

Jacques Brel is Alive and Well
Polly Pen on Writing Musicals
Cowgirls' Mary Murfitt

at play

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MUSICALS

INTERVIEW WITH A BAT BOY

Director of Professional Rights Robert Vaughan and Director of Publications Michael Fellmeth met with Bat Boy in the Palm Court of the Plaza Hotel in Manhattan to talk about growing up in a cave in Hope Falls, West Virginia, Bat Boy: The Musical, and his rise to global celebrity as the lead in a hit show about his own life. The pointy-eared, fanged star arrived with an entourage of bodyguards, personal assistants, agent, lawyer and publicist. Bat Boy, immaculately clad in Savile Row, seemed only vaguely aware of their presence. He greeted us warmly, sat down, lit a miniature cigar and ordered a bloody mary.

continued on next page



BAT BOY
THE MUSICAL

FELLMETH. Let me begin by saying how taken I am with your voice, Bat Boy. Did you have any formal training?

BAT BOY. Please don't call me Bat Boy. My name is Edgar.

FELLMETH. Of course, my apologies, Edgar.

EDGAR. It's all right. It's a common blunder. Although, I imagine you might find it tiresome if the public persisted in calling you "Monkey Man." In answer to your question, no, I did not have any formal training. I learned, shall we say, on the job. In order to hunt in the dark, twisting caverns, I employed "echo-location," sending out sounds to seek out and identify my prey. Bugs echo differently from rats, turtles, small lost children, et cetera. At first I used simple shrieks and guttural garglings, but soon I found I enjoyed harmonizing with my own echoes. I learned to bounce notes, scales, full contrapuntal melodies off my meals. I was quite literally "singing for my supper." (*Laughs.*) Ah, good times ... Anyway, eventually I improvised extended fugues and oratorios, which I later recorded and submitted to earn my doctorate in ethnomusicology from Magdalen College, Oxford. And my ability to stun or even kill prey with an ear-rending shriek came in handy when I began performing on the stage: no microphones for me!

FELLMETH. Hanging there, upside down, harmonizing with nature, I find that an incredibly moving image, Edgar.

VAUGHAN. Me too. It must have been very difficult to adjust to society after leaving the cave, Edgar; after all, they wrote a musical about it. But what have you found to be most troublesome? For instance, there was your appearance in the tabloids as a stalker of Jenna Bush. How much truth was there to that? (*Edgar's mobile rings.*) Is that me? Or — no, it's you. Do you need to get that?

EDGAR. I'm terribly sorry. This will only take a second. (*Answers phone.*) Talk to me ... Bobby! Bubbie! Good to hear your voice ... Uh-huh ... (*Laughter.*) Oh Bobby, you are a caution! ... Can you hang on? I'm getting another call. (*Edgar*

EDGAR. Ahhh, Jenna. Jenna the Menace, that was my pet name for her. She was such a terror. The media had it all wrong, though. It was she who took to following me. After I finally got a restraining order she went on that binge in Texas that made all the papers. It's sad, really. I loved her so. You don't know where she is, do you?

VAUGHAN. Er ...

FELLMETH. I'd like to return to the cave for a moment, if we could, Edgar. You grew to boyhood entirely in the company of bats, and I'm wondering what your thoughts were when you first encountered your own kind, the spelunkers who discovered you.

EDGAR. My own kind? A brace of vile cannabis-crazed adolescent morons? (*Chuckles.*) I hardly think so. However, upon being set upon and cudged by those ruffians, I recall my first thoughts were these: (*Emits a series of ear-rending shrieks.*) In my language it closely resembles your New Testament phrase, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Thus: "*(Shriek)*" means "My God, my God," or more accurately "My Bats, my Bats"; "*(Shriek)*" of course is "Why hast Thou forsaken"; and "*(Series of shrieks, grunts, metallic whines and earsplitting howls)*": "me." So yes, it was a difficult time. I spent much of it in a sack. Are you all right, mates? You look a bit fagged.

FELLMETH. Ouch.

VAUGHAN. Migraine.

EDGAR. Oh. Right. Regular humans. Sorry, sometimes I forget myself. (*Cell phone rings.*) Talk to me! Paulie! Bubbie! ... What's the rumpus? ... In Jersey? They did? Oh no ... What does that mean, criminal charges or just a lawsuit? ... Now, Paulie, that's just folderol, because I was provoked. *Provoked*, you understand? ... Three beers, tops. Maybe some bourbon and a Sex on the Beach. But that's immaterial. Habeas corpus, that's what I say ... Well, just fix it, then ... Don't give me that, Paulie-boy. Whose side are you on, anyway? ... Well, you tell them that they're treading on dangerous ground here. Don't they understand what can happen when Edgar is provoked? ... D.A., shmee-ay. *Nobody* dictates terms to me. Now stop wasting my valuable time, and *fix this like you're paid to do!* (*Hangs up.*) Oh, you two look better.

VAUGHAN. Okay, Edgar, time for word association: How about Shelley Parker...?

EDGAR. Innocent maiden / as beautiful to behold / as my reflection.

VAUGHAN. Actually, word association is just supposed to be the first word that pops into your head.

EDGAR. Oh, right. Sorry. Sometimes I naturally speak in haiku. Let's try again. Go.

FELLMETH. Meredith Parker.

EDGAR. Life was yours to give / I cried out for your mercy / but you turned away. Wait. I did it again, didn't I? Silly me. Do another.

VAUGHAN. Dr. Thomas Parker.

EDGAR. SCREEEEEEEEEECH!!! Sorry. Lost myself for a second there. In my native tongue that means ... well, there really is no English equivalent. It just means SCREEEEEEEEEECH!!!

FELLMETH. Edgar.

VAUGHAN. Please.

EDGAR. Right. Noted. (*Makes "zipping up my*

lips" motion.) Perhaps we'd best not discuss Dr. Parker. That is a difficult subject for me.

FELLMETH. Understandably so. A father who abandoned you in infancy to be raised by bats and then — as if that weren't enough — tried to rally a town to kill you.

VAUGHAN. But it's admirable the way you've channeled all your pain into your art, rather than exorcising it through violence, like you used to do.

EDGAR. Excuse me? As I used to do?

VAUGHAN. Well, yes. The people you've attacked, eaten really ...

EDGAR. Attacked, eaten? ... I? ... What a strange man you are. You say such silly things. I have no idea what you're talking about. No idea whatever.

Once upon a time, my dreams were the dreams of any half-bat/half-boy.

But to answer part of your odd question, yes, I do have a message for the young people: perseverance. That's what it takes. Just follow your dreams, that sort of thing.

FELLMETH. Forgive my psychobabble, Edgar, but it seems to me that your dream was to be accepted and loved as you are by your mother and father, the people of Hope Falls and, of course, by your beloved, Shelley. In *Bat Boy* you make extraordinary efforts towards that end, mastering English from BBC tapes in a matter of hours, mastering geography, mathematics, world events, even earning your CPA, and all the while resisting the lure of fresh, warm blood, subsisting on little more than your desire to fit in. With all your success, do you feel at last that your perseverance has allowed you to achieve your own dreams?

