



Disney
THE LION KING
THE WORLD'S #1 MUSICAL

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION RESOURCE

PRE-SHOW CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Walt Disney Company Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country and their enduring connections and continuous care for the skies, lands and waterways throughout Australia.

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*More spots than a teenage cheetah? Any time you see a tiny asterisk next to a word, journey through this education resource to discover its definition in the Vocabulary Section on Page 33. ✂

Keep your eyes peeled for little animal silhouettes in the footers of particular pages throughout the resource. This is where our action unfolds with classroom-based, curriculum-aligned activities!



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PRE-SHOW CONTENT



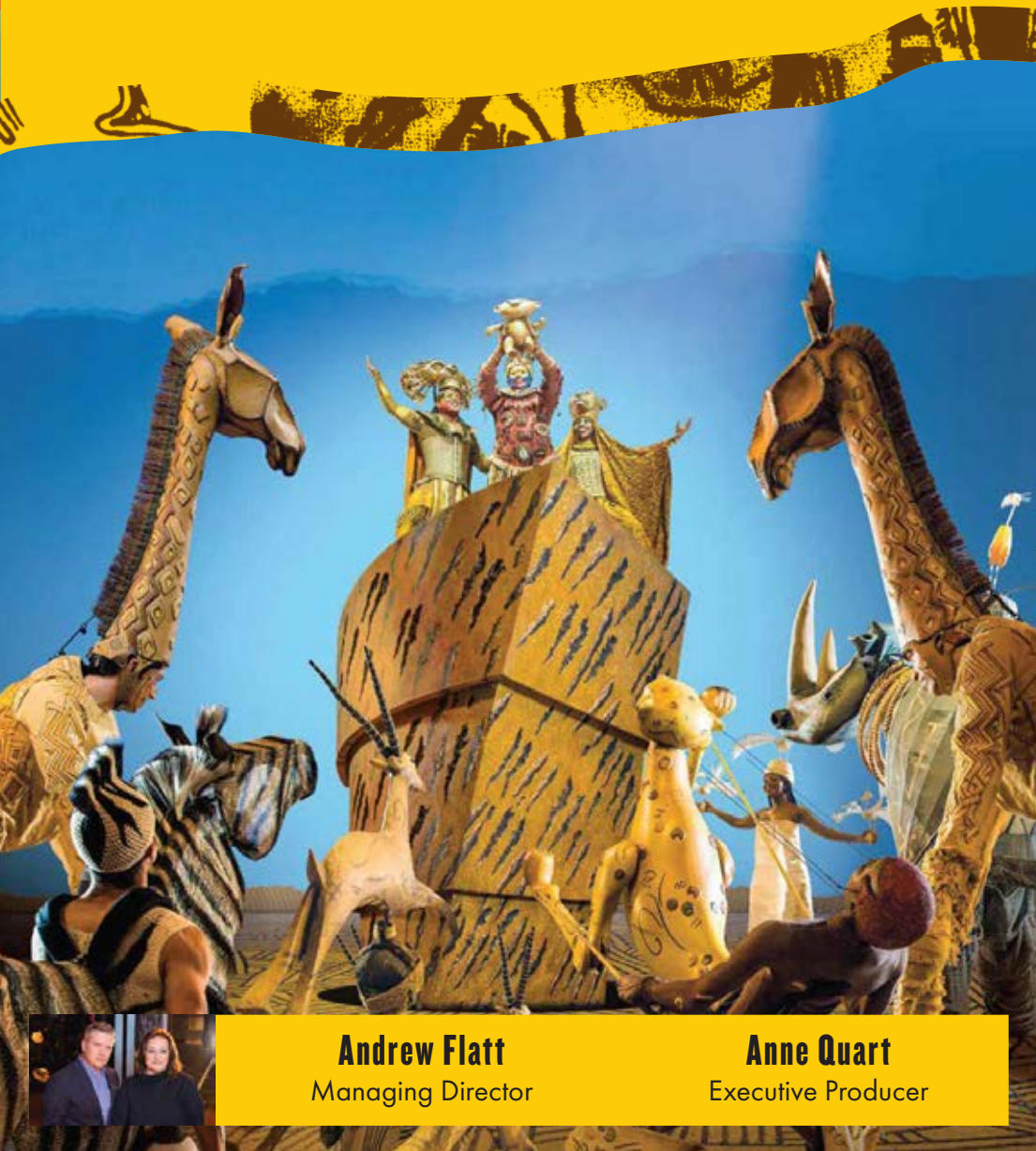
MEET DISNEY THEATRICAL GROUP!

DISNEY THEATRICAL GROUP (DTG), a division of The Walt Disney Studios, was formed in 1994 and operates under the direction of Andrew Flatt and Anne Quart. Worldwide, its ten Broadway* titles have been seen by more than 200 million theatregoers and have been nominated for 62 Tony Awards®*, winning Broadway's* highest honour 20 times. The company's inaugural production, Beauty and the Beast, opened in 1994, playing a remarkable 13-year run on Broadway* and continues to be produced in replica productions around the world. In November 1997, Disney made theatrical history with the opening of THE LION KING, which received six 1998 Tony Awards®* including Best Musical and Best Director, Julie Taymor, who became the first woman in Broadway* history to win the award. Approaching 30 landmark years on Broadway*, it has welcomed over 124 million visitors worldwide to date and has multiple productions currently running worldwide. Within Disney Theatrical Group's first three decades, under the leadership of Thomas Schumacher, THE LION KING has played over 100 cities in 24 countries on every continent except Antarctica and its worldwide gross exceeds that of any film, Broadway* show or entertainment title in box office history. Elton John and Tim Rice's Aida opened on Broadway* next, winning four 2000 Tony Awards. It was followed by Mary Poppins, a co-production with Cameron Mackintosh, which opened in London in 2004 and went on to enjoy a six-year Tony-winning®* Broadway* run. TARZAN®, Tony-nominated®* for its 2006 Broadway* premiere, went on to become an international hit with an award-winning production enjoying a ten-year run in Germany. In January 2008, The Little Mermaid opened on Broadway* and was the best-selling new musical of that year. Disney Theatrical opened two critically acclaimed productions on Broadway* in 2012, winning seven Tony Awards®* between them: Peter and the Starcatcher and Newsies, each of which enjoyed a two-year run and launched a North American tour, with Newsies playing a record-breaking Fathom Events in-cinema release. Disney Theatrical Group's 2014 hit, Aladdin, continues its smash Broadway* run, having launched eleven productions on four continents and been seen by more than 21 million guests.



Disney Theatrical's newest hit, the 2018 Tony-nominated Best Musical Frozen has launched eight productions around the world, with a filmed version of the stage musical currently available on Disney+. Other stage ventures include King David in concert on Broadway*, Der Glöckner Von Notre Dame in Berlin, stage productions of Disney's High School Musical and the Olivier-nominated* West End hit Shakespeare in Love. Disney Theatrical Group has collaborated with preeminent theatres in the US to develop new stage musicals including The Hunchback of Notre Dame and Freaky Friday. As a part of the recent acquisition of 20th Century Studios, Disney Theatrical also heads the Buena Vista Theatrical banner, which licenses Fox titles for stage adaptations including Anastasia; Moulin Rouge! The Musical and Mrs. Doubtfire. Disney Theatrical Group recently premiered Hercules in London's West End* and a North American tour production of Beauty and the Beast. The stage adaptation of the beloved film The Greatest Showman recently opened in Bristol, United Kingdom to box office records, with the next step in its life to be announced shortly. In addition to theatrical stage productions, Disney Theatrical Group licenses and manages Location-Based Entertainment (LBE) experiences for The Walt Disney Company, including Disney On Ice, Mundo Pixar, Disney Junior Live On Tour, and The Nightmare Before Christmas Light Trail, expanding the magic of Disney storytelling into immersive environments worldwide. With dozens of stage productions and live ticketed events currently being produced or licensed, a Disney live experience is taking place somewhere around the globe virtually every hour of the day.

WELCOME TO THE PRIDELANDS!



Andrew Flatt
Managing Director

Anne Quart
Executive Producer

We're delighted you're joining us at this performance of THE LION KING. When Julie Taymor's thrilling production opened on Broadway* in November 1997, no one could have imagined that it would still be delighting audiences around the world nearly 30 years later, having played in 9 languages and on every continent except Antarctica.

In retrospect, one might imagine that a stage adaptation of THE LION KING was inevitable, and its success preordained*. In fact, it was anything but. Arguably one of the most successful films of all time, THE LION KING was not the most obvious choice to adapt into a Broadway* musical. The original animated film was purely cinematic*. The brilliant directors Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff and their extraordinary film team of hundreds set out to tell an original story not born of fairy tales or historical events. They each faced a blank canvas - literally. And, to everyone's surprise, the film worked spectacularly.

But how does that translate to live theatre? In the mid-90's The Walt Disney Company's theatrical business was small, but there was great enthusiasm to create more productions to follow up on the success of our first stage work, BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. But out of what? The notion of THE LION KING kept coming up, but what would the idea be? There had to be something more than just the film on stage. But what? The answer was, of course, not 'what' but 'who.'

We turned to the immensely gifted theatre artist Julie Taymor to bring THE LION KING to theatrical life. Although she was esteemed* and in demand in theatres and opera houses the world over, she had never worked in the commercial world of Broadway* and was hardly the most obvious choice for the assignment. But Tom already knew and loved her work and felt instinctively that her theatrical audacity* was the key to bringing the work to the stage. Through her fearless vision, her artistry and commitment, this brilliant theatre artist, along with the incredibly talented group of collaborators that formed the show's creative team, created a production that continues to enthral* audiences worldwide. It has crossed countless barriers, brought new audiences to the theatre and redefined what musical theatre can do.

In many ways, this is because of the timeless themes of our story and its beloved characters. We like to think that by challenging audiences to engage with the show through the sheer theatricality of its storytelling, Julie and her team found a way to allow people to experience this story as if for the first time.

PERFORMANCE SYNOPSIS & RUNNING TIME

ACT I:

It is sunrise over Pride Rock, overlooking the savannah. Rafiki, the wise old baboon, calls the animals to witness as Mufasa, 'the lion king', and his queen, Sarabi, present their newborn son, Simba. All the animals are delighted, except Mufasa's brother, Scar, who resents the new prince and the cub's place as next in line to the King.

