

# Beacon On

## Three demure 'CATS' are newest additions to Sardi's Restaurant Wall of Fame Gallery

By Audrey J. Bernard  
Lifestyles/Society Editor

Investors in the sultry all-black limited engagement of Tennessee Williams' classic *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* are shouting "Hooray for Broadway!" because the hugely successful Broadway revival has recouped its investment. In other words the \$2.1 million dollar investment has been met and now the play is in the Black — nothing but the sweet smell of success.

Tickets for the critically acclaimed play — scheduled to close on June 22 — are still selling like hotcakes so hurry, hurry, hurry and be part of this history making play. Produced by Stephen Byrd and Alia M. Jones, president & CEO and vice president of Front Row Productions, Inc., respectively, and directed by multiple Emmy winner and two-time Tony nominee Debbie Allen. The play stars James Earl Jones, Phylicia Rashad, Anika Noni Rose and Terrence Howard with Lisa Arrindell Anderson, Lou Myers, Count Stovall and Giancarlo Esposito.

"We have been playing before packed enthusiastic audiences since we opened on March 6," exclaimed Byrd. "Actually, since the show began previews on February 12 at the Broadhurst Theatre, CAT has been, every week, the most successful straight play on Broadway as well as being right up there with the top-grossing musicals," added Jones. That's why theatergoers are finding it hard to believe that the play was snubbed by the Tonys.

But not by the legendary Sardi's Restaurant who just added three new Cats to its famous wall on Thursday, May 8. The Three New Caricatures of *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* stars Terrence Howard, Phylicia Rashad and Anika Noni Rose will be immortalized on the walls of this legendary eatery. They'll be joining the hundreds of theatre icons — including their *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* co-star James Earl Jones — mounted in places of honor gazing down upon the diners.

Sardi's owner, Max Klimavicius, revealed the drawings to the purring trio who were joined by fellow castmates, crew, friends and family for hors d'ouvers, cocktails and fun at one of the private rooms of Sardi's Restaurant.

Discerning theatergoers are comparing the new production with the Democratic Presidential Campaign of Senator Barack Obama because, like



Terrence Howard, Anika Noni Rose, Phylicia Rashad with caricatures



Anika Noni Rose, Stephen Byrd, Phylicia Rashad, Dr. Henry Jarecki



Jim Galub, Alia M. Jones



Lisa Arrindell Anderson



Rob Riley



Marcia Pendleton



Valence Williams, Morgan Grant



Stephen Byrd, Elizabeth Catlett



Tony Detre, Anika Noni Rose



Terrence Howard, Stephen Byrd, Phylicia Rashad, Melvin Van Peebles

the Obama smartly run campaign fused with millions of first-time voters, the play is generating new enthusiastic audiences — many of whom are first-time theatergoers.

*Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* is a compellingly provocative play about hypocrisy, greed and secret passions that threaten to

tear apart a wealthy but dysfunctional Mississippi family in Tennessee Williams' stunning American masterpiece. *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* portrays the larger-than-life characters of Maggie "the Cat," her alcoholic husband, Brick, and the domineering family patriarch, Big Daddy.

(Photos by Jeff Fasano)