



Patti LuPone: A Memoir

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"I have been incredibly fortunate over the course of my career to have been associated with some extraordinary dramatic and musical productions, and also some rather spectacular disasters. Looking back, I can find gifts and life lessons in every one."

The legendary Patti LuPone is one of the theatre's most beloved leading ladies. Now she lays it all bare, sharing the intimate story of her life both onstage and off--through the dizzying highs and darkest lows--with the humor and outspokenness that have become her trademarks.

With nearly 100 photographs, including an 8-page four-color insert, and illuminating details about the life of a working actor, from inspired costars and demanding directors to her distinct perspective on how she developed and honed her Tony Award-winning performances, *Patti LuPone: A Memoir* is as inspirational as it is entertaining. And though the title might say "a memoir," this is ultimately a love letter to the theatre by a unique American artist.

Raised on Long Island's North Shore, Patti discovered her calling at the age of four and knew that she was destined for the stage. A prodigiously gifted child, she was one of only 36 young actors chosen for the inaugural class of The Juilliard School's Drama Division, where she fought near-constant criticism from her instructors, and here describes those early years with disarming frankness.

From the heady days of her early twenties--crisscrossing the country as a founding member of the classical repertory theatre ensemble, The Acting Company--to her early success on Broadway, her four-year stint as Libby Thacher on the television series *Life Goes On*, her loving marriage to Matt Johnston, and much, much more, Patti chronicles her professional and personal life with inimitable candor and wit.

With its insightful retrospective of her career-defining turns, both on Broadway and abroad, in *Evita*, *Les Misérables*, *Anything Goes*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Gypsy*, *Patti LuPone: A Memoir* reveals the artist's deeply felt passion for music and the theatre and is, in the end, the compelling and quintessential tale of an exceptional life well lived.

Patti LuPone: A Memoir Details

Date : Published September 14th 2010 by Crown Archetype (first published January 1st 2010)

ISBN : 9780307460738

Author : Patti LuPone

Format : Hardcover 336 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction, Biography, Plays, Theatre

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From Reader Review Patti LuPone: A Memoir for online ebook

Jamey says

PATTI IS A STARRRRRRRR

V. Briceland says

It's tough for anyone not actively sharing a stage with the diminutive star to determine whether Patti LuPone is as difficult to work with as her reputation would have it. Too often, 'difficult' is a label applied not only to entitled divas of both genders, but also to artists who dare to protest when wrongly abused by directors or producers and their sometimes shady money-making tactics.

After reading LuPone's memoir, however, it's tough to want to side with anyone other than the woman who originated the American *Evita*. Though she's capable of throwing tantrums with the best of them, LuPone is disarmingly candid about her own shortcomings, including her temper and her seeming inability to tell composers and directors to send offers to her agent, rather than asking her commit to new projects before it's wise. She's earthy: she calls still-living actors 'assholes,' and bluntly says things of other professionals such as, "He sucked." She's frank about her heartbreak over the much-publicized feud with Andrew Lloyd Webber over being denied the American debut of *Sunset Boulevard*, and her cold detente with Glenn Close, who supplanted her. Underlying the barbs is LuPone's wry sense of humor, though, in addition to a remarkable grasp of the drive and discipline needed to maintain a career as a working actor—much less the stuff of legend.

LuPone's frank memoir is a quick and fun read that crackles with gossip and an insider's view of the Broadway and London stages. Even if LuPone is a bit of a diva . . . well, it's still awfully tempting to cheer her on.

Rob says

Insightful behind the scenes memoir from one of Broadway's powerhouse performers. To hear Ms. Lupone recount in her own voice her triumphs and tumults enhances the listening experience. One anecdote had me laughing out loud during her London *Sunset Boulevard* run as she races to make her curtain call. Her re-enactment is priceless and pure Patti. But you have to listen to her tell it (disc 6; track 4). You won't get the full effect from reading it.

David Jay says

Where is the line between "diva" and "entitled bey-otch?" I am fascinated by the idea that just because someone has a talent that they are beyond the limits of acceptable adult behavior. So when Lupone finds out that she is not going with "Sunset Boulevard" to Broadway, that they have decided to go with the huge (at the time) movie star Glenn Close, who has gotten raves for the role in LA, instead of Lupone, who has gotten mixed reviews in London, she thinks it is appropriate to trash her dressing room, throw a lamp out the second floor window and refuse to perform. If I did that type of thing at work, they'd all the police, and rightly so.