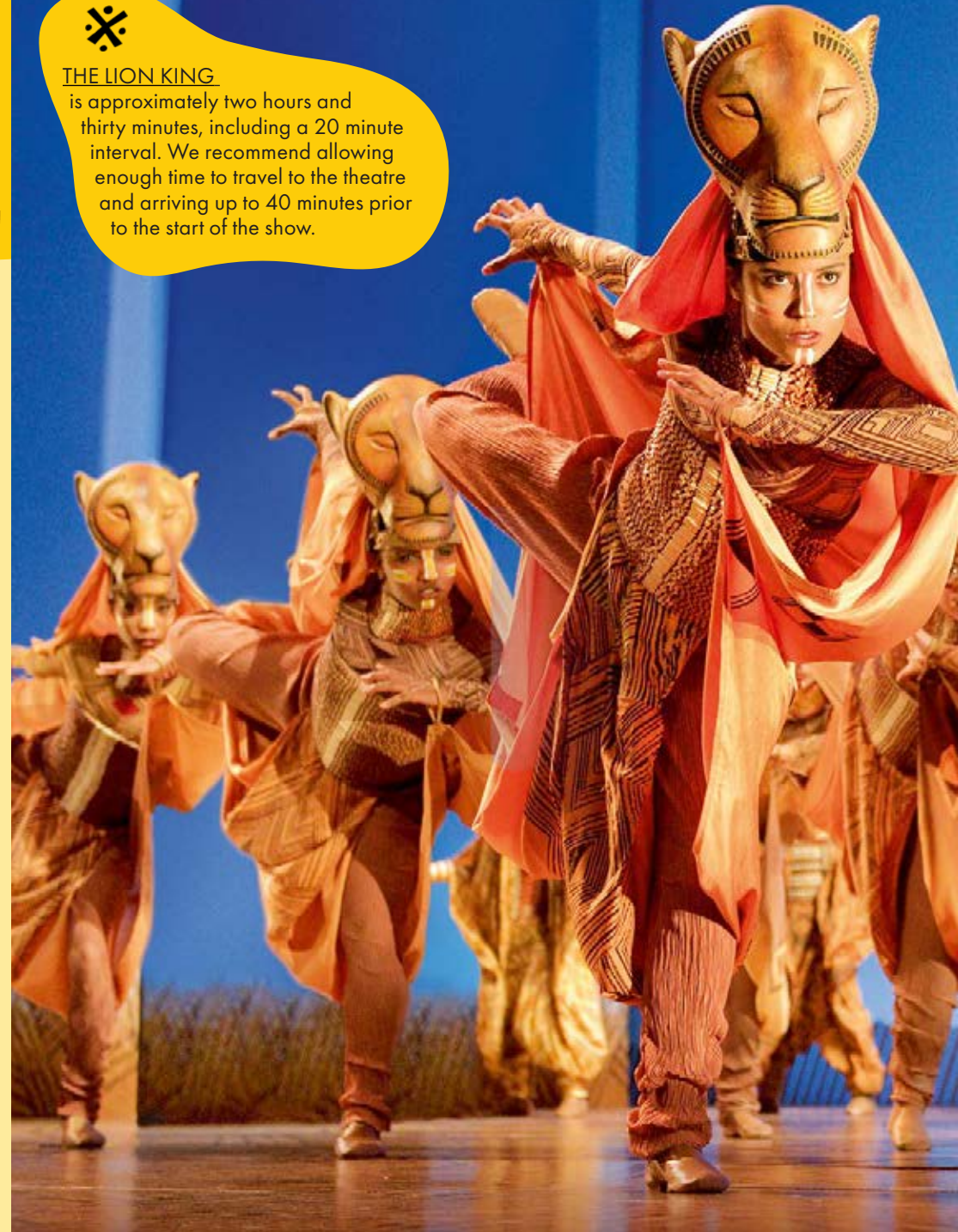
Simba grows into an adventurous young cub, as Mufasa tries to instil in him the responsibilities of leadership, and his belief that everything lives together in a delicate balance called the Circle of Life. Scar plays on Simba's curiosity by telling him about the Elephant Graveyard beyond the borders of the Pridelands, where Simba is forbidden to go. Simba cannot resist exploring, taking with him his best friend, the young lioness Nala, and evading their chaperone, the hornbill Zazu, Mufasa's major domo. The young pair are attacked by three hungry hyenas, and only Mufasa's arrival saves them. Mufasa is disappointed in Simba and tries to explain to him the real meaning of bravery and maturity. Scar continues to plot the downfall of Mufasa. He lures Simba into a gorge and has the hyenas start a stampede of wildebeests which threatens to kill Simba. Mufasa arrives in time to save him but is wounded and clings desperately to the cliff by his claws. Scar shows no mercy to his brother, throwing Mufasa back down under the hoofs of the wildebeests. He makes Simba believe that Mufasa's death was his fault and persuades him to leave the Pridelands, never to return.

The rest of the pride, believing Simba to be dead, must accept Scar as their new king. A lazy and inefficient king, he invites the hyenas into the Pridelands, and the devastation of the countryside begins. Simba runs a long way from the Pridelands before collapsing exhausted, almost becoming a meal for the buzzards. He is rescued by Timon, a wisecracking meerkat, and Pumbaa, a big-hearted warthog. They befriend Simba and teach him their philosophy of life through the song, Hakuna Matata, which means 'no worries'. Simba grows from a cub into a young lion.



THE LION KING

is approximately two hours and thirty minutes, including a 20 minute interval. We recommend allowing enough time to travel to the theatre and arriving up to 40 minutes prior to the start of the show.





ACT 2: Scar, haunted by the memory of Mufasa, wishes to secure his immortality by having children. He tries to force his attentions on Nala, Simba's childhood friend, now grown into a beautiful young lioness. She rejects him and runs away from the Pridelands.

Simba has grown restless, and rather reckless*. He leaps over a river, daring Timon to follow. When the meerkat tries, he falls into the river, almost plunging over the waterfall into the jaws of crocodiles who wait below. Simba rescues him but is ashamed of his own silly mistake. As they lie looking up at the stars, Simba remembers his father and his promise always to be there for him. As Simba sings Endless Night, back in the Pridelands old Rafiki hears the song on the wind and conjures Simba's image on a tree trunk, with the mane of an adult lion. Pumbaa is chased by a lioness. When Simba steps in to protect him, he recognises his old friend Nala, who is shocked to find him alive. The two young lions realise the depth of their affection for each other, but still Simba is too ashamed* to do what Nala asks, to go back to the Pridelands and reclaim the throne. Simba stalks away into the jungle, but meets old Rafiki who tells him his father is alive – in him.

The stars seem to come together to form Mufasa's face. Mufasa tells his son that he must take his place in the great Circle of Life. Simba makes up his mind, and sets off back to the Pridelands, with Nala, Timon and Pumbaa. They arrive to find the land dry and bare, and Scar assaulting Sarabi, Simba's mother, because she advises that they leave Pride Rock. Simba confronts Scar but is forced by Scar to admit that he believes that he caused his father's death. As Scar backs Simba to the edge of a cliff, in a moment of showing off and not thinking, he whispers the truth: that he killed Mufasa. This gives Simba the strength to fight back and conquer Scar, who is made to repeat the truth to everyone, though he tries to blame everything on the hyenas. Simba spares his life, but sends him away forever. Scar attacks Simba again, but Simba manages to flip his uncle over the cliff, down to the hungry hyenas waiting below. Simba is proclaimed the new king, and all the animals celebrate. The Circle of Life continues as Rafiki raises aloft* the son of the new Lion King for all to see.

Head to this link to witness the incredible 360 degree footage of THE LION KING on Broadway*. Use the toggle in the top left corner of the screen to experience the performance from every angle!



PRODUCTION HISTORY

124+

MILLION AUDIENCE
MEMBERS WORLDWIDE

70

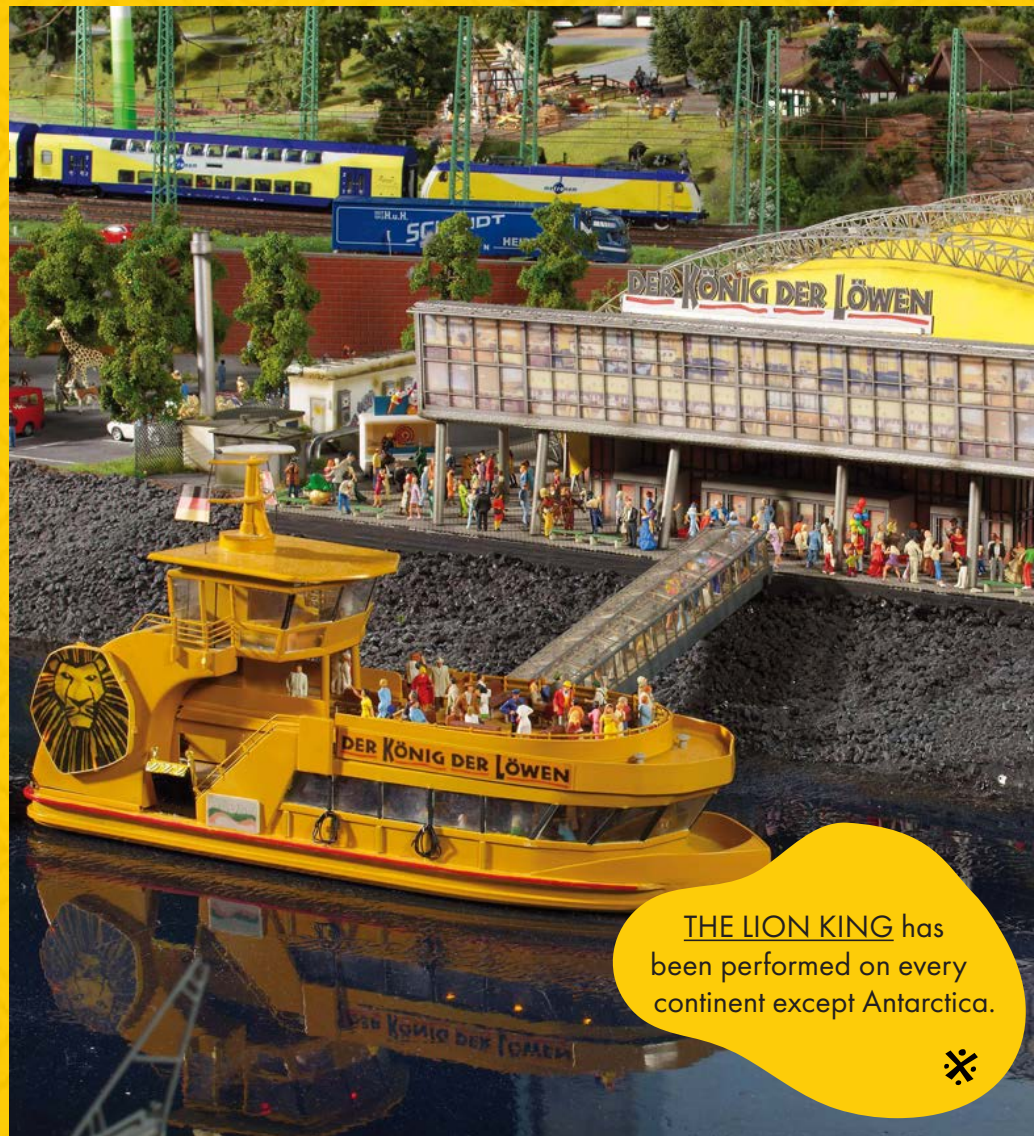
MAJOR THEATRE
AWARDS INTERNATIONALLY

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PRODUCTIONS
AROUND THE WORLD

THE LION KING isn't just a show; it's a global phenomenon that has blown the minds of over 124 million people worldwide. Think about that number for a second... That's more than four times the entire population of Australia, all united by the same jaw-dropping visuals, iconic music, and storytelling that could only ever work on a live stage. And at the heart of it all is one extraordinary creative force: Julie Taymor, who made history by becoming the first woman ever to win the Tony Award®* for Best Direction of a Musical. She didn't stop there either; she also took home a Tony Award®* for her iconic costume designs, co-designed the masks and puppets, and even wrote additional lyrics for the show. One person. All of that. Incredible. Since opening on Broadway* in November 1997, THE LION KING has become the most successful musical in history. It currently plays 8 times a week at the Minskoff Theatre, in Times Square, New York, America. The show's impact didn't stop on Broadway*; it conquered the world. Premiering in Tokyo in 1998, audiences from around Japan continue to be delighted and enthralled* by the show to this day. It is currently running in Tokyo at the Ariake Shiki Theatre. The following year, THE LION KING opened at the Lyceum Theatre in London's West End*; for over 25 years, the show continues to break records, and remains the West End's* best-selling musical. Since opening in Germany in 2001, THE LION KING has reigned* as its most successful musical; here, audience members travel to see the show at the Theater im Hafen, Hamburg, on special LION KING boats..!

