

Almost that time of year

And it came early for me. Every year in late January or early February I re-read the Hobbit and Lord of the Rings series. Every year I find something new in the stories that I didn't see in the last reading.

I started early this year because I will need more time to finish. I have gotten a part in a play, and I will not have the hours to spend reading these books. I have many lines to learn, so I have to use my time wisely. That may cut back on my blogging time too. Oh well, such is the life of a theater junkie.

Anyway, back to the books. I am an avid reader and I like a lot of books. I am always looking for something new to read.

So I am open to any suggestions

[poll id = 3]

Books as Movies – 2

I remembered a book I enjoy yearly that was made into a movie. It was an animated movie, but it was a movie.

Long before Peter Jackson made the "Lord of the Rings" series, Rankin-Bass made "The Hobbit". This was actually a decent handling of the book. This movie was designed as a family friendly TV movie. That is exactly what it was. There were a number of things that were different from the book, but what can you do in a 70 minute movie.

This little animated movie actually set the stage for the animated movie I wanted to talk about. Rumors were rampant

about the quality of the animation for the “Lord of the Rings” in 1978. I think that is the only thing that made the movie interesting. A 132 minute movie trying to fit a trilogy the size of “The Lord of the Rings”. There was a lot of stuff left out in the 10+ hours of the Peter Jackson movies, how did they think they could do any of this justice.

Well, they didn't. For me, the animation had some problems, mainly with the big battles. They didn't look like they fit with the rest of the movie. Other than that, I don't remember much about this. My problems were with the story adaptation. There were many things missing in the story (of course) and the way the characters were drawn and written, made me wonder if anyone read the book. There was no depth to any of the characters. No drive in the Hobbits. Gandalf just seemed like an angry aging wizard (standard issue). And other characters seemed flat.

Before Peter Jackson made his films I thought of getting this movie just for a collection. I'm glad I waited.

Crossing the Big Pond

Planning a trip to London? Let me be your guide to the best the West End has to offer in theatre. Already there are the Broadway hits [Wicked](#), [Phantom of the Opera](#) (ok, ok, it was in London first), and the just opened [Jersey Boys](#). However, there are several productions which have not yet made the leap over to the U.S.

There is the Andrew Lloyd Webber produced revival of *The Sound of Music*. Apparently, Lord Lloyd Webber cannot produce anything new on his own that is capable of making money so he must revive not only his past successes but also breathe new

life into other's works as well (whatever happened to his planned sequel to *Phantom?*). There is also a revival of Webber's [Joseph...](#). In a bit of "American Idol" meets musical theatre, the Joseph for this production was chosen on a reality television show. In 2007, the new Broadway cast of [Grease](#) was chosen in this way on a series called "Grease: You're the One that I Want." Not a very original title.

There is also a new musical version of the classic novel and movie [Gone with the Wind](#). The Trevor Nunn directed production stars [Darius Danesh](#) as Rhett Butler. Darius was seen on "Pop Idol" which is the British phenomenon that inspired "American Idol." I wonder if the judges told him that he was "too theatrical" as Simon Cowell has been known to tell American contestants.

Perhaps the strangest if not the most ambitious show of all is the staging of J.R.R. Tolkien's [Lord of the Rings](#) trilogy. It took three films of nearly three hours each to scratch the surface of the novels. I'm sure Rings purists are left wanting after only one 3 hour musical.

So... if you are in West End or are planning a trip over the Atlantic, consider taking in one or more of these stage hits. Of course many times, today's hits of London become tomorrow's Broadway blockbusters and vice versa.