

# Cathy Rigby IS Peter Pan

Limited Engagement

## Review

By Richard Frehofer, Editor and Publisher

Thrilling as a Disney ride, exciting as a circus and starring no doubt the best Peter Pan in the show's 100-year history—this production unleashes Broadway theatrics for an entertainment experience not even a Hollywood blockbuster can match!

Few shows give artisans of the stage such a playground to let loose—and this troupe in Branson has definitely seized every opportunity to work their magic. The magic begins the moment the curtain suddenly becomes dreamlike as it transports us into old Victorian England. From there we will fly high in the clouds on a shower of fairy dust, we will find ourselves in a Never-Never-Land of swashbuckling pirates, a wild tribe of lost boys, a band of colorful, high-energy natives led by an Indian princess—and oh

Captain Hook & his  
Tango-savvy buccaneers.



Pounding drums cause an uprising that becomes a masterpiece of dance.

yes, there are fairies!

The scenery and costumes are stunning, the special effects extravagant. Add to that a brilliant dance company, acting that's as believable in the balcony as it is in row one, great singing, and a musical score that we've loved for generations. Then there's Cathy Rigby.

No one will ever top the former Olympic gymnast's portrayal of the great pan. Without a doubt, Cathy Rigby is the best Peter Pan of all time. Incredibly, it's a role she has played for well over 3,000 shows! To be blunt, the opportunity to witness her epic performance live and in person is literally the chance of a lifetime.

Who else but an Olympic gymnast can sail, swirl, tumble and spin through the sky so grandly that audiences burst into cheers? But that's just the beginning. In this boy role traditionally played by females, Cathy's Peter is all boy, from a raspy cockney voice to those littlest of nuances— a shrug of the shoulders, the constant squirrel-like movement and fidgeting, the short attention span, boredly turning cartwheels or doing handstands on the banister while talking or singing. This rascally Tom Sawyer gets giggles and laughs with almost every line and gesture, yet seemingly without even trying. And wow, this kid can carry a tune! *I Won't Grow Up!*, *I'm Flying!* and *I*

Branson Church Getaway Planner

*Gotta Crow* never sounded better!

But most impressive, Cathy's Peter has many layers—funny and adorable at times, charming and heroic at other times, a depth of character capable of even touching on the noble and the tragic of his make-believe world. Empathy for the Peter she has created is universal and strong. Kids in the audience would love to play with him. For adults, Peter has the capacity to stir up deep parental instincts, along with those sweet memories of our lives "before we grew up." Peter makes us laugh, he touches our hearts, and few among us would pass up the chance to give him a hug by show's end.

Peter's foil, of course, is the fabulously dressed villain Captain Hook, played with hilarious Shakespearean pomposity by Broadway veteran Robert Westernberg. His grand

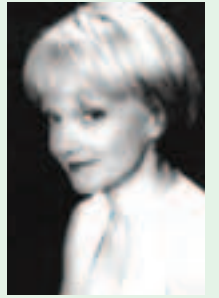
entrance is greeted by boos and hisses, which provokes him to turn to the audience and snarl, "Oh, grow up!"

Never-Never-Land is a whirlwind of fast-moving events, from riotous pirate tangos, airborne sword play, a kidnapping, mermaids, a croc on a pirate ship, and one of the most spectacular dance performances to ever beat the floorboards! To the rhythm of pounding drums, Peter and Princess Tiger Lilly cause a dancing uprising among the Lost Boys and Indian warriors — a masterpiece of dance which begins almost as a primal ceremony, only to build to an intensity that becomes nearly mind-numbing—exploding into flying leaps, precision swirls, kicks and splits. It's a mass fusion of ballet, hip-hop, modern-jazz and break dance—every dance. The athleticism is punishing, the effect breathtaking! Just when you think it can be amped up no higher, it just keeps going and going.

This is Broadway in all its glory, a land where music stirs the heart, children can fly and where the feet of the dancers must surely have wings. ✧

## Cathy Rigby

- Has played Peter Pan in well over 3,000 performances
- Her performance as Peter Pan on Broadway earned a Tony nomination
- Nominated for an Emmy for Peter Pan on the A&E TV network
- Starred on Broadway as the Cat in the Hat in *Seussical the Musical*
- Starred in several Broadway musicals
- Appeared in many dramatic roles on TV
- Two-time Olympic gymnast, first American woman to medal in *World Gymnastics Competition*, holds 12 international medals, 8 gold.
- Gymnastic commentator on ABC for 18 years.
- *ABC's Wide World of Sports* named her one of America's Most Influential Women in Sports.



## The Cast

Broadway veterans **Robert Westernberg** (Captain Hook & Mr. Darling) and **Kim Crosby** (Mrs. Darling) are married and now live in Springfield where Robert teaches at Drury University. The rest of the cast consists of several Broadway veterans and seasoned performers both from Branson and throughout the U.S. Visit our website for a complete listing.