In 2007, THE LION KING made a deeply meaningful journey to Johannesburg, South Africa, connecting the production back to the continent that inspired it. Then Paris fell in love with it too, with the French production Le Roi Lion absolutely dominating the prestigious Molière Awards in 2008, (France's equivalent of The Tony Awards®*), winning Best Costume Design, Best Lighting Design, AND Best Musical in one incredible night. From New York to Johannesburg to Paris, this production has proven something remarkable: that Taymor's vision of Africa, told through masks, puppets, and breathtaking stagecraft, speaks to audiences no matter where we are from.



THE LION KING has been performed on every continent except Antarctica.



Disney
THE LION KING
THE WORLD'S #1 MUSICAL

PRODUCTIONS AROUND THE WORLD



1997	New York City The New Amsterdam Theatre	2015	Mexico Teatro Telcel
1998	Tokyo Shiki Theatre Company	2016	Shanghai disney resort Walt Disney Grand Theatre
1999	London Lyceum Theatre		Holland Fortis Circustheater
	Japan Tour	2017	3rd North American Tour
2000	Los Angeles Pantages Theatre	2018	International Tour:
	Toronto Princess of Wales Theatre		Manila
2001	Hamburg Stage Theatre im Hafen		Singapore
2002	1st North American Tour		Daegu
2003	1st Australian Tour		Seoul
	2nd North American Tour		Busan
2004	Holland Fortis Circustheater		Auckland
2006	Shanghai Shanghai Grand Theatre		Taipei
	Seoul Charlotte Theater		Kaohsiung
2007	South Africa Montecasino Theatre		Bangkok
	Paris Mogador Theatre		Abu Dhabi
2008	TaiPEI Taipei Dome		Hong Kong
	Mexico Auditorio Nacional	2019	2nd EUROPEAN TOUR
2009	Las Vegas Mandalay Bay Theater	2021	Paris Mogador Theatre
2011	Singapore Marina Bay Sands Theatre	2023	SãO PAULO Teatro Renault
	Madrid Teatro Lope de Vega	2024	TORONTO Princess of Wales Theatre
2012	1st European Tour	2025	Mexico Teatro Telcel
2013	SãO Paulo Teatro Renault	2026	3rd Australian Tour
	2nd Australian Tour		

OUR AWE-STRIKING AWARDS HISTORY!

BROADWAY*, NEW YORK

Tony Awards®*, 1998

Best Director of a Musical - Julie Taymor

Best Choreography - Garth Fagan

Best Scenic Design - Richard Hudson

Best Costume Design - Julie Taymor

Best Lighting Design - Donald Holder

Drama Desk Awards, 1998

Best Director of a Musical - Julie Taymor

Best Choreography - Garth Fagan

Best Featured Actress in a Musical - Tsidi Le Loka

Best Scenic Design - Richard Hudson

Best Costume Design - Julie Taymor

Best Lighting Design - Donald Holder

Best Puppet Design - Julie Taymor & Michael Curry

Best Sound Design - Tony Meola

Drama League Awards, 1998

Best Director of a Musical - Julie Taymor

Best Choreography - Garth Fagan

BROADWAY*, NEW YORK (CONTINUED)...

Outer Critics Circle Awards, 1998

Best Director of a Musical - Julie Taymor

Best Choreography - Garth Fagan

Best Featured Actress in a Musical - Tsidi Le Loka

Best Scenic Design - Richard Hudson

Best Costume Design - Julie Taymor

Best Lighting Design - Donald Holder

New York Drama Critics Award, 1998

Best Musical

Theatre World Award, 1998

Best Featured Actor in a Musical - Max Casella

Astaire Award, 1998

Outstanding Choreography - Garth Fagan

GRAMMY® Award, 1998

Best Musical Show Album - Mark Mancina, Producer

LONDON

Laurence Olivier Awards*, 1999

Best Choreography - Garth Fagan

LONDON (CONTINUED)...

Best Costume Design - Julie Taymor

Evening Standard Award, 1999

Theatrical Event of the Year

Ivor Novello Music Awards, 2000

International Achievement in Musical Theatre

Critics' Circle Theatre Award, 1999 (UK)

Best Designer - Julie Taymor & Richard Hudson

LOS ANGELES

Hollywood Makeup Artist and

Hair Stylist Guild Awards, 2000

Best Makeup for a Theatrical Production -

Beth Thomspson, Tiffany Hicks, Roger Stricker,

Darren Jinks & Brenda O'Brien

Backstage West Awards Garland, 2000

Costume Design - Julie Taymor

Mask and Puppet Design - Michael Curry

Lighting Design - Don Holder

Makeup Design - Michael Ward

LOS ANGELES (CONTINUED)...

Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award, 2000

Costume Design - Julie Taymor

Mask and Puppet Design - Michael Curry

Lighting Design - Don Holder

Ovation Awards, 2001

Best Musical

Director, Musical - Julie Taymor

Featured Actor, Musical - Danny Rutigliano

Choreographer - Garth Fagan

Set, Larger - Richard Hudson

Lighting - Donald Holder

Costumes - Julie Taymor

NAACP Theatre Awards, 2001

Best Producer - Disney Theatricals,

Peter Schneider & Thomas Schumacher

Best Set Design - Richard Hudson

Best Lighting - Donald Holder

Best Costumes - Julie Taymor

NORTH AMERICAN TOUR

National Broadway* Theatre "Star"

Awards, 2003

Best Direction – Julie Taymor

Carbonell Awards (Florida), 2003

Best Performance

Best Director – Julie Taymor

TORONTO

Dora Awards, 2000

Outstanding Costume Design - Julie Taymor

Outstanding Performance in a Featured Role

(Play or Musical) - Jonathan Wilson

HAMBURG

"Musicals"- Awards, 2001/2002

Best Director - Julie Taymor

Best Sets and Costumes - Julie Taymor and Team

JAPAN

1998, the show won the 11th prize of the year in the ranking of an influential magazine *Weekly Pia*.

1998, the show won The Best Musical Award of an influential magazine *Monthly Musical*.

1999, the advertising won Yomiuri Advertising Award In 1999, the show won the 1st prize

of the year in the ranking of *Weekly Pia*.

2000, the show won the 1st prize of the year in the ranking of *Weekly Pia*.

2001, the show won the 10th prize of the year in the ranking of *Weekly Pia*.

2002, the advertising display won the Best Signboard of "The 1st Railway Advertising Design

Contest" Sponsored by Japan Railway Kyushu.

AUSTRALIA

Helpmann Award*for Best Musical, 2004

The MO Award* for Musical Theatre Production
of the Year, 2004

HOLLAND

John Kraaijkamp Musical Awards, 2004

Best Female Supporting Actress in a Large

Musical – Nomvula Dlamini

Best Creative Performance – Julie Taymor

John Kraaijkamp Musical Awards 2005

Best Musical of 2005

SÃO PAULO

Folha de Sao Paulo Awards, 2013

Best Musical



Since its Broadway* debut in 1997, THE LION KING has been performed across 72 seasons worldwide, bringing its extraordinary story to audiences across the entire globe, making it one of the most widely travelled theatrical productions in history.

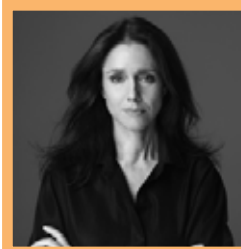


MEET THE CREATIVES



JULIE TAYMOR

CONCEIVER/DIRECTOR, DIRECTOR, COSTUME DESIGN,
MASK/PUPPET CO-DESIGN, ADDITIONAL LYRICS



Julie Taymor won the 1998 Tony Award®* for Best Direction of a Musical and for Best Costumes for THE LION KING. It also garnered Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and Drama League Awards for Taymor's direction; three Moliere Awards, including Best Musical and Best Costumes; and myriad awards for her original costume, mask and puppet designs. Taymor made her Broadway debut in 1996 with Juan Darien: A Carnival Mass (Lincoln Center), nominated for five Tony Awards. Other theatre work includes M. Butterfly starring Clive Owen (Cort Theatre), Grounded (Public Theatre), The Green Bird (New Victory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, the Cort Theatre on Broadway); Titus Andronicus; The Tempest: The Taming of the Shrew (Theatre for a New Audience); The Transposed Heads (Lincoln Center and American Music Theatre Festival); Liberty's Taken (Castle Hill Festival); and Spider-Man Turn Off the Dark (Foxwoods Theatre on Broadway). Her opera productions include the Pulitzer finalist, Grendel, composed by Elliot Goldenthal (Los Angeles Opera and the Lincoln Center Festival); Mozart's Die Zauberflöte, in repertory at the Metropolitan Opera since 2004; and Oedipus Rex with Jessye Norman, conducted by Seiji Ozawa, for which she earned the International Classical Music Award for Best Opera Production and an Emmy®* for a subsequent film version. Her first film, Fool's Fire, an adaptation of an Edgar Allan Poe short story, aired on PBS in 1992. Her feature films include Titus, starring Anthony Hopkins and Jessica Lange; Frida, starring Salma Hayek and Alfred Molina (six 2002 Academy Award® nominations, winning two); Across the Universe (2008 Golden Globe®- nomination for Best Musical/Comedy); and The Tempest, starring Helen Mirren, Djimon Hounsou, and Ben Whishaw. She recently directed The Glorias, starring Julianne Moore, Alicia Vikander, Bette Midler and Janelle Monae based on the life of Gloria Steinem, and completed a cinematic version of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, filmed during her stage production that ran at Theatre for a New Audience's new home in Brooklyn. Taymor has received a MacArthur "genius" Grant, a Guggenheim Fellowship, two Obie Awards*, the first annual Dorothy B. Chandler Award in Theatre, 2015 Inductee to the Theatre Hall of Fame, 2015 Shakespeare Theatre Company's William Shakespeare Award for Classical Theatre, 2017 Disney Legends Award, among many others. A book spanning her career, Julie Taymor: Playing with Fire, is available from Abrams.

