GENERAL

cats the musical on dvd

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Introduction

For theater lovers, the 1981 Broadway hit **Cats**remains a cultural touchstone that continues to enchant audiences worldwide. While the live experience is undeniably magical, owning a copy of the musical on DVD brings the spectacle into the comfort of your living room. Whether you're a seasoned fan looking to revisit the iconic songs or a newcomer curious about what makes this show legendary, the DVD version offers an intimate and convenient way to enjoy the story, the choreography, and the unforgettable score.

In this comprehensive guide, we'll explore everything you need to know about **Cats the musical on DVD**—from production details and cast highlights to buying tips and user reviews. By the end, you'll understand why this DVD is a must have addition to any theater aficionado's collection.

About the Musical Cats

Origins and Inspiration

Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* is built upon the 1939 poetry collection *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*by T. S. Eliot. The adaptation transforms Eliot's whimsical verses into a vibrant, character-driven narrative that explores the lives of a group of cats known as the Jellicles. Each cat is given a chance to ascend to the Heaviside Layer—a metaphorical afterlife—through a midnight ritual that tests their worthiness.

Plot Overview

The story centers on the Jellicles' nightly gathering in a moonlit alley, where they perform the "Jellicle Song." The elder cat, Old Deuteronomy, calls upon the Jellicles to choose a cat who will be chosen to be reborn. As the night progresses, several cats—Grizabella, Macavity, Rum Tum Tugger, and others—perform individual songs that reveal their personalities and backstories. The climax arrives when Old Deuteronomy announces the chosen cat, and the audience is left with a bittersweet reflection on life, death, and the possibility of renewal.

Key Musical Numbers

- Memory – A haunting ballad sung by Grizabella, the "former glamorous diva."
- Jellicle Song – A rousing ensemble number that sets the tone for the Jellicles' tradition.
- Mr. Mistoffelees – A whimsical dance piece highlighting the mischievous cat's tricks.
- Alabama Song – A playful number that showcases the mischievousness of the Jellicles.
- Mr. Mistoffelees (Reprise) – A lighter reprise that brings the show to a joyous close.

Why the DVD Version is a Game Changer

Convenience Meets Immersion

While watching a live performance offers an electric atmosphere, a DVD provides a curated experience with added benefits:

1. High Quality Audio-Visual – Modern DVD remasters bring crisp sound and sharp visuals, preserving the original production's grandeur.
2. Rewatchability – You can pause, rewind, or replay your favorite numbers without the constraints of a theater

schedule.

3. Accessibility – Subtitles, audio descriptions, and language options make the show accessible to a broader audience.

Behind the Scenes

DVD releases often include bonus content such as behind the scenes footage, interviews with the creative team, and commentary tracks. These extras give fans deeper insight into the creative process and the challenges of staging a production as large as *Cats*.

DVD Release Details

Available Editions

The most popular DVD editions include:

- Standard Edition – Full-length performance, basic packaging.
- Collector's Edition – Includes a deluxe case, a booklet with production notes, and a bonus disc with extended scenes.
- Digital Download – For those who prefer streaming, the show is available on platforms like Amazon Prime Video and iTunes.

Technical Specifications

When selecting a DVD, pay attention to the following:

- Video Quality – Look for 1080p or 720p resolution; 1080p offers the best clarity.
- Audio Format – Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound provides immersive audio.
- Region Code – Ensure the DVD's region code matches your playback device.

How to Get the DVD

Official Retailers

You can purchase the DVD from reputable retailers such as:

- Amazon – Offers competitive prices and fast shipping.
- Best Buy – Often includes bundle deals with other musical DVDs.
- Hulu and iTunes – For digital versions with instant download.

Second Hand Options

If you're on a budget, consider:

- eBay – Search for listings with good seller ratings.
- Local theater shops – Some venues sell used DVDs at discounted prices.
- Library rentals – Many libraries offer DVDs for short-term borrowing.

Buying Tips

1. Check for Authenticity – Verify that the DVD is an official release from the production company.
2. Read Reviews – Look at user feedback for any issues with audio or video quality.
3. Compare Prices – Use price comparison tools to find the best deal.

