

Cats Encyclopedia Article

Cats

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By the end of the twentieth century, *Cats* had lived up to its billing of "Now and Forever," as it became the longest-running Andrew Lloyd Webber musical in both London and New York. The tuneful score, inspired by T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, includes songs in a wide variety of styles. John Napier's elaborate set transforms the entire theater into a garbage dump upon which the feline cast learn which one of them will gain an extra life at the Jellicle Ball. Various cats tell their tales through song, but the winner is Grizabella, the glamour cat who became an outcast. Grizabella's number, "Memory," is one of Lloyd Webber's most famous songs; by 1992, it had been recorded in no fewer than 150 different versions. *Cats* opened in London in 1981 and in New York the following year. The innovative costumes and choreography coupled with the eclectic musical score which culminates in "Memory" account for its continued popularity. A video version of *Cats*, filmed during a London performance, was released in 1998.

The cast of *Cats*.

Further Reading:

Lloyd Webber, Andrew. *Cats: The Book of the Musical*. London, Faber & Faber, 1981; San Diego, Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1983.

Richmond, Keith. *The Musicals of Andrew Lloyd Webber*. London, Virgin, 1995.