

Sesame Street Live welcomes a new Jenny to the block

BY ALICE REIN
CORRESPONDENT

Don't you sometimes think you're the only human among monsters at work?
For Melody Johnson, who plays Jenny, the new music teacher in the Vee Corp. production of *Sesame Street Live*, that is, quite literally, the case. "I'm the only live character on stage. The rest are monsters," says Johnson, a Washington D.C. native who will visit Detroit for the first time when *Sesame Street Live* *Everyone Makes Music* hits the Fox Theatre Feb. 5-16.

"When we had our first full dress rehearsal, I was a little thrown back by the fact that all my friends were now Muppets," says Johnson, who graduated from Northwestern University and landed right into this role. "All the kids like the monsters, so I have to make my gestures very big for children to read from the stage."

Now 22, Johnson was raised on a steady diet of music and *Sesame Street*. Her mother was a singer and actress in Washington D.C. and directed children's theater. And like most kids her age, Johnson watched the Emmy Award-winning PBS show every morning with her breakfast cereal. "I liked Grover and the Count. I thought he was very dramatic the way he counted," Johnson said.

Sesame Street Live has become a winter mainstay in Detroit and, for the second year in a row, the first night is a benefit for WTVS, Detroit's public television station.

"We get a lot of new members and last year we came close to a sellout," said Michelle Ganser, special events manager of WTVS (Channel 46).

Last year, the event raised nearly \$100,000 for the public television station, and a generous anonymous donor bought up the rest of the opening night tickets to give to children from his favorite charities. For the



Big Bird and a friend sing together in *Sesame Street Live* *Everyone Makes Music*.

exclusive premiere night on Feb. 5, every child gets a goodie bag.

Tickets for this show can only be purchased through Detroit Public TV at (313) 876-8195.

At 23 years, *Sesame Street Live* is the longest-running children's tour in history. And just like the television show, the Broadway-style production features timeless lessons where children learn about patience, cooperation and teamwork.

In *Everyone Makes Music*, Jenny's musical instruments are all lost during her move to *Sesame Street*. But Elmo, The Count, Cookie Monster, Big Bird, Bert & Ernie and all their furry friends come to the rescue and discover new ways to make music. Rubber ducks, trash can lids and even laps become instruments in what could be considered a pee-wee version of *Stomp!*

"What's great about this show is that it uses all styles of music—rumba, disco, rap, hip-hop and country western, too," Johnson said. "It exposes kids to different kinds of music."

And adults can appreciate the high-tech stagecraft while getting reluctantly nostalgic over music like *The Hustle*. You Should Be Dancing and Rockin'.

Sesame Street Live

Everyone Makes Music

When: Both daytime and night performances Feb. 5-16. Feb. 5 is an exclusive premiere for Detroit Public TV.

Where: The Fox Theatre in Detroit.

Tickets: Call (313) 876-8195 to buy tickets for the Feb. 5 show. Packages range from \$50-\$200 for four tickets, a soft drink, box of popcorn and a special goodie bag. Tickets for Feb. 6-16 start at \$10 and are available at the Fox Theatre box office and Hockeystown Authentics in Troy (with no service charges) and at all Ticketmaster outlets, including Marshall Field's. Charge by phone at (248) 433-1515 or visit ticketmaster.com.

Robin. While Johnson's colleagues are reluctant to take any roles that take them out of New York or Los Angeles, she sees this as an opportunity to hone her skills.

"Yes, I know the audience is under 5, but I'm learning so much about being an adaptable, flexible solid performer, and how to keep my voice healthy and gain strength," she said.

Sounds like *Sesame Street* comes to teach valuable lessons to people of all ages.



This is one of Michigan's many scenic waterfalls. Monte Nagler used a 1/2 second exposure to put the water in "motion."

These tips will add movement to photos

I'm a stickler for getting photographs as sharp as possible. But there may be times you want to break the rules, to deviate from what you're used to doing, and make your pictures appear as if they have motion. After all, using your imagination and experimenting with a new idea could be just the thing for adding a new dimension to your photography.



Focus on Photography

Monte Nagler

There are several ways to add movement to your shots. First, you can photograph something in motion and make it look like a blur in the finished shot. For example, try shooting a waterfall at a shutter speed of about 1/2 to 1 second and see how the water will appear "milky" and will seem to "flow." Everything else will be sharp and in focus because you're using a tripod. Try photographing a moving automobile or train in a similar way at perhaps 1/4 to 1/2 second and you'll get exciting "motion" in your shot.

Expanding your creativity even further, shoot a sporting event slower than you normally would, say 1/4 to 1/2 second and you'll pick up a "ghosting" of movement in the charging soccer player or the slam-dunking basketball star.

Another way to add movement to your photographs is to move the camera as you depress the shutter release. Yes, move the whole camera during a 1- or 1/2 second exposure. A field of flowers will appear as blurs of color or your friends face may come out looking like a space alien. Experiment and see what you produce.

In the photograph shown here taken at one of Michigan's many spectacular waterfalls, I wanted to show motion by giving the water a "milky" appearance. All it took was a steady tripod and a shutter speed of 1/2 second.

Use your imagination and you'll come up with other ideas that will put motion in your photographs, too.

Monte Nagler is a fine art photographer based in Farmington Hills. You can leave him a message by calling (313) 953-2047.

WIN FREE TICKETS!

Meadow Brook Theatre

MICHIGAN EXCLUSIVE!
Canada's internationally acclaimed
SHAW FESTIVAL
performing George Bernard Shaw's
CANDIDA
JAN 6 - FEB 2
"Superb performance!"
— *Examiner*
"A thrilling production... theatre
doesn't get much better than this!"
— *Detroit Journal*

THE SHAW FESTIVAL'S "CANDIDA"

CLIPPERS, MAGIC BOOK-END ALL-STAR WEEKEND

Start your
BOOK END
at the BOX
Office, Monday, Feb. 3
6:00 PM

THIS WEDNESDAY VS LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS 7:30 PM

WEEKNIGHTS
Show your card and save!
Buy One, Get One Free!

Thunderstix Noisemaker
Giveaway To The First
5,000 Fans Courtesy of
20th Century Fox

DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 PM

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13 VS ORLANDO MAGIC 7:30 PM

GO TO PISTONS.COM FOR
INTERNET-ONLY TICKET SPECIALS
SEE GO COUPLES GET MARKED
ON THE PISTONS

DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 PM

PISTONS

GO TO WORK. EVERY NIGHT.

BUY TICKETS AT PISTONS.COM. THE PALACE BOX OFFICE AT
248.371.0100 AND ALL TICKETMASTER LOCATIONS.

Opens This Thursday! Tickets Start at \$10!

SESAME STREET LIVE
A VEE Corporation Production

**Everyone makes
MUSIC**

February 6-16

Great seats available at the Fox Theatre box office,
Hockeystown Authentics in Troy (without service charges)
and at all **admission** ticket centers, including Marshall
Field's. Charge by phone: 248-433-1515 or order on-line at
OlympiaEntertainment.com.

February 5 is Detroit Public TV Exclusive Premiere Night
with Meet & Greet opportunities. All proceeds benefit
Detroit Public TV children's programming. Call 313-876-8195
for more information or visit www.detroitpublictv.org

www.sesamestreetlive.com

LEAPIN' LIZARDS! DON'T MISS IT!

Annie

MARCH 4-9 FOX THEATRE

Tickets available at Hockeystown Authentics in Troy (without
service charges) and at **admission** outlets, including Marshall
Field's.

Charge by Phone 248.433.1515
or online at OlympiaEntertainment.com

Groups (20 or more) call: 313.471.3009