



Travis Edward Pike: The Grumpuss

Otherworld Entertainment,* www.grumpuss.com

Travis Edward Pike's *Grumpuss* is an enchanting tale of a monster-sized cat and the quest of one knight, Sir Ellery, to subdue it for the sake of salvaging his kingdom.

The entire tale, carved into 4 distinct "acts" (1 hour 38 minutes running time in the video version, 2 cassette tapes worth for the audio only version), is a rhyming epic-style romance in the spirit of the magical stories told by medieval bards before royal courts. And true to the spirit of that medieval inspiration, Pike performs the entire poem from memory! That's right. Nary a cue card in sight.

You would think that a long performance like this would be boring as it slammed up against our short attention spans. Au contraire! I found it refreshing and charming.

The *Grumpuss* will be a sure fire hit for children. It has the lilting playful rhymes of a Dr. Seuss book (albeit not as zany as Seuss), that should captivate any youngster. But the story has appeal for adults too, if for nothing else than to get a taste of the kind of entertainment that would have pleased the eyes and ears of courtly types before the days of deep dish tv and Frequency Modulated radio waves. You'll be amazed how anyone could have committed this type of long poem to memory, and yet, there it is before your eyes and ears -- proof that it can be done, and done well. Anyone interested in oral poetry would find much of value in *The Grumpuss*.

Pike provides an expert actor's touch to the various characters in his poem -- infusing them with quirky voices, by turns husky, wheedling, and fluid. It's the kind of narrative poetry that will send your imagination on a sort of magical balloon ride.

reviewed by James Esch

* Since this review appeared in the Spring, 1999, issue of *Sparks*, the audio and video cassette versions have been replaced with CD and DVD editions. The *Grumpuss, 15th Anniversary Audio Theater Edition* on two CDs costs slightly more (\$19.95), but the 79 minute audio quality with enhanced sound effects, shorter music cues, and with the entirety of Travis Edward Pike's masterful storytelling performance lovingly preserved is simply superb, and currently available at [CD Baby](http://www.CDBaby.com). And that's not all! The world premiere benefit for the Save the Children Fund at Blenheim Palace was originally captured digitally, and with advanced technology, that incredible live performance, entirely from memory, has now been released in a *Grumpuss 20th Anniversary Platinum Edition* on DVD, and both the CD and DVD versions are sold on Amazon.com, and other select retail outlets worldwide. To hear the audio clips, go to <http://www.grumpuss.com/AUDSAMPLES.html>. To see clips from the live performance, go to <http://www.grumpuss.com/VIDSAMPLES.html>.