EDGAR. Ah, yes. Once upon a time, my dreams were the dreams of any half-bat/half-boy. I dreamed of food, a warm spot in which to sleep and freedom from predators. The world that the Parker family revealed to me was beyond my wildest imaginings. Your language, your culture, your soft, fluffy bunnies — all of it! It tickled the synapses in my human brain and stirred the passion in my animal loins. I wanted to take the bull of society by the horns, ride it for eight seconds, then tear its head off and drink my fill — metaphorically speaking, of course. And, by God, I've done it! Look around you now. Do you not marvel at the opulence? Does your heart not beat a bit faster in my presence? The loathed tabloid monster is now a star of the world stage! *Ha-ha!* Put that in your pipe and smoke it, Sasquatch!

VAUGHAN. I take it you're not satisfied with the quality of the press you get.

EDGAR. Dear God, no. Still misunderstood, still hunted, feared, mocked. (*Snaps his fingers in the direction of an assistant.*) Cassie, give me this week's *News*. See, look at this cover: "Bat Boy Bites Girl at Auto Show!" Now really, would I be caught dead at an auto show? Now, the opera, certainly. (*Picks up a review.*) Observe this too: "A brilliant parody of musicals." Numbskulls. My

continued on page 8

In my native tongue that means ... well, there really is no English equivalent.

switches over.) Talk to me ... Barbra! Bubbie! ... How's Jimmy? ... Uh-huh ... (*Laughter.*) Hmm, could be a very lucrative endorsement deal, I hear these dentists are loaded ... Okay ... Oh sweetie, no. You were a funny girl, and an even funnier lady, but what have you done for me lately, you know? ... All right ... Have your people call my people, and Edgar will see what he can do. Buh-bye, Bubbie. (*Switches back.*) Bobby? Gotta run. We'll meet for sushi when I'm back on the left coast ... Oh no, no. It's "Bat Boy," Bobby. Not "Bat Middle Aged Man." ... Okay, you know the drill ... Edgar will see what he can do. (*Edgar hangs up, sighs.*) It's like this all day. I'm not just a sex symbol anymore. I'm an icon. A brand, really. Everyone wants a piece. What was the question?

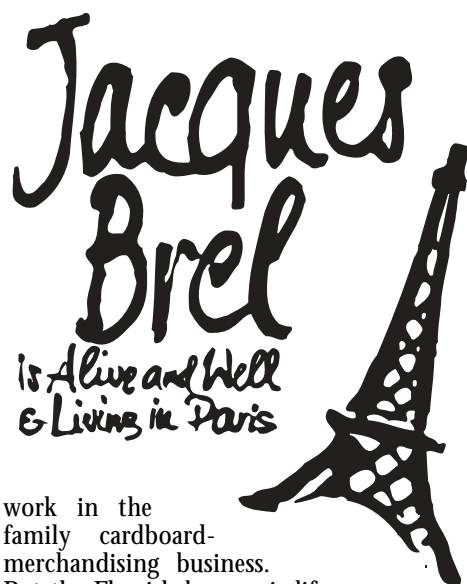
VAUGHAN. Jenna Bush?

JACQUES BREL IS ALIVE AND WELL AT THE PLAY SERVICE

by Michael Q. Fellmeth

On January 22, 1966, *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well & Living in Paris* opened at the Village Gate Theatre in New York City and went on to run for an incredible 1,847 performances. The musical, conceived by poet Eric Blau and singer/songwriter Mort Shuman, who also translated the lyrics from the French, brought the music of Jacques Brel to the widespread attention of American audiences. Since then, this beloved revue has been performed countless times throughout the world.

Widely considered one of the greatest songwriters who ever lived, Jacques Brel was born in Brussels in 1929. He studied commercial law in his youth and went to



work in the family cardboard-merchandising business. But the Flemish bourgeois life did not sit well with Brel, and for a time he seriously considered leaving the family business to become a chicken breeder or a cobbler. Fortunately, Brel never followed through with these vocational aspirations. Instead, in 1953, he released his first record, a 78 with two songs backed by an accordion band, which went largely unnoticed, except by the talent scout and director of a famous Parisian nightclub Jacques Canetti, who invited him to Paris. Brel went to the City of Lights to perform some of his songs in the cabarets and music halls and the following year settled there permanently where he began a new life filled with tours throughout

France, Holland, Switzerland and North Africa, his reputation as a songwriter and performer steadily increasing.

In 1957, with the release of “Quand on a que l’amour” (“If We Only Have Love”), one of the songs included in *Jacques Brel*, the songwriter began his legendary ascent. The song was wildly successful, and that same year, the head of Columbia’s AR department, Nat Shapiro, persuaded his CBS superiors to release an American debut. The music world at large began to take notice. The next few years saw Brel’s marvelous output increase exponentially with the release of dozens of albums and singles on the Philips and Barclay labels, including his classics “Madeleine,” “Les bourgeois” (“Middle Class”) and “Jef” (“You’re Not Alone”) from *Jacques Brel*. Interpretations of Brel’s songs began to appear on the American and British soundscapes by such diverse artists as Frank Sinatra, the Kingston Trio, Ray Charles, Petula Clark, Barry Manilow and even David Bowie. In 1974 Terry Jacks hit number one in the U.K. and the U.S. with his interpretation of “Le moribund” as “Seasons in the Sun,” and Brel’s talent had finally and irrevocably made its international mark.

Brel made his final album in 1977, “Les Marquises,” which sold 650,000 copies on the day of its release and eventually sold over two million copies. The following year Brel died of cancer. He is buried on the island of Hiva-Oa in the Marquesas Islands, where in 1973 he had retired to the simple, tropical life of Gauguin. Brel’s daughter once said of him, “He loved to provoke, to demystify,” and his genius allowed him to explore themes as wide-ranging as the effects of time on the body to the life of a hard-drinking sailor to a young man being stood up by the girl he loves in musical styles as disparate as marches to ballads. The Play Service is thrilled to have added *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well & Living in Paris* to our growing collection of musicals and to once again offer this renowned revue, which has been unavailable for several years, to producing organizations all over the world seeking to delight audiences with the magic that is Jacques Brel. ■

NEWPLAYS

AN ADULT EVENING OF SHEL SILVERSTEIN
by Shel Silverstein

Welcome to the darkly comic world of Shel Silverstein, a world where nothing is as it seems and where the most innocent conversation can turn menacing in an instant.

AMPHIBIANS by Billy Roche

A twelve-year-old boy spends a night alone on an island as a rite of passage in this story that achieves the resonance and force of myth.

ANCIENT LIGHTS by Shelagh Stephenson

After many years a group of old friends meet in northern England. Each of them has a secret, and none of them is exactly who they say they are.

