

IRRESISTIBLE: Edith Piaf and Her Music

Written and performed by Sue Mathys
Fictional prayers and letters based on Edith Piaf's biography
combined with 24 of her beloved *chansons*



Edith Piaf- idol, legend, huge voice in a tiny frame – was born 100 years ago. What was her secret? What made her *IRRESISTIBLE* to every man (and woman) she met? What force drove her life, fueled her voice, endowed her songs with an undeniable authenticity that has captivated more than one generation?

IRRESISTIBLE is not a cabaret act, nor a concert, nor a play. It is a one-woman theatrical experience told through music and text. Sue Mathys has compiled some of Edith Piaf's greatest hits and uncovered some less famed treasures, and in fictional letters and prayers (created from historical facts of Piaf's biography) gives us a glimpse of the bright and colorful light of an extraordinary life — a life full of *joie de vivre*, of generosity of spirit, loud laughter and tender affection. Piaf was an adamant believer in romantic love, but also a passionate worker and ardent lover of the arts. She discovered many new talents and supported them; wrote lyrics and music; indeed, worked hand in hand with the composers and lyricists who created virtually all of her songs – mostly uncredited. She inspired generations with her full-throated passion, in her music as well as in her life. Her disarming directness and charming naiveté, as well as the sheer power of her emotional investment in her performance, enchanted audiences all over the world. This brilliant star who came from the gutter survived the war but died young, physically destroyed by addiction, illness and accidents; but not without shouting "Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien" into the microphone.

What the critics say:

"Sue Mathys is a force with a multilayered voice and fierce determination"

"Sue Mathys gets rather frighteningly close to the ideal embodiment of Piaf"

"She sings, laughs, screams, drinks, loves, and rages with unabated intensity"

"Some Roses sound like trumpets, others saxophones. Mathys can sound like any instrument in the orchestra"

"Mathys has a powerful voice, warm and silky when needed to charm or wheedle and bursting with iron-willed girt"

"Sue Mathys is a singer whose glorious voice fills a stage, and an actress whose in-depth interpretation of a song brings its character and meaning alive"

IRRESISTIBLE is directed by David Hilder, with musical direction by John Bell.

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Bios:

Sue Mathys, a Swiss born and New York trained award winning actress, singer and recording artist, has been hailed for her performances in leading roles across Europe, where she has appeared for more than three decades in countless musicals, plays, concerts, revues, galas, films, TV shows and radio plays. She starred as Norma Desmond in two hundred performances of the German premiere production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Boulevard* (directed by Trevor Nunn), in *Master Class* (Maria Callas), *Piaf* (title role), *Sweeney Todd* (Mrs. Lovett, German premiere), world premieres of the new musicals *Heidi* and *Heidi And Johanna* (Johanna Spyri), *Candide* (Old Lady), toured her One Woman shows *Lila Rosen* (world premiere) and *Act I: The Same Old Song*, played leads and title roles in *Cabaret* (Sally Bowles, many productions), *Nunsense* (Sister Robert Anne, Original German recording), *Company* (Marta), *Irma La Douce* (Irma), *La Belle Helene* (Helene), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Mary Magdalene), *Grease* (Rizzo), *West Side Story* (Anita), *My Fair Lady* (Eliza), the German premiere of *The Rocky Horror Show* (Columbia), *Der Schwarze Hecht* (*Iduna*), *Pippi Langstrumpf* (*Pippi*) and many more. Revues include *One Touch of Weill*, *Hop-Là*, Raymond Queneau's *Autobus S*, and the award winning Hanns Eisler Revue *Ein Genie Bin Ich Selber*. For her portrayal of Edith Piaf in *Piaf* she received a Prix Walo Award (the Swiss "Tony Award"), and all of the last world premieres she starred in (*Heidi And Johanna*, *Drei Bräute Für Ein Halleluja*) were nominated as Best Production for this most prestigious Swiss entertainment award. Concerts include Leonard Bernsteins *Mass* (Deutschlandhalle Berlin), galas with orchestras (Lucerne Symphony, Zürich Weill Orchestra, Pepe Lienhard Big Band) and Jazz formations (Roberto Bossard Trio). CD's with orchestras and cast recordings include *Sue Mathys Sings Broadway And Piaf* (live recording with the 60 piece Luzerner Sinfonieorchester from the sold out 2,000 seat Great Concert Hall of the Kultur-und Kongress-Zentrum in Lucerne), *Piaf*, *Lila Rosen*, *Heidi*, and *Heidi Teil 2*. Since 2008, Sue Mathys is based New York. She made her American Concert Debut at Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, reprised this concert at Carpenter Performance Hall in Irving, Texas, and elated audiences in many gala events (Swiss Ball, Swiss Embassy Washington DC, Cocktail Français at the National Arts Club, Friar's Club, Dutch Treat Club, Actor's Temple Benefit) and New York festivals (Cabaret Festival at Urban Stages, *8-Minute Musicals* at the New York Musical Theatre Festival 2010; *Taking The Plunge*, which reached the finals in the 36th Annual Samuel French Off Off Broadway Short Play Festival 2011). She was a featured singer at the gala opening night of the 21st New York Cabaret Convention 2010 presented by the Mabel Mercer Foundation at Rose Hall (Jazz at Lincoln Center), where her performance garnered a standing ovation. She performed in New York readings (*Neurosis*, *The Musical: Samantha*, *Café Puttanesca: The Baroness*, the new musical *The Rivals: Mrs. Malaprop*), sang the part of the villainess Kitty on the concept recording of the secret agent musical *Sympathy Jones*, and is the voice of Calpurnia in the upcoming video game *The Judgement of Quintus*. Sue Mathys performed her concert *Two Worlds, One Voice* - which received an Agnes Moorehead Award as one of the "Ten Best New York Live Performances of 2009" - in venues in New York (Urban Stages, Metropolitan Room) and at the Library of Congress in Washington DC, in New Jersey, Florida and Rhode Island. Regionally, Sue Mathys played Matron Mama Morton in *Chicago* and Fräulein Schneider in *Cabaret* at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, and starred as Rose in *Gypsy* at the New Bedford Festival Theatre in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and at the Lyric Stage in Irving, near Dallas, Texas, to rave reviews. www.suemathys.com

