

Previews

Bloom's Day

"I don't know what's happening," says Matthew Broderick. "Even when I did Neil Simon's plays, which, particularly back then, were big deals, it was not like this." After rave reviews in Chicago, Mel Brooks's new musical adaptation of his outrageous theatrical farce **The Producers**, in which Broderick plays Leo Bloom, is rolling into New York on an advance that rivals the cash flow of Hillary's Senate campaign. Broderick says the cast doesn't know what to do with all the early adulation: "It's a strange thing, because they built extra time into the schedule after Chicago so they could write new numbers or make major cuts." The only problem is, Mel Brooks, writer Thomas Meehan, and choreographer-director Susan Stroman have decided to just trim and tweak. "There's been all this time with not much to do," says Broderick, preparing for the first week of previews. "Right now, we just want to get back in front of an audience." When Broderick does step back onstage with Nathan Lane, the two (pictured) will face the daunting challenge of reprising roles immortalized by Zero Mostel and Gene Wilder—and Broderick gladly admits that he hasn't exactly reinvented Wilder's mania. "I can't help sometimes but do exactly what he did. I literally just can't help it," he says. "Sometimes, I look at Nathan in his red robe and his silk scarf—he's even doing a bit of a comb-over, even though he has plenty of hair—and it's like being on the set of a movie that you loved when you were a kid." That said, "I think as you keep doing it over and over again, it starts to be more your own," Broderick explains. "But I don't want to sound at all confident," he says. "I don't want God to hear it—and smite it." In previews for an April 19 opening. (See "Broadway.")

L.H.

Les Misérables

What a story! Just synopsis the plot brings tears to the iciest of eyes. (Simon: 3/31/97.) \$20-\$85. Mon.-Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 3/12/87. • Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

The Lion King

This spectacle rightfully earns that most abused of epithets: *magical*. (Simon: 12/1/97.) \$20-\$90. Wed.-Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened: 11/13/97. • New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (212-307-4747).

The Music Man

Back in 1957, Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* made a star out of Robert Preston; the current revival should do the same for Rebecca Luker. As Marian Paroo, the librarian of River City, Iowa, who goes from tight-lipped spinster to glowing innamorata in this happy show, Miss Luker gives a performance as detailed, nuanced, and cherishable as ever turned a performer into a legend. Susan Stroman's production has other assets as well. (Simon: 5/8/00.) \$40-\$90. Tues.-Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd St. (212-307-4100).

The Phantom of the Opera

Unlike *Cats*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's other blockbuster refuses to give up the ghost. \$20-\$85. Mon.-Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 1/26/88. • Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Proof

David Auburn's *Proof* is what *Copenhagen* ought to be: a play about scientists whose science matters less than their humanity. Here, those of us who want their dramatic characters to be real people need not feel excluded. Robert, a world-famous mathematician who went crazy; Catherine, his mathematically brilliant but too-depressed-to-work daughter; Hal, a young math teacher going through Robert's hundred-plus confused notebooks; and Claire, Robert's



older daughter and a successful actuary, are above all fascinating individuals. As directed by Daniel Sullivan, the performances are perfect. As for Mary-Louise Parker, her Catherine is a performance of genius. (Simon: 6/5/00.) \$24-\$69. Tues.-Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 W. 48th St. (212-239-6200).

Rent

The late Jonathan Larson's reimagining of Puccini's *La Bohème* as it might be lived by a gaggle of contemporary sick and hip types living in the East Village. \$35-\$80. Tues.-Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. • Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (212-307-4100).

Riverdance

The Irish return. \$25-\$80. Wed.-Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. (212-307-4100).

The Rocky Horror Show

Christopher Ashley (Jeffrey) directs a surreal cast in Frank N. Furter's naughty pad. Lifelong rocker Joan Jett makes her Broadway debut opposite *Rent* star Daphne Rubin-Vega, stage vet Tom Hewitt, comics Dick Cavett and Lea De Laria, and Alice Ripley of *Side Show* (very appropriate). \$75. Tues.-Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9:45, Sun. at 2 and 7. • Circle in the Square, 1633 Broadway (212-239-6200).

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe

Lily Tomlin returns, along with an astonishing assortment of characters led by Trudy, a homeless lady

and "creative consultant to these aliens from outer space" who knows that reality is really just "a collective hunch." The solo show that makes other solo shows look like, well, solo shows, it's written and directed by Jane Wagner. Tomlin's longtime collaborator and partner. As Trudy says, "I'm glad I got delusions of grandeur. It makes me feel a lot better about myself." \$50-\$65. Tues.-Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 5/13. • Booth Theatre, 222 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

Seussical

The struggling but optimistic musical. \$25-\$85. Wed.-Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • Richard Rodgers Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. (212-307-4100).

The Tale of the Allergist's Wife

Who would have expected from a campy downtown playwright a nicely structured, intelligently funny, satirically relevant uptown comedy? In Charles Busch's new play, the retired but still overactive allergist Dr. Ira Taub is married to Marjorie, an immobilized nervous wreck since the death of her therapist. If you seek an ideal cast, look no further. Linda Lavin, for whom the admiring Busch wrote Marjorie as, he says, a kind of King Lear, is that and more: Lady Macbeth, Willy Loman, Lydia Languish, and, better yet, herself at her dizzying best. (Simon: 3/13/00.) Also starring Tony Roberts and Michele Lee. \$30-\$70.

Mon.-Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St. (212-239-6200).

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Code of the West

Mark R. Giesler wrote and directs this comedy about Joshua A. Norton, who proclaimed himself Emperor of the United States in 1859 San Francisco. \$40. Tues.-Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/29 opening. • McGinn/Cazale Theater, 2162 Broadway (212-279-4200).

Eula Mae's Beauty, Bait, and Tackle

Former rodeo star Eula Mae sets up shop in a small town. \$40. Mon.-Sat. at 8. Previews begin 3/30 for a 4/4 opening. • Jose Quintero Theatre, 534 W. 42nd St.

(212-244-7529).

Mnemonic

This 1999 London Drama Critics Award winner by Theatre de Complicite looks to be an experimental-theater addict's delight. \$55. Tues.-Sat. at 8, Sat and Sun. at 2, Sun at 7. In previews for a 3/28 opening. • John Jay College Theater, 899 Tenth Ave., near 58th St. (212-239-6200).

Passion Play

A middle-aged couple is seduced by a young woman in this comedy by Peter Nichols. \$25-\$55. Tues.-Fri. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3, Sun. at 7:30. In previews for a 4/4 opening. • Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta La. (212-307-4100).

Ground Rules

Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where discount tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th St. and 2 World Trade Center, mezzanine level; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0740.