AS IT IS IN HEAVEN by Arlene Hutton

A Shaker community is changed when a nonbeliever has an ecstatic experience in this lovely play filled with Shaker hymns and dance.

BE AGGRESSIVE by Annie Weisman

Vista Del Sol is paradise, sandy beaches, avocado-lined streets. But for seventeen-year-old cheerleader Laura, everything changes when her mother is killed in a car crash, and she embarks on a journey to the Spirit Institute of the South where she can learn “cheer” with Bible belt intensity.

BLACK SHEEP by Lee Blessing

A prominent family’s “black sheep” nephew, the son of an interracial marriage, comes to stay with them after being released from prison, raising issues of race, sex and family values.

THE BUBBLY BLACK GIRL SHEDS HER CHAMELEON SKIN by Kirsten Childs

In a humorous and pointed coming-of-age story, Viveca, the bubbly black girl from sunny Southern California, blithely sails through the confusing worlds of racism, sexism and Broadway showbiz until she’s forced to face the effects of self-denial.

CARL THE SECOND by Marc Palmieri

An often hilarious but also literate and gently profound portrait on the archetype of the second banana.

THE CASTLE adapted by David Fishelson and Aaron Leichter from a dramatization by Max Brod, based on the novel by Franz Kafka

By turns sexy, comic and horrifying, this new stage version of Kafka’s most magical novel tells the story of a man who decides to fight a monstrous bureaucracy rather than give in to it.

THE CAVALCADERS by Billy Roche

The life of a small-town Irish shoemaker who amuses himself singing with a barbershop quartet is laid bare in this wonderful, wistful memory play.

THE CHEMISTRY OF CHANGE

by Marlane Gomard Meyer

Meyer gives dysfunctional families a diabolical twist when matriarch Lee marries Smokey, a carnival barker, who may be the devil himself.

DANCE OF DEATH by August Strindberg, adapted by Richard Greenberg

Husband and wife Alice and Edgar, ever at each other’s throats, find their mutual hatred at an all-time high just when Alice’s cousin Kurt arrives, newly stationed on the island.

THE DAZZLE by Richard Greenberg

A pair of early twentieth-century bachelor brothers bury themselves under collectibles and trash in their Harlem mansion in this gorgeous tale of mental collapse. Loosely based on the true story of the Collyer brothers.

THE DEATH OF FRANK by Stephen Belber

In this dark comedy, Peter is in love with his sister, a yoga instructor, who falls in love with a sleazy construction worker. Peter’s desperate attempts to reclaim his sister take him from dating a militant linguist to a stint in jail.

DEN OF THIEVES by Stephen Adly Guirgis

Maggie, newly in a program for overeating kleptomaniacs, calls her safe-cracking sponsor Paul when she reverts to her old ways, which leads to an ill-considered heist that goes disastrously and hilariously wrong.

ENDPAPERS by Thomas McCormack

The regal Joshua Maynard, head of a publishing house, must name a successor. While one faction backs a smart, “pragmatic” manager, the other faction backs a smart, “sensitive” editor, and both fear what the other man could do to the house — and to them.

ETTA JENKS by Marlane Gomard Meyer

The Hollywood dream goes awry for Midwestern girl Etta Jenks in this brilliant and discomfiting odyssey through Southern California’s pornographic landscape.

EVERETT BEEKIN by Richard Greenberg

In Greenberg’s blisteringly funny stew of sibling rivalry and assimilation angst, Jimmy Constant, a young man about to move to California to start a pharmaceuticals firm with the visionary Everett Beekin, enters into the lives of the Lower East Side’s Fox women where he hopes to take one of them with him.

A FEW STOUT INDIVIDUALS by John Guare

A wonderfully screwy comedy-drama that figures Ulysses S. Grant in the throes of writing his memoirs, surrounded by a cast of fantastical characters, including the Emperor and Empress of Japan, the opera star Adelina Patti and Mark Twain.

FIVE KINDS OF SILENCE by Shelagh Stephenson

A conspiracy of silence afflicts a family where abuse, rather than love, forms the ties that bind, and murder offers the only way out.

FORCE OF NATURE by Steven Dietz

A play of extravagant romance and combustible desire, *Force of Nature* brings together the "perfect couple" — Edward and Charlotte — with two persons from their past: a beautiful young woman and an older man, Edward's best friend.

FURTHER THAN THE FURTHEST THING by Zinnie Harris

On a remote island in the middle of the Atlantic secrets are buried. When the outside world comes calling, the islanders find their world blown apart from the inside as well as beyond.

GHOSTS by Lanford Wilson

Wilson has revived Ibsen's classic *Ghosts* for a new audience, and it has never seemed more profoundly relevant.

THE GIMMICK AND OTHER PLAYS by Dael Orlandersmith

A collection of scorching and scintillating short plays by the profoundly gifted author of *Yellowman*.

GLIMMER, GLIMMER & SHINE by Warren Leight

A touching drama about the perils of long-buried secrets and abandoned dreams set in the world of jazz musicians.

GOING TO ST. IVES by Lee Blessing

The mother of an African dictator travels to England for medical treatment for her falling eyesight. Her true motive, however, is to obtain a poison she can use to kill her son.

THE GOLEM by H. Leivick, adapted by David Fishelson from a translation by Joseph C. Landis

Drenched in the magic and mystery of the Kabbala, the play retells the legend of a sixteenth-century Rabbi who defies God when he molds and animates a huge clay figure to defend the Jewish community from attack.

GOOD THING by Jessica Goldberg

Brings us into the households of John and Nancy Roy, forty-something high-school guidance counselors whose marriage has been increasingly on the rocks and Dean and Mary, recent graduates struggling to make their way in life.

THE GUYS by Anne Nelson

Less than two weeks after the events of September 11th, an editor named Joan comes together with a fire captain to help craft eulogies for firemen lost in the attack. Based on a true story.

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH by John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask

The story of "internationally ignored song stylist" Hedwig Schmidt, a fourth-wall-smashing East German rock 'n' roll goddess who also happens to be the victim of a botched sex-change operation, which has left her with just "an angry inch."

AN INFINITE ACHE by David Schulner

A fresh and heartfelt play about love, time and the infinite directions in which two lives can travel.

JACQUES BREL IS ALIVE AND WELL & LIVING IN PARIS by Eric Blau, Mort Shuman and Jacques Brel

The music of Jacques Brel soars in this utterly delightful and timeless musical revue.

JAPES by Simon Gray

In this unflinching look at the comedy of life, two brothers share the house they grew up in — and then share the woman they both love.

THE LATE HENRY MOSS by Sam Shepard

Two antagonistic brothers, Ray and Earl, are brought together after their father, Henry Moss, is found dead in his seedy New Mexico home in this classic Shepard tale.

A LETTER FROM ETHEL KENNEDY by Christopher Gorman

This acerbic and touching play finds Kit, a TV executive, trying to make amends with his difficult parents, who never accepted him, before he dies from AIDS.

