

Arts ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer

Reel 2 Real Is Strictly Rhythm

In the unique world of Reel 2 Real, creative synergy and cultural union prevail. One needs only to examine the artistry and commercial reach of the world wide smash debut album *Move It* for ample proof. The act's latest sophomore collection "Are You Ready For Some More" continues in true Reel 2 Real tradition, yet sports the versatility and growth needed to progress to the next creative level.

In the hands of Erick "More" Morillo, the group's mastermind, there is clearly no such thing as taboo territory. Initially, purists were puzzled by the idea of melding the revelry of house music with the celebratory tone of reggae into a singular sound. And then they caught an earful of "I Like To Move It"—a single that has sold over three million copies since its release in 1994. The song's kinetic blend of slippery grooves and group frontman the Mad Stuntman's raucous wails had even the most



Reel 2 Real

staunch musical separatist pleading for more. With that in mind, Morillo went for broke on "Are You Ready For More," boldly fusing traditional Afro-Cuban elements with Latin-house beats on

"Mueve La Cadera (Move Your Body)," and sewing a sun-kissed Caribbean melody into the lush and languid soul ballad "Life's Funny." Clearly, repetition was not on Morillo's agenda during

the recording of this collection.

The end result of such ambition is an album that also explores jazz, classic-funk, hip-hop, and jungle with agility and credibility. In achieving the latter, Morillo wisely solicited the input of such vocalists and performers as Proyecto Uno, Michael Watford, Barbara Tucker, Naturally, Charlotte Smalls, Althea McQueen, and Octavia from Soul System. "I wanted to bring in a wide range of people who were good at a variety of things," Morillo says. "I fully believe in the collaborative process, and do not believe in pretending to know everything."

The history of Reel 2 Real stems back to the 25-year-old Morillo, a native New Yorker who draws constant inspiration from his Colombian-Dominican heritage.

Having hit the turntables when he was 12, Erick later began to study technical production and engineering at the Center of Media Arts. The rest is history.

Tips On Selecting And Working With A Contractor

You can avoid many problems if you do the following when hiring any kind of contractor:

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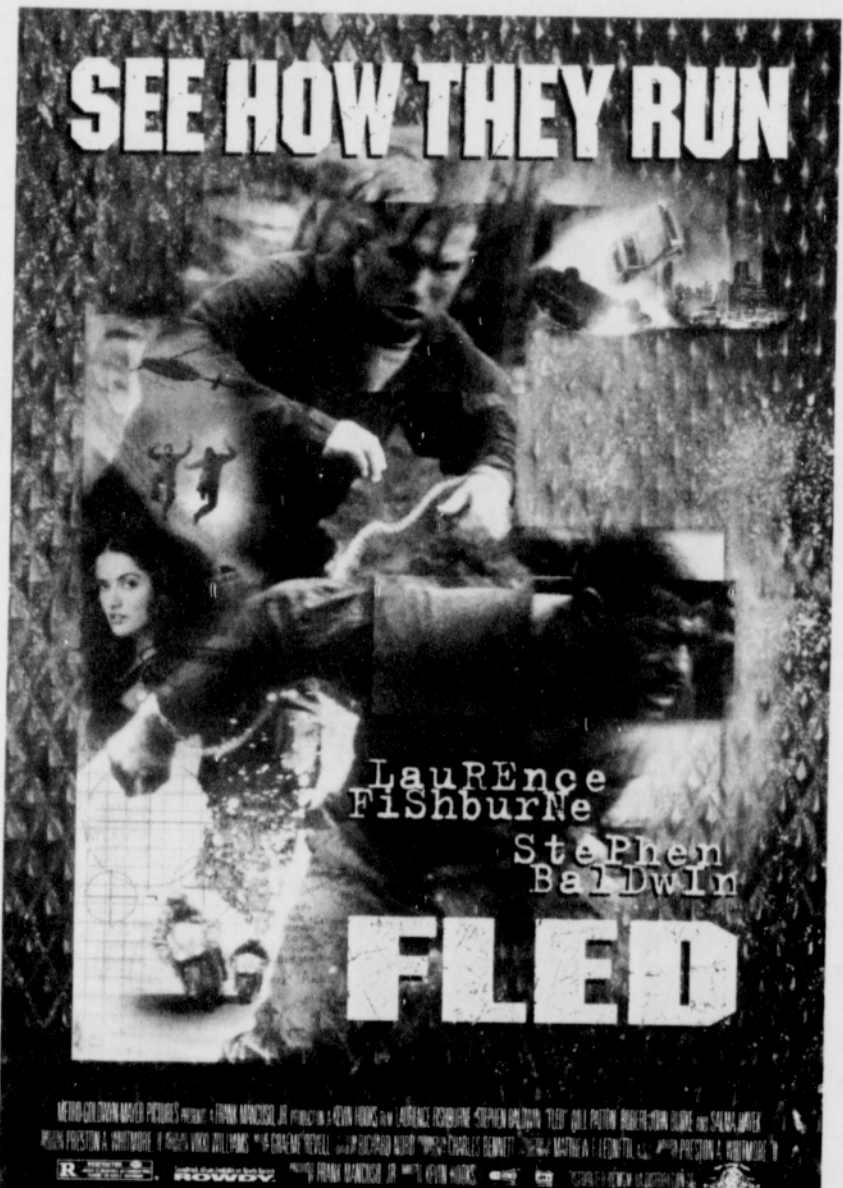
Get two or three written bids for bigger projects. Don't automatically accept the

