

NEW YORK POST

24 HOURS A DAY

LIZA, PALACE COME FULL CIRCLE



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'UNTIL YOU play The Palace, you haven't played the top!" sang Judy Garland ages and ages ago.

ON JUNE 10, 2007, I was attending an AmFAR benefit in the Rainbow Room with the AIDS-fighting hero **Kenneth Cole**. **Liza Minnelli** joined us; she performed, she fooled around, she then sold one song, "Our Love Is Here to Stay," to big bidders who paid \$50,000 to hear this number.

Liza was with a guy named **Ron Lewis**, and they were about to depart for South America on an adventure to bring to life a show about Liza's godmother, the famous performer Kay Thompson. I thought it was a great idea, but I wasn't sure if Liza could really make it happen. Way back in the mid-'50s, I'd seen the electrifying Miss Thompson and the dancing-singing Williams Brothers do their act in The Plaza Hotel's Persian Room. It was unforgettable. Miss Thompson was then already a legend, immortalized at MGM and later on TV's "Person to Person" by Edward R. Murrow.

This creative genius nurtured talent, wrote the "Eloise at The Plaza" books, influenced Judy Garland's latter-day performing style, and perhaps you recall her as the fashion editor who goes to Paris and sings "Think Pink" in the classic Fred Astaire-Audrey Hepburn movie "Funny Face."

Liza always worshipped her godmother, and in the days before the latter died in 1998, she took care of Kay personally, bringing her into her own apartment.

NOW IT'S all coming back together. Liza and her guys have been performing all over South America and in Europe, and on Dec. 3 they'll open "Liza's at The Palace" for the world to enjoy through Dec. 14. And yes, of course, we mean New York's Palace on Broadway.

Half of it will be a Liza concert, and half will be director Lewis' version of Kay and the Williams Brothers. (The Brothers are to be played by **Jim Caruso**, **Johnny Rodgers**, **Cortes Alexander**, **Tiger Martina**. Do I have to tell you that in real life, the original quartet produced the star **Andy Williams**?) The whole thing is backed up by the incredible **Billy Stritch**, produced by **John Scher**. Mr. Lewis has created all new innovative choreography, for there is unfortunately no film record of Kay and the Williams Brothers.

Liza is again following in her famous mother's footsteps (Judy at The Palace was a sensation, more than once!) But this time Liza is paying homage to another woman both she and Judy adored.

You gotta keep handing it to Liza Minnelli. Nothing keeps her down.

IT ISN'T only financial business that's going under these days. **The Queen's** most treasured dressmaker for half a century, Hardy Amies, is trembling on the verge of financial collapse. The Queen has plenty of troubles; her favorite horse had to be put down. (How are *your* horses doing?) . . . Many asked how the recent Fete de Swifty to benefit the Mayor's Fund did in these perilous financial times. Well, this party drew in \$723,622. What's more, it won the highest rating of four stars from the Charity Navigator (America's largest independent evaluator of charities. We manage our finances "in an efficient and effective manner.") . . . By the way, do read **Holly Peterson's** essay in Newsweek about the high finance scene at Swifty's these days . . . **Too bad investment honchos didn't read the Stephen Viscusi book "Bulletproof Your Job." There's still good advice in it for the rest of us slobs.**