

**BUZZ
EXTRA**

BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL

November 19- December 12, 2010

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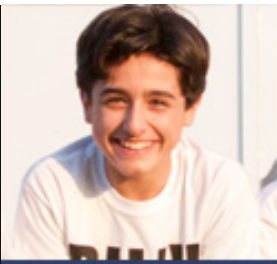
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FEATURED ARTICLES

CAN YOU FEEL THE ELECTRICITY?



Photo Credit: Liam Mower (Billy) and police shield; Photo by David Scheinmann



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Talking with Giuseppe Bausilio

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The boys portraying Billy Elliot have studied... JAZZ, TAP, FLAMENCO, ACROBATICS, HIP-HOP, MODERN...

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FUN FEATURES

Have you ever had a dream that was discouraged by your family?

Yes

No



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BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL leaps into PlayhouseSquare as part of the KeyBank Broadway Series from November 19 through December 12.

Time Magazine tells audiences they will "be electrified by Broadway's Best Musical of the decade."

The New York Post agrees that this is "the best show you will ever see!"

Critics all over are raving!

The LA TIMES calls the show "a theatrical phenomenon."

The Chicago Sun Times bursts, "Explosive and altogether spirit-lifting."

Australia's *Sunday Mail Adelaide* explains, "Sometimes five stars aren't enough. Sometimes you see a show that moves, entertains, and enthralls its audience so completely it defies normal rules...If you only see one life-changing musical this year, you must see BILLY ELLIOT."

London Evening Standard only has one word to describe the show: irresistible.

Awards – The Lucky Number is 10

Ten is BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL's lucky number, evidenced by its 10 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Book of a Musical, Choreography, Scenic and Lighting design, and Director, and 10 Drama Desk Awards, including one for outstanding music.

Add in seven of Australia's Helpmann Awards, plus 3 of London's Olivier Awards to equal 10.

Not to forget seven Outer Critics Circle Awards, including one for the three actors who played Billy, which also equals 10!

Honored with six Australian Green Room Awards, an Evening Standard Award, the Theatre's Goers' Choice Award and one more Olivier Award, and that's another lucky 10!

Five million people worldwide have cheered for BILLY ELLIOT THE

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MUSICAL.

BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL has played London, New York, Sydney, Los Angeles, Melbourne, San Francisco, Chicago and Toronto. The National Tour takes Billy to Dallas, St. Louis, Seattle, Minneapolis, Tampa, Portland, Houston, Durham, Charlotte, Denver and Tempe, with other cities in the works. The opening in Seoul, the first non-English speaking version of the show, is an indicator of Billy's appeal to the world.

Synopsis

In the midst of a miner's strike in Northern England, a young boy discovers a passion for dance. A father, scraping together enough money for his son to take boxing lessons, learns that the hard earned money is spent, instead, on ballet. Sparks fly. A community is divided. Families work together to help a boy live his dream.

Did You Know?

The UK Miner's Strike that takes place in BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL actually happened in Great Britain 1984-1985.

The British National Coal Board believed that with cheaper energy sources of oil and gas available, the demand for coal had dropped. Therefore, the coal mining industry needed to be restructured and some mines would have to close due to financial loss.

Naturally, the National Union of Mineworkers disagreed. They believed that no mine should be closed unless it had exhausted its source of coal and a mine that resulted in a loss needed more investment to become profitable.

As 20 mines closed and 20,000 jobs were lost, the Union called for a strike. Violence erupted between the striking miners and the police.

Many families in England, Wales and Scotland lost their main source of income. Hunger and poverty forced some workers to break the strike and return to work. This broke apart communities, friendships and families.

A year later, when a new agreement was reached between the union and the National Coal Board, the strike ended.

