

# Maguire's fairy tale

By Jenna Scherer / Theater Review

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**M**aking something new from something old - that's what Gregory Maguire is all about. He's the author of "Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West," "Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister" and many other novels - all remixes of classic fairy tales and myths.

Logically, Boston's Company One sought out Maguire for "GRIMM," the troupe's fairy-tale-steeped world premiere. The show is a combination of seven new short plays based on Grimm's fairy tales, updated and Boston-ified, each penned by a different writer.

We spoke with Maguire, who was at his home outside of Boston, about his contribution: "The Seven Stage a Comeback," a take on "The Seven Dwarfs."

*Is this your first time writing for the stage?*

This is the first time since I was 8 years old. I used to put on Sunday night entertainment with my six brothers and sisters. I would spend the afternoon writing the play, and we'd perform the show after dinner.

*Were the plays you were writing back then also based on fairy tales?*

They were usually based on real-life disasters. Once we did a play about the San Francisco earthquake. We piled up every sofa cushion in the house so it could be skyscrapers tumbling, and used ketchup lavishly for blood on my infant baby brother.

*That's pretty intense subject matter for kids.*

Well, so is Grimm. There's a lot of heartache and sorrow and abandonment in the fairy tales. I think that's part of what calls us back to them over and over, because we know those things also exist in the real world.

*How did you become involved with Company One?*

I got an e-mail asking, because of my interest in the strength of children's stories. ... I had so much fun with the theater given the success of "Wicked" that I thought, "Well, I've been wanting to do something like this for a long time."

*What drew you to "Snow White"?*



COOKIE CRUMBLES: Mason Sand and Nicole Prefontaine star in 'GRIMM.'

The story is really interesting from a psychological standpoint. Why is Snow White, a beautiful and vulnerable young child, taken into the house of seven unmarried men? You couldn't think of a place where she would be less at ease. But the fact of them being dwarves makes them available to be cooperative without being dangerous. They're like chipmunks or something. So what did the dwarves think when they realized they had lavished all this love and protection on their daughter, only to have her run off with the first prince to give her a good kiss?

*A lot of your work is about adapting fairy tales for adults. Why do you think we're so drawn to them?*

We get fairy tales at a very rich time in our psychic and moral development, when we have not completely ruled out the presence of magical agency in the world. For some people that means the eye of God caring for every sparrow that falls, etc. For children, it's the animus in stuffed animals, where they don't really believe that they're not real because they feel so real. Most people settle on the side of rationality by the time they're halfway through high school, but we carry the lingering traces of belief in the magic universe. Hearing them as adults is like hearing some old person croon to us a lullaby we might have heard when we were young. They console us, but also remind us how mysterious the world seemed to us as children.

"GRIMM," presented by Company One at the BCA Calderwood Pavilion, Through Aug. 14. Tickets: \$15-\$38; call 617-933-8600.