



Storybook Theatres' current production of *The Ugly Duckling* opens on October 12 and runs every Saturday at 1 p.m. until Jan. 11, 2025.



# Theatre West Celebrating 40 years with Storybook

Written by Dina Morrone  
Photography by Garry Kluger



Storybook Theatre is an absolute gem of interactive children's theatre in Los Angeles and is now in its 40th year of entertaining children and adults.

Lloyd and Barbara Schwartz are this project's brains, heart, and soul. After the birth of their first son, Andrew, Lloyd, and Barbara noticed a shortage of quality children's theatre in the Los Angeles area and decided to do something about it. Lloyd wrote the book, music, and lyrics and directed their first children's musical, *Little Red Riding*

*Hood*. They rented the park auditorium near their house, and the play sold out immediately. It was such a success that legendary Theatre West ([www.theatrewest.org](http://www.theatrewest.org)) asked them to bring their play to the company. According to Actors Equity Association, Storybook Theatre is one of the highest-impact children's theatres in the US.

On September 29th, 2024, Theatre West celebrated Barbara and Lloyd's contribution with a huge surprise party. They received honors from the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and LA City Councilmember's office (Nithya Raman) for their 40 years of producing award-winning Children's Theatre in Los Angeles.

Storybook Theatre's unique participatory interactive musicals have delighted over half a million children in the Los Angeles area.

**Book by Lloyd J. Schwartz.**  
**Music and lyrics by Adryan Russ.**  
**Produced and directed by Barbara Mallory**  
**Schwartz for Storybook Theatre.**  
**The cast includes Kathy Garrick, Elise Walters, Briana Burnside, and Paul Denniston.**  
**Understudies: Kerry Melachouris, Jennifer Whitman, Kelsey Johnson, Hasan Crawford.**  
**Stage managers: David P. Johnson, Leesa Freed.**

They perform on Saturdays and have special field trips to schools and various charities.

The reviews over the years have been outstanding. *The Los Angeles Times* said: "Storybook Theatre's appeal over all these years is its unscary, playful

theatrical setting and a good-natured invitation for young children to become part of a familiar story. Nobody does it better!"

*L.A. Parent Magazine* declared Storybook Theatre "The Best Children's Theatre in the city."

*Los Angeles Magazine* said, "Storybook Theatre is one of the 200 reasons not to leave Los Angeles." Barbara and Lloyd pride them-

selves on the fact that their plays are nonviolent and contain messages that make parents happy to accompany their children to the theater. Each of their eighteen original musical productions retells a famous story or a theme that provides immediate familiarity for their young audiences.

Storybook Theatre's catalog of plays includes *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, *Aladdin*, *Jack and The Beanstalk*, and *The Pied Piper*, to name a few.

One of the aspects of Storybook Theatre plays is their appeal to the audience's imagination. They are presented with colorful costumes, but the sets are minimal. The songs are sung to professional tracks, and each play has only four or five performers and travels easily. Each show takes into account the attention span of the audience and runs fifty minutes to an hour with an intermission. Intermission is also a special part of the show's experience because children are given juice boxes and cookies. After the show, they can meet the play's colorful characters and take pictures with them.

The shows are just as much fun for adults. Watching the children interact and engage with the characters on stage, participating from the audience by answering questions, or just seeing the joy and excitement on their faces can melt your heart and put a smile on your face.

**About Theatre West:**  
Established in 1962, Theatre West is celebrating its 62nd year as the oldest continually running professional theatre company in Los Angeles. It is a membership collective of actors, playwrights, directors, and technicians. Theatre West's alumni members include Ray Bradbury, Beau Bridges, Richard Dreyfuss, Sally Field, Betty Garrett, Martin Landau, Lee Meriwether, Jack Nicholson, Carroll O'Connor, Sherwood Schwartz, Joyce Van Patten, and Paul Winfield. Theatre West has produced more than 300 plays and musicals. Of these plays, nearly 70% are original works developed in its workshops, and many have led to Broadway, regional tours, and feature films, including *A Bronx Tale* by Chazz Palminteri; *A Very Brady Musical* by Lloyd Schwartz and Hope Juber; *Our Man in Santiago* by Mark Wilding that transferred to Off-Broadway in the Fall of 2022; our co-production of *Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground* that went to Broadway in 2023, and in 2025 David Johnson's musical *Sally Spectre* will also open off-Broadway.  
[www.theatrewest.org](http://www.theatrewest.org)

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\*For tickets or bookings for Schools or Charities, call (818) 761 2203 [www.theatrewest.org](http://www.theatrewest.org)