THE MAI by Marina Carr

Mai has always sought an exceptional life, but her husband of seventeen years, feeling stifled by her demands, has left her, so Mai builds her dream house for when her dark-haired prince returns.

MONTHS ON END by Craig Pospisil

In comic scenes, one for each month of the year, we follow the intertwined worlds of a circle of friends and family whose lives are poised between happiness and heartbreak.

WHY I HAVE TO WRITE MUSICALS

by Polly Pen

The problem was that I grew up at a time when there was an abundance of musicals that required performing children. *Someone* had to be in *The Sound of Music*, *The Music Man*, *Oliver!*, etc. So, sometimes I just had to do that. It seemed at the time particularly essential as I had a promisingly loud voice. Sometime later (after a few piano lessons), it occurred to me that someone needed to keep *writing* musicals or things might get a bit tired. So, when I was fifteen, I wrote my first musical, *Tomato*. Long before Albee's *The Goat*, *Tomato* featured an unusual relationship between a girl and her dog. It was, I believe, the first (only?) absurdist musical. At the end of *Tomato*, twelve elderly women turned into tomatoes. Fortunately, for the dignity of my future career, this early work was lost in a gym locker in Chicago. Thus far, to my knowledge, it has never been found.

After this early loss, I continued to "misplace" or simply neglect to finish a growing oeuvre of musicals. Once released from college, I continued to perform onstage and write musicals in secret until ... well, one day, I became that dreaded thing: an out-of-work actress. A fellow out-of-work actress, Peggy Harmon, and I decided to write a show for ourselves to perform. We based it on a Victorian verse poem called *Goblin Market*. Around this time I met the theatrical producer Doug Aibel (Artistic Director of the Vineyard Theatre). Doug forced me to play and sing the emerging show for him.

Then he made me finish it. And *then* he had the courage to produce it.

The subsequent success of *Goblin Market* propelled me to stumble upon other oddities that seemed to require a musical form. Sometimes I just came across something that seemed intriguingly impossible. This happened with *Bed and Sofa* (a collaboration with playwright Laurence Klavan). *Bed and Sofa* was based on a Russian silent film from the 1920s. I liked the idea of something "silent" — there'd be less music for me to write, and I was feeling lazy. Naturally, the show turned out to be *all* music.

Jump cut to the present: My basic job has been to be a rust-remover, to snatch neglected works from the past, alter their form and see what they feel like *now*. With each new show, the reasons for writing it vary. Sometimes it's a problem I'd like to explore. Sometimes it's something I'd like other people (i.e., the audience) to worry about or laugh at. But always it's because the particular dramatic stew of words and music is endlessly fascinating to me. Besides, I have few other marketable skills ... ■



WELL, HELLO DOLLY

A Musical Recollection

by Mary Murfitt

It started out like any other performance night. *Cowgirls* had been playing downtown at the Minetta Lane Theatre for several months. It was July, and it was hot and steamy. Inside the theatre six women, sharing one dressing room, were trying to stay cool. I know a lot of casts share that little moment backstage before curtain when they meditate together or pray ... The six of us would form a circle, join hands in the center and “mooooo” as loudly as possible. There were many times during the run of *Cowgirls* when I thought being an actor in my own show was a dreadful mistake in judgment, but in these “moo” moments, I knew I was getting to share in something most authors never experience.

The audience was unusually lively this night — singing along with the pre-show music, always a good sign. The show started, and off we went. It was a great first act! We got laughs on lines that had *never* worked before. Oh yeah! We were *hot!* Even intermission sounded different. Folks were clapping and singing and applauding. Wow, what were we doing? It was amazing. Finally, we came to the last section of the show. It's a concert, and at this point the fourth wall comes tumbling down, and the audience is ... well, the audience. The Cowgirl Trio — Mary Ehlinger, Lori Fischer and myself — was singing a song called “Sunflower,” which I'd written as a sort of homage to Dolly Parton's song “Wildflowers.” As I looked out into the audience, I saw someone's head with very big blond hair bobbing back and forth in time with the music. Whoever it was, was sitting in the producers' house seats. I tried to focus on the face. Oh my God ... It was Dolly Parton, and she was singing with us! I glanced over at Lori and Mary. They smiled. They'd known all along she was out there.

Well, no wonder the audience was so jazzed! No wonder that Dolly Parton punchline of mine worked! It wasn't us ... it was Dolly! Dolly jumped to her feet at the end of the show, and of course, the audience *had* to follow. I just couldn't believe she was there, watching the show and, more importantly, listening to *my* music. Dolly Parton may be known as many things, a singer, an actress, even a caricature according to some, but to me she is a songwriter. A great one! We were told that she was coming backstage to say hello. I waited breathlessly. Finally, she came through the door, and the first thing she did was introduce herself. My impulse was to kneel. So I did. It seemed appropriate. “I'm a huge fan of yours!” I heard myself say. “Oh honey, git up. I'm a fan of yours now!” she giggled. I don't

remember much more of what was said. I was pretty much in shock. What I do remember is how incredibly pretty she was up close. One would think someone who wore that much makeup and spent so much time trying to look outrageous would look pretty scary up close. But she was stunning to look at. She wore a black dress with a low-cut square neckline that framed her famous bosom ... like you were supposed to look at it. Of course, I did, and at the time I thought, “Wow, they really aren't that big or weird looking in person. Why does everyone make such a big deal out of them? Johnny Carson. Leno. How ‘male’ to just make tit jokes out of her. The woman's an extraordinary talent ... get out of her brassiere already!”

Dolly was incredibly gracious and generous. She took countless photos with us, stayed backstage signing autographs and talking to cast members, stagehands and the box-office staff. She even asked if she'd missed anyone before she left. The funny thing is, for someone who “puts on” so much externally, she is the most genuine person I have ever met. I will never be able to thank Susan Gallin (one of our producers) enough for getting Dolly to come to our show. Then it was time for Dolly to leave. She told us we should watch *The Regis and Kathy Lee Show* the next morning. And as quickly as she'd arrived, she was gone. I was floating! The next morning, I set my alarm to make sure I didn't miss Dolly on TV. As it turned out, Dolly wasn't just a guest, she was the co-host for the day. Regis started out by asking, “So what have you done since you got here?” “I saw the best show last night,” she said and started talking about *Cowgirls*. I couldn't believe it! Then suddenly she leaned forward, looked right into the camera ... through the TV ... to me (of course) and said, “Hi Cowgirls!” Well, it doesn't get much better than that!

The next day there was a photo in the *New York Post*. There it was: my hero and new guru Dolly Parton standing between Betsy Howie (my collaborator) and me. She looked great. Betsy looked great. Unfortunately, I looked like a goofy school-girl. But so what? She was there. I had proof! One of the finest songwriters alive had said we were good in print — and on TV. I called our press rep, Sam Rudy, to congratulate him on getting the photo into the paper but added that I wished they could have used a picture that made me look a little better. Sam was silent for a moment, and then he said, “Mary, you were looking at her breasts in all the other pictures.” ■

NEWPLAYS

NECESSARY TARGETS by Eve Ensler
Two American women, a Park Avenue psychiatrist and an ambitious young writer, travel to Bosnia to help women refugees confront their memories of war.