ELTON JOHN MUSIC



The monumental career of international singer/songwriter and performer, Elton John, has spanned more than three decades. Since launching his first tour in 1970, Elton has delivered over 4,000 performances in more than 80 countries. He is one of the top-selling solo artists of all time, with 1 diamond, 40 platinum or multi-platinum, and 23 gold albums and more than 300 million records sold worldwide. The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences had awarded Elton multiple Grammy Awards^{®*}, including the Grammy Legend Award^{®*}. In the early 1990s, Elton collaborated with lyricist Tim Rice on the soundtrack for THE LION KING, winning him an Academy Award^{®*}. The album produced two top-selling, award-winning singles: Can You Feel The Love Tonight and Circle of Life. The Tony Award^{®*}-winning Broadway productions of THE LION KING and Aida both awarded Elton with Grammy Awards for Best Musical Show Album. Billy Elliot was nominated for a record-tying 15 Tony Awards^{®*} and won 10, including Best Musical. In 1992, Elton established the Elton John AIDS Foundation, which today is one of the leading nonprofit HIV/AIDS organizations. In 1998, the Queen of England knighted him Sir Elton John, CBE. In 2004, Elton received the Kennedy Center Honor for his lifetime contributions to American culture and excellence through the performing arts. In 2003, Elton was honored as the first recipient of the prestigious BRITs Icon Award. Elton announced the Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour at New York's Gotham Hall in January 2018. Encompassing 5 continents, and over 350 dates, this 3-year-long tour started in September 2018 and marks his retirement from touring after more than 50 years on the road. In May 2019 it was named Billboard's Top Rock Tour. 2019 also saw the release of the critically acclaimed Rocketman and global bestselling autobiography, Me. An epic fantasy musical motion picture of Elton's life Rocketman has been a box office smash, taking close to \$200m at the box office, receiving a Grammy^{®*} and four BAFTA Award^{®*} nominations and winning an Oscar^{®*}, Golden Globe^{®*} and Critics' Choice Award for Best Original Song.

TIM RICE LYRICS



Tim Rice has worked in music, theatre and films since 1965 when he met Andrew Lloyd Webber, a fellow struggling songwriter. Rather than pursue Tim's ambitions to write rock or pop songs they turned their attention to Andrew's obsession – musical theatre. Their first collaboration (lyrics by Tim, music by Andrew) was based on the life of Dr. Barnardo, the Victorian philanthropist, The Likes Of Us. Their next three works together were much more successful – Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Jesus Christ Superstar and Evita. Tim has also worked with other distinguished popular composers such as Elton John (THE LION KING, Aida), Alan Menken (Aladdin, King David, Beauty and the Beast), Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson (Chess), and Stuart Brayson (From Here to Eternity). Tim founded his own cricket team in 1973 and was President of MCC in 2002. He was appointed President of the London Library in 2017 in succession to Sir Tom Stoppard. He has won several awards (an EGOT, etc.), mainly for the wrong thing or for simply turning up.

LEBO M

ADDITIONAL MUSIC & LYRICS, ADDITIONAL VOCAL SCORE*, VOCAL ARRANGEMENTS, CHORAL DIRECTOR



Lebo M is known as the 'voice and spirit of THE LION KING.' Once a teenage singer in Soweto, the Grammy Award^{®*} winner and Tony^{®*} nominee's music brings audiences to tears with hauntingly inspiring African rhythms and melodies. Lebo's talents have been hailed by the worldwide press in superlatives that might describe the most delightfully poetic of musical deities. Since his arrival in America, Lebo has attracted music industry giants such as Quincy Jones, Jimmy Cliff and Hans Zimmer as mentors, allies and collaborators. Lebo has performed and produced four albums, Rhythm of the Pride Lands (Disney), Deeper Meaning (Gallo) and THE LION KING (Japanese and Hamburg cast recordings). Other credits include The Power of One, Back on the Block and Listen Up with Quincy Jones; the feature films Outbreak (Warner Bros.), Congo (Warner Bros.) and Born to Be Wild (Paramount); he is the composer and co-producer of the Legend of Tarzan theme song, Opar; and the Disney television special, People. He has performed on the Academy Awards[®] and the Essence Awards Show, with Vanessa Redgrave at Kthimi- The Return in Kosovo, and been honored by Artists for a Free South Africa.

MARK MANCINA ADDITIONAL MUSIC & LYRICS, MUSIC PRODUCED FOR THE STAGE, ADDITIONAL SCORE*



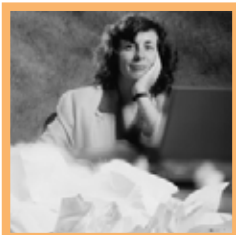
A Tony^{®*} nominee and multi-platinum, three-time Grammy Award^{®*}-winning composer, Mr. Mancina produced songs for Disney's blockbuster animated feature film, and proved a uniquely qualified choice to produce the music for the stage production of THE LION KING. The 1994 film's critical and box office success spawned the hit album Rhythm of the Pride Lands, for which he co-wrote and produced multiple tracks, including He Lives in You and Shadowland, songs featured in the stage production. In addition to his songwriting and producing achievements, he is a seasoned film score composer. Mr. Mancina's credits include mega-hits Moana, Training Day, Speed, Twister, Bad Boys, Tarzan, and August Rush among many others.

ROGER ALLERS BOOK



Roger Allers directed the 1994 animated feature THE LION KING with co-director Rob Minkoff. He then, along with co-author Irene Mecchi, wrote the book for THE LION KING Broadway musical based on his film, receiving the 1998 Tony®* nomination. Mr. Allers has been instrumental in shaping the structure and dialogue for many Disney animated features since 1986, including Aladdin, Beauty and the Beast, The Little Mermaid, Oliver and Company, Rescuers Down Under and the first CGI movie, Tron. He directed the Academy Award®*-nominated short The Little Matchgirl for Disney and co-directed the 2006 animated feature Open Season for Sony Studios. Mr. Allers wrote and directed the 2015 animated adaptation of Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet, a book of philosophical poetry. Currently, he is preparing his original musical The Grasshopper, with composer Genaro Pereira for the Broadway stage.

IRENE MECCHI BOOK



Irene Mecchi began her association with Disney, when she wrote the animated short, Recycle Rex, which won the 1994 Environmental Media Award. Irene is a co-writer of Disney's animated features THE LION KING, The Hunchback of Notre Dame and Hercules. Along with co-author Roger Allers, she received a 1998 Tony®* nomination for writing the book for THE LION KING. Irene adapted Annie for ABC's Wonderful World of Disney and Peter Pan Live – for NBC. She shares a writing credit on Disney Pixar's Brave. Irene is currently developing new projects for the stage and screen.

GARTH FAGAN CHOREOGRAPHER



From Kingston, Jamaica, Mr. Fagan is the recipient of the 1998 Tony Award®*, the 2000 Laurence Olivier Award*, and the 2004 Helpmann Award* for Best Choreography in a Musical for his work on THE LION KING. Regarded as 'one of the great reformers of modern dance,' Fagan has toured the world with Garth Fagan Dance for over five decades, earning international recognition and numerous accolades, including a New York Bessie Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Fulbright 50th Anniversary Distinguished Fellowship.

RICHARD HUDSON SCENIC DESIGNER



Born in Zimbabwe, Richard Hudson trained at Wimbledon School of Art. He has designed operas for Glyndebourne, Covent Garden, The Metropolitan Opera, New York, Teatro alla Scala, Maggio Musicale Florence, English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Kent Opera, Opera North, Wiener Staatsoper, Munich, Chicago, Copenhagen, Athens, Bregenz, Amsterdam, Zurich, Barcelona, Madrid, Brussels, Houston, Washington, Venice, Pesaro and Rome. He has also designed for the Aldeburgh Festival, The Royal Ballet, Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre, Royal Court, Almeida and the Young Vic. In 1988, Mr. Hudson won an Olivier Award* for the Jonathan Miller season at the Old Vic. His set designs for THE LION KING have won numerous awards including a Tony Award®* in 1998. Mr. Hudson is a Royal Designer for Industry (RDI). In 2003, he won The Gold Medal for Set Design at the Prague Quadrennial and in 2005 he received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Surrey. Recent work includes Leopoldstadt (West End* and Broadway*), La Boheme, Gianni Schicchi (Greek National Opera); The Nutcracker and Sleeping Beauty (American Ballet Theatre), Romeo and Juliet (Bolshoi Ballet), Four Seasons, La Bayadère, Le Coq D'or and Raymonda (The Royal Danish Ballet), Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried and Götterdämmerung (Teatro Massimo, Palermo), Versailles (Donmar Warehouse), La Bohème (Bologna), Peter Gynt (National Theatre), Morgen und Abend (Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Deutsche Oper, Berlin) and Ballo in Maschera (Verdi Festival, Parma). Future projects include Midsummer Night's Dream (Zürich Ballet) and Romeo and Juliet (New York City Ballet).

DONALD HOLDER LIGHTING DESIGN



Donald Holder received the 1998 Tony Award®*, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards for THE LION KING (Broadway), and the Moliere Award for THE LION KING (Paris). For his work on Broadway*, Donald has received 14 Tony Award®* nominations, 61 productions, including McNeal; The Pirates of Penzance (2025); Paradise Square; Tootsie; Kiss Me Kate (2019 revival); Oslo; Anastasia; She Loves Me (2016 revival); The King and I (2015 revival); The Bridges of Madison County; Golden Boy; South Pacific (2008 Tony Award®*); Oslo; Ragtime; Les Liaisons Dangereuses; A Streetcar Named Desire; Gem of the Ocean; Movin' Out; Juan Darien; On the Twentieth Century; You Can't Take It With You; Spider-Man Turn Off the Dark; Promises, Promises; Annie (2012 revival); Arcadia; Cyrano de Bergerac; The Little Dog Laughed; Thoroughly Modern Millie; The Boy From Oz and many others.

Television credits include The Marvelous Mrs Maisel - Seasons 4 and 5 (Amazon Studios); Gossip Girl (HBO); Smash - Seasons 1 and 2 (NBC/DreamWorks). Film credits include Spirited (Apple Studios); Oceans 8 (Warner Bros. Pictures). Education work includes Yale School of Drama, Head of Lighting Design at Rutgers University.

MICHAEL CURRY MASK & PUPPET CO-DESIGNER



Michael Curry is an award-winning visual artist and concept designer, known for his broad work in theatre and live entertainment. He is sought out by the world's top entertainment organisations, such as The Metropolitan Opera, Universal Studios, Cirque du Soleil, and the International Olympic Committee to create large-scale spectacles. He has brought his vision to countless shows for Disney, including Frozen on Broadway*. Curry's concepts can be seen in theme parks, resorts, stadium tours, and productions worldwide. Michael works closely with his long-term team in Portland, Oregon, where they develop innovative solutions for future projects, as well as support multiple on-going theatrical productions around the world.

MICHAEL WARD HAIR & MAKEUP DESIGN



Michael Ward designs for opera and theatre. For Disney: THE LION KING (Broadway* and others) and Der Glöckner von Notre Dame (Berlin). Other work has been seen in Britain, the United States, Holland, France, Japan, Israel and Portugal. Along with his design work in theatre, he works as a garden and landscape designer.

