

The CATS' meow ♦ lives, but Broadway is still fit for a (Dancing) Queen.

by Erin McCarty
staff writer

When Andrew Lloyd Webber first picked up T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* as an adult, he had no inkling of what degree of success he would have by coupling his musical compositions with Eliot's poems. However, he took a gamble, and selecting fourteen of Eliot's poems as a base, this man who virtually invented the rock opera genre went on to test the limits once more with CATS, a show with an entirely feline cast of characters.

The unconventional musical went on to break the record set by A Chorus Line for the longest-running musical on Broadway, and on September 10th, it graced the stage for the final time in its 18-year Broadway run.

The story of the band of "jellie cats," the desire of the outcast glamour queen Grizabella to rejoin the tribe, and the quest of their leader, Old Deuteronomy, to find a suitable feline to make the exalted journey to Heaven has struck a chord with audiences worldwide, bringing in more than two billion dollars in ticket sales.

Enhanced by careful costuming and choreography that allowed the human actors to take on a very feline appearance, the show won seven Tony Awards and was performed 7,484 times on Broadway.

CATS continues to play in



FILE PHOTO

London's West End Theater, and various playhouses around the world still bring the crowds in with their more small-scale productions. Grizabella's show-stopping "Memory" has been

recorded by over 160 artists, not to mention its presence in countless music boxes.

CATS has certainly not seen the last of its nine lives, but if you journey to Broadway hoping to find it, you will have to satisfy yourself with memories.

Keep your eyes open, however, for a promising new musical following in its wake. A lighthearted romp through the music of one of the hottest musical groups of the seventies, Mamma Mia is slated to hit Broadway in October of next year. Already finding acclaim in London and Toronto, the play is sculpted around twenty-two songs from ABBA, the Swedish band that took the world by storm from 1972-1982.

Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson, the two B's of the group, had a great deal to do with this new production. Aware of the desire of fans for an ABBA reunion in any form, the songwriting friends wanted to find a way to incorporate their music into an

unrelated storyline. In order to accomplish this feat, they sought the aid of Catherine Johnson, a British playwright.

The story she came up with is set on a fictional Greek island and concerns a woman named Donna and her twenty-year-old daughter, Sophia, who, on the eve of her wedding, becomes determined to have her father walk her down the aisle. The problem? She doesn't know who he is. There are three men who could be Sophia's father, and in order to complete the vision of her dream wedding, Sophia must decide in just one day which one is the genuine article.

Ulvaeus and Andersson have attributed much of ABBA's staying power to the fact that they never reunited. This fun little musical serves to ease the hunger of ABBA fans for the songs they love without requiring the band members themselves to work together again. Will it be able to match the fan appeal of Webber's record-breaking rock opera? Probably not. But for the legions of ABBA fans who will venture to New York to see it, this show just may be the cat's meow.

Sic' Em FIDO

by Deanna Symoski



The Rules: a girls' guide to watching movies

Okay, so I grew up on Disney fairytales the way most girls did. I was frightened by the evil witch, adored the beautiful princess and swooned for the heroic prince, who always swept in at the nick of time. He saved the day and got the girl—the end.

But I'm not six anymore, and I don't make a habit of watching Disney flicks. I do watch movies, however, and I realized a long time ago that the same formulaic love stories abound. In fact, it may be these shameless exploitations of love that have warped the average girl's expectations. Movies have always had the unique ability to transport us into worlds we couldn't even imagine. We see ourselves in the characters and our lives in their words. So it follows that love on the Silver Screen should be just as probable in real life—after all, wasn't that character based on me?

Delusions like this are easy to fall into, I know. I do it every time I watch *When Harry Met Sally*. My New Years were never that romantic and why not? I have friends too, and none of them ever divulged their undying love for me a few strokes before midnight. But that's the rub. These are just movies, fantastical escapes from a world that may never be as good as the ones we pay to see. With that in mind, I am offering a few tips for better movie watching.