More information on the [UK Miner's Strike](#)


More information on [BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL](#)

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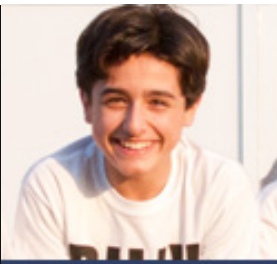
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THE SOURCES OF THE MUSICAL



Photo Credit: Cesar Corrales (Billy), Emily Skinner (Mrs. Wilkinson) and Cast; Photo by Joan Marcus



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BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL is based on two sources: the 2000 award-winning **movie** and the 1935 novel by A. J. Cronin.

Based on the book, there was also a film released in **1940** and a **TV mini-series** in 1974.

A.J. (Archibald Joseph) Cronin was a Scottish doctor who served as a surgeon in the Royal Navy during World War I. After the war, he worked on ships and in hospitals until he moved to Wales to serve as Medical Inspector of Mines.

This is where he developed his fascination with the coal industry, which served as a basis for his most famous novels *The Citadel* and *The Stars Look Down*.

The Stars Look Down tells the story of a young man who wants to improve safety conditions in the mines. The similarities to BILLY ELLIOT are a focus on the coal-mining community, a disaster and the results that occur when someone goes against the norm.

BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL pays homage to Cronin in the lyrics of the opening song:

*And the stars look down on the mean and hungry
And the stars look down and show the way.
And the stars look down and we will stand together,
To see a day when then stars look down and know our history,
When the stars look down upon our past,
And the stars look down and see our future, bright at last.*

*The stars look down when we're abandoned, look down in the heart of night.
And the stars look down and give us vision, to see the light.
The stars look down upon our struggle; the stars look down and know the past.*

*And the stars look down at their reflection,
And the stars look down and there's a light*

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*When the stars look down and see the justice, and the right.
And the stars look down and see the struggle,
And the stars look down at all the pain.
And the stars will lead to where light shines again.*

A.J. Cronin wrote the adaptation for the 1940 film, which *The New York Times* called one of the 1,000 Best Movies Ever Made.

The 2000 film received countless awards all over the world including Best Film, Best Actor and Best Director. Stephen Daldry, the acclaimed director, has received many accolades for BILLY ELLIOT. People thought his own love of dance aided him while making the film, but Daldry has said, "I didn't even like dance before I made the film." He must like dance now!

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QUIZ: BILLY OR ELTON?

Elton John, the composer of **BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL**, has many things in common with Billy, the character. In fact, when Elton John first saw the movie at the Cannes Film Festival, he said, "The story is very similar to mine: Trying to be something out of the ordinary. Having a talent and wanting to break free from what your parents want you to do. Wanting approval from your father, especially when your father doesn't approve of the profession you've chosen."

Take this quiz to see how many things Elton has in common with Billy.





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Which of the sentences describe Elton John? Billy Elliot? Both?

He was raised in Great Britain.

He was an only child.

He lived in the house of his paternal grandparents.

He began doing his art form at an early age.

His mother encouraged his interest in the performing arts.

His father was in the Royal Air Force.

His father was very strict.

His father played the trumpet.

He was afraid of his father.

He showed a great artistic talent at a young age.

His father did not want him to consider the performing arts as a career.

His father wanted him to considered going into the family business.

He took performing art lessons from a private tutor.

As a young boy, he won a scholarship to one of the Royal Academies of Performing Arts.

Where are the similarities?

Elton was raised in Pinner, Middlesex, a suburb of London; Billy grew up in the northern pit village of Easington in Great Britain.

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Elton was an only child; Billy had a brother.

Elton lived with his grandparents until they moved into their own home. Elton's parents eventually divorced and his mother remarried. His mother is still alive.

Billy's mother is dead. He lived with his father, brother and grandma.

Elton began playing the piano at age three. Billy discovered dance at age 11.

Elton's dad, a strict man, surprisingly played trumpet and had an incredible record album collection. He was in the Royal Air Force as a Squadron Lieutenant and wanted his son to join the Air Force or become a banker.