THE NINA VARIATIONS by Steven Dietz
In this funny, fierce and heartbreaking homage to *The Seagull*, Dietz puts Chekhov's star-crossed lovers in a room and doesn't let them out.

THE NOTEBOOK by Wendy Kesselman
An adolescent Russian immigrant's trust is shattered by the English teacher she has come to love in this moving story of intellectual awakening.

THE PAVILION by Craig Wright
By turns poetic and comic, romantic and philosophical, this play asks old lovers to face the consequences of difficult choices made long ago and to start back into life with newfound strength and bittersweet resolve.

PORTIA COUGHLAN by Marina Carr
Beautiful beyond compare and blessed with a poetic sensibility, it would seem that Portia Coughlan has it all, but grief over the death of her twin brother fifteen years ago continues to torment her and prevents her from being the mother and wife she wishes she could be.

QED by Peter Parnell
Nobel Prize-winning physicist and all-around genius Richard Feynman holds forth with captivating wit and wisdom in this fascinating biographical play that originally starred Alan Alda.

REVELERS by Beth Henley
In the wake of charismatic Artistic Director Dash Grey's death, his devotees struggle for their place in Chicago's Red Lantern Theatre.

ROCKET MAN by Steven Dietz
Donny Rowan believes somewhere in the universe is a place where all the roads we never chose converge, and this play explores his obsessive desire to find this “parallel world” — and the profound effect of his decision on his family and friends.

SHEL'S SHORTS by Shel Silverstein
Lauded poet, songwriter and author of children's books, the incomparable Shel Silverstein's short plays are deeply infused with the same wicked sense of humor that made him famous.

[SIC] by Melissa James Gibson
In adjacent apartments three young, ambitious neighbors come together to discuss, flirt, argue, share their dreams and plan their futures with unequal degrees of deep hopefulness and abject despair.

SIGNATURE by Beth Henley
In the year 2052 one brother embarks on a quest for fame but the other achieves it in this disturbing tale of the future.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES by Andrew Bovell
Two couples in unstable marriages inadvertently exchange partners in a night of adulterous encounters in this genre-defying psychological thriller.

SUMMER OF '42 by Hunter Foster and David Kirshenbaum
In the summer of 1942 America is on the brink of war: men line up by the thousands to join the army, and on a tiny island off the coast of Maine, three fifteen-year-old boys begin a summer they will never forget.

THIS THING OF DARKNESS by Craig Lucas and David Schulner
Abbey and Donald, best friends, celebrate their graduations and twenty-second birthdays together in Abbey's parents' remote country house as an uncertain future looms menacingly ahead of them.

THE TRANSPARENCY OF VAL by Stephen Belber
Within minutes of being born, Val learns the history of the world. Shortly after, he finishes college and is faced with the task of actually living. But with all the twisted Buddhists, sexually amorphous mates and frighteningly friendly Nazis, it's not quite the facts as he was taught. Still, Val's a survivor, and he'll endure, unless he goes insane.

THE WEXFORD TRILOGY by Billy Roche
Three separate but related tales of life in small-town southern Ireland, tinged with the spirits of Chekhov and O'Casey.

WHERE'S MY MONEY? by John Patrick Shanley
A caustic and sardonic vivisection of the institution of marriage, laced with the author's inimitable razor-sharp wit.

WONDER OF THE WORLD by David Lindsay-Abaire
A madcap picaresque involving Niagara Falls, a lonely tour-boat captain, a pair of bickering private detectives and a husband's dirty little secret.

YELLOWMAN by Dael Orlandersmith
A multi-character memory play about an African-American woman who dreams of life beyond the confines of her small-town Southern upbringing and the light-skinned man whose fate is tragically intertwined with hers. Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

A musical comedy/horror show about a half-boy/half-bat creature who's discovered in a cave in West Virginia.

BED AND SOFA

An enchanting three-character "silent movie opera" based on a scandalous 1926 Russian film comedy.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

A musical overhaul of John Gay's great comic masterpiece on marriage, money and morals, generally agreed to be the first ever musical.

THE BUBBLY BLACK GIRL SHEDS HER CHAMELEON SKIN

What's a black girl from sunny Southern California to do? White people are blowing up black girls in Birmingham churches. Black people are shouting "Black is beautiful" and coveting light skin. Viveca Stanton's answer: Slap on a bubbly smile and be as white as you can be!

BY HEX

Jonas, a young Amish farmer, rebels against the restrictions of his people; he wants to wear red suspenders and buy a tractor. In a word, he wants to "go modern."

THE CATCH COLT

A folk tale of the Western plains with music, this high-spirited show tells the story of Joey Bud, a "catch colt" (orphan) who claims his rightful name, and his rightful bride, despite the underhanded scheming of a jealous rival.

COWGIRLS

If "practice" is the way to get to Carnegie Hall, how could a classical trio possibly end up at Hiram Hall, a country music palace in Rexford, Kansas?

FAME TAKES A HOLIDAY

The delightful story of the High Heeled Women, a four-girl cabaret act, on the two worst nights of their showbiz lives.

FIRST LADY SUITE

Four chamber pieces, ranging from riotously funny to hauntingly lyrical, focus on celebrated first ladies and the people surrounding them.

THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI

It is Christmas in New York, but for two young lovers, Jim and Della, the prospects are bleak, as both are out of work and penniless. A timeless musical tale from the O. Henry story.

GOBLIN MARKET

Two proper Victorian sisters, both now grown women and mothers, return to their childhood nursery to relive the haunting memories of their youth.

GREAT SCOT!

This joyous, tuneful musical is based on the lively (and sometimes eyebrow-raising) escapades of the young Robert Burns.

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

This outrageous and unexpectedly hilarious story is dazzlingly performed by Hedwig (née Hansel), a fourth-wall-smashing East German rock 'n' roll goddess.

HELLO AGAIN

The joys of sex are here for the asking in this adult musical fantasy suggested by Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde*.

HOLLYWOOD PINAFORE OR THE LAD

WHO LOVED A SALARY

With loving respect for what makes Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore* a masterpiece, George Kaufman's dazzling lyric writing transplants the maritime world of the original *Pinafore* to the glamorous world of Hollywood filmmaking.

JACQUES BREL IS ALIVE AND WELL & LIVING IN PARIS

The pointed, passionate and profound songs of Belgian songwriter Jacques Brel are brought to vivid theatrical life in this intense musical experience.

JO

Based on Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, this lively musical play employs flowing songs, sprightly dancing and bright lyrics to bring new life to an ever-popular classic.

JOHNNY PYE

A lighthearted tale about one man's life and his struggle to find his place in the world.

