



MEAT LOAF ON BROADWAY
THE HUDSON THEATER
SEPTEMBER 17, 1993

By Earl Douglas

Meat Loaf, one of rock n roll's biggest stars (literally and figuratively), brought his Back Into Hell tour into Broadway's Hudson Theater amidst all the pomp and circumstance that usually comes with a show on The Great White Way. Everyone knows the story of Meat Loaf. Along with partner/keyboardist/chief songwriter Jim Steinman, they created *Bat Out Of Hell*, one of the most successful selling albums of all time. Legal hassles, and a variety of physical and mental problems (which included Meat Loaf losing his voice), prevented the duo from releasing a sequel (though you could make a case for 1981's *Dead Ringer LP*). *Bat Out Of Hell II: Back Into Hell* finally saw the light of day earlier this month, and has all of the things that made *Bat I* brilliant - over the top production, lengthy titles, and extended music suites.

Upon entering the lavish theater, you were greeted by two scantily clad women who have you customized Meat Loaf earplugs - an early indicator that things were going to get pretty loud. Smoke machines provide atmosphere as you walked through the lobby. As you were taking your seat, a string quartet played selections from *Bat I*. A very clever, classy move.

Shortly after 8:30, lead guitarist Pat Thrall (who strongly resembled Tommy Shaw) chased the string quartet with a barrage of six string acrobatics. Dressed in black and lace, Meat Loaf led his six piece band into the majestic "I'd Do Anything For Love (But I Won't Do That)", the first single off of *Bat II*, and destined to be the next Meat Loaf standard. Next came "You Took The Words Right Out Of My Mouth", complete with the memorable dialogue between Meat and Ellen Foley and it was sing-along time. The first act (?) was divided between both *Bats*: "All Revved Up With No Place To Go" received a new guitar-based arrangement; "Two Out Of Three Auld Bad" sounded just as ironic and gorgeous as ever; "Rock n Roll Dreams Come Through" is a solid mid-tempo rocker, and "Everything Louder Than Everything Else" is just that - loud - complete with confetti, strobe lights and explosions.

After a brief intermission, Jim Steinman, decked out in leather and studs, did a hilarious reading of "Wasted Youth" to kick off the second act. After the hard driving and sardonic "Life Is A Lemon (And I Want My Money Back)", Meat Loaf was joined by Steinman (who played a hot rod colored piano) for a version of "Heaven Can Wait" that had the audience completely spellbound. "Objects In The Rare Mirror (May Appear Closer Than They Are)", with its lengthy title and its numerous time changes, is another number off *Bat II* that will undoubtedly remain in the Meat Loaf set list. Things ended with the inevitable: Thunderous versions of "Bat Out Of Hell", and everyone's favorite ode to teenage lust, "Paradise By The Dashboard Light". For "Paradise", Meat Loaf and vocalist Patricia Rousseau re-created all of the joys and horrors that go into "The Big Dance". All in all, it was a brilliant blending of rock n roll and theater.

Meat Loaf, thinner and in fine voice, was clearly the evening's highpoint. Despite the fact he is a outstanding singer, Meat Loaf was more like an actor as he used sweeping hand gestures and dramatic pauses to his advantage. When talking to the crowd, he deflected any wisecracks like a seasoned comic. His band, The Neverland Express, had a tall order, but rose to the occasion (though I would suggest to several members to drop the spandex - Its so 80s!). The rhythm section of Steve Buslowe (bass) and John Miceli (drums), held everything together, while Kasim Sulton did double duty on the keyboards and guitar. Pianist Mark Alexander and lead guitarist Pat Thrall had difficult tasks re-creating the parts made famous by Todd Rundgren, Roy Bittan, and Jim Steinman, but they more than met the challenge. Though she was not as memorable as Carla DeVito or Ellen Foley, singer Patricia Rousseau was credible as Meat Loaf's onstage foil.

If you are lucky enough to have tickets on this theater tour, check out The Back Into Hell Tour. This package combining the power of rock n roll with theater is the stuff that Pete Townshend can only dream about - and that's no knock on his theatrical efforts, mind you. If you don't have tix, fear not, Meat Loaf's coming back to larger venues later this year. So if you're all revved up and have no place to go, check out Meat Loaf.

Earl Douglas is the producer of "Mr Marty On The Loose"
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After seeing Meat Loaf perform on Broadway, the Hard gang (Bill, Collie, Morgan and Lisa) followed the roaring Harleys to Le Ear Bat (naturally) for some after show partying the Hard way. Thanks to David Fleischman, Gina Iorillo and everyone at MCA for a thoroughly enjoyable evening...



Here's a heavy duty frontline: Songwriter/Meatloaf musical wiz and keyboard maestro, **Jim Steinman**, **Bill Hard**, **Meat Loaf** and MCA's **David Fleischman**.



WPDH's **Greg O'Brien** (left) and WDHA's **TJ Bryan** try to coax **Bwana Bill** into joining their Jacket Of the Month Club.



A Meat Loaf sandwich? MCA's **Gina Iorillo** and **Bill Hard** get close with the man himself (who just happens to look like he's ready to make a meal out of the paparazzi).



Recent Hard Report cover **Boy Gary** and his lovely wife, **Mary**, mix and mingle with the Big Guy himself... **Hard**, **Bill Hard** to you.