But she thinks its fine to behave this way because... because she sings really well? Because she had won a tony a decade earlier? The justification for her bad behaviors never became clear to me. And even in the writing of this book, nearly 20 years after the event, I don't get the sense that Lupone feels that her behavior was unwarranted. Please be aware that that is in no way a criticism of this book. It is shock at Lupone's tantrum behaviors. But that is precisely what makes the book such a junk food delight.

This book is theatre geek heaven! Lupone has many grudges, names names (brutally so!), tells stories about herself without realizing how she is coming across (leaving what be thought of as diva behavior in the dust!!). If the thought of reading about Lupone's on again off again love affair with Kevin Kline in the 70s, before either one of them were famous, and inviting David Mamet over for brunch on Sundays gets you excited, this is the book for you! If you read that last sentence and thought, who on earth would care about such a thing, stay away!

Kelly says

Criticism has come out about this memoir exploiting "diva-like" behavior. I didn't read it that way at all. In no way is Patti LuPone a "diva". She is someone with a backbone who will stand up against someone treating her unfairly...most specifically in this memoir, Broadway king Andrew Lloyd Webber.

LuPone does not gloss over anything, beginning with Juilliard and her romance with fellow student, Kevin Kline. From Evita to Sunset Boulevard, to Sweeney Todd to Gypsy, LuPone has seen it all and spills it all. While she spews hatred for Webber (after reading the chapters on Sunset Boulevard, you will understand why), her Life Goes On TV husband, Bill Smitrovich, and others, she is also quick to show her love for beloved stage costars such as Boyd Gaines and Laura Benanti of Gypsy. She has had a monumental theatrical career, and gives the reader a gift by allowing entrance into all of it.

There are very few living Broadway legends today. Patti LuPone is one of them. When she opens her mouth, you stop and listen. If that description sounds like the very first Mama Rose of Gypsy, Ethel Merman, then you know where I am going with this. Thank you, Ms. LuPone, for letting us all in on your fabulous theater experiences...and they're not over yet!

MY RATING - 5

See this review on 1776books.net...

<http://1776books.blogspot.com/2010/10...>

Neil Shurley says

I had such a great time listening to this. Ms. LuPone is, unsurprisingly, a fantastic narrator. Her stories are heartfelt and truthful - even when they don't always reflect that well on her - and I appreciate her honesty and depth. It's also filled with humor, accentuated by her personality as she reads. What a performance. What a show.

Anne says

Patti LuPone, one of the theatre's leading ladies, writes an insightful retrospective of her career, with details about the life of a working actor, from inspired costars and demanding directors to her perspective on how she developed and honed her award-winning performances.

I have been a fan of Patti Lupone for years. *Evita* is one of my all-time favorite cast albums and I loved her work in *Sunset Boulevard*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Gypsy*. I knew she had a reputation for being difficult, but I always felt that was just our chauvinist culture putting a negative stamp on a woman who stands up for herself. After reading her memoir, I still feel that most of the turbulence wasn't entirely her fault, but she still comes across whiny and melodramatic, speaking of her months of my-life-is-over woes after bad experiences. Bad, yes, but not THAT bad. I found myself annoyed with her as much as anything and increasingly unsympathetic to her complaints after yet another director or co-star did her wrong. If I were an actor, I think I would appreciate the book much more because she speaks so much about the lessons she's learned as an artisan. In fact, the book seems to be written more as a teaching tool for actors than as a gossipy read, which isn't a bad thing, but doesn't necessarily pull you in as an outsider. If you're a fan of her work, definitely check it out. If you're not as familiar with her career or as interested in professional acting, I'm not sure I'd bother.

Neil Schleifer says

LuPone offers a dishy backstage memoir that echoes her onstage persona perfectly. As with most memoirs, she conveniently remembers things that make her look good, and others look like villains. In short, it's as much fiction as it is non-fiction.

Among those she trashes her Bill Smitrovitch, her co-star on *LIFE GOES ON*, running the gamut of simple distaste (she says they had no chemistry) to outright vulgarity (she calls him a douchebag). She never DOES tell us what he said or did to elicit such wrath. Is it possible he called her on some diva antics in front of the cast and crew?

She conveniently leaves out well-publicized diva moments like when she walked off the stage when the cast of *NOISES OFF* (suspiciously omitted totally from the book) interrupts the curtain call to make a plea for the audience to donate to *BROADWAY CARES/EQUITY FIGHTS AIDS* (and apparently threw something at the stage manager); or the more famous incident of screaming at an audience member for snapping photos during *GYPSY*.

The book is a quick read, but take it with a grain of salt. There's more manufactured drama on those pages than a bad bus-and-truck company version of *EVITA*.

