

“Les Misérables” Lyricist and Former Theatre Critic Herbert Kretzmer Turns 90 As World’s Longest Running Musical Turns 30

London—September 30, 2015 – Herbert Kretzmer, the former London theatre critic who went on to write the lyrics for “Les Misérables,” the longest running and most successful musical in the world, will celebrate his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on October 5<sup>th</sup>

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, Kretzmer, known affectionately as “Mr. Miz” by his friends, will be honored at London’s Queens Theatre where a special performance of “Les Misérables” will celebrate the show’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and benefit the Save the Children Syria Children’s Appeal.

- Born in South Africa, Herbert Kretzmer spent six years off and on in Paris before moving to London in 1954. From 1951 to 1987, he was a reporter, entertainment columnist, feature writer, and theatre critic for the Johannesburg Sunday Express and London’s Daily Sketch, Sunday Dispatch, Daily Express (where, as senior drama critic, he covered some 2,500 first nights) and the Daily Mail, serving as the paper’s TV critic from 1979 to 1987.

- His feature article for the Daily Mail, “I wrote the lyrics to ‘Les Misérables’ while working as the Mail’s TV critic – and it changed my life” <http://www.herbertkretzmer.com/interview.html> tells the story of how a full-time critic and part-time song writer was chosen to write the lyrics for the most successful musical the world has ever seen.

- He has encountered, interviewed and profiled some of the twentieth century’s legendary theatre, literature, show business and sports personalities, including Rex Harrison, Truman Capote, Walt Disney, Cary Grant, Henry Miller, Billy Wilder, Sugar Ray Robinson, Marcel Marceau, Yul Brynner, Boris Karloff, Marlene Dietrich, J. Paul Getty, John Steinbeck, Duke Ellington, Judy Garland, Groucho Marx, Peter Sellers and even Hitler’s favorite filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl.

- He met Hemingway, ran with the bulls in Pamplona and played poker with John Houston.

- In 2011, he was appointed Officer of the Order of British Empire (OBE) and he was appointed Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French government.

- Susan Boyle’s stunning performance of Kretzmer’s “I Dreamed a Dream” (from “Les Misérables”) on “Britain’s Got Talent” TV program made her an international sensation.

- “Suddenly,” the song he wrote for the blockbuster film version of “Les Misérables” received Golden Globe and Academy Award nominations.

- His other memorable songs include “She” and “Yesterday When I was Young” (both written with Charles Aznavour) and “Goodness Gracious Me.”

In his second career as a lyricist., he wrote the musical “Kristina” with Benny Anderson and Bjorn Ulvaeus from ABBA, “Marguerite” with “Les Misérables” colleagues Claude-Michael Schonberg and Alain Boublil, and the film, “Can Heironymus Merkin Ever Forget Mercy Humpe And Find True Happiness?” with Anthony Newley.

**“Les Misérables” at 30**

- On October 8, (three days after lyricist Herbert Kretzmer celebrates his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday), the London production of “Les Misérables” will celebrate the show’s 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is currently the longest running musical in the world, having played over 51,000 professional performances before a total audience of 70 million people and earning over three billion dollars.
- **“Les Misérables” has been translated into 22 different languages:** English, Japanese, Hebrew, Hungarian, Icelandic, Norwegian, German, Polish, Swedish, Dutch, Danish, French, Czech, Castilian, Mauritian Creole, Flemish, Finnish, Argentinean Spanish, Portuguese, Estonian, Mexican Spanish and Korean.
- **Over 100 professional companies have opened “Les Misérables” worldwide.**
- **Productions have played in 44 countries and 349 cities.** Countries include Japan, Israel, Hungary, Iceland, Poland, Sweden, Czech Republic, China, Bermuda, Malta, Argentina, Germany, Australia, Estonia, Korea, South Africa, Belgium, Finland, Serbia, France, Canary Islands, Philippines, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Mauritius, Scotland and Brazil.
- **“Les Misérables” has won over 125 major theatre awards, including eight Tonys and five Drama Desk awards.**
- **There have been 47 cast recordings of “Les Misérables,” with the original Broadway cast album winning a Grammy.**
- **There are approximately 100 cast and crew members directly involved in each performance.**
- **Each performance requires nearly 400 complete costumes (1,780 items of clothing and 31 wigs).**
- **“Les Misérables” is the fifth longest running show in Broadway history, after “Phantom of the Opera,” “Cats,” “Chicago” and “The Lion King.”**
- **The biggest single live audience for “Les Misérables” to date was 125,000 at the 1989 Australia Day concert in Sydney. The biggest broadcast audience was when 250 Les Misérables cast members sang at the 1996 European Football Championship, televised to 400 million viewers in 197 countries.**
- **Kretzmer received both lyricist and screenwriter credits for the blockbuster film version of “Les Misérables,” which won the 2013 Golden Globe for best musical or comedy and was nominated for eight Academy Awards, with Anne Hathaway winning an Oscar for best performance in a supporting role.**

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