

A review of the musical
Cats
by Andrew Lloyd Webber
by
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On the evening of Tuesday the 17th December, I went with my family, to the New Theatre, Oxford to see the musical Cats. It was the opening night of the performance in Oxford and we had seats in the circle. All the seats soon filled up and it was time for the show to begin. I really liked it when some of the cats ran through the audience with their eyes glowing as they were making their way to the stage.



Cats was composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber and was based on a book by T S Eliot called Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats. The musical was first performed in the West End of London back in 1981 and was then performed on Broadway in the United States in 1982. It is the fourth-longest running musical in the West End and has won many awards.

Cats is the story of a tribe of cats called the Jellicles who come together for the night of their annual Jellicle ball held to celebrate who they are. It is also the night that 'the Jellicle choice' is made and the decision is taken about which cat will ascend to the Heaviside Layer and come back to be reborn into a new life. The decision is made by the tribe leader, the wise Old Deuteronomy.

The story is completely told through song and dance and begins with the song called 'The Naming of the Cats' where it is explained to us human visitors who the cats are and that each cat gets three names: the one the family uses daily, a more dignified name and a secret name. The cats start arriving for the ball.

Grizabella, the Glamour Cat arrives, but she is shunned by the rest of the tribe. She left the tribe many years ago to explore the outside world but now wants to return to the tribe. A thunderous crash and police sirens signals that Macavity, the villainous cat is on the loose. I really liked it when Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer arrive. They are a couple of pranksters who are always getting into trouble with the family they live with. Old Deuteronomy arrives and the cats entertain him with a special show where the cats dress up as two rival gangs of dogs.

Now the cats have all arrived, the ball begins and there is a great dance where all the cats celebrate.

It was then a pause for the interval and Old Deuteronomy stayed on stage for the children to go up and meet him.



In the second part, we were introduced to more of the cats and their story and finally Macavity arrives and with his henchmen, kidnap Old Deuteronomy. Macavity returns to the ball dressed as Old Deuteronomy but the cats realise who it really is and there is a battle between Macavity and the other male cats. Almost defeated, Macavity rigs a big explosion which puts all the lights out. The Jellicat cats still have to find Old Deuteronomy and they call in the conjuring cat, Mr Mistoffelees, to use his magical powers to bring back Old Deuteronomy.

Finally it is time for the Jellicat Choice and Grizabella reappears at the ball singing about her memories of how things used to be. This time the other cats accept her and she is the choice to journey to Heaviside Layer to be reborn.

I really enjoyed seeing this show. The quality of both the dancing and singing was great from all the actors. I didn't really understand what was going on a lot of the time as there wasn't an easy story line to follow and it only really made sense to me when I read through the Synopsis in the Programme while I was getting ready to write this review. However, it didn't spoil my enjoyment and I would very much recommend this show.