

# GRUPPUSS 1997 PREMIERE PERFORMANCE ON DVD REVIEW IN UGLY THINGS MAGAZINE, WINTER 2017 ISSUE



## The Grumpuss 1997 Premiere Performance is now on DVD

Travis Edward Pike  
Otherworld Cottage Industries 2017

Last year, *Ugly Things* introduced sixties rocker, Travis Edward Pike to its readership. “Watch Out Woman” and “The Way That I Need You,” songs Pike performed in the 1966 movie *Feelin’ Good*, have since been released by State Records, and the original 1967 recording of Travis Pike’s Tea Party’s “If I Didn’t Love You Girl” is due for release on a vinyl 45 in early 2018.

Now Pike is releasing [a new Premiere Performance\*] of his 1997 videotaped world premiere performance of his original epic rhyme, *Grumpuss*, staged for Britain’s Save the Children Fund at Blenheim Palace, home of the Dukes of Marlborough and birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill.

During 2017, I asked Travis how a Yankee rocker from Boston, Massachusetts, composed a medieval fantasy entirely in rhyme, and managed to stage it in a world heritage site in the heart of England.

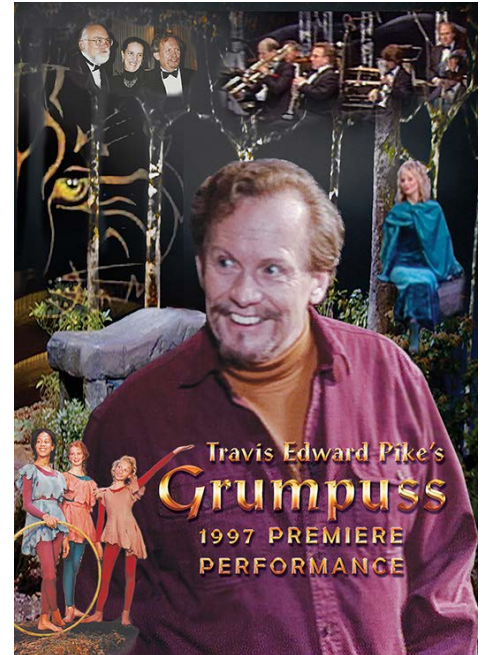
Pike answered, “My stories in rhyme were as much a part of my shows as my songs in coffeehouse performances, and later, in rock concerts, when we experienced technical difficulties, I sometimes entertained audiences with my rhymes until the show could go on. In March 1997, an English professor at Bridgewater State College, who had used my 1991 demo recording of *Grumpuss* in her seminar on *Homer and Greek Tragedy*, sent me an effusive thank you note, closing with the hope that I could ‘arrange for the general public to meet him soon.’ So I did.

“The rhyme is in English and set in Britain’s medieval past, when the oral tradition prevailed, supported primarily by kings, nobles, and some colorful outlaws. Today, that bardic tradition is still celebrated in Britain, particularly in Wales. Unknown in the U.K., I wondered how I would attract an audience for *Grumpuss*, until a friend suggested I make it a charity gala, and since the rhyme was suitable entertainment for children and adults alike, stage it for the Save the Children Fund.

“The charity agreed, so I scouted more than a dozen celebrity venues



Travis Pike, 1965



large enough for the equipment and crews I required to videotape the event, but none sufficed. At a meeting with my British crew, one wag suggested ‘nothing less than Blenheim Palace would suit me,’ so I scouted it. That rascal’s joke led me to the perfect location for my world premiere. With Anna Scott in the role of the Queen of the Sidh, and three of British Gymnastic young ladies to play the waifs the queen holds in thrall, all that remained was for my English friend, David Carr, formerly of the Fortunes, to arrange and conduct my music at the event.”

Around my own magazine and book writing work, which included this assignment, I watched Pike’s remastered DVD, in every way more revealing and potent than the reviews and testimonials for the 1998 VHS release claimed. To learn more about this award-winning, critically-acclaimed, family-friendly entertainment, now on DVD, visit the fascinating Legacy Section at [grumpuss.com](http://grumpuss.com).

(Harvey Kubernik)

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