

FOX RIVERSIDE LIVE!

Hairspray's Drag Queen

By Pamela Hogan

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FOX

Riverside Theater Foundation

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Greg London played the role of Edna with the air of a washer woman and the panache of a true drag queen. This 6'4" experienced actor, writer, producer and artistic director – to name just a few of his accomplishments – has a singing voice that is pure and sweet. However, the voice he renders for Edna stems from a mixture of his Aunt Claudia's with his Grandma Edna's. He was inspired to play this part by his friend, Costume Designer, William Ivey Long, whose work he highly praised.

Greg is the Artistic Director for the Palace Theater in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, a 4,000 seat theater with multiple performance venues. He has played in theaters where the costume changes were made in a trailer out of the stage's back door, as well as growing an international repertoire in Moscow, London, China, and Japan. He knows theaters!

Greg had very high praise for our Fox Performing Arts Center. "Gorgeous," he said, when asked what he thought of the Fox, "Great." But in true Drag Queen (or is it Drama Queen) fashion, he added, "I could use a bigger couch on which to faint after my scenes."

Greg spends about a half hour getting ready for each performance. Putting glue on his eyebrows to make them recede, putting on the heavy beehive wig, stepping into high heels, and transforming into Edna by putting on the very heavy body suit. It can definitely get hot and tiring.

Mr. London, who holds multiple Masters' degrees from USC AND ASU, has also won a Eugene O'Neill Dramatic Writing Award for the play, *War Women*. He describes it as a story about "the women who are victims of men's wars." He loves that he has the opportunity to DO It All!—

acting, writing, producing, designing... Story ideas come to him and he sees them unfold in his dreams.

Where did he get his acting training? Greg was a child Suzuki violinist and a cellist, who widely performed with orchestras. He studied ballet for eight years, and after graduating from college with a music and painting degree, he taught high school orchestra for one year and loved the students. But he had to get away from the parents so he joined the service and spent three years in the Military Police. The latter experience was dramatically distant from his earlier artistic pursuits and what cultural media he would later practice. However, after taking stock of his life, he went on to further study teaching at the college level and do more performing. Even though this is the last week of Hairspray's tour, I suspect Greg London has many more transformations to make, as well as contributions to the illusory world of theater.



Photo obtained from Broadway in Riverside

"I could use a bigger couch"

It was my pleasure to spend time with this man of many talents; I hope you enjoyed learning about him.

Two plays Greg recommended for our stage are *August in Osage County* and *39 Steps*. Stay tuned!

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Greetings from the Fox Riverside Theater Foundation, the charitable organization whose mission is to advance the efforts of the Fox Performing Arts Center to serve and enhance the City of Riverside, its residents, artists, art enthusiasts and the Downtown by providing a first class regional facility offering a wide range of professional and community-based performing arts.

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