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HOLY COW! HE'S BROADWAY'S BOVINE BABY

BILLY HELLER. *New York Post.* New York, N.Y.: Jun 1, 2002. pg. 027

Abstract (Document Summary)

Milky-White may not be able to produce any milk ("I love milk," [Chad Kimball] says), but Jack, who owns her, loves her all the same.

Along the way, Milky-White rolls her eyes and flops down on all fours. When it's time for Vanessa Williams and the rest of the cast to take a bow, Milky-White - and the 25-year-old guy who plays her - always get a big round of applause.

Chad Kimball moo-ves in on Milky-White, his alter ego. N.Y. Post: Jennifer Weisbord

Full Text (625 words)

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Some nights, before he goes on stage, Chad Kimball stops by Angus McIndoe, the restaurant across the street, for a hamburger.

Then he goes to the Broadhurst Theatre to dress up as ... a cow. And not just any cow - he's Milky-White, one of the stars of Broadway's "Into the Woods."

Milky-White may not be able to produce any milk ("I love milk," Kimball says), but Jack, who owns her, loves her all the same.

Unfortunately, Jack's mother is in it for the milk, which is why Jack sells Milky-White for a handful of magic beans. Enter the beanstalk, a giant and a whole lot of trouble.

Along the way, Milky-White rolls her eyes and flops down on all fours. When it's time for Vanessa Williams and the rest of the cast to take a bow, Milky-White - and the 25-year-old guy who plays her - always get a big round of applause.

"Cows don't come any better than this," raved The Post's Clive Barnes.

Kimball is not up for a Tony Award tomorrow night - even though USA Today says he deserves one - but he knows he's appreciated.

"I never imagined I'd be bowling over Broadway as a bovine," says Kimball, who lives in Astoria with his pet turtle, Rudy.

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"My dad just keeps on saying, 'Wow. I sent you to college to play a cow.'"

Kimball grew up in Seattle, where his first gig was in a community theater production of "Our Town."

In high school, Kimball was torn between pursuing acting career or going to West Point. "When I asked the recruiter about performing opportunities, he said, 'Well, there's a men's quartet ...'"

West Point's loss was the theater's gain. After graduating from Boston Conservatory, Kimball moved to New York City and quickly got his first role on Broadway, as a soldier in "The Civil War."

He began his "Into the Woods" work as an understudy. But when the actresses who originally played the cow weren't able to keep up with the strenuous physical demands of the costume, Kimball was asked to moove in.

"It's a tremendous blessing and in some ways it's a curse, because I get all this attention and at the end of the day, I've gotta go down on all fours and cover my face with this mask," he says.

With a dresser's help, it takes five or six minutes for the 5-foot-10, 165-pound Kimball to become a cow.

First he dons Milky-White's head, made of carbon graphite. Under the cow suit, he wears tights with some bumps sewn on "to fill in the calves," he says. "No pun intended."

He uses crutches for the cow's front legs, hooked into place by a vest-like contraption - all of it covered by the cow suit, which Kimball calls "very wrinkly and very cute."

He wears the suit for the entire show, but takes off the head whenever he's not on stage, because "it's a little hot."

At least it's not a pain in the back.

While he plays his part on all fours, the crutches help, Kimball says. "It's actually a very restful position," he explains. "It's as if you're bending over and leaning your elbows on a counter."

Before this, the closest Kimball ever came to a cow was at a state fair - oh, and there was that Burger King commercial he did.

Now, he can't get enough.

As an opening-night gift to the members of the company, Kimball adopted a cow - he sends money for its care, gets photos of it and is kept up on how it's doing.

No word yet on whether she gives more milk than Milky-White.

[Illustration]

Chad Kimball moo-ves in on Milky-White, his alter ego. N.Y. Post: Jennifer Weisbord

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