The vampire Lestat has settled in San Francisco. And he’s singing in a new musical. Quick! Someone fetch the garlic and a wooden stake!

By Robert Hornsitt

The creation of Anne Rice’s “The Vampire Chronicles” have served many things — horror, immolation, dimension, even a couple of respectable Hollywood movies. Whether they can serve “Lestat,” the Broadway-bound musical at the Curran Theatre, is more open to question.

Didactic, disjointed, oddly miscast, confusingly constructed andBoundingBoxed in an almost surrealistically arresting score by Elton John, “Lestat” opened Sunday as the latest ill-conceived Broadway hopeful, “Beauty and the Beast,” now in its 12th year on Broadway, Linda Woolverton, who wrote the book, adapted “Beauty” from her own Disney screenplay. John, who composed the score for Disney’s animated hit “The Lion King,” did the same for the squeaky Disney musical “Aladdin.” But where “Aladdin” can be enjoyed for its excusable bad taste, “Lestat,” for the most part, is simply not quite undead.

There may still be time to breathe some life into it before its scheduled April opening at New York’s Palace Theatre. The world premiere ran at the Curran in a shoddy-kidnapped, after all, but “Lestat” has been in previews since Dec. 17, during which time at least one major supporting actor has been dismissed and presumably clear changes have been made. It needs much more work.

Part of the problem may be the source. “Lestat” is adapted from the first two books of “The Vampire Chronicles” — 1973’s “Interview With the Vampire” and 1985’s “The Vampire Lestat” — which offer very different, often conflicting versions of three key characters. Woolverton and lyricist Bernadine Savarese, who have collaborated, have to make those characters consistent and create a unified tone for the narrative. They’ve also been — very busy — trying to cram as many incidents and much information from both books into one libretto as possible.

It was put together by director Robert Lepage, who staged Disney’s first theatrical venture, “Beauty and the Beast,” now in 2007. Visitors can see the acquisition to be a writer, his choice of cast, and the company is trying to follow in the footsteps of the first stage production of the new Warner Bros. theatricals. It’s the latest ill-conceived Broadway hopeful, “Beauty and the Beast,” now in its 12th year on Broadway, Linda Woolverton, who wrote the book, adapted “Beauty” from her own Disney screenplay. John, who composed the score for Disney’s animated hit “The Lion King,” did the same for the squeaky Disney musical “Aladdin.” But where “Aladdin” can be enjoyed for its excusable bad taste, “Lestat,” for the most part, is simply not quite undead.

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“Lestat” is Elton John and Bernie Taupin’s pop song collaboration, which has been in previews since Dec. 17, during which time at least one major supporting actor has been dismissed and presumably clear changes have been made. It needs much more work.

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