lowest bid—a higher price may be worth it in better materials, workmanship and reliability.

Always use a written contract. Put everything, including changes to the original contract, in writing. Pay in installments. Consider partial payments upon completion of portions of the work.

Call the Better Business Bureau (503/226-3981, 1-800-488-4166) or the Dept. of Justice Consumer Information Hotline (503/378-4320, 229-5576) for information on complaints they have received.

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Cats: All Show, No Talk

Decked out in semi-formal wear last Friday for the opening night of the Broadway musical, *Cats*, my two friends and I were among the minority of people overdressed for a Burger King meal.

Consequently, both fell into the hands of an *Our Town* photographer desperately combing the crowds for well-dressed, photogenic socialites at the event.

As for the show, it was an incredible explosion of spectacular special effects using the latest in modern technology, innovative costumes, scenery, makeup and wigs with tireless, all-star dancers and talented, golden voices.

Having said that, I must express my emotional attachment to plots and storylines, which was relatively absent. *Cats* is not about witty chatter or dramatic dialogue. It's a revolutionary show leaping beyond traditional boundaries of theatrical staging and choreography.

What began as an idea for a simple children's show, when Andrew Lloyd Webber picked up a book of children's poems in an airport bookshop (T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*), has become one of the most successful Broadway musicals in the world.

The Broadway company of *Cats* is the longest running musical currently on Broadway, and the third-longest-running musical ever. In June of 1997, it will overtake *A Chorus Line*, and become the longest-running musical in the history of

Broadway. *Cats* has also been a trailblazer for Broadway on the road, playing in cities where no major first-class Broadway show has ever been seen, and opening up the market for other shows to follow.

Grizabella (played by Jeri Sager) stands up to Barbara Streisand's pipes with her deep, crystal voice in the hit song "Memory"; the notorious tear-jerker, in its freeing style of melancholy conviction. Tear ducts were being dabbled at the audience sunk deep into their seats from the resonance of that

perfect nostalgic melody. An array of idiosyncratic characters bring the cast to a full circle, including the faux-Elvis personality, Rum Tum Tugger (played by Robert Bartley), and the Copperfield-esque cat with Fred Astaire-toes, Magical Mistoffelees (played by Randy Andre Davis).

Andrew Lloyd Webber's felines will give their last Portland performance on Sunday, so there's still time to check this gem out. This popular musical is a fine collaboration of artistic skill and technique and is reputed as one of Webber's best. But, if you're only going to see one Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, look out for the *Phantom of the Opera* in 1997.

Tickets priced from \$15-\$55 at all TicketMaster outlets and the Portland Center for the Performing Arts (SW Broadway & Main) or charge by phone, (503) 790-ARTS.

In The Arts



BY SABRINA SAKATA

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*** Something wonderful and strange that the artist fashions out of the chaos of the world in the torment of his soul.

—W. Somerset Maugham

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