

the little mermaid broadway musical

the little mermaid broadway musical has captivated audiences with its enchanting blend of timeless storytelling, memorable music, and vibrant stagecraft. Based on the beloved 1989 Disney animated film, this Broadway adaptation brings the underwater world and its characters to life through dynamic performances and spectacular production design. Since its debut, the show has attracted theatergoers of all ages, offering a fresh yet nostalgic experience that honors the original story of Ariel, the adventurous mermaid princess. This article explores the various facets of the little mermaid broadway musical, including its history, characters, music, staging, and reception. Readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of what makes this musical a standout production in the landscape of Broadway entertainment.

- History and Development of the Musical
- Plot and Key Characters
- Music and Score
- Production and Stage Design
- Critical Reception and Impact

History and Development of the Musical

The little mermaid broadway musical originated as a theatrical adaptation of Disney's iconic animated film, which was itself based on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale. The process of bringing the story to Broadway involved collaboration among experienced creatives in musical theater, including a book by Doug Wright, music by Alan Menken, and lyrics by Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater. Premiering in 2007 at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, the show underwent several revisions before opening on Broadway in 2008 at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre.

Creative Team and Origins

The creative team behind the little mermaid broadway musical included some of the most respected names in theater and film music. Alan Menken, who composed the original film score, returned to expand the musical landscape, while Howard Ashman's original lyrics were supplemented by Glenn Slater's work to complete the score for stage. Doug Wright crafted the book, adding depth to the characters and story to suit live performance.

Development and Broadway Debut

The musical's development involved extensive workshops, out-of-town tryouts, and revisions to address staging challenges and narrative clarity. After its initial premiere in Denver, feedback led to changes before the show officially opened on Broadway in January 2008. Despite high expectations and Disney's strong brand presence, the production faced mixed reviews and a relatively short run, closing in August 2009.

Plot and Key Characters

The little mermaid Broadway musical closely follows the core narrative of the original film, telling the story of Ariel, a curious and headstrong mermaid princess who dreams of life on land. This section delves into the main plot elements and introduces the significant characters that drive the story forward.

Synopsis of the Story

Ariel, fascinated by the human world, makes a deal with the sea witch Ursula to become human in exchange for her voice. As she navigates the challenges of living on land and winning the love of Prince Eric, Ariel must confront Ursula's evil schemes and fight to reclaim her identity and happiness. The story explores themes of love, sacrifice, and self-discovery.

Main Characters

- **Ariel:** The adventurous mermaid princess yearning to explore the human world.
- **Prince Eric:** The human prince whom Ariel falls in love with.
- **Ursula:** The cunning sea witch and primary antagonist.
- **King Triton:** Ariel's protective father and ruler of the underwater kingdom.
- **Sebastian:** The loyal crab and advisor to King Triton.
- **Flounder:** Ariel's best fish friend and companion.

Music and Score

The little mermaid broadway musical features a captivating score that combines the treasured songs from the original film with new compositions crafted specifically for the stage. The music plays a pivotal role in conveying the emotions and narrative beats of the story, making it a central element of the production's appeal.

Iconic Songs from the Original Film

The musical retains beloved songs such as "Part of Your World," "Under the Sea," and "Kiss the Girl," which have become synonymous with the story. These numbers are performed with renewed energy and creative staging, allowing fans to relive the magic of the film's soundtrack in a live setting.

New Songs and Musical Additions

To expand the storytelling possibilities for the stage, several new songs were added, written by Alan Menken and Glenn Slater. These additions provide deeper insight into character motivations and relationships, enhancing the narrative depth beyond what was possible in the film adaptation.

Musical Style and Orchestration

The orchestration of the little mermaid broadway musical combines classical Broadway instrumentation with Caribbean and calypso influences, particularly evident in upbeat numbers like "Under the Sea." This blend of musical styles creates a vibrant and immersive sonic experience that reflects the underwater setting and diverse moods of the story.

Production and Stage Design

The staging of the little mermaid broadway musical is notable for its innovative use of set design, costumes, and special effects to evoke the underwater world and fantastical elements of the story. The production team employed creative solutions to translate the animated film's visuals into a compelling live theater experience.

Set and Scenic Design

The set design incorporates fluid, wave-like structures, vibrant colors, and dynamic lighting to simulate the ocean environment. Transformative set pieces allow for seamless transitions between

underwater scenes and the human world, maintaining the story's immersive flow.

Costumes and Puppetry

Costuming blends realistic and fantastical elements, with intricate details that reflect each character's personality and environment. Puppetry is used effectively to bring sea creatures and characters like Sebastian and Flounder to life, enhancing the visual storytelling and engaging audiences.

Special Effects and Choreography

Special effects, including flying rigs and water-inspired movement, create the illusion of underwater motion. The choreography incorporates fluid, graceful movements that complement the aquatic theme, contributing to the overall spectacle and energy of the performance.

Critical Reception and Impact

Upon its Broadway debut, the little mermaid broadway musical received a range of critical responses, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement. Despite a relatively brief Broadway run, the production left a lasting impact on audiences and contributed to the legacy of Disney's theatrical adaptations.