Billy's dad and his brother work in the mines. His father gives Billy money to study boxing, and gets angry when he discovers Billy used the money for dance lessons. Billy's father wants him to go into mining like the family's men have always done.

Elton took private music tutoring. Billy received private dance lessons from Mrs. Wilkinson.

Elton won a scholarship to a prestigious music academy; at the end of the musical, Billy is heading to an audition for the Royal Ballet School.

Because the story spoke so deeply to him, Elton John approached Stephen Daldry, the director of the film and Lee Hall, the screenwriter, to ask them to consider adapting the film into a musical. The rest is history, as evidenced by the 73 international awards that the show has received.


Photo Credit: Elton John

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TALKING WITH GIUSEPPE BAUSILIO

Buzz Extra was fortunate to chat with Giuseppe Bausilio, who stars as Billy in the National Tour of BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL. Giuseppe, from Bern, Switzerland, is 13 years old. Coming from a family of dancers, he has been dancing since he was four.





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Trained in ballet, tap, modern, flamenco, jazz and hip hop, Bausilio has won international dance competitions. He speaks five languages (English, Italian, German, French and Portuguese), plays the cello and piano, and enjoys skiing, swimming, reading, Kung Fu and...cooking.

He was chosen to portray Billy from more than 1500 boys who auditioned. Some Buzz Extra readers may have seen Giuseppe at PlayhouseSquare's annual Dance Showcase in September.

EXTRA: We're so excited you are coming back to Cleveland.

BAUSILIO: I can't wait!

EXTRA: I understand you were invited to audition for BILLY ELLIOT?

BAUSILIO: Yes, I was at the **YAGP (Youth America Grand Prix)**, a ballet competition, and I had won third prize. I've never auditioned for anything. But the casting director of Billy was at the YAGC in New York and saw me. She came to my mom and dad and asked if I wanted to audition, and they said yes.

EXTRA: What was the audition like?

BAUSILIO: I auditioned from eleven o'clock in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon, and they kept me alone in one room, no break. I had to tap dance, sing, everything. I was so nervous.

In the middle of the first audition, the casting director came out to my mom to ask, "If we would cast him, would you come to America?" My mom said, "Yes, of course."

My second audition was a call back. There were 11 other kids. I really enjoyed auditioning. When I first danced *Dream Ballet* with music, my heart just exploded with joy.

After the audition, we were two streets from where I just auditioned, when they called us back to tell me I was cast.

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EXTRA: Had you ever done any singing professionally or taken lessons?

BAUSILIO: I just sing with my brother and sister at home for fun. I'd never taken singing lessons before, but I was pretty happy because in BILLY ELLIOT, they wanted a natural singing voice, so they trained me how they wanted.

EXTRA: Billy's dialect must have come easy to you, since you are so good with languages.

BAUSILIO: Before BILLY ELLIOT, I didn't speak proper English. I spoke basic English, games, books with a picture, things like: hi, my name is, dog, doll. Now I know all these hard words, because once the director told me, "now you have to persuade the person," and I said, "What does that mean?" because I didn't know that word, so he made me look it up.

EXTRA: So this has improved your English.

BAUSILIO: Yes, very much.

EXTRA: What is your favorite moment in the show?

BAUSILIO: My favorite moment is probably *Dream Ballet*. Since I was little, I've always dreamt of flying, just like a bird, and suddenly I'm going to do it because I fly in *Dream Ballet*.

EXTRA: What is a day in the life of Giuseppe Bausilio like on tour?

BAUSILIO: I usually wake up at eight o'clock. Then there is tutoring until they call me for rehearsal. Then I have ballet with all the other Billys. From 11-12, I have a run through of the first act, dancing only. There is a dinner break and I have another run through, the acting.

I do two performances a week. There are five Billys on this tour. We rotate every ten performances. Then we get one day off.

EXTRA: How long do you think you can play Billy?

