

HELLO, I'M EDGAR LOESSIN WITH LOESSIN AT LARGE.. THE LION KING IS VISUALLY ASTOUNDING, SPECTACULAR, AND MAGICAL. IT BUBBLES WITH IMAGINATION. IT ACHIEVES BRILLIANT THEATRICAL SOPHISTICATION AND YET MAINTAINS ITS ATTRACTION FOR CHILDREN. TO PUT IT SIMPLY AND ACCURATELY, IT'S A WORK OF ART FROM START TO FINISH. THE CREATOR OF THIS AWE INSPIRING EVENT IS JULIE TAYMOR. NOT MANY BROADWAY SHOWS RECEIVE AN EDITORIAL IN THE DISNEYS FOR HAVING THE COURAGE TO TAKE RISKS, AND ALLOW TAYMOR TO TEST THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATION AND THEATRICALITY. THERE IS NO DUMBING DOWN OF THIS STORY. TAYMOR MAKES A VERY DELIBERATE EFFORT TO REVEAL THE HUMANS WHO GIVE THE LIFE SIZE PUPPETS LIFE. WHAT IS HUMAN IS ALSO ANIMAL AND WHAT IS ANIMAL IS ALSO HUMAN. IT'S THE CIRCLE OF LIFE..WHEN THE ANIMALS FILL THE UNSPOILED SYMBOLIC SAVANNAH AT THE SHOWS OPENING ONE IMAGINES THE GARDEN OF EDEN OR PARADISE. BIRDS FLY AND OTHER CREATURES PRANCE AND PLAY, SOME STIFFLY BUT AT THE SAME TIME GRACEFULLY, ON THEIR STILTS. WHILE IT IS THE VISUAL MAGIC THAT RULES THE EVENING, THE SHOW IS NOT WITHOUT EMOTION AND HEART. RAFIKI, PLAYED BY PHINDILE MKHIZE, IS A MANIACAL BUT WISE SHAMAN WHO INSTANTLY CONJURES UP THE GREAT CONTINENT OF AFRICA IN HER THRILLING OPENING NUMBER. SHE ALSO HELPS TELL THE STORY OF THE LONG JOURNEY OF YOUNG SIMBA TO MATURITY AND TO THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE THRONE. THE CAST OVERALL IS WITHOUT BRASSY BIRD, ZAZU, AND SO IS JOHN PLUMPIS AS TIMON, THE 'NOO YAWKER' VEGETARIAN MEERKAT, WHO IS A BIT NERVOUS AROUND THOSE LION TYPES. HE PARTNERS SUPERBLY WITH WARTHOG PUMBAA, ARTFULLY PRESENTED BY BEN LIPITZ. I WISH THAT I COULD NAME EACH AND EVERY PERFORMER. . ELTON JOHN AND TIM RICE WROTE MOST OF THE MUSIC AND LYRICS. I ESPECIALLY LIKED THE AFRICAN CONTRIBUTIONS OF LEBO M. AND MARK MANCINA... DIRECTOR TAYMOR RECEIVES LAVISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CHOREOGRAPHER GARTH FAGAN, SCENIC DESIGNER RICHARD HUDSON AND LIGHTING DESIGNER DONALD HOLDER IN REALIZING HER UNIQUE VISION..THE IMAGES THEY CREATE MIGHT JUST ROAM AROUND YOUR MIND FOREVER, COMPETING WITH GREAT AND GOOD DREAMS AND WONDERFUL TIMES OF VERY SPECIAL ENCHANTMENT. FOR WHRO-FM, I'M EDGAR LOESSIN WITH LOESSIN AT LARGE AND I'LL SEE YOU AT THE NEXT OPENING.