)

There's something to ... any day
I will know ... right away ... soon as it shows.
I got the feeling there's a miracle due

Somewhere over the rainbow
(Medley cont.) Got to be true
Coming to me.

Here comes the sun
Here comes the sun
And I said, It’s alright ...

Oh happy day. Oh happy day ...

Something’s coming. I don’t know ... what it is ...

I’m picking up good vibrations.

Bright blessed days, the darkness of night,
And I think to myself. ..