LUCKY NURSE AND OTHER SHORT MUSICAL PLAYS

Four one-act musical plays spanning such seemingly incompatible subjects as White House secretarial chit-chat, construction site visitations by the Virgin Mary and flop house plumbing, all unified by a sense of irony, irreverence and compassion for the workaday lives of their characters.

MONEY

A wealthy young man is spurred on to do something in the world by a girl he loves.

MY EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

From a story by Hans Christian Andersen, a colorful, brightly comic treat for young audiences.

NIGHTCLUB CANTATA

Comprised of twenty original songs set to texts drawn from contemporary prose and poetry, this long-running Off-Broadway success is a truly unique and creative blending of music, drama, comedy and popular entertainment.

QUACK

A Vaudevillized musical version of Molière's *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* where all that could have been a disaster turns out happily for all concerned.

QUILTERS

This beloved musical blends a series of interrelated scenes into a rich mosaic that captures the sweep and beauty, the terror and joy, the harsh challenge and abiding rewards of frontier life.

SALLY BLANE, WORLD'S GREATEST GIRL DETECTIVE

In a musical for adults about children — and a real delight for the whole family — Sally Blane sets off to rescue her father who is being held hostage by a coffee cartel in Latin America.

SIMPLY HEAVENLY

Based on the novel *Simple Takes a Wife* by Langston Hughes, this story captures the color, humor and poetry of Harlem.

SPLENDORA

The favorite pastime in Splendor, a small East Texas town, is gossip. People were still talking about outcast Timothy John Coldridge — who ran away fifteen years ago — until Miss Jessica Gatewood came to town. The exotic and beautiful Miss Jessie, a lady of Victorian bearing and lofty literary ideals, is making a successful new life for herself in Splendor until, that is, it's discovered that she and Timothy John are one and the same person.

SPUNK

An evening of theater that celebrates the human spirit's ability to overcome and endure, adapted from Zora Neale Hurston's evocative prose.

STANDUP SHAKESPEARE

Sets the timeless language of the Bard to the exciting rhythms of jazz, baroque, samba and gospel-rock original music.

SUMMER OF '42

Hermie, Oscy and Benjie are used to coming up to Maine to spend the summer together, but this year seems different. Girls have replaced baseball and comic books, and a young war bride has won the heart of Hermie.

SWINGING ON A STAR

(THE JOHNNY BURKE MUSICAL)

The fabulous songs of Johnny Burke are here perfectly woven into various settings and scenes as if they always belonged there.

THE TALE OF JEMIMA PUDDLE-DUCK

In this lighthearted musical adaptation of Beatrix Potter's classic tale, Jemima Puddle-Duck determines to prove that she has the wherewithal to hatch eggs.

THEDA BARA AND THE FRONTIER RABBI

Back in the days before Madonna, Marilyn and even Jean Harlow, there was Theda Bara, silver screen vamp! A marvelous, nostalgic look at a scandalous silent film star and the rabbi with whom she falls in love.

THREE POSTCARDS

At a trendy Greenwich Village restaurant three young women, Big Jane, Little Jane and K.C., arrive for dinner and for the conversation, daydreams and memories.

TIMES AND APPETITES OF TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

This colorful, lively play traces the eventful life of Toulouse-Lautrec and also captures the excitement and verve of the Paris of his day.

ZOMBIES FROM THE BEYOND

A musical comedy celebration of American ideals and foibles in the Eisenhower era. As the Cold War and space race paranoia threaten the good folks at the fictional Milwaukee Space Center in 1955, the staff is all abuzz at the arrival of rocket scientist Trenton Corbett.

THE ZULU AND THE ZAYDA

Set in racially torn South Africa, this warmhearted, gently humorous play tells of the friendship that blooms between a Jewish grandfather and the native servant engaged to look after him.

Dramatists Play Service licenses hundreds of professional productions each year. For your convenience, here's a schedule of some of them. You can access an even more comprehensive list of professional and select nonprofessional productions by visiting www.dramatists.com and viewing PAGE TO STAGE.

ARIZONA

OLD WICKED SONGS by Jon Marans. Arizona Jewish Theatre. Phoenix. February.
OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS by Joe DiPietro. Invisible Theatre. Tucson. November.

ARKANSAS

DRIVING MISS DAISY by Alfred Uhry. Murry's Dinner Playhouse. Little Rock. January.
OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS by Joe DiPietro. Murry's Dinner Playhouse. Little Rock. February.

CALIFORNIA

'ART' by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton. PCPA Theaterfest. Santa Maria. January.
BOOK OF DAYS by Lanford Wilson. TheatreWorks. Palo Alto. January.
THE CHOSEN by Aaron Posner and Chaim Potok. A Traveling Jewish Theatre. San Francisco. January.
CLOSER by Patrick Marber. PCPA Theaterfest. Santa Maria. January.
FUDDY MEERS by David Lindsay-Abaire. Colony Theatre Company. Burbank. February.
INCORRUPTIBLE by Michael Hollinger. San Jose Stage Company. San Jose. November.
THE SANTALAND DIARIES by David Sedaris, adapted by Joe Mantello. Old Globe Theatre. San Diego. December.
THIEF RIVER by Lee Blessing. New Conservatory Theatre. San Francisco. January.
THE WEIR by Conor McPherson. PCPA Theaterfest. Santa Maria. January.

COLORADO

LAST TRAIN TO NIBROC by Arlene Hutton. Aurora Fox Theatre Company. Aurora. January.

CONNECTICUT

DANCING AT LUGHNASA by Brian Friel. 7 Angels Theatre. Middlebury. February.
A LESSON BEFORE DYING by Romulus Linney, based on the novel by Ernest J. Gaines. Stamford Theatre Works. Stamford. January.
PRIVATE EYES by Steven Dietz. The Meeting House Players. Chester. November.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

BOOK OF DAYS by Lanford Wilson. Arena Stage. Washington. February.
THE DAY ROOM by Don DeLillo. Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Washington. December.

DELAWARE

HAVING OUR SAY, THE DELANY SISTERS' FIRST 100 YEARS by Emily Mann, adapted from the book *Having Our Say* by Sarah L. and A. Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearsh, based on the lives of Sadie and Bessie Delany. Delaware Theatre Company. Wilmington. January.

FLORIDA

THE CAVALCADERS by Billy Roche. Florida Stage. Manalapan. January.
THE COUNTESS by Gregory Murphy. Caldwell Theatre Company. Boca Raton. February.
CRIMES OF THE HEART by Beth Henley. Shores Performing Arts Theatre. Miami Shores. January.
DRIVING MISS DAISY by Alfred Uhry. Angel Cabaret Theatre. New Port Richey. February.
AN EMPTY PLATE IN THE CAFÉ DU GRAND BOEUF by Michael Hollinger. Orlando Theatre Project. Sanford. November.
THE FOREIGNER by Larry Shue. Florida Repertory Company. Ft. Myers. February.
HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH by John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask. Phil Oesterman's National Youth Theatre. Miami. January.
MASTER CLASS by Terrence McNally. Florida Repertory Company. Ft. Myers. January.
THE MIDDLE AGES by A.R. Gurney. Riverside Theatre. Vero Beach. November.
MOLLY SWEENEY by Brian Friel. Theatrewest. Wellington. November.
OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS by Joe DiPietro. American Stage Company. St. Petersburg. November.

THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY by Edward Albee. Hippodrome State Theatre. Gainesville. January.
PROOF by David Auburn. Orlando Theatre Project. Sanford. January.
THE SANTALAND DIARIES by David Sedaris, adapted by Joe Mantello. Hippodrome State Theatre. Gainesville. November.
SHERLOCK'S LAST CASE by Charles Marowitz. Actors Playhouse. Coral Gables. November.

GEORGIA

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH by John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask. Actors Express. Atlanta. December.
I HATE HAMLET by Paul Rudnick. Georgia Ensemble Theatre Company. Roswell. January.
SHAKESPEARE'S R&J by Joe Calarco. Alliance Theatre Company. Atlanta. January.
A SKULL IN CONNEMARA by Martin McDonagh. Theatre Gael. Atlanta. January.
WONDER OF THE WORLD by David Lindsay-Abaire. Horizon Theatre Company. Atlanta. January.

HAWAII

VISITING MR. GREEN by Jeff Baron. Manoa Valley Theatre. Honolulu. January.

IDAHO

VALPARAISO by Don DeLillo. Boise Contemporary Theatre. Boise. January.

ILLINOIS

IN THE BLOOD by Suzan-Lori Parks. Next Theatre Company. Evanston. January.
LOBBY HERO by Kenneth Lonergan. Goodman Theatre Company. Chicago. November.
TWO ROOMS by Lee Blessing. American Theatre Co. Chicago. February.

INDIANA

BLUES FOR AN ALABAMA SKY by Pearl Cleage. Indiana Repertory Theatre. Indianapolis. January.
PRAYING FOR RAIN by Robert Vaughan. Phoenix Theatre. Indianapolis. January.

IOWA

FUDDY MEERS by David Lindsay-Abaire. Riverside Theatre. Iowa City. November.
WIT by Margaret Edson. New Ground Theatre. Bettendorf. February.

KENTUCKY

THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE by Martin McDonagh. Actors Theatre of Louisville. Louisville. January.
PROOF by David Auburn. Actors Theatre of Louisville. Louisville. November.

LOUISIANA

FULLY COMMITTED by Becky Mode. All Kinds of Theatre. New Orleans. November.
THE SANTALAND DIARIES by David Sedaris, adapted by Joe Mantello. Southern Repertory Theatre. New Orleans. November.

MAINE

A CHRISTMAS CAROL by Christopher Schario, adapted from the book by Charles Dickens. Public Theatre. Auburn. December.
PROOF by David Auburn. Public Theatre. Auburn. January.

MASSACHUSETTS

HOWIE THE ROOKIE by Mark O'Rowe. Suga Theatre. Cambridge. January.
THE MEMORY OF WATER by Shelagh Stephenson. Lyric West Theatre. Wellesley. February.
OLD WICKED SONGS by Jon Marans. Merrimack Repertory Theatre. Lowell. January.
A SKULL IN CONNEMARA by Martin McDonagh. New Repertory Theatre. Newton Highlands. November.

MICHIGAN

THE FOREIGNER by Larry Shue. Meadow Brook Theatre. Rochester. February.
FULLY COMMITTED by Becky Mode. BoarsHead: Michigan Public Theater. Lansing. January.
NECESSARY TARGETS by Eve Ensler. Performance Network. Ann Arbor. February.

NO NIGGERS, NO JEWS, NO DOGS by John Henry Redwood. Detroit Repertory Theatre. Detroit. January.
VISITING MR. GREEN by Jeff Baron. Jewish Ensemble Theatre. West Bloomfield. December.

MINNESOTA

THE BOYS NEXT DOOR by Tom Griffin. Mixed Blood Theatre Company. Minneapolis. November.
[SIC] by Melissa James Gibson. Pillsbury House Theatre. Minneapolis. February.

MISSISSIPPI

BLESSED ASSURANCE by Laddy Sartin. New Stage Theatre. Jackson. January.

NEW JERSEY

THE 75TH by Israel Horowitz. George Street Playhouse. New Brunswick. January.
SPUNK by George Wolfe, adapted for the stage from three short stories by Zora Neale Hurston. Two River Theatre Company. Red Bank. January.

NEW YORK

FULL GALLOP by Mark Hampton and Mary Louise Wilson. Fleetwood Stage Company. New Rochelle. February.
A PERFECT GANESH by Terrence McNally. Kitchen Theatre Company. Ithaca. January.
SIDE MAN by Warren Leight. Ujima Theatre. Buffalo. November.
THE UNEXPECTED MAN by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton. Kitchen Theatre Company. Ithaca. November.

NORTH CAROLINA

AUGUST SNOW by Reynolds Price. Triad Stage. Greensboro. February.
DINNER WITH FRIENDS by Donald Margulies. PlayMakers Repertory Company. Chapel Hill. January.
OLD WICKED SONGS by Jon Marans. Triad Stage. Greensboro. February.
PROOF by David Auburn. PlayMakers Repertory Company. Chapel Hill. November.
THE SANTALAND DIARIES by David Sedaris, adapted by Joe Mantello. Actors Theatre of Charlotte. Charlotte. December.
THE WAITING ROOM by Lisa Loomer. Actors Theatre of Charlotte. Charlotte. January.

OHIO

CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE OF JOY by Lynn Nottage. Cleveland Play House. Cleveland. February.
ESCANABA IN DA MOONLIGHT by Jeff Daniels. CATCO, Contemporary American Theatre Co. Columbus. January.
HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH by John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask. Cleveland Public Theatre. Cleveland. December.
THE MAI by Marina Carr. Dobama. Cleveland. November.
PROOF by David Auburn. Cleveland Play House. Cleveland. January.
TAPE by Stephen Belber. Ensemble Theatre (CIN). Cincinnati. February.

OKLAHOMA

DINNER WITH FRIENDS by Donald Margulies. Pollard Theatre. Guthrie. February.

OREGON

THE SANTALAND DIARIES by David Sedaris, adapted by Joe Mantello. Portland Center Stage. Portland. December.

PENNSYLVANIA

DRIVING MISS DAISY by Alfred Uhry. Pittsburgh Public Theater. Pittsburgh. November.
FULLY COMMITTED by Becky Mode. Act II Playhouse. Ambler. November.
IN THE BLOOD by Suzan-Lori Parks. People's Light and Theatre Company. Malvern. January.
NORTHEAST LOCAL by Tom Donaghy. Arden Theatre Company. Philadelphia. February.
THE SANTALAND DIARIES by David Sedaris, adapted by Joe Mantello. Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble. Bloomsburg. December.