David Hilder (Director) was named a 2010 Person of the Year by nytheatre.com. New York directorial credits include three shows at TBG Arts Center (the world premieres of Philip Gerson's *Jumping Blind* and Dan Via's *Daddy* and the New York premiere of Martin Casella's *Scituate*), and, for Reverie Productions, *User 927* by Katharine Clark Gray (HERE Arts Center) and *Ping Pong Diplomacy* (59E59 Theatres). He served as Associate Director on the Roundabout Theatre production of *Death Takes a Holiday*, and has also assisted Doug Hughes on *The Royal Family* (5 Tony nominations) and the Broadway and Off Broadway productions of *Frozen* (4 Tony nominations). Other New York: *Margarita and Max* (Best Director, Midtown International Theatre Festival); four editions of *Blogologues*; Lark Play Development Center (including Katharine Clark Gray's *Timber Land* for Playwrights Week 2011); Fresh Fruit Festival (*Hassan & Sylvia*, published in *Plays & Playwrights 2011*, and Best Director for *Miss Mary Dugan*); many rounds of the Atrainplays; Vital Theatre Co. (*Daisy in Disguise*, *Cinderella's Mice*, *Giblet: A Nightmare, Suspense*), Ensemble Studio Theater (*Faithful, Movin' On*). Regional: Olney Theatre (*Joseph...Dreamcoat*), Millbrook Playhouse (*The Last Five Years*), Horizons (*Pumping Josey*), Rep Stage (*The Philadelphia Story*), Theater J (*Social Security, Only Kidding!*), Source Theatre (*Ruthless!*), Pioneer Playhouse (*You Can't Take It With You, The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*). Film: the independent shorts "Final Dis/Cord" and "Faithful." Education: University of Pennsylvania and the O'Neill Center's National Theater Institute. David is also an award-winning playwright and recovering actor. He tweets, too: @hilderthrguy. www.davidhilder.com

John Bell (Music Director and Pianist):

New York: Sondheim's *Marry Me A Little* (Keen Company, New Cast Recording); *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*; *Donnybrook*, *New Girl in Town*, *Meet Me In St. Louis*, *Transport*, and *A Child's Christmas in Wales* (Irish Rep); *Tomorrow Morning*, *Harold & Maude*, *The Body Beautiful* (Cast Recording), *Plain & Fancy*, and *Knickerbocker Holiday* (York Theatre Company); as well as many readings and workshops of new musicals, including four productions in NYMF. John has worked with City Center's Encores (*Irma La Douce*), the New York Pops, Pittsburgh CLO, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. He holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from Ithaca College, an MA in Piano from CUNY, and has studied at the Manhattan School of Music.