Rule #1: You can never turn the Bruce Willis of *Die Hard* into the Bruce Willis of *The Story of Us*. Try as you might, your father will never approve of Johnny Castle sweeping away his "baby." And Maverick could never really be grounded. These guys are movie bad boys, and their gritty appeal comes from our inherent need to tame them. But in real life, these guys are the ones that call you from prison and ask you to bail them out. And while even that might be kind of exciting for awhile, sooner or later you will outgrow the drama. You will never be able to change them, so don't waste your time trying. Instead, wear his leather jacket and ride his Harley (or whatever form of bad-ass transportation he chooses), then go home and call your accountant boyfriend.

Rule #2: Speaking of *Die Hard*, imminent danger does not equate true love. So the next time you catch yourself on a speeding bus or dodging flying cows in tornado alley, please do not expect to meet Prince Charming. That is the movie version of your life. The real version usually goes something like this: faucet breaks. Sweaty fat man with plumbers' crack answers call. Fixes faucet. Charges you way too much but offers to waive the fee for a date at Arby's. And also remember, they offer self-defense courses for a reason—because you know you'll be left to defend yourself should you suddenly be surrounded by terrorists and/or members of your local drug cartel.

Rule #3: Your best friend (of the opposite sex) will probably fall for you at one time or another, but yes, the sex will get in the way. Since I could only think of one movie that was so close to real life it caused delusions of grandeur, I decided to throw in some small screen examples to illustrate my point. You are not Monica, he is not Chandler. Your best friend is not Dawson, and Harry and Sally were a fluke. The idea of your best friend becoming your soul mate is a nice one. However, once you cross that line, you will spend more time defining the relationship than enjoying it. You can love your friends, just don't love your friends.

Rule #4: ILM (Industrial Light and Magic) does not work for you. Special effects make special things happen, like when Patrick Swayze returned from the dead to fight off his evil nemesis. Special effects also enabled Robin Williams to explore the netherworld to save his wife from eternal damnation. And while those are extravagant ways of showing affection, please do not expect such things of your current mate. If he could, I am sure he would come back from the dead for you. So don't start the argument, "If I was trapped in Hell, would you come save me?" YES, he would.

Rule #5: Doomed romances are not necessarily the most productive way to spend your day. Okay, I know that this time it really is going to work, but let's look at the evidence. A romance in 1912—good. A romance on a luxury cruise liner in 1912—bad. A love affair between a photographer and a middle-aged Midwestern housewife—good. Interracial romance—good. Interracial romance with musical knife fights and choreographed gang rumbles—bad. In other words, if the situation is not conducive to love, rethink your situation.

Rule #6: Ignore rules one through five. I like watching these movies, and I do it over and over again. No, I'm not a glutton for punishment—I'm optimistic. I like that the 84 failed relations I've had haven't ruined me. And I like that if I don't have much faith in the current state of things, I can go rent some sappy tear-jerker and get it back. I'm not complaining about these movies. They serve their purpose well, but don't take notes.

These films are to be enjoyed, cherished even. They are the idealistic evidence that good things happen and we need them to remind us of that when nothing is going right. But they are not how-to videos. They are just movies, and that's all.

The best stuff is the real stuff—the night he brought you flowers for no reason, the first time you kissed. While movies may be the stuff that dreams are made of, dreams only come true in the waking light of day. So don't ruin the real thing by waiting for the fantasy. Honestly, ladies, the real stuff is always better...because it's yours.

Elton disappears

Elton John vanished from a Lisbon concert September 13. Before performing for 1500 fans, including political leaders and corporate presidents, Elton peeked out at the crowd and saw the seats weren't completely full. He then left as the rest of the sold-out crowd filed in. He has offered no explanation, but heads of the venue plan to sue.

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 10 Greatest Hits

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Stairway to Heaven (1971) | 6. Yesterday (1965) |
| 2. (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction (1965) | 7. Imagine (1971) |
| 3. Layla (1971) | 8. Johnny B. Goode (1958) |
| 4. Light My Fire (1967) | 9. My Generation (1966) |
| 5. Purple Haze (1967) | 10. Like A Rolling Stone (1965) |
- as voted on by bar patrons and web surfers around the world from a list of 30 songs spanning 50 years

Wrestling goes country

Ending a long time deal with the USA Network, the WWF switches to The Nashville Network (TNN) September 25 for Monday Night RAW. Following the changes, Sunday's HEAT will now air on MTV. Smackdown will stay on the UPN.

