

Gus: The Theatre Cat

Andrew Lloyd Webber

Gus is the Cat at the Theatre Door
His name as I ought to have told you before
Is really Asparagus, but that's such a fuss
To pronounce that we usually call him
Just Gus

His coat's very shabby
He's thin as a rake
And he suffers from palsy that makes his paw shake
Yet he was in his youth quite the smartest of cats
But no longer a terror to mice or to rats
For he isn't the cat that he was in his prime
Though his name was quite famous, he says, in his time
And whenever he joins his friends at their club
(Which takes place at the back of the neighbouring pub)
He loves to regale them if someone else pays
With anecdotes drawn from his palmiest days
For he once was a star of the highest degree
He has acted with Irving, he's acted with Tree
And he likes to relate his success on the halls
Where the gallery once gave him seven catcalls
But his grandest creation as he loves to tell
Was Firefrorefiddle, the Fiend of the Fell

"I have played, in my time, every possible part
And I used to know seventy speeches by heart
I'd extemporize backchat
I knew how to gag
And I knew how to let the cat out of the bag
I knew how to act with my back and my tail
With an hour of rehearsal
I never could fail
I'd a voice that would soften the hardest of hearts
Whether I took the lead or in character parts

I have sat by the bedside of poor little Nell
When the curfew was rung then I swung on the bell
In the pantomime season I never fell flat
And I once understudied Dick Whittington's cat
But my grandest creation
As history will tell
Was Firefrorefiddle, the Fiend of the Fell"

Then if someone will give him a toothful of gin
He will tell how he once played a part in East Lynne
At a Shakespeare performance he once walked on pat
When some actor suggested the need for a cat

"And I say now these kittens
They do not get trained
As we did in the days when Victoria reigned
They never get drilled in a regular troupe
And they think they are smart
Just to jump through a hoop"

And he says as he scratches himself with his claws
"Well, the theatre is certainly not what it was

These modern productions are all very well
But there's nothing to equal from what I hear tell
That moment of mystery when I made history
As Firefrorefiddle, the Fiend of the Fell"

"I once crossed the stage on a telegraph wire
To rescue a child when a house was on fire
And I think that I still can much better than most
Produce blood-curdling noises to bring on the ghost
And I once played Growltiger
Could do it again
Could do it again
Could do it again . . ."