Features of the DVD

Full-Length Performance

The DVD captures the entire 90 minute show, from the opening “Jellicle Song” to the final “Memory.” No scenes are omitted, giving you a complete theatrical experience.

Bonus Content

Many editions come with:

- Interviews – Conversations with the director, choreographer, and lead performers.
- Making of Featurettes – A look at set design, costume creation, and rehearsals.
- Alternate Takes – Different camera angles and performance variations.

Audio Options

Choose from:

- Stereo – Standard audio for everyday viewing.
- Dolby Digital 5.1 – Surround sound for a more immersive experience.
- Language Subtitles – Available in multiple languages to accommodate non English speakers.

User Reviews and Critical Reception

Positive Highlights

- Authentic Stage Experience – Reviewers praise the DVD for capturing the live energy of the Broadway production.
- High Production Value – The set design, lighting, and choreography are praised for their fidelity to the original stage show.
- Convenient Extras – Fans love the behind the scenes content that offers deeper insight into the creative process.

Areas of Criticism

- Audio Mixing – Some users note that certain vocal lines are slightly under mixed, though this is a minor issue in the grand scheme.
- Video Compression – A few reviewers mention that the video may appear slightly compressed, especially on older DVD players.

Behind the Scenes: Production Insights

Set Design

The stage of *Cats*is a sprawling, moonlit alley filled with towering cat trees, whimsical lighting, and a large, ornate set piece that doubles as a throne for Old Deuteronomy. The design team used a combination of practical effects and digital overlays to create a surreal environment that feels both grounded and fantastical.

Costume Creation

Each character’s costume reflects their personality. Grizabella’s tattered, yet elegant gown contrasts sharply with Rum Tum Tugger’s sleek, rebellious attire. The costume designers employed a mix of natural fibers and faux fur to achieve the desired texture and movement.

Choreography

Christopher Wheeldon’s choreography for the show is a blend of contemporary dance and theatrical pantomime. The movement is designed to highlight each cat’s individuality while maintaining a cohesive ensemble feel. The DVD’s camera angles capture the intricate footwork, especially in the “Jellicle Song” ensemble sequence.

Why Cats Remains Timeless

Universal Themes

Beyond its feline façade, *Cats* tackles themes of aging, redemption, and the search for belonging—issues that resonate with audiences of all ages. Grizabella's longing for acceptance speaks to anyone who has felt marginalized or forgotten.

Musical Innovation

The score combines memorable melodies with intricate harmonies, creating a soundscape that is both catchy and emotionally powerful. Songs like "Memory" have become cultural staples, often performed in karaoke bars and talent shows worldwide.

Cross Generational Appeal

With a strong presence in both theater circles and popular culture, *Cats* bridges the gap between classical musical theater enthusiasts and mainstream pop audiences. The DVD's accessibility ensures that younger viewers can experience the show's charm without the barrier of a theater ticket.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the DVD suitable for children?

Yes, the content is family friendly. However, the themes of death and rebirth may require parental guidance for younger viewers.

Can I watch the DVD on my smart TV?

Absolutely. Most modern smart TVs support DVD playback. If your TV lacks a DVD drive, you can use an external player or stream the digital version via a compatible app.

Does the DVD include subtitles?

Most official releases come with English subtitles, and some editions offer subtitles in additional languages such as Spanish, French, and German.

What is the difference between the Standard and Collector's editions?

The Collector's edition typically includes a premium case, a booklet with production notes, and bonus content such as extended scenes or interviews. The Standard edition offers the main performance with basic packaging.

Conclusion

Owning **Cats the musical on DVD** is more than just a purchase—it's an investment in a cultural milestone that continues to inspire and entertain. Whether you're reliving the magic of the original Broadway run or discovering the show for the first time, the DVD delivers the full theatrical experience right to your living room. With its high production quality, insightful behind the scenes content, and timeless themes, *Cats* remains a shining example of how musical theater can transcend the stage and become a lasting part of our collective imagination. Don't miss the chance to bring this iconic spectacle home; the curtain is always open for you.

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