HANS ZIMMER ADDITIONAL MUSIC & LYRICS

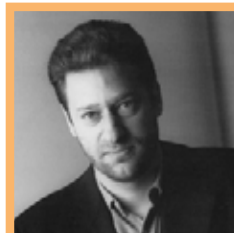


Hans Zimmer has scored more than 200 projects across all mediums, which, combined, have grossed* more than 28 billion dollars at the worldwide box office. Zimmer has been honoured with an Academy Award®, two Golden Globes®, three Grammys®, an American Music Award, and a Tony Award®. His work highlights include Gladiator, The Thin Red Line, As Good as It Gets, Rain Man, The Dark Knight trilogy, Inception, Thelma and Louise, The Last Samurai, 12 Years A Slave, Blade Runner 2049 (co-scored w/ Benjamin Wallfisch) and Dunkirk,

as well as recent film scores including Wonder Woman 1984, Ron Howard's Hillbilly Elegy and The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run. In 2019, Zimmer scored the live-action remake of THE LION KING, for which he received a Grammy nomination for Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media. Zimmer's films for 2021 include the James Bond film No Time to Die, Denis Villeneuve's Dune, Top Gun: Maverick and The Boss Baby: Family Business. Zimmer has completed highly successful Hans Zimmer Live tour stops around the globe, and will continue to perform in an upcoming European tour beginning in February 2022.

JAY RIFKIN

ADDITIONAL MUSIC & LYRICS



The Grammy®* Award-winning producer, together with producing and composing partner Hans Zimmer, created Media Ventures, a multifaceted entertainment group that includes music, new media, film and television. Their partnership has earned them numerous awards and nominations, including Academy Award®* nominations, for the film scores of Driving Miss Daisy, Rain Man and THE LION KING. Following the success of THE LION KING, Jay conceived and produced the gold-selling follow-up album, Rhythm of the Pride Lands. He is also chairman of Media Revolution and a founder of the film production company Media Ventures Pictures.

STEVE CANYON KENNEDY SOUND DESIGN



Steve Canyon Kennedy was the production engineer on such Broadway* shows as Cats, Starlight Express, Song & Dance, The Phantom of the Opera, Carrie and Aspects of Love.

His Broadway* sound design credits include Catch Me If You Can, (Tony Award®* Nomination) Guys and Dolls, Mary Poppins, THE LION KING, Jersey Boys (Drama Desk Award), Billy Crystal's 700 Sundays, Hairspray, The Producers, Aida, Titanic, Big, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Carousel and The Who's Tommy (Drama Desk Award).



MEET THE CAST



THE LION KING requires 50 cast members plus an additional 100 people backstage to make each performance happen.



DANIEL FREDERIKSEN - SCAR



Daniel Frederiksen studied at NIDA* and is a founding member of Red Stitch Theatre Company. His theatre credits include *Shakespeare in Love*, *As You Like It*, *The Lady in The Van*, *Abigail's Party*, *Dean Man's Cell Phone*, *Rockabye*, *Realism*, *Don Juan in Soho*, *Cheech* or *The Chrysler Guys Are In Town* and *Measure for Measure* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Matilda The Musical* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *The Good Person of Szechwan* (Malthouse), *Julius Ceasar* (Bell Shakespeare), *Robot VS Art* (La Mama), *Ruben Guthrie*, *Fat Boy*, *The Day Room* and *The Shape of Things* (Red Stitch) and *A Christmas Carol*

(GWB Entertainment). Daniel's television credits include *Exposure*, *Upright*, *Fires*, *Joe vs. Carole*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Underbelly "Squizzy Taylor"*, *Underground*, *Bastard Boys*, *Stingers*, *Blue Heelers*, *Mermaids* and feature films *The Dry*, *Vessel*, *Summer Coda*, *Closed for Winter*, *Ten Empty* and *Ghost Rider*. Daniel's accolades include the Helpmann Award for Best Male Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical for *Matilda The Musical*, an AFI Award nomination for Best Lead Actor in a Television Drama for *Bastard Boys*, and a Logie nomination for Best New Talent for *Stingers*.

BUYI ZAMA- RAFIKI



Buyi is no stranger to **THE LION KING**, having performed as Rafiki in Las Vegas, Taiwan, South Africa, Shanghai, Australia and the West End* before moving to Broadway*. For her role as Rafiki, she has won an Australian MO Award* for Female Musical Performer and was nominated for an Australian Helpmann Award* for Best Female in a Musical. Born in Durban (Kwa-Mashu), South Africa, Buyi began her performing career as a singer and backing vocalist in her home country. Her big break came when she auditioned somewhat unexpectedly for **THE LION KING** London production and was cast to understudy the role of Rafiki, which wasn't long

before she landed the role of Rafiki for an Australian tour. Buyi's journey reflects her South African roots (she speaks Zulu, among other languages) and a love of travel and stage performance, having spent many years touring internationally with **THE LION KING**.

NICK AFOA- MUFASA



Nick Afoa is a New Zealand-Samoan actor and baritone who has recently completed the Australian tours of Miss Saigon as John and Rent as Collins. With an extensive theatrical background, he has held a long-term role in Australia, spent five years in London's West End* playing Simba in THE LION KING and recently performed in, and directed Pacifica the Musical. Afoa made his feature film debut in Mysterious Ways shot in New Zealand. In earlier years he represented New Zealand in rugby, securing a Junior Rugby World Cup title in South Africa.

BENN WELFORD - ZAZU



Benn Welford is a highly accomplished actor and voice artist with over 20 years of professional experience across stage, screen, and audio. A graduate of NIDA* (Bachelor of Dramatic Arts – Acting), Benn has worked extensively in Australia and overseas with some of the most respected theatre companies and producers, including Disney Theatrical Productions, Michael Cassel Group, Sydney Theatre Company, State Theatre Company South Australia, Griffin Theatre Company, and Theatre of Image. He has toured extensively with THE LION KING across Australia and internationally, performing a range of principal roles, including on London's iconic

West End*. On screen, Benn has featured in productions for ABC, Network Ten, Foxtel, Empire Pictures, and 20th Century Fox, with credits including: Crownies, A Model Daughter: The Killing of Caroline Byrne, Whatever Happened to That Guy?, and X-Men Origins: Wolverine. He has also appeared in a wide range of national television commercials and short films. As a narrator and voice-over artist, Benn's vocal work spans fiction, education, and commercial content. His narration credits include Spring Fling: Wine Country and Only the Weekend for Meet Cute on Apple Podcasts, as well as Scholastic's audiobook A Guide to Falling Off the Map by Zanni L Arnot. He has also voiced campaigns for the NSW Department of Education and Training, AMES, and a diverse range of commercial clients.



See if you can spot Nick Afoa playing the role of Simba in previous production imagery throughout this pack.

JAMIE MCGREGOR- TIMON



Born in Wellington, New Zealand, Jamie McGregor trained at the New Zealand College of Performing Arts. He is best known to international audiences for his acclaimed portrayal of Timon in Disney's THE LION KING, a role he has performed across the globe – including productions in Australia, Asia, and most recently, an impressive five-year run in London's West End*. Jamie's extensive theatre credits span a diverse range of productions, including: Sweeney Todd (Downstage Theatre NZ), Blood Brothers (NZ Tour), Kids' Stuff (Kids' Stuff Theatre Company), Noises Off, Wind in the Willows (Circa Theatre NZ), The Schelling Point, Sydney Ghost

Stories (Old Fitz), The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Melbourne Theatre Company), Jay's Place (Sydney Theatre), and multiple international seasons of THE LION KING (Australia 2003–06, Singapore 2011, Australia 2013–16, International 2018–19 and London's West End* 2019–2024). On screen, Jamie has appeared in The Tribe (BBC) and Home & Away (Seven Network). His work also includes motion capture performance for The Lord of the Rings with WETA Digital.

RUTENE SPOONER- PUMBAA

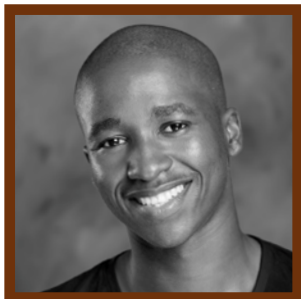


Rutene Spooner is a proud descendant of Ngāti Porou, Ngāruahine, and Ngāti Kahungunu tribes. After graduating with a Bachelor of Performing Arts in Musical Theatre in 2009, he has travelled the world, captivating* audiences as a singer, actor, and entertainer. His stage highlights include acclaimed productions such as the New Zealand premiere of Billy Elliot, the Australian tour of Jersey Boys, and standout performances in Chicago, Little Shop of Horrors (The Court Theatre), and the Australasian premiere of Jekyll & Hyde. Rutene has also lent his voice to Disney Reo Māori films including Frozen, Coco, Encanto, and most recently as Kele in Moana 2. As a soloist, he has performed

with the Auckland Philharmonia, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Wellington, and the New Zealand String Quartet. His artistry has been recognised with the Grant Tilly Actor of the Year Award* at the 2023 Wellington Theatre Awards and the 2025 VAC* New Zealand Male Entertainer of the Year title. Dubbed 'a stalwart of the Auckland cabaret scene' by The New Zealand Herald, Rutene continues to charm audiences through works like Super Hugh-Man, Thoroughly Modern Māui, Be Like Billy? and The Velvet Rebels. Beyond performing, he is a creative producer, documentary director, vocal coach, and proud kaihaka of Te Kapa Haka o Whāngara-Mai-Tawhiti and member of the Modern Māori Quartet.



APHIWE NYEZI- SIMBA



Aphiwe Nyezi is a performer from Cape Town, South Africa. He received training from Rainbow Arts Organization as well as Magnet Theatre Gang Intervention Program. Past theatre and performance credits include: Autumn, Gomora and Sins of Others (R.A.O productions), Sprint of the Bosh (Zirosonic), 23 Years a Month and 7 Days (Magnet Theatre), Shut Up and Dance (Romantic), Infecting the City (Institute for Creative Arts), Cape Town Carnival and THE LION KING (International Tour, UK tour, West End* and Toronto). Film credits include The Woman King (Sony Pictures).

EMILY NKOMO - NALA



Emily Nkomo is a Zimbabwean-Australian performer and singer-songwriter whose work spans musical theatre, film, and contemporary music. She made her professional stage debut in 2021 as Frankie Healy in the Australian production of Jagged Little Pill, performing alongside industry icons including Natalie Bassingthwaite and Tim Draxl. She subsequently toured nationally for two years with Tina: The Tina Turner Musical, performing as an Ikette and as an ensemble* member. Emily's theatre credits also include Little Fan in the Australian premiere of Jack Thorne's adaptation of A Christmas Carol, starring David Wenham. On screen, Emily's credits continue

to grow. She will appear as Lady Fyre in an upcoming Screen Australia–Bus Stop Films feature, further showcasing her versatility across mediums. As a recording artist, Emily releases music under the moniker* MASIZA. Her debut single Care is available on all major streaming platforms, and she is currently developing her first EP, showcasing her distinctive vocal voice and artistry. In 2022, Emily made history as the first Zimbabwean-Australian artist to perform the national anthem at the State of Origin kickoff. She is honoured to join the company of THE LION KING Australia in 2026, continuing to contribute to Australia's vibrant performing arts landscape.

