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Tours, Fairy Tales and Mazes

Los Angeles gets creative for Halloween

By Bridgette M. Redman

Bluebeard's Castle

Halloween marks the day that the medieval musical thriller “Bluebeard’s Castle” makes its American premiere at the Odyssey. It will run until Nov. 23 and is performed in English.

Playwright and director Sofia Streisand is bringing the intimate musical based on the French folktale to Los Angeles after a successful run in Russia, Serbia, Montenegro and France.

“It’s a very old fairy tale that has a lot of symbolism in it,” Streisand said. “It has a lot of allegorical elements that are profound and speak something true about human nature that has been true for millennia. These are very old stories that were passed from generation to generation when people were basically illiterate. These stories survived and evolved because they mattered.”

Bluebeard’s Castle is a retelling of the myth of an evil man who has murdered his first seven wives and has just married the eighth. When he has to travel, he gives her keys to every room in the mansion but warns her not to open one.

“I was looking for material for a story that would be an opportunity for me to talk about violence,” Streisand said “I try to work with stories that are urgent to me, that I can relate to, that touch me on a personal level. Bluebeard is a good opportunity to explore all aspects of violence.”

Streisand said she was surprised to learn that people in Los Angeles were unfamiliar

with the story of Bluebeard, a fairy tale that is well-known in Europe. She subverted aspects of the traditional tale to tell a story that was filled with surprises and focuses on the psychological side of the story.

“In this interpretation, there are deep feelings between the husband and the wife,” Streisand said. “It’s an interesting psychological phenomenon when people go from passion and love for each other to abuse and violence. Why does that happen? What mechanisms work for that paradox?”

Another theme is the perception and understanding of women’s freedom and their sense of equality. Streisand said she didn’t write the musical for an American audience, but it ended up addressing urgent topics being discussed in the United States.

“That’s how theater works,” Streisand said. “It evolves depending on the environment where it’s being formed.”

While the show is not for young kids, Streisand believes it will appeal to people from high school and older. It’s an opportunity, she said, for that demographic to fall in love with theater and to realize it is as much for their generation as other media.



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“Bluebeard’s Castle” opened in St. Petersburg, Russia and is now making its American debut at the Odyssey.

(Natalia Ivanova/Submitted)