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

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.

FERMETH. 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.

Once upon a time, my dreams were the dreams of any half-bat/half-boy.
January 22, 1966, Jacques Brel is Alive and Well 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 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, Roy 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 M Arabises," 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 marchés 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 renown 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.
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 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 plan 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 rust-remover, to snatchneglected 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

I t 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 knew 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 front of the camera … through the TV … to me. Suddenly she leaned forward, looked right about me and said, “Howie (my collaborator) and me. She 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, Len. H. O. Wm ’male to just make bit 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 Gailin (one of our producers) enough for getting Dolly to come to our show. Then it was time for Dolly to leave. She told us she would watch the Regis and Kathy Lee Show the next morning. And as quickly as she 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. 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 schoolgirl. But so what? She was there. I had proof! Of 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 heart-rending 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 strike into life with newfound strength and bittersweet resolve.

PORTIA COUGHLAN by Marina Carr
Beautifully bold 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
Novelists — warring physicists 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 Dr. Robert Dashiell Gray’s death, his devoted 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 that place 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 unequable degrees of depth and abandon.

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 young men stand 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
Ashley and Donald, best friends, celebrate their graduations and twenty-second birthdays together in Abbey’s parents’ remote countryside 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 Buddha’s, sexually ambiguous 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 picturesque involving Niagara Falls, a lonely tuxedo captain, a pair of bickering private detectives and a husband’s dirty little secret.

YELLOW MAN by Dael Orlandersmith
A character memory play based on 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 tragicall intertwined with hers. Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

5 AT PLAY
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? W hite people are blowing up black girls in Birmingham churches. Black people are shouting “Black is beautiful” and coveting light skin. Vivica 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.

HEWDIG 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 transplantsthe maritime world of the original Pinafore to the glamorous world of Hollywood filmmaking.

JACQUES BREL IS ALIVE AND WELL & LIVING IN PARIS
In this lighthearted musical adaptation of Beatrix Potter’s classic tale, Jemima Puddle-Duck is brought to vivid theatrical life in this intense musical experience.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
A Vaudevillized musical version of Molière’s The Doctor in Spite of Himself captures the excitement and verve of the Paris of his day.

JOY
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.

THE MERRY WIVES OF MARRIETTA
A musical comedy/horror show about a half-boy/half-bat creature who’s discovered in a cave in West Virginia.

THE NIGHT OF THE IFFY BROADWAY BROADWAY
A musical comedy/horror show about a half-boy/half-bat creature who’s discovered in a cave in West Virginia.

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

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.

SWMING ON A STAR
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
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.

TONIGHT IS THE NIGHT
A musical comedy/horror show about a half-boy/half-bat creature who’s discovered in a cave in West Virginia.

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

TWO TALES OF TOLUCA
This musical comedy/horror show about a half-boy/half-bat creature who’s discovered in a cave in West Virginia.

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

ZOMBIES FROM THE BEYOND
A musical comedy/horror show about a half-boy/half-bat creature who’s discovered in a cave in West Virginia.

THE ZULU AND THE ZAYDA
A Vaudevillized musical version of Molière’s The Doctor in Spite of Himself captures the excitement and verve of the Paris of his day.

For more information on these musicals, visit www.dramatists.com
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 them, saw through their rib cage with my incisors and extract their juicy spleen.

EDGAR. It's all in the face, mate. The "angry inch" of the title referred to the trailer park, only to fall for geeky Tommy Speck, 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 irrepairably 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. 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.

By the end of the evening, after the laughter and 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 saber-toothed-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 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 saber-toothed-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 the public 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 them, saw through their rib cage with my incisors and extract their juicy spleen.

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 you think you'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, Smash-croft, 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.

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.

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