WINSTON HILLYER - BANZAI



Since graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts* in 2005, (Foundation year Musical Theatre), Winston has had a celebrated career in Europe and Australia. Immediately following VCA, Winston made his professional debut as Simba in the German Production of THE LION KING where he subsequently performed the role for over 1800 performances. Winston then went on to tour Europe playing Berger in Hair for 2 years, followed by Judah in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, and as lead singer on board the Queen Elizabeth for Cunard Cruises. Winston returned to Melbourne in 2014 and made his Australian debut with Showboat in 2014. He has

continued his theatrical success performing in Dreamgirls and Black Rider. He has also appeared in Neighbours, House Husbands and many tv commercials. Most recently Winston was a Standby on the Australian and International tours of Hamilton covering the roles of Aaron Burr, George Washington and Hercules Mulligan/James Madison. Winston is thrilled to be returning to THE LION KING. He is looking forward to sharing this beautiful show with his own children. Winston would like to thank his beautiful wife and his two children for their continued love and support. Winston is proudly represented by Ian White Management. Winston is a proud MEAA* member.

EZRA WILLIAMS - SHENZI



Ezra Williams is a powerhouse* performer whose voice, movement, and presence light up every stage she steps onto. A 2023 Grand Finalist on The Voice Australia, Ezra's artistry transcends genre — blending soulful vocals, dynamic dance, and magnetic storytelling. In 2024, she thrilled audiences nationwide as the opening act for Jessica Mauboy's Yours Forever Australian tour, performing across 23 sold-out shows. Her singles Lonely and Higher continue to showcase her evolving sound, following the chart success of Blush, which reached number seven on the Official New Zealand Music Chart. Ezra's theatre journey has seen her embody leading roles,

including Venus in Pacific the Musical, and tour with Madagascar the Musical. Her performances have graced grand stages from Coca-Cola Christmas in the Park to Miss Universe New Zealand, as well as halftime shows for international sporting events. Beyond the spotlight, Ezra is a dedicated mentor and educator, having taught Hip-Hop dance in New Zealand and judged on Vocal Fusion (Papua New Guinea) and WHATNOW (TVNZ). Whether on stage, or in song, Ezra continues to inspire with her energy, authenticity*, and undeniable passion for performance.

MAT VEREVIS - ED



A 2012 graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Mat Verevis is best known for his performance as Barry Mann in [Beautiful: The Carole King Musical](#), which won him a 2018 Helpmann Award*. Most recently, he has been seen in [The Lovers](#) by Laura Murphy as Lysander and in [Tina: The Tina Turner Musical](#) as Roger Davies, which earned him a Sydney Theatre Award* nomination. Other credits include: Tommy in [The Who's Tommy](#) (Victorian Opera), Tobias Ragg in [Sweeney Todd](#) (State Opera South Australia, Victorian Opera and Sydney Opera House), Mark in [RENT](#) (SOH/Sugary Rum Productions), [Lea Salonga's Australian Tour](#), Henrik Eggerman in [A Little Night Music](#) (Victorian Opera), [Christmas, Actually](#) (The Little Red Company), [Lazarus](#) (The Production Company), backing vocals for the [Hugh Jackman Australian Tour](#), [There's Something About Music](#) (The Little Red Company), [Torch Song Trilogy](#) (Darlinghurst Theatre Company), [The Voice Australia](#) - Top 12 (Shine Network) and [Down Under](#) (RIOT film) directed by Abe Forsythe. His original EP is available on all streaming platforms.



To learn about all the incredible employability skills the team behind [THE LION KING](#) use, enjoy the short film called [Getting Ready to Roar Careers Documentary](#) in the [Behind the Scenes Series](#) at this link. ✖



PATHWAYS TO PERFORMING



Ever dreamt of becoming a performer yourself? Here are some insights from two of the amazing members of THE LION KING's Ensemble about their passions and pathways. Introducing...



SHUGRI ABDI - ENSEMBLE

1. What was your favourite subject at school and why?

I really enjoyed History, actually! I liked learning about events in the past and understanding how they shaped the way we operate today.

2. How did you first get involved in the performing arts?

I started dance classes when I was three! I had to force my mum to sign me up for ballet lessons after watching Dance Academy.

3. Did you take any extra lessons or classes outside of school?

Yes! I've done after-school training my whole life, but over the past 3 years, I partook in the HQ Academy program which mixed extra dance training hours into my weekly school timetable. So, I was able to continue going to school regularly and further my dance training at the same time!

4. Please tell us about your first memory of seeing a live production.

The first ever musical I watched was Aladdin in 2018! I remember walking out feeling so inspired, it was one of those experiences that can't be replicated.

5. Do you have any advice for anyone who dreams of a career in the performing arts?

I stand by the saying: 'What is meant for you, will come to you!' So, dream big, put your head down and work hard, and know that you need small wins to have big wins...



JACOB ROZARIO - ENSEMBLE

1. What was your favourite subject at school and why?

Shock horror, my favourite subject was Theatre Studies! I LOVED my teacher and she really understood the kind of person I was, and I always wanted to do well because of her. I loved working on projects and learning about each department, (lighting, set, props, etc.); it led me to really appreciate the art of creating a show and just how much work is involved.

2. How did you first get involved in the performing arts?

Growing up, I loved singing. But I never took it very seriously because I didn't have the resources to know what to do with it until I started high school. Suddenly, there were so many opportunities to use what I thought was a 'niche' talent. I threw myself into the school musicals, which were my pride and joy, and I took it VERY seriously. I was a vocalist in our school's Soul Band, I joined the Vocal Ensemble, and any performance opportunity the school had... I was there! Because of the 6 years I dedicated to this schedule, it was very clear to me that I needed to try to make a career out of it, but was never really sure if I was good enough...

3. Did you take any extra lessons or classes outside of school?

I didn't, however, my extra-curricular timetable was very busy! Mondays were Soul Band rehearsals, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays were rehearsals for our musical, Wednesdays were Vocal Ensemble. I was always busy. My social life struggled, but I didn't care because every day I was doing something that I loved.

4. Please tell us about your first memory of seeing a live production.

The first musical I saw was The Sound of Music with Amy Lehpamer at the Regent Theatre in Melbourne. Our school had taken us as a group and I remember being so in love, not just with the idea of performing, but all the stagecraft it took to put a show on. Seven years later, I was back at that same theatre, performing WITH Amy Lehpamer, and making my professional debut.

5. Do you have any advice for anyone who dreams of a career in the performing arts?

There is no conventional path, and you can absolutely create your own. I didn't get into the performing arts schools I dreamed about and I was devastated, but everything happens for a reason and I was meant to take the path I took. The best advice I was given when I started was: prioritise your work/life balance. This job is the best and it can very easily get consuming, so find a hobby outside of performing. Learn from the people you admire: think about why you admire these people and what is it that you respect? And lastly, always be kind!



KEY THEMES



IDENTITY, ANCESTRY* & BELONGING

THE LION KING is a story about a young lion who loses his sense of identity, is severed from his ancestry*, and must find the courage to reclaim his belonging, and in tracing that journey, the production reminds us that these are not three separate struggles, but a single one. In knowing who you are, honouring where you come from, and finding your place in the world are, ultimately, the same quest.

LEADERSHIP VS POWER

By placing Mufasa and Scar side by side, THE LION KING draws a sharp and unmistakable distinction between leadership and power, asking its audiences to consider the difference. Where Mufasa role-models leading with wisdom, warmth, and a deep sense of responsibility to every living thing in his kingdom, Scar seizes power through manipulation, cruelty, and relentless self-interest, and there are devastating consequences to his tyranny*. THE LION KING shows that true leadership is never about reigning* power over others, but about the willingness to serve something greater than yourself.

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

The Circle of Life is not simply the title of the show's opening song but the philosophical heartbeat of the entire production, expressing the belief that every living thing is connected, that every ending contains a new beginning, and that each of us carries both a debt to those who came before and a responsibility to those who come after. When Rafiki raises Simba's cub above Pride Rock in the show's final scene, bookending the production by mirroring the show's very first image, the audience feels not just the satisfaction of a happy ending but the completion of an ancient and inevitable cycle for all of us.

FRIENDSHIP & LOYALTY*

Friendship and loyalty* in THE LION KING are not just presented as simple or comfortable virtues but also as demanding ones, which test our characters repeatedly with fear and grief. Timon and Pumbaa choose to care for a stranger who could theoretically eat them. Nala crosses unknown territory alone to seek help for a community she refuses to abandon. And Simba, who spends years running from his past, ultimately learns that the friends who stood by him and the loyalty* they showed him unconditionally are precisely what give him the strength to become who he was always meant to be.

CORRUPTION*, TREACHERY* & BETRAYAL*

These themes all have one character in common: Scar. From the moment he causes Mufasa's death and then cruelly convinces a heartbroken young Simba that he is to blame, Scar shows us that the most dangerous villains are not the ones who act in rage but the ones who play the long game, guiltlessly planning the downfall of those around them, whilst pretending to be well-intended. The production makes clear that corruption* does not simply hurt the people closest to it but spreads outward, poisoning communities, landscapes, and the natural order itself, until someone finds the courage to stand up and face it.

SECRETS & LIES

Secrets and lies are the engines that drive THE LION KING's entire plot forward, because without Scar's carefully constructed deception, Simba would never have fled the Pridelands and the rest of the story would never have happened at all. The lie that Simba caused his own father's death is particularly cruel because it is a lie that Simba believes for years, causing shame* and grief to rob him of his identity, his confidence and his relationship with the truth; these are the classic impacts of true gaslighting*.

LOVE & LOSS

THE LION KING teaches us that loss does not cancel out love, it survives it. Mufasa's death breaks Simba's heart and robs him of his entire sense of who he is, while Nala watches her kingdom and her closest friend disappear at the hands of the same tyrant. And yet, the audience witnesses that love endures, waiting patiently in the faces of old friends, in the voice of a father carried on the wind, and in the quiet determination of a lioness who never stopped believing that love was worth fighting for.

To hear the original creative team explore how the universal themes of THE LION KING were established and conveyed in the theatrical performance, WATCH the video titled Behind the Story in the Behind the Scenes Series at this link.



COURAGE

Courage in THE LION KING is not presented as the absence of fear but as the decision to act in spite of it. Simba is terrified to return home, terrified to face the truth about his father's death, and the production is honest enough to show us every moment of that terror. But courage also belongs to Nala, who sets out alone into the unknown, and to Timon and Pumbaa, who follow Simba into a battle that was never theirs to fight. The show reminds us that courage doesn't always announce itself loudly, more often looks like someone who is scared taking one step forward at a time, even if it's towards the thing that frightens them most.