SOUTH CAROLINA

PROOF by David Auburn. Charleston Stage. Charleston. January.
THE SANTALAND DIARIES by David Sedaris, adapted by Joe Mantello. Trustus. Columbia. December.

TENNESSEE

THE KENTUCKY CYCLE by Robert Schenkkan. Mockingbird Public Theatre. Nashville. February.
THE SANTALAND DIARIES by David Sedaris, adapted by Joe Mantello. Playhouse on the Square. Memphis. November.

TEXAS

THE LARAMIE PROJECT by Moisés Kaufman and the members of Tectonic Theater Project. Watertower Theatre. Addison. January.
OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS by Joe DiPietro. Main Street Theatre. Houston. November.
THE SANTALAND DIARIES by David Sedaris, adapted by Joe Mantello. Watertower Theatre. Addison. December.

UTAH

LOBBY HERO by Kenneth Lonergan. Salt Lake Acting Company. Salt Lake City. February.

VERMONT

BETRAYAL by Harold Pinter. Vermont Stage Company. Burlington. January.

VIRGINIA

PROOF by David Auburn. Barksdale Theatre. Richmond. February.

WASHINGTON

CRIMES OF THE HEART by Beth Henley. Tacoma Actors Guild. Tacoma. February.
DRIVING MISS DAISY by Alfred Uhry. Village Theatre. Issaquah. January.
THE LONESOME WEST by Martin McDonagh. Harlequin Productions. Olympia. January.

WISCONSIN

LOBBY HERO by Kenneth Lonergan. Madison Repertory Theatre. Madison. January.
LOVE LETTERS by A.R. Gurney. Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts. Brookfield. February.
PROOF by David Auburn. Milwaukee Repertory Theatre Company. Milwaukee. December.

PUERTO RICO

FIVE WOMEN WEARING THE SAME DRESS by Alan Ball. Producciones Arena, Inc. San Juan. November.

CANADA

'ART' by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton. Theatre New Brunswick. Fredericton, New Brunswick. January.
COLLECTED STORIES by Donald Margulies. Neptune Theatre. Halifax, Nova Scotia. February.
DEATHTRAP by Ira Levin. Stage West Calgary. Calgary, Alberta. February.
IF WE ARE WOMEN by Joanna McClelland Glass. Citadel Theatre. Edmonton, Alberta. January.
THE LARAMIE PROJECT by Moisés Kaufman and the members of Tectonic Theater Project. Studio 180. Thornhill, Ontario. January.
PROOF by David Auburn. Citadel Theatre. Edmonton, Alberta. November.
PROOF. Grand Theatre. London Ontario. February.
PROOF. The Guild Hall Theatre. Whitehorse, Yukon. November.
SHAKESPEARE'S R&J by Joe Calarco. The Shakespeare Company. Calgary, Alberta. February.
SIDE MAN by Warren Leight. Tarragon Theatre. Toronto, Ontario. November.
SYLVIA by A.R. Gurney. Theatre Aquarius. Hamilton, Ontario. January.
WIT by Margaret Edson. Great Canadian Theatre Company. Ottawa, Ontario. January.

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AT PLAY

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show is not a parody. The tunes, the lyrics and the story are all original, and if anyone disagrees, I shall be happy to debate them, refute them, saw through their rib cage with my incisors and extract their juicy spleen.

FELLMETH. It seems that the press continues to fall prey to the hysteria that the townsfolk of Hope Falls fell prey to, hysteria that led to your being caged and then released and then again hunted down like a frothing rabid animal only to emerge as an international star. It's a schizophrenic adore-fear relationship the public has with you. Certainly, aside from perhaps Michael Jackson, you're the only major celebrity I know of who inspires, well, such horror. Robert mentioned earlier the accusations that you've eaten a couple of people, though, of

course, you've never been convicted. Do you think the fear is unjustified? How do you explain the apparent adore-fear thing?

EDGAR. It's all in the face, mate. Now I (after years of therapy) have come to accept my unique beauty — smooth alabaster skin, perfect bone structure, enormous erotic veined ears, double-jointed sabertoothed-tiger jaws — but many strangers do still tend to greet me with a bit of the old soiling-the-trousers and fleeing-in-tears. That's why we did a musical — to show me in the proper light, as the icon I should be, rather than the freak you think you know. And poor, deluded Jacko — millions of dollars in plastic surgery and I ask you, does he yet resemble me? I give him an A for effort though.

VAUGHAN. One last ques — (Phone rings.)

EDGAR. Is that you?

VAUGHAN. I think it's —

FELLMETH. Maybe it's —

EDGAR. No, it's me. (Picks up phone.) Talk to me! Paulie! Tell me you've fixed it! ... Federal, Paulie? New Jersey to New York is not crossing a state line, is it? ... Really? ... They're coming here? ... I see ... Well, if they think they're going to get Edgar Parker to do a perp walk just so they can get their pictures in the *Weekly World News*, they've got another think coming! ... Ashcroft, Smashcroft, this is an affront, and *I will not tolerate it!* (Hangs up.) Gentlemen, I'm very sorry to cut this short, but I must go. Now.

With that, Bat Boy and his entourage beat a hasty retreat to his limousine and vanished into the moonlit night. ■



HEDWIG
 AND THE ANGRY INCH

In the spring of 1998 my aunt and her husband arrived in New York City from the Midwest for a week's vacation. "We feel like Ma and Pa Kettle in the big city!" they told me. They wanted a quintessential New York experience, and after consideration, I settled on a show, little known at the time, playing at the Jane Street Theatre downtown called *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. I'd recently seen it with some colleagues and loved it. It was far and away the most fun I'd had at a musical in ages, but I was worried that the show might be too much for them.

The tale of an East German transsexual rocker named Hedwig who marries Luther, an

American GI, and is later abandoned in a Kansas trailer park, only to fall for geeky Tommy Speck, who steals all her songs and achieves rock-star fame, *Hedwig* was outrageous, to say the least. The "angry inch" of the title referred to the botched sex-change operation Hedwig underwent in order to marry Luther, and I feared that "part" of the show alone might turn them irreparably off, not to mention what followed. But out of curiosity or perversity or just because it was a truly great show, I sent them anyway. Afterwards, I was to meet them for dinner.

I found them in the restaurant wide-eyed, a look of shock on their faces. "Well, how was it?" I smiled brightly. There was a pause as they

exchanged a glance, then — to my relief — burst out laughing. "We loved loved *loved it!*" Through their fits of laughter, they recounted the most hysterical moments of the show for me, in detail, and in their delight at this fantastically bizarre tale I was allowed to see a side of them I'd never seen before. It occurred to me that my worries about visiting the travails of a transsexual East German rocker on my Midwestern aunt and her husband had been the result of my own provincialism, not theirs. By the end of the evening, after the laughter had begun to die down, my aunt said it all when she offered up her final words on Hedwig, "Rock on!" she said, "Rock on!" ■

—Michael Q. Fellmeth