



CATS

Study Guide

Missouri State.
UNIVERSITY



High School Workshop

24 October 2019

Show directed & choreographed
by Sarah Wilcoxon

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CATS

Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber
Based on Old Possum's Book Of Practical Cats by T.S. Eliot
Directed and Choreographed by Sarah Wilcoxon

Other showtimes:
25-26, 28 October 7:30 PM
27 October 2:30 PM
Craig Hall Coger Theatre

PLOT SUMMARY

Cats begins with the gathering of the cats of the Jellicle tribe onstage to explain a bit about their lives and their purpose. After the group describes how they assign names to each cat in the tribe, they assemble in preparation to take part in the annual festival of cat-dom...they send out invitations to attend the Jellicle Ball! At the Ball, each cat tries to prove to Old Deuteronomy (the leader of the Jellicle tribe) why he or she deserves to go the Heavyside Layer – a heavenly feline afterlife.

Munkustrap, the show's feline narrator, introduces the cats one by one starting with Jennyanydots. The Rum Tum Tugger, the wild and inconstant Elvis-esque cat, interrupts her presentation with his grand entrance; he feels no obligation to other cats and does as he feels. Following Tugger's exuberant performance, the old and greying Grizabella makes her way through the group causing the tribe to scatter. The other cats dislike the lowly Grizabella and somberly sing of her sad state. As Grizabella sulks off into the night, the fat and renowned Bustopher Jones sings of his elite status among his fellow cats. The villainous feline Macavity ends the song with a crash in the distance as all the cats run away. With the stage empty, Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer arrive telling how they love to create mischief for families around the city.



Without further ado, the Jellicle leader, Old Deuteronomy, arrives on the scene. He is a wise and experienced old cat revered by the Jellicle tribe. It is Old Deuteronomy who will decide which cat will travel to the Heavyside Layer. In celebration of his arrival, the tribe performs a number (The Aweful Battle of the Pekes and the Pollicles) about a feud between two dog tribes that ends with their shared fear of the Great Rumpus Cat. The Jellicle Ball has finally begun but Grizabella returns, wishing to be included in the festivities. Disregarded by the other cats, she melodically recalls the past when she was a beautiful and happy cat (Memory).

PLOT SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

After another scare from Macavity, Old Deuteronomy calms the Jellicle tribe by reminding the cats about The Moments of Happiness. Gus, the once-famous theatre cat now old, tells the story of how he once played the notorious pirate Growltiger, Terror of the Thames. Following Gus the thespian is Skimbleshanks, the unofficial conductor of the railway train. One of the most clever cats of the tribe, he is responsible for starting the train; without him, the cats are stuck in place. After all his disturbances, Macavity appears with a final crash and an evil cackle. A delinquent feline who always escapes being seen at the scene of the crime, he captures Old Deuteronomy.

Disguised as Old Deuteronomy, Macavity returns only to be discovered by the tribe and fought by Munkustrap. Thinking quickly, The Rum Tum Tugger convinces the tribe to find Mr. Mistoffelees – a magical cat – to help bring Old Deuteronomy back. Using his magical skills, Mr. Mistoffelees successfully brings back Old Deuteronomy so that he may now decide who enters the Heavyside Layer!



Before making his big decision, the tattered and disheveled Grizabella appears for the final time. Allowed the floor by Old Deuteronomy, she addresses the tribe for a chance to get to the Heavyside Layer. Her soulful reprise of Memory sways the cats and Old Deuteronomy chooses her to be the one to journey to the Heavyside Layer. A huge tire descends from the sky and takes Grizabella up into the sky. Old Deuteronomy closes the show with The Addressing of Cats.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, the production of *Cats* is based on T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939), which the composer recalled as having been a childhood favorite. The songs of the musical consist of Eliot's verse set to music by the composer, except for the most famous song from the musical, "Memory", for which the lyrics were written by Trevor Nunn after an Eliot poem entitled "Rhapsody on a Windy Night". Also, a brief song titled "The Moments of Happiness" was taken from a passage in Eliot's *Four Quartets*. Andrew Lloyd Webber began composing the songs in late 1977 and premiered the compositions at the Sydmonton Festival in 1980. The concert was attended by T.S. Eliot's wife, Valerie Eliot and she loved the songs that Webber had composed. She gave her blessing for the songs to be adapted into a musical stage play. Rehearsals for the musical began in early 1981 at the New London Theatre.

Due to the Eliot estate asserting that they write no script and only use the original poems as the text, the musical had no identified plot during the rehearsal process, causing many actors to be confused about what they were doing. An unusual musical in terms of its construction, the overture incorporates a fugue and there are occasions when the music accompanies spoken verse. The show is completely told through music with almost no spoken dialogue in between the songs. Dance is also a key element in the musical, especially during the 10-minute Jellicle Ball dance sequence. The set, consisting of an oversized junkyard, remains the same throughout the show without any scene changes. Lloyd Webber's eclecticism is very strong here; musical genres range from classical to pop, music hall, jazz, rock, and electro-acoustic music as well as hymn-like songs such as "The Addressing of Cats".