FAITH* & ACCEPTANCE

Faith* and acceptance are woven into the very fabric of THE LION KING, carried powerfully in the show's central image of the sun rising over the Pridelands, a daily reminder that life continues even after the darkest of nights. Simba's journey is ultimately a journey towards both, learning to accept his father's death and to have faith that Mufasa's love and wisdom live on inside him even though he can no longer see or hear him. Rafiki embodies this quality, moving through the world with the unshakeable certainty of someone who believes deeply in things that cannot be proven, and whose faith in Simba never wavers even when Simba's faith* in himself has collapsed. The circle of life itself is an act of faith, a belief that light follows darkness, and that those we have lost are never truly gone.

AMBITION VS RESPONSIBILITY

Ambition and responsibility sit on opposing ends of THE LION KING's moral landscape; most apparent in the contrast between Scar and Mufasa. Scar's ambition is purely personal, a hunger for power that recognises no obligation to anyone or anything beyond his own desire, and the Pridelands pay a devastating price for it. Contrastingly, Mufasa understands that true leadership is inseparable from responsibility, that the throne is not a reward but a duty, and that the measure of a king is not what he takes from his kingdom but what he gives back to it. Simba must eventually find his way to that same understanding, learning that his ambition to avoid his past and his responsibility to face it cannot coexist forever, and that growing up means choosing the harder of the two.

MAKING THE MESMERISING MUSIC OF THE LION KING



THE LION KING animated film incorporated five songs by Elton John and Tim Rice. Tim Rice had written the lyrics for such classic musicals as Jesus Christ Superstar and Evita, each of which had also been best-selling recordings. Rice seemed the perfect choice to write the lyrics for THE LION KING, but who would compose the music? Elton John, who has written some of the best known and most endearing popular music in the last half of the twentieth century, said: 'I actually jumped at the chance because I knew that Disney was a class act and I liked the story line and people immediately. The Disney films last forever and children watch them and adults watch them and get just as much fun out of them.' As Rice and John began to work together, they knew that their main purpose was to tell the story. 'Up until now,' said Rice, 'about 95 per cent of the lyrics I've written have been done to a tune. Elton is one of those rare examples of a composer who actually likes to get the words first. In the case of...THE LION KING, that proved to be quite useful because the key thing...is to get the story line dead right. Everything flows from the story.'

SOUNDS FROM SCREEN TO STAGE

Have you ever lost someone important to you and wished you could still feel their presence? That's exactly what the famous number from THE LION KING called He Lives In You is about, and it's one of the most powerful moments in the entire show. The song carries a simple but profound message: the people we love never truly leave us, even after they're gone. The lyrics in this song give Simba the reassurance that despite losing his father Mufasa in a most harrowing way, Mufasa's spirit will always be with him as he finds the courage to reclaim his place in the Pride Lands.

What makes this song's story fascinating for any music lover is its journey to the stage. It was written by Mark Mancina, Jay Rifkin, and Lebo M, the South African composer and vocalist whose

voice and vision shaped so much of THE LION KING's distinctive African sound. The song actually never appeared in the original animated film, it was first recorded for Rhythm of the Pride Lands. But when the stage musical was created, it found its perfect home, appearing twice in the show. In Act One, Mufasa sings it to young Simba as They Live In You, about the ancestral kings watching over both of them from the stars. Then in Act Two, it returns as a reprise sung by Rafiki, reminding Simba that his father has been with him all along. The lyrics of these soulful and evocative melodies were rewritten for the stage version, but their South African sound and mood became the foundation for a unique combination. By integrating* the work of musician Lebo M, the score* to THE LION KING musical tapped into the complex and beautiful rhythms of South African music.

Lebo M co-wrote additional music and lyrics in addition to those written by the Rice-John team. As the choral director, he introduced the American cast members to a different style of singing: 'I taught them the historical meanings of the lyrics and the practical and spiritual meanings of the songs. The singers must understand the pain or joy, the feeling behind the song. The most difficult part is the interpretation, the African way of singing... there's a rawness that is totally unique; it comes from the heart.' Lebo M sees his life mirrored in the story of THE LION KING: 'This is an African story that happens to parallel my own life. Young Simba's loving education from his father, his rebellion and his eventual struggle to regain a foot-hold in his native land were very familiar to me.' He calls his work on THE LION KING: 'a tribute to the New South Africa... like Simba, I too lost family and close friends during my time away, but returned home victorious to the open arms of my newly freed countrymen and family.'

AFRICAN MUSIC

'World Music: The Rough Guide' says: "South Africa is distinguished by the most complex musical history, the greatest profusion of styles and the most intensely developed recording industry anywhere in Africa." South Africa's musical history, especially in the past century, is linked to its national history and the racist system of apartheid*, in which black South Africans were confined to small areas, their movements and rights tightly controlled

by the white minority*. Because the growth of its music was so closely tied to the country's history, learning about South African music is a perfect way to learn about South African history.

In Africa, music isn't just something you listen to for fun, it is woven into the fabric of everyday life. Across the vast continent of Africa, with all its different countries and cultures, music plays an important role in almost everything people do. Here, songs are written to entertain, but also to teach important lessons, to encourage people through hard times, to mourn those who have been lost, and even to heal. Music brings people together, strengthening human connections during events as simple as a meal or as important as a ceremony. While Africa is home to an enormous variety of nations, languages, and traditions, the music of sub-Saharan Africa, which is the location that inspired the setting for THE LION KING, shares some remarkable common features that make it unlike music from anywhere else in the world.



The following conventions can be heard in the music of THE LION KING:

REPETITION When the same pattern of sounds or beats is played over and over again. Think of it like a musical echo that keeps coming back!

IMPROVISATION In African music, performers often make up music on the spot, no rehearsing, no planning, just creating something brand new in the moment. In African culture, being able to do this well is considered a real and special talent, because music isn't just something you perform, it's part of everyday life.

POLYPHONY When two or more different melodies are played or sung at exactly the same time, weaving together to create something richer and more complex than either melody could achieve on its own. Imagine two people humming different tunes simultaneously that somehow sound amazing together!

POLYRHYTHMS When two or more different beat patterns are played at the same time. Imagine one person clapping a slow, steady beat while another claps a faster, more complicated one, and both happening simultaneously, locking together like puzzle pieces.

CROSS-RHYTHMS When the beats in a song land just slightly after the beats of another instrument, like a drummer and a hand-clapper who are almost in sync but not quite. This creates an exciting, infectious tension; you might also hear this called syncopation.

CALL AND RESPONSE When a leader sings or calls out a line, and a group responds by echoing or building on it. It's like a musical conversation! This can also work between two groups singing back and forth to each other. You'll hear this technique used powerfully throughout THE LION KING.



ACTIVITY

In THE LION KING, some of the most powerful music in the show is built on rhythm. And here is a secret: you do not need a single musical instrument to explore rhythm. Everything around you is already an instrument, if you listen carefully enough.

You and your classmates are invited to create your very own Found Object Orchestra! Look around the room and find three objects that make interesting sounds when tapped, scraped, shaken, or struck.

You might choose:

- A pencil case tapped with a ruler;
- A water bottle partially filled with small objects for shaking;
- Two pencils clicked together;
- A hardcover book tapped with a fingertip; and/or
- A plastic container struck with a pen.

EXPERIMENT with each object before you begin. NOTICE how different surfaces, different striking tools, and different amounts of force all produce completely different sounds.

Share this astonishing moment when the Broadway* casts of THE LION KING and ALADDIN went head-to-head in a live, a capella* vocal battle, entertaining and delighting fellow passengers during a flight delay at a busy airport. ✘



Next, in groups of three, each person will CHOOSE one found object instrument. Together, follow these steps:

- ✘ First, one person STRIKES a simple, steady beat, REPEATING it continuously without stopping. This person is your master drummer, just like in the African musical traditions that inspired THE LION KING.
- ✘ Next, a second person ADDS a different rhythm on top, perhaps twice as fast or half as fast as the first.
- ✘ Finally, the third person BUILDS in a third layer, creating a moment of polyrhythm, which is when two or more rhythms are playing simultaneously.
- ✘ Once all three layers are established, try STOPPING one layer at a time and listen to how dramatically the music changes. Then BRING it back. Once your group's rhythm is complete, SHARE it with the rest of the class.
- ✘ Afterwards, DISCUSS as a whole class which combinations of rhythms people felt were exciting. IDENTIFY any that felt uncomfortable. And DESCRIBE what it felt like to be the master drummer, holding everything together.

✘ To hear about the authenticity*, the passion and the diversity conveyed through the music of THE LION KING, let's watch the clip titled Making the Music in the Behind the Scenes Series at this link.



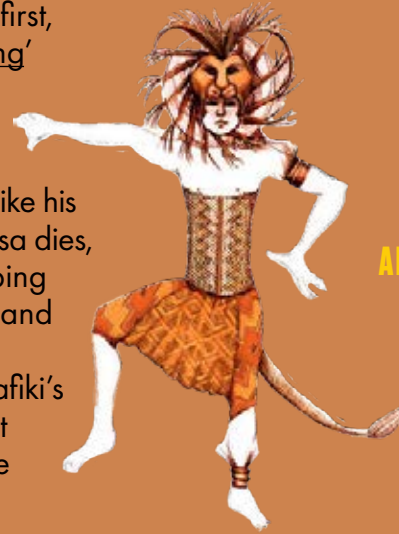
MAIN CHARACTER ENERGY & KEY CHARACTER QUOTES

The characters of THE LION KING are brought to life not just through costume and performance, but through the words they speak and the words spoken about them. As you read through the character profiles below, you'll discover what makes each character unique: their strengths, their flaws, and the role they play in one of the greatest stories ever told on stage. Alongside each profile, you'll find a selection of quotes that capture each character's voice, personality, reputation and relationships, giving you a taste of the powerful language that makes THE LION KING so unforgettable. These quotes are sorted under subheadings which clarify whether they are said TO, BY or ABOUT each of the characters.





Like most young children, Simba's understanding of the world is beautifully simple. At first, Simba thinks becoming 'The Lion King' means he gets to be in charge, and that suits him just fine. Mischievous and adventurous, Simba's greatest ambition is simply to grow up to be like his father, Mufasa. However; when Mufasa dies, the sense of identity Simba is developing through this role model is shattered, and Simba spends his young adult years unsure of who he really is. It takes Rafiki's guidance for Simba to understand that his father's courage and wisdom have been part of him all along.



BY: SIMBA - 'My dad just showed me the whole kingdom! And one day, I'm gonna rule it all!'

SIMBA - 'I'm brave. What's out there?'

TO: MUFASA - 'Remember who you are...You are my son and the one true king.'

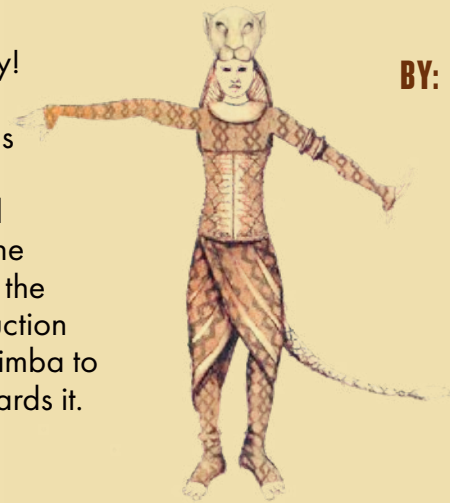
ABOUT: 'I'VE NEVER SEEN A KING OF BEASTS WITH QUITE SO LITTLE HAIR' - Zazu about Simba

'THIS CHILD IS GETTING WILDLY OUT OF WING' - Zazu about Simba

'...that son of mine...he seems to rush headlong into danger without thinking.' - Mufasa about Simba

'He's depressed.' - Timon about Simba

As a cub, Nala is Simba's equal in every way! Just as brave, just as curious, and just as ready for adventure. But when the two friends are reunited as young adults, something has shifted. Nala has grown into a lioness of real courage and fierce determination, and it is she who finds the strength to face the truth about the Pridelands, directly challenging Scar's destruction of their homelands. Rather than waiting for Simba to find his destiny, Nala actively drives him towards it.