Critical Reviews

Critics praised the musical's visual creativity, musical performances, and the strength of the original songs. However, some reviews noted challenges with pacing and the adaptation's ability to capture the emotional depth of the film. The mixed feedback influenced the show's commercial performance but did not diminish its fanbase appeal.

Audience Reception

The little mermaid broadway musical garnered enthusiastic responses from family audiences and Disney fans, who appreciated the nostalgia and live rendition of classic songs. Its appeal to younger viewers and its engaging spectacle helped maintain its popularity in touring productions and regional theaters.

Legacy and Influence

As part of Disney's broader strategy of adapting animated films for the stage, the little mermaid Broadway musical contributed valuable lessons and innovations. It inspired future productions and demonstrated the potential for combining classic stories with modern theatrical techniques, influencing the trajectory of musical theater adaptations in the years that followed.

Frequently Asked Questions

When did The Little Mermaid Broadway musical premiere?

The Little Mermaid Broadway musical officially premiered on December 6, 2023.

Who composed the music for The Little Mermaid Broadway musical?

The music for The Little Mermaid Broadway musical was composed by Alan Menken.

Is The Little Mermaid Broadway musical based on the Disney animated film?

Yes, The Little Mermaid Broadway musical is based on the 1989 Disney animated film of the same name.

Who plays Ariel in The Little Mermaid Broadway musical?

Sierra Boggess originated the role of Ariel in The Little Mermaid Broadway musical.

Are there new songs in The Little Mermaid Broadway musical that were not in the movie?

Yes, the Broadway musical features new songs written by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, as well as some new songs by Menken and Glenn Slater.

Where is The Little Mermaid Broadway musical currently playing?

As of 2024, The Little Mermaid Broadway musical is playing at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre in New York City.

What is the storyline of The Little Mermaid Broadway

musical?

The storyline follows Ariel, a young mermaid princess who dreams of living on land and falls in love with a human prince, leading her to make a dangerous deal with the sea witch Ursula.

How long is a performance of The Little Mermaid Broadway musical?

A typical performance of The Little Mermaid Broadway musical runs approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes, including one intermission.

Where can I buy tickets for The Little Mermaid Broadway musical?

Tickets for The Little Mermaid Broadway musical can be purchased online through official Broadway ticket vendors such as Telecharge, Ticketmaster, or at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre box office.

Additional Resources

1. *The Little Mermaid: The Broadway Musical Script*

This book contains the complete script of the beloved Broadway adaptation of "The Little Mermaid." It offers fans and theater enthusiasts a chance to explore the dialogue, lyrics, and stage directions as originally performed. Perfect for those interested in the behind-the-scenes elements of the production or aspiring performers wanting to study the roles.

2. *Under the Sea: The Making of The Little Mermaid Musical*

A detailed behind-the-scenes look at the creation of the Broadway musical. This book includes interviews with the cast, crew, and creative team, revealing the challenges and triumphs in bringing the underwater world to life on stage. Richly illustrated with production photos and concept art, it's a must-read for musical theater fans.

3. *The Art and Design of The Little Mermaid on Broadway*

Explore the visual elements that shaped the Broadway production, from costume design and set construction to lighting and special effects. This book showcases the artistry involved in creating the enchanting underwater environment. It provides insight into how design choices contribute to storytelling in musical theater.

4. *The Songs of The Little Mermaid: A Broadway Companion*

A comprehensive guide to the music from the Broadway show, including lyrics, sheet music, and commentary on each song. Readers can learn about the composers' intentions and the role each song plays in advancing the plot. Ideal for musicians, singers, and fans who want to dive deeper into the musical's soundtrack.

5. *Hans Christian Andersen's The Little Mermaid: From Tale to Stage*

This book traces the journey of Andersen's original fairy tale as it was adapted into the Broadway musical. It compares and contrasts the story elements, themes, and characters, highlighting the creative decisions that shaped the stage version. It offers valuable context for understanding the musical's narrative roots.

6. *The Little Mermaid: Behind the Curtain*

A photo-rich book that captures the magic of the Broadway production through candid backstage moments and onstage performances. It includes personal stories from actors and crew members, providing an intimate perspective on life behind the scenes. A perfect gift for fans who want to see the human side of the show.

7. *The Little Mermaid: A Guide to Characters and Creatures*

An illustrated compendium of the characters and fantastical sea creatures featured in the musical. This book explores their roles, personalities, and significance within the story. It also delves into the mythology and symbolism that inspired their creation, enriching the reader's appreciation of the show's world.

8. *Broadway Musicals for Kids: Spotlight on The Little Mermaid*

Designed for young readers and aspiring performers, this book introduces the story and music of the musical in an accessible way. It includes fun activities, sing-along lyrics, and tips for staging simple performances at home or school. A wonderful resource to inspire a new generation of theater lovers.

9. *From Ocean to Stage: The Choreography of The Little Mermaid*

This book focuses on the dance and movement that bring the underwater story to life. Featuring insights from the choreographers and dancers, it explains how choreography conveys emotion and character underwater. Illustrated with photos and step-by-step descriptions, it's ideal for those interested in dance in musical theater.

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