Cats premiered in the West End at the New London Theatre on May 11, 1981. There was trouble initially as Judi Dench, cast in the role of Grizabella, snapped her Achilles tendon during rehearsals before the London opening. She was replaced by Elaine Paige. The musical was produced by Cameron Mackintosh and Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Group, directed by Trevor Nunn, with associate director and choreographer Gillian Lynne, design by John Napier, and lighting by David Hersey. The conductor was Harry Rabinowicz. It played a total of 8,949 performances in

PRODUCTION HISTORY (CONTINUED)

London. Its final performance in London's West End was on its 21st birthday, 11 May 2002, and broadcast on a large screen in Covent Garden to the delight of fans who could not acquire a ticket for the final performance. It held the record as London's longest-running musical until 8 October 2006, when it was surpassed by *Les Misérables*.

The show made its debut on Broadway on 7 October 1982, at the Winter Garden Theatre with the same production team. On 19 June 1997, *Cats* became the longest-running musical in Broadway history with 6,138 performances. It closed on 10 September 2000, after a total of 7,485 performances. Its Broadway record was surpassed on 9 January 2006 by *The Phantom of the Opera*. It remains Broadway's fourth-longest-running show in history. Lloyd Webber stated that when the original show was produced, it cost £900,000, but on Broadway, it cost \$5,000,000.

In 1998, Lloyd Webber produced a video version of *Cats*, based upon the stage version, starring Elaine Paige, who originated the role of Grizabella in London; Ken Page, who originated Old Deuteronomy on Broadway; Sir John Mills as Gus; Michael Gruber as Munkustrap; John Partridge as The Rum Tum Tugger; Jo Gibb as Rumpelteazer with many of the dancers and singers drawn largely from various stage productions of the show. It was directed by David Mallet, with choreography and musical staging by the show's respected original creator Gillian Lynne in London's Adelphi Theatre, and was released on VHS and DVD, as well as broadcast on television worldwide. Andrew Lloyd Webber and others on the production team for the film wanted to keep the feeling that viewers watching the film could still get the sense of seeing the show live, by having all views be facing the stage, therefore, getting multiple views of the set, with several close-ups.



Beyond the productions in England, the US, Canada, and Australia, the musical has been produced professionally in Hungary, Austria, and Japan, 1983; Sydney and Toronto, 1985; Germany, 1986; France, 1989; Mexico, 1991; Netherlands, 1992; Argentina, 1993; Hong Kong, 1994; Spain, 2003; Poland and Czech Republic, 2004; Russia and Estonia, 2005; Israel, Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, China and Finland, 2007; Singapore, Hong Kong, Dominican Republic, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, China, Italy, Bulgaria and Japan, 2009; and Brazil and the Philippines, 2010. *Cats* has been translated into over 20 languages.

CAST LIST & ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Alonzo: Ryan May

Bombalurina: Rachel Haselhorst

Carbuckety: Gabby Lunn

Coricopat: Allegra Schaeffer

Electra: Elizabeth Drake

Georgie: Adyson Shaw

Gus the Theatre Cat: Zach Greer

Jellylorum: Jenna Leavitt

Macavity: Max Ruether

Mungojerrie: Neil Cathro

Old Deuteronomy: Hayden Hart

Pouncival: Declan Rhodes

Rumpleteazer: Aline O’Neill

Sillabub: Katie Allison

Tantomile: Morgan Ball

Victor: Seth Walley

Asparagus: Chapman Blake

Bustopher Jones: Zach Greer

Cassandra: Ellie Vaughn

Demeter: Janae Hammond

Etcetera: Madison Crosby

Grizabella: Sarai Harding

Jemima: Anna Pennington

Jennyanydots: Natalie Renfro

Mistoffelees: Joe Schultz

Munkustrap: Richard Forrist

Plato: Max Ruether

Quaxo: Nathan Salter

Rum Tum Tugger: Andrew McGowan

Skimbleshanks: Neil Cathro

Tumblebrutus: Brooke Verbois

Victoria: Josie Walker

Swings/Pit Singers: Courtney Lauster, McKenna Harvey, Patrick Sturm

Pit Singers: Katie Krasovec, Joey Myers

Director & Choreographer: Sarah Wilcoxon

Sarah Wilcoxon is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Missouri State University. She is the dance representative for the Musical Theatre Program and coordinates the Department’s wellness initiatives. Her research and creative interests include cross-disciplinary collaboration and dance conditioning/injury prevention. Wilcoxon is a STOTT Certified Pilates teacher and a certified Progressing Ballet Technique instructor. She teaches ballet, jazz, musical theatre styles, partnering, dance kinesiology, and Pilates.



THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Everyone here at Missouri State University and from the Department of Theatre & Dance are so happy that you decided to join us for this special performance, JUST FOR YOU! However, in order to guarantee that everyone in attendance has an enjoyable experience, we have some ground rules to set. These rules of etiquette are the same rules that you would be expected to follow at any live performance you would attend.

- 1.) Turn off your cell phone.
- 2.) Eat your dinner before the show, not DURING it.
- 3.) Remain quietly seated and wait until scene changes to enter/exit.
- 4.) If you have to cough, cover your mouth.
- 5.) Unwrap cough drops before the show.
- 6.) Don't talk during the show.
- 7.) Don't sing along.
- 8.) Don't feel like you have to dress up.
- 9.) Try not to fall asleep.
- 10.) Respect the space and comfort of those around you.
- 11.) Come clean.
- 12.) Stop shrieking, whooping, screaming, and hollering.
- 13.) No photos at any time.
- 14.) Don't block the view of those sitting behind you.
- 15.) The overture is part of the performance. Please cease talking at this point.

WORD SEARCH

N U R B D S P A Y M D S O B O P F I L M Y Y L O
 I A I E L E I C W G T J U M A C A V I T Y V Q L
 N D E Z G R M Y K O B S O S N G H U Z G G K C D
 R R D R O I O E D Q T H E K S P D Y O W J M F D
 K N U T O W T Y T O V P L N E P Z K X G W I V E
 P K C M F H N L P E W N C A Z U O M F X U E D U
 M I K K P A C H W H R M I H E H P C X M Z K C T
 V A M Z Y L E I K O A P L S B V B Z S S H C J E
 G H H N P R E K S U R H L E M C L A R B O B X R
 Q O N B J U G T J P D G E L U H O Z X O O J W O
 L E N O Z A L O E F R Q J B N S K W H M H J D N
 J A N N Q R Y R W A J E Z M G K F C B X Y Y I O
 G E T F Y O W F G B Z F T I O T A A Q C O Q F M
 S R U M T U M T U G G E R K J M L T F L S N V Y
 N Z J P M H B Y Q U X K R S E U I S L Y M R Z U
 Z L H N E A A Z A C J K L B R F B E Y J H S S D
 W L M I I E D D Y T K M P I R C X S A J K K O K
 S H O M K U S F X M E S N D I W A E W Q F M T V
 J E M L F R D J A R V A I L E Z O G J I M Y I Q
 D S G B K E S C P F A W I C K A H C Z W D Q M F
 B U H J F Z S R X S E E L E F F O T S I M R M P
 S F N A L L E B A Z I R G M U I M C M P T C L A
 S Z R A X C Q L X K C H V J C W V K A E Y H E P
 C V N S P D M M O Q G S T T E N T N O K G V N G

Word Bank

Jellicle	Cats	Victoria	Old Deuteronomy	Jennyanydots
Rum Tum Tugger	Grizabella	Bustopher Jones	Mungojerrie	
Rumpleteazer	Macavity	Terpsichorean	Gus	Growltiger
Skimbleshanks	Demeter	Bombalurina	Mr Mistoffelees	

CRITIQUE SHEET

Now that you've seen our production of *Cats*, think about the different design elements of the show. Rate each category. (1=Poor, Not at all effective; 5=Excellent, very effective) and answer the prompts below in complete sentences.

Lighting Design: 1 2 3 4 5

Does the lighting effectively convey the mood of the scene and add to the atmosphere of the scene? Why/why not?

Sound Design: 1 2 3 4 5

Are the music and sound effects fitting to the scene? Do they effectively communicate the tone of the play? Why/why not?

Scene Design: 1 2 3 4 5

Does the set clearly portray the setting of the piece? Do the actors work well in the space? Why/why not?

Costume Design: 1 2 3 4 5

Do the costumes and the makeup give insight to who the characters are? Why/why not?

Acting: 1 2 3 4 5

Were the actors believable and engaging? Why/why not?

Pertaining to the design elements or the acting: What did you like the best? What did you like the least? Would you tell a friend to come see this production?

ALIGNMENT TO STANDARDS

National Core Arts Standards

TH: Re7.1.1.: a. Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.

TH:Re8.1.1.: c. Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.1.: b. Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

Missouri Learning Standards — Theatre

5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
 - A. Prepare
 - c. (HS Proficient-HS Advanced) Demonstrate appropriate audience etiquette for the venue, purpose, and style.
7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
 - A. Reflect
 - a. (HS Proficient) Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.
8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
 - A. Interpret
 - c. (HS Proficient) Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theatre work.
9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
 - A. Evaluate
 - b. (HS Proficient) Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.