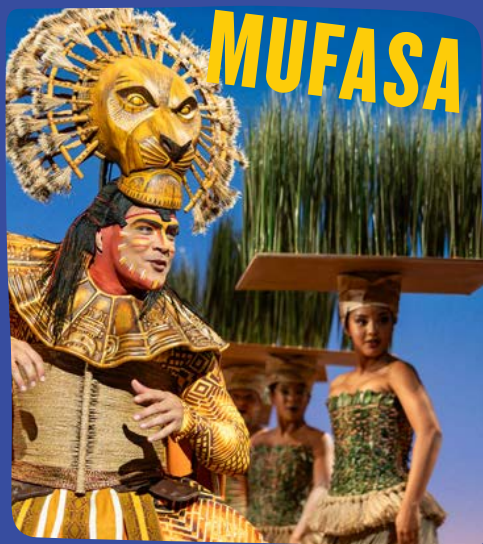
BY: NALA - 'I'LL REMEMBER MY PRIDE'

NALA - 'I HAVE NO CHOICE, I WILL FIND MY WAY'

'You're destroying the Pridelands.'
- Nala to Scar

'...he is the rightful king.'
- Nala about Simba





Mufasa is the gold standard of what a great leader looks like. Firm, proud and wise, but also warm and playful, he knows instinctively when to discipline Simba for his mischief and when to simply enjoy it. What sets Mufasa apart is not just his strength, but his deep, quiet certainty about who he is and where he belongs in the circle of life. That calm confidence is what makes every animal in the Pridelands trust and respect him.



BY: '...nobody messes with your dad.' - Mufasa to Simba

MUFASA - 'A king's time as ruler rises and falls like the sun. One day, Simba, the sun will set on my time here and will rise with you as the new king.'

MUFASA - 'There's a lot more to being king than getting your way all the time.'

MUFASA - 'Simba, everything exists in a delicate balance. As king, you need to understand that balance and respect all the creatures.'

MUFASA - 'Look inside yourself, Simba. You are more than what you have become.'

ABOUT: BANZAI - '...Mufasa.'

SHENZI - '... I just hear that name and I shudder.'

Mufasa's most trusted advisor, Zazu is a prim and proper Hornbill bird with an enormous sense of dignity. He can be easily flustered, (particularly where young Simba is concerned), but his dedication to Mufasa and the pride is absolute and unshakeable. However difficult the circumstances, Zazu remains loyal through good times and bad.



BY: ZAZU - 'I really am better suited to affairs of state than to tending tots.'

TO & BY: SHENZI - 'You're Mufasa's little stooge*.'

ZAZU - 'I, madam, am the king's majordomo*.'



RAFIKI



Rafiki is the show's narrator and spiritual guide; she is mysterious, wise, and unlike any other character in the story. She travels her own path, appearing first to welcome newborn Simba into the world, then vanishing on her own mystical journey before returning at precisely the right moment to guide Simba back to his destiny.



BY: RAFIKI - 'The question is: who are you?'

RAFIKI - 'You trust old Rafiki. She knows what she is talking about.'

TO RAFIKI - 'You are Mufasa's boy.'

& BY: SIMBA - 'You knew my father?'

RAFIKI - 'Correction. I know your father.'

Scar is not the largest or most powerful lion, but what he lacks in physical strength, he more than makes up for with cold, calculating cunning. Consumed by his obsession with the throne, he is Simba and Mufasa's most dangerous enemy. While Scar relies heavily on his hyena followers to carry out his schemes, he is perfectly capable of cruelty, too. As a ruler, he is terribly selfish, caring so little for the Pridelands that the land itself begins to wither and die under his reign*.



BY: SCAR - 'Life's not fair, is it? You see, I shall never be king.'

SCAR - 'Perhaps you shouldn't turn your back on me.'

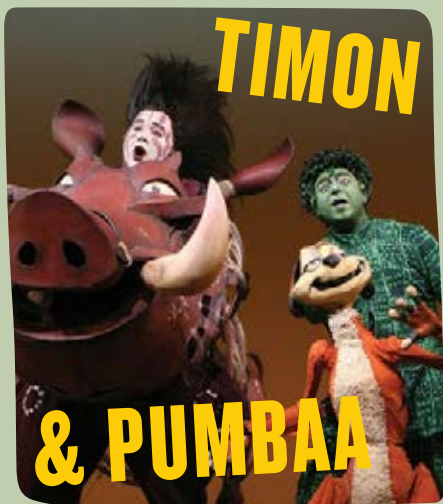
SCAR - 'As far as brains are concerned, I got the lion's share. But when it comes to brute strength, I'm afraid I'm in the shallow end of the gene pool.'

SCAR - 'I'm surrounded by idiots.'

SCAR - 'Stick with me and you'll never go hungry again!'

SCAR - 'YOU ALL BELONG TO ME!'

TO: 'As slippery as your mind is...' - Zazu to Scar



The phrase 'hakuna matata' is a genuine Swahili saying, meaning 'no worries'. It was discovered by THE LION KING's story developer Brenda Chapman during a trip to Kenya in 1991, and went on to become the motto of the show's most beloved comedy duo. Pumbaa the warthog is generous, warm-hearted, and remarkably trusting, even of a lion who could potentially eat him. What he may lack in cleverness he makes up for entirely in loyalty* and heart. Timon the meerkat, by contrast, is quick-witted, fast-talking, and entirely convinced of his own brilliance. Beneath the endless jokes and wisecracks, however, lies a fiercely loyal friend who would do anything for those he cares about.



BY: TIMON - 'When the world turns it back on you, you turn our back on the world.'

'You're an outcast! That's great! So are we!'
- Timon to Simba

'I'm tellin' ya kid - this is the great life. No rules, no responsibilities... And best of all, no worries!'
- Timon to Simba

'Hakuna Matata: These two words will solve all your problems.' - Pumbaa to Simba

'I'M A SENSITIVE SOUL THOUGH I SEEM THICK-SKINNED AND IT HURT THAT MY FRIENDS NEVER STOOD DOWNWIND!' - Pumbaa

In any great story, the villain is only as threatening as the company he keeps, and Scar's hyena followers are what make him truly dangerous. Shenzi, Banzai, and Ed form a scheming, snarling, and darkly comedic trio who serve as Scar's muscle, doing his dirty work in exchange for the promise of power and a share of the Pridelands' resources. Lurking at the edges of the kingdom, driven by hunger and resentment*, the hyenas are a constant reminder of what happens when greed and selfishness are allowed to rule.

ABOUT: 'THEY'RE CRUDE AND UNSPEAKABLY PLAIN'
- Scar about hyenas

'Slobbering, mangy, stupid poachers...!' - Zazu about hyenas

BY: SHENZI - 'If it weren't for those lions, we'd be running the joint.'



A MINUTE WITH MUFASA

Hear from Nick Afoa, who plays Mufasa in the Australian season of THE LION KING, about how he sees his character, and what he has learned about leadership and responsibility along the way:



1. You are in a unique position of having played both Simba and Mufasa in THE LION KING? Do you notice any key similarities and differences between father and son?

There's a way I held myself towards the end of Simba's journey that's carried into Mufasa. Once Simba faces his fears and understands his purpose, he becomes more grounded as he knows what's at stake. With Mufasa, his sense of knowing comes from a more traditional upbringing in the kingdom. There is less searching and more certainty. Physically and vocally, Simba grows but with Mufasa, I begin there.

2. Which aspects of Mufasa's character do you feel make him such an influential leader?

For me, it's the warmth and goodness in his heart. Even with someone like Scar, he chooses not to cast him out. There's a sense that Mufasa understands Scar, and knows Scar is not strong enough to lead on his own. Playing that, I feel like Mufasa's strength comes from how deeply he cares. His love for family doesn't just stop at Simba, it extends to everyone... including his brother who eventually kills him.

3. Which scene would you describe as the climax for the character of Mufasa, and what do you feel in that moment? Does this feeling change from performance to performance?

For me, the climax is when Mufasa realises he could have lost his son. It's not just the danger, it's the fear that maybe he didn't say the right things, or do enough as a father. That's where I feel we see him at his most vulnerable. And it can shift each night, depending on how Simba comes across. Whether he's remorseful, or a bit defiant, really changes what Mufasa feels in that moment.

4. What are the trickiest parts about playing Mufasa? Is there a specific moment in the show or aspect of the character which has taken extra rehearsal to refine?

For me, one of the trickiest parts has been becoming 'one' with the mask and the movement, the morphing in between human and animal. I've had to really find a way for that to feel seamless and believable. Even something as simple as Mufasa's walk took time for me to settle into, and I've had to learn how the angles of the mask carry emotion in each moment. I've realised a lot of the storytelling lives in the physicality. The picture has to speak before I even say anything.

5. Are there any overlapping skills which have been useful to you both as a performer in an internationally acclaimed mainstage musical AND as a representative of your country in the Junior Rugby World Cup?

Growing up as an athlete and captaining teams shaped how I approach this work. It taught me responsibility, and that what you do affects everyone around you. Representing your country showed me it's bigger than you, and I feel that same sense of responsibility carrying Mufasa. I see myself as a vessel for the story.

VOCABULARY

Abstract - When an artist uses colours, shapes, and patterns to express a feeling or idea rather than trying to make their artwork look exactly like something from real life.

Academy Awards® - Also known as the Oscars, Academy Awards are one of the film industry's most famous prizes, recognising achievements in filmmaking across categories including acting, directing, music, costume design, and many more.

A Capella - When singers perform music using only their voices, with no musical instruments accompanying them at all.

Ancestry - The story of who came before you, the family members, communities, and traditions stretching back through generations whose lives, choices, and wisdom helped shape who you are today.

Animist - Someone who believes that everything in the natural world, from animals and trees to rivers and mountains, contains a living spirit, and that humans are not separate from nature but deeply connected to it.

Apartheid - Deeply unjust system of laws in South Africa, in place from 1948 to 1994, that forcibly separated people based on the colour of their skin, denying Black South Africans basic human rights, freedoms, and opportunities that white South Africans were automatically given.

Audacity - The quality of being bold and brave enough to do something surprising or daring that most people would never even attempt.

Authenticity - The quality of being genuinely and completely yourself, without pretending to be something you are not or hiding who you truly are in order to please others.

BAFTA Awards® - The United Kingdom's annual prizes for film and television, recognising outstanding creative achievement across both industries.

