

INTRODUCTION TO CATS

Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats – on which the musical **CATS** is based – was written by TS Eliot during the 1930s and first published in 1939 by Faber & Faber. Although Eliot generally intended his cat poems to be for children, they were also appealing and amusing to adults.

With a little adaptation, Andrew Lloyd Webber used Eliot's poems as lyrics and set them to music to create the musical **CATS**. The inclusion of elements of *Rhapsody on a Windy Night* and some of Eliot's unpublished writings enabled the character of Grizabella the Glamour Cat to be used. As a result, a storyline emerged that formed a shape for the poems and a basis for a musical.

A set was designed by John Napier – to cat scale – creating a place where the cats could congregate for the Jellicle Ball. Dance pieces were choreographed by Gillian Lynne to enable the performers to move and express themselves as cats.

CATS first opened in May 1981 at the New London Theatre and went on to become a huge success throughout the world, influencing not only future musical theatre but also the development of future performers and creators of musicals.

Over sixty years after Eliot wrote his poems and twenty years after **CATS** first appeared as a musical, the story and characters still hold immense appeal for audiences of any age or background. **CATS** takes you into a world of fascinating creatures, with stories to tell and journeys to take, expressed through music, song and dance.



CATS

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