Theo Chen says

Patti LuPwned.

Ashley *Hufflepuff Kitten* says

I feel the need to preface this by saying that I've never been an enormous Patti LuPone fan. I'm not familiar with Evita beyond "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" and I'm not familiar with Gypsy at all. However, I do love her on the cast recordings from Anything Goes and Sweeney Todd, and it was such a treat to see her in American Horror Story: Coven. And somehow, being the Les Miserables freak that I am, I was unaware that she originated Fantine in the West End. WHAT EVEN.

I'm also familiar with her reputation as a diva, but let's face it: Patti LuPone is a legendary powerhouse of a singer, not to mention an actress. This book was fantastic in that it detailed everything that was important to her -- from Juilliard (!!!) to traveling the country with the Acting Company to Evita and then onward to Les Miserables, Anything Goes, Sunset Boulevard, and her more recent triumphs in Sweeney Todd and Gypsy. I've seen a few reviews mention how she "conveniently" left out the bit from her Gypsy run when she stopped the show to berate an audience member-- um, it's her book. It's her prerogative if she wants to leave something out.

I would definitely recommend this for theatre junkies!

Victoria Weinstein says

There is such a relentless tone of misery and insecurity in LuPone's remembrances it destroyed any sense of delight I would have gained sharing so much theatrical history with this first lady of the Broadway stage. LuPone is a dedicated artist with a certain degree of wisdom earned through experience, but she's not very bright. She is not a pleasant person with whom a reader relishes spending hours in recollection. LuPone's writing is like her singing: she has a tendency to shriek. There is a sense of grinding, relentless sound and fury signifying nothing.

Forrest says

It takes Patti LuPone all of three pages in her memoir before she starts complimenting herself. She states that for decades (decades!) people of all kinds had been telling her she simply had to play the character of Mama Rose in "Gypsy." That she was perfect for it, born for it. When I read this to my boyfriend, he responded "Yeah, I have no doubt people told her that, because just like Mama Rose, Patti LuPone is a monster who doesn't see herself as a monster." Truer words have never been spoken.

Patti's memoir is interesting, not necessarily because her life is interesting (though it is), but because the memoir's purpose and execution are so at odds with each other. The memoir is self-serving, as all memoirs are intended to be, in that she only writes about things that either A) she helped make a success or B) were a failure, but not because of her, so don't worry, she's still great. The problem is that Patti LuPone, diva extraordinaire, is the one writing these words, so that even though she's trying to elicit your sympathy and make herself come across as the lovable protagonist, she ends up coming off as an egotistical sociopath. You almost end up rooting for the people against her. It's hard to be on her side (and, make no mistake, there are points where you should be on her side based on the things that happen to her) when her basic response to any sort of problem is, "it's not my fault, it's someone else's!" For example, at one point, she talks about starring in a production of Chekhov's "Three Sisters," and states that at the curtain call, the women who played the nominal siblings (which included Ms. LuPone) were booed. She then states something like "but

I'm sure those boos were for the other two, and not for me!" I think she means this as a joke, but I couldn't swear to this under oath. It's entirely possible that she truly believed it, as the book makes it seem like Ms. LuPone harbors an almost delusional confidence in her abilities. This is the woman, after all, who, right before her name was called as the Tony award winner for her role as Evita, was so sure she would win that she shoved her purse into her friend's lap and barked "here, hold this!" so that she wouldn't have to waste a second in getting to the stage after her name was called.

She also comes across as terribly petty and, frankly, slightly unstable. Upon learning that, despite having a contract, she would not be originating the role of Norma Desmond in "Sunset Boulevard" on Broadway, she has a full on temper tantrum that includes smashing her dressing room and throwing a lamp out of a two story window. She was 45 years old when this happened. I am 31 and can't imagine doing anything like that. Furthermore, she goes to great lengths to rake Glenn Close over the coals for never contacting her after Glenn was announced as Broadway's new Norma. However, it was Ms. LuPone who, upon hearing that Glenn would be starring as Norma in the LA version of "Sunset," stipulated in her contract that Glenn was in no way allowed to come to the London cast's opening night, nor could she be anywhere in the vicinity of the theater during the London cast's rehearsals. It doesn't take a genius to assume that word of these stipulations made its way back to Ms. Close. Assuming that, why on earth would she have reached out to a woman who clearly was going to great lengths to keep a distance between them? But again, it's never Patti's fault, right?

