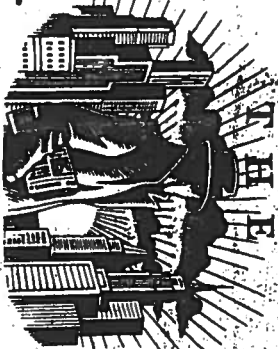


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VOLUME 13 NUMBER 39

NEW YORK OCTOBER 18, 1999

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THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

8-Day Week

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ONE DOLLAR

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called early that week about the late Friday show. "They said nothing," she said in a huff. "Which is sort of not cool," said Mr. Goldstein, adding he had "no idea" who Mr. Leitch is. "He's Kirsty Hume's husband," said an annoyed Ms. Franklin.

When Chris Ercole, an ad salesman in a black corduroy jacket, discovered Ms. Shedy would not be performing, he shook his head and said, "Are you kidding me? I've seen Hedwig three times before and wanted to see Ally Shedy's interpretation. I asked when I called for tickets on Tuesday, and they said she would be doing it."

A young woman who had come with three friends overheard Mr. Ercole and angrily demanded a refund, which she was given. But most of the ticket holders decided to take their seats. Jane Smits, a public health worker attending with a girlfriend, said, "I'm a little relieved it's not Ally Shedy. Can she sing? Can she dance?"

Some, such as hotelier Andre Balazs, came specifically to see Mr. Leitch. "Ally Shedy?" said Mr. Balazs. "I just found out two weeks ago that Donovan was doing it, so I tried to fit it into the schedule. I'm actually really curious to see him. I think he's hugely talented, so I'm dying to see it."

Although a sign by the box office reads, "No Refunds. No Exchanges," Anthony Zeig,

Wigged out? Ally Shedy in Hedwig and the Angry Inch.



CAROL ROSEGG

Danny Goldstein, a young Off-Broadway director, walked up with his date, Michelle Franklin, a dark-haired woman in knee-high boots and miniskirt. He said he had seen Hedwig before. "I had seen it with the first guy," he said, "and I specifically want to see it with Ally Shedy." Told she wouldn't be performing, he said, "Really? That's so sad. Seeing her play this role, that's what I found so interesting." Ms. Franklin said she had

the house manager, said, "If anyone wants refunds or exchanges, we give it. If someone's name is above the title, people are entitled to a refund. It's a rule. Actors' Equity asked if the publicity for the show was misleading the public, he said, "Donovan doing the late show was only official a week ago, last Friday. If people call, we tell them."

The four-piece rock band that backs Hedwig on stage had made some adjustments for Ms. Shedy. "She's a woman. He's a man. It is kind of odd for us," said Jon Weber, the drummer. "It is definitely brand-new, and we never considered it until we were actually doing it. There were some technical musical adjustments that we made. Other than that, a few extra rehearsals, two or three, three or four."

Chris Weilding, who plays guitar and sings backup vocals, said, "Ally approaches it more as an actor. That's the biggest difference. It was a big adjustment. We tend to change keys for some of the songs. Her voice is a little different, because it's a woman's voice. She's working with a vocal coach, a lot. Since she's started rehearsals, her voice has gotten a lot stronger. Donovan was used to singing, because he was in a band, and I don't think she's used to singing, you know, a lot."

On another night, nine autograph seekers were in the lobby of the theater waiting for Ms. Shedy. Six of them hadn't even seen the show. Nat Bloch, a 49-year-old self-described "bun," clutched a head shot from *The Broadway Club* in his hand. "I didn't see the show, I don't wake up early enough," he said. "Since *St. Elmo's Fire* I thought she was hot. Some friends mentioned that she was here, I'm not a stalker, no obsessed. I just wanted to meet her and get her autograph."

Sharon Owens, a 44-year-old Philadelphia insurance agent, did attend the show, just to love how she rises out of obscurity, she said of Ms. Shedy. She added that while the ladies' room, she met an elderly woman who asked, "Who was a man, and who was a woman in the show? Who is this Ally Shedy? Is she a man or a woman?"

Ms. Shedy emerged, looking tiny in baggy neon green sweatshirt. The fans pulled out programs and photos for her to sign. "I've seen *St. Elmo's Fire* 20 times," Mr. Bloch told her. "You're so beautiful."

"Thank you," said Ms. Shedy. "The *Observer* asked Ms. Shedy why she took the role of Hedwig. "Because it's stimulating and challenging in every single way," she said. "It is the biggest thing I could take on. And I love singing." Asked if she was nervous about opening night, she started waving quickly to the exit door. "I'm leeching," she said. "I'm just getting my footing."