Faith and Tim

Cleveland, OH
August 29, 2000

Being the country bumpkin I am, I attended the Faith Hill/Tim McGraw "Soul 2 Soul" tour. Although parking in Cleveland is about as fun as parking at Behrend, the rest of the experience was wonderful. Hill looked like an out-of-place hippie, wearing bangles and a Hendrix shirt, but sang with more power and soul than I ever expected. The only word I can truly use is "amazing."

After a series of Bud Light commercials (the sponsor) featuring Tim McGraw's butt, McGraw finally appeared in his trademark skintight black jeans. His performance was also exceptional and incredibly upbeat. He sang the famous ones, such as "Don't Take the Girl" along with a few little-known ones I've yet to hear on the radio.

Of course, at the end, the two lovebirds sang duets such as "It's Your Love" and "Let's Make Love." After ending with twenty minutes of "You Can Go Your Own Way," I left with a feeling of a \$34 well spent.

by Paige Miles

Dave Matthews

Orchard Park, NY
July 21, 2000

"Play something I know!" shouts my friend, unwittingly stating the theme of the night. While *any* Dave Matthews show is a good Dave Matthews show, this one left a little lacking. This episode in the 2000 World Tour, kicking off optimistically with a vibrant "Ants Marching" turned out to be more a sampling of the group's new album due out December 12. At times, the crowd seemed disheartened as they anticipated a cut they could sing along with only to be met with one they never heard. And by the end of the show, as the thousands of bodies in Ralph Wilson Stadium anticipated "Crash" for the finale, they met more disillusionment because "Crash" never came.

The show was not a total bust, however. A 20-minute rendition of "Lie In Our Graves" certainly helped make amends, as did passionate versions of "Grace Is Gone" and "Long Black Veil." Still with all the buzz about the July 3rd Pittsburgh show (a friend reported that they got fireworks), DMB was a little less than satisfying this time around.

by Deanna Symoski

No Doubt Pittsburgh, PA, June 29, 2000

Gwen Stefani may claim that all she wants is a "Simple Kind of Life", but by listening to her in concert you would think that she was born to rock out. After their hugely popular Tragic Kingdom tour, No Doubt was back in Pittsburgh this summer for their Return of Saturn tour. To any concert-goer that had attended both events, the changes in the band's sound were evident.

A five year lapse between albums provided the time that the band needed to grow both personally and musically. While Gwen took another gamble with her tremendously personal lyrics, the band took a chance by ditching a dozen or so extra instruments players they had on the first tour.

Despite straying slightly from their ska-reggae beat, and losing the extra

horn players, the band tore it up on stage, performing most of the best songs off of their two most current albums. Saving everyone's favorite, "Spiderwebs," for the last-last encore song, the band was prepared to leave Pittsburgh calling the show a hit...until some jerk chucked a bottle onto stage and bashed Gwen in her cheek, marring her just one day before a photo shoot. Here we go Steelers...

Even though the carnage was great, and Gwen personally thanked the crowd for "the worst experience" she has ever had on stage, No Doubt proved that they are a band that can make it twice as nice the second time around. Providing they ever come back to Pittsburgh after the barbaric events that took place that night, try not to miss them on the next tour!

by Katie Galley

New Releases

Movies

Almost Famous

Woman on Top

*Urban Legends:
Final Cut*
9/22

*release dates are 9/26

Video*

*Messenger:
Joan of Arc*

Music*

98 Degrees
Revelation

Van Morrison

Mystikal

Soul Asylum

DVD*

Final Destination

*The Flintstones in
Viva Rock Vegas*

A whopping 84%
of you watched *Survivor*
at least once while it aired
last summer. Next week's
question: **Have you ever
wished life was more
like the movies?**

e-mail votes to behrroll5@aol.com