That said, anyone with a passing knowledge of current Broadway lore or of Ms. LuPone herself is probably already well aware of her diva-like antics. And while her memoir both plays down while simultaneously epitomizing that character trait, the fact remains that she is a talented, driven woman who has achieved much success and has some interesting insights into the world of acting and the theater. Furthermore, her desire to get you on her side leads to some truly no-holds-barred criticisms of various power players in the theater world, which means that even though you may come away not agreeing with her, the memoir does dish in a way that few memoirs do. Where some memoirs may tread lightly for fear of retribution, Ms. LuPone clearly could care less about burning any bridges, so there's an excitement of the "oh no she didn't!" kind as you read her take downs of people like Andrew Lloyd Weber. Spoiler Alert: She hates him and it was all his fault!

In the end, whatever your view is of Patti LuPone, this memoir probably won't do much to change your mind. But it's a quick read, with some interesting gossip, so if you have any interest in it at all, I'd recommend it. Just be prepared to come face to face with the biggest ego this side of Mariah Carey. And if you, too, are a monster who doesn't see yourself as a monster, you'll probably love it.

Cole says

Only die-hard theater nerds will probably be interested in this memoir. I think I am eligible because I distinctly remember performing numbers from LuPone's Irving Berlin album "Heatwave" in the back room of our house when I was 12.

The ghost-written celebrity memoir is a special animal, not often read for its groundbreaking narrative arc or use of lilting prose. The writing style here is especially grating--apart from some of LuPone's signature sarcasm, the language here is rather boring and unimaginative. Digby Diehl, who has co-written dozens of these celeboirs, should have a better handle on this kind of thing by now.

LuPone is loved, but she is hardly lovable. Although she makes it evident that none of the drama in her career (and there has been plenty, both on-stage and off) has ever been her fault--it was always a rude co-worker or a money-hungry producer who was to blame. Highs and lows are recounted here, and failure is always treated as "a lesson learned." But in spite of the fact that LuPone posits herself as blameless, she also

doesn't convey herself as the warmest and fuzziest of individuals. She is consistently boastful, catty and completely uninterested in winning you to her side.

But enough of ripping her to shreds--although she seems to be a genuine trouble-maker, it is this drama that keeps her fans captivated. She's big, brassy and can belt, all the things we look for in a musical theater diva. She might not be the most huggable of human beings, she has a talent that can fill a theater.

There are great little gossip moments here and some stating the obvious for those of us who love theater: producers are sketchy, Andrew Lloyd Webber is highly overrated, and not every Broadway success or failure deserves its fate. If you love the Broadway stage, you'll breeze through LuPone's memoir, not for its polish or its insight, but because you love the backstage madness as much as you love the 11 o'clock number.

Other thoughts (because I could go on for days):

-LuPone seems to believe that actresses are due a level of courtesy that she doesn't often extend to others. For example, her claim that Arthur Laurents has "all but tried to forget" the 2005 Sam Mendes Broadway adaptation of "Gypsy" is a clear slap in the face to Bernadette Peters (whom she otherwise doesn't mention, and who also, in my clearly-outnumbered opinion, turned in a finer, more intricately-drawn portrayal of Mama Rose)

-A couple key moments are left out of the book entirely, including her 2009 breakdown when she stopped her big finale number in "Gypsy" to yell at a man taking photographs with a flash. This is, I'm sure, a moment that most fans and readers are dying to know about, and it seems like a great chance for her to be able to explain herself. Tell us this most interesting story from your own perspective!

Ally says

While I am obviously a huge Broadway fan, I can't say I'm a huge Patti devotee. I mean, I think she's been amazing in some things, but I don't kneel at her altar. However, a few months ago I heard her tell a few snippets of stories on Alec Baldwin's podcast, and I knew I had to finally read this memoir (I'd picked it up a couple of years ago as a free or \$0.99 Kindle sale). I'm very glad I did - what a delicious and delightful read. She does not hold back (at one point she was talking about a sound mixer, and simply said, "He sucked."). This is worth the read for the "Sunset Boulevard" chapters alone.

Lori says

This is a pretty good memoir for the most part. I wish I could have the chance to see this talented woman on stage live. I have heard of her for decades and her long career on stage and film. Patti LuPone is very honest about her career the good and the bad. She writes about her experiences on stage in the many musicals and plays she has acted in and also her movies and TV appearances.

She is not shy about writing about the bad experiences as well such as her time during Sunset Blvd. and feeling she was betrayed by Andrew Lloyd Webber. I remember watching her on the TV series Life Goes On. She got along with most of the actors but did not get along with Bill Smitrovich. I liked this memoir she has

had a long successful career and did not shy away from writing about the good and bad times she has during her long career. Good read for the most part.
