

Hit musical 'Cats' gets rap song

10th July, 2014



The hit musical 'Cats' has had a slight makeover for its comeback performances starting in December in London. One of the traditional songs will now be a rap. The

musical's writer, Andrew Lloyd Webber, said he felt the musical needed to be updated to appeal to a new generation of theatre-goers. Lloyd Webber based his musical on a famous book called "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats" by the famous British writer T. S. Eliot. It tells the story of a group of cats called the Jellicles, who have to decide which cat gets to come back to life after death. 'Cats' first opened in London's West End in 1981 and on Broadway in New York in 1982. It won numerous awards and ran for twenty-one years in the English capital.

The rap will be performed by the Rum Tum Tugger character, who is a rebellious street cat. Lloyd Webber said the original poem that the cat sings, written in the 1930s, has a strong rap rhythm. He joked that T.S. Eliot may have been the world's first rapper, saying: "I've come to the conclusion...that maybe Eliot was the inventor of rap." He added: "I think Rum Tum Tugger is going to have to become a street cat for today and he has to do hip-hop." The show's producer, Sir Trevor Nunn, explained the decision to include the rap. He said: "There is a whole generation of kids who haven't seen 'Cats' or discovered it. And there are certainly elements of the show that can be reinvented in very contemporary terms."

Sources: Daily Telegraph / Evening Standard / Wikipedia

Writing

Compare and contrast rap and rock. Which do you prefer? Why?

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

makeover / comeback / traditional / appeal / generation / famous / awards / capital / performed / rebellious / rhythm / rapper / inventor / hip-hop / discovered / show

True / False

- All songs in the new version of the musical 'Cats' will be rapped. T / F
- Rap has been introduced to get younger people to see musicals. T / F
- The story of 'Cats' is based on an entry about cats in an encyclopaedia. T / F
- 'Cats' opened in New York a year after it opened in London. T / F
- The rap will be performed by the cat who follows all the rules. T / F
- The 'Cats' writer joked that a famous British writer was the first rapper. T / F
- The writer of 'Cats' is also the producer. T / F
- A guy called Nunn said parts of the show could be made more modern. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. hit | a. tempo |
| 2. traditional | b. age group |
| 3. updated | c. creator |
| 4. generation | d. standard |
| 5. ran | e. energised |
| 6. rhythm | f. modernised |
| 7. conclusion | g. incorporate |
| 8. inventor | h. box-office success |
| 9. include | i. deduction |
| 10. invigorated | j. continued |

Discussion – Student A

- Do you like musicals?
- How do musicals in your culture compare with Broadway ones?
- How are musicals and operas different? Which are better?
- Is it a good idea to put rap in older musicals to make them more modern?
- Do you think more people will want to see Cats because it has a rap?
- Would you prefer to watch a musical or play?
- Do you think London and Broadway musicals are exciting?
- What's the best musical from your culture?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. The hit musical 'Cats' has had | a. to be updated |
| 2. comeback | b. poem |
| 3. the musical needed | c. awards |
| 4. come back | d. terms |
| 5. It won numerous | e. a slight makeover |
| 6. the original | f. of kids |
| 7. a strong | g. to life |
| 8. the inventor | h. performances |
| 9. a whole generation | i. of rap |
| 10. in very contemporary | j. rap rhythm |

Discussion – Student B

- Is there anything rebellious about you?
- Would you like to see the musical Cats?
- Is it possible the writer T.S. Eliot could have invented rap?
- What do you know about the history of rap?
- Is rap music?
- What is the appeal of musicals?
- Is it important for musicals to be "modern"?
- What questions would you like to ask Andrew Lloyd Webber?

Spelling

- The hit musical 'Cats' has had a slight rkvemoea
- comeback femraecsrnp
- the dniartltaio songs
- appeal to a new oraegteinn
- It won eumounsr awards
- in the English aliaptc
- The rap will be eorepdrmf
- a irebleuslo street cat
- a strong rap tmhryh
- the oetvirnn of rap
- eeletnsm of the show
- in very ypecntaoomr terms

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. b	5. j
6. a	7. i	8. c	9. g	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Rap

You think rap is the best music for musicals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their types of music. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rock, classical or punk.

Role B – Rock

You think rock is the best music for musicals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their types of music. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rap, classical or punk.

Role C – Classical

You think classical is the best music for musicals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their types of music. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rock, rap or punk.

Role D – Punk

You think punk is the best music for musicals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their types of music. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rock, classical or rap.

Speaking – Music

Rank these with your partner. Put the best music for a musical at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| • rap | • rap |
| • rock | • rock |
| • classical | • classical |
| • jazz | • jazz |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.