The Westport Country Playhouse Sunday hosted a reunion of three members of the original Broadway cast of the 1987 Tony Award-winning play, “Into the Woods,” the Stephen Sondheim musical that is the Playhouse’s 2012 season opener.

Taking part in Sunday’s discussion were (l-r) David Kennedy, Playhouse associate artistic director, Danielle Ferland, Joanna Gleason and Chiz Zien. (CLICK TO ENLARGE) Dave Matlow for WestportNow.com

David Kennedy, Playhouse associate artistic director, facilitated the post-matinee performance reunion with an interview session with the three actors —Danielle Ferland, who originated the role of Little Red Riding Hood in 1987 and currently appears in the Playhouse production as the Baker’s Wife, Joanna Gleason, who won a Tony Award for originating the role of the Baker’s Wife, and Chip Zien, the original Baker.

All spoke of their individual career changing experience of working with Sondheim. Gleason called Sondheim “a genius—once you do a Sondheim show you have a stamp in your career passport.”

Zien spoke tongue-in-cheek about the challenges of having been in a Sondheim play. “If you’ve done Sondheim, the expectations of you are so much higher in any future acting roles,” she said.
As an example Zien said, “in rehearsals for other shows it’s not uncommon for the director to say, ‘I know you do this better. You already performed for Sondheim.’”

Ferland, who was only 16 when she played Little Red Riding Hood and plays the Baker’s Wife in the current Playhouse production, said she was in awe in the presence of Sondheim.

Eric Liberman, who plays the role of the Baker in the Playhouse’s current production, addressed Zien: “You’ve been my role model and inspiration.”

Both played the same role in “Into the Woods”—25 years apart.

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