BAUSILIO: It doesn't really matter how old you are to play Billy. It

depends on if your voice has changed or how tall you've gotten, and you can't go on stage with a beard.

EXTRA: How long do you want to play Billy?

BAUSILIO: I don't know. The longest someone has done Billy is four or five years. I want to play Billy until it is time for me to go.

EXTRA: What about the future?

BAUSILIO: That's a really hard decision right now because before, I really wanted to be dancing with my brother in the **Paris Opera Ballet**. But at the time I wasn't the Paris Opera type, I was short and big, and they have a certain height and weight you have to be to get in. They want really thin people and tall boys. But now, I have the height and weight. I don't know. I want to be in movies, but at the same time, I want to be in the Paris Opera.

EXTRA: Anything else you want to tell Cleveland?

BAUSILIO: Just something I learned from my mom. She has said, "Always give your best, never ever try to be lazy, because if you think someone is not looking, someone is looking." That's how I got this role.

EXTRA: Good advice! Thank you Giuseppe.

BAUSILIO: Thank you. I am very, very excited to return to Cleveland.

EXTRA: We're excited too!


Photo Credit: Armand Schultz (Dad), Giuseppe Bausilio (Billy); Photo by Joan Marcus

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BOYS AND BALLET



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Photo Credit: David Alvarez (Billy) and Haydn Gwynne (Mrs. Wilkinson); Photo by Joan Marcus

In the 1600s, King Louis XIV of France was often called the Sun King, dubbed as such because of his performance as Apollo in a ballet entitled *Le Ballet de la Nuit* (The Ballet of the Night). His love of dance led him to establish the first ballet school, L'Académie Royale de Danse. This dance academy was located in a room at the Louvre in Paris.

Men mostly performed ballet during Louis' time. It wasn't until the 1830s that women began to dominate the art.

However, many men have made their mark not just on ballet, but on the entire dance world.

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Jamie Bell, the young man who portrayed Billy Elliot in the 2000 film, was part of a dancing family. He has compared his life to Billy's and said that during school, "the other boys called me 'poof,' 'ballerina boy.' 'Get on your tutu, Jamie.' It gave me more determination to prove it wasn't just for girls. It was for boys as well." His reward for sticking to dance was 11 international awards for his outstanding portrayal of the role of Billy Elliot.

[Vaslav Nijinsky](#), the famous Polish dancer, also came from a dancing family. Nijinsky, known for his incredible leaps, became one of the most exemplary artists of his time.

Then, there are the most famous male ballet dancers of all time: Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov.

Helen Ciolkovitch praised [Nureyev](#): "this exceptional dancer, his amazing elevation, his ability to remain suspended in midair at the highest point of his jumps, his sense of drama, his magnetic presence."

Time Magazine has described Baryshnikov: "when he launches his perfectly arched body into the arc of one of his improbably sustained leaps – high, light, the leg beats blurring precision – he transcends the limits of physique, and it sometimes seems, those of gravity itself."

Yet, male dancers are not limited to ballet. The boys portraying Billy Elliot have studied jazz, tap, flamenco, acrobatics, hip-hop, modern and other forms of dance, in addition to ballet. They have been studying dance from as young as four years old. They have come from the United States, Switzerland, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Ukraine, Great Britain and elsewhere.

Michael Jackson, Patrick Swayze, Gregory Hines, Bill T. Jones, Mark Morris, Alvin Ailey, Bob Fosse, Arthur Mitchell, Savion Glover, Channing Tatum, Gabriel "Kwikstep" Dionisio, Bryan Tanaka. Ballet, jazz, modern, tap, hip hop, b-boyz, or Latin, male dancers have many different styles of dance to express themselves. All have incredible years of training. All display great athleticism, grace and agility. Every day, boys are learning to dance and how to express, as Michael Jackson said, "the ecstasy of divine union through my music and my dance."

Or maybe Gene Kelly had it right: "I got started dancing because I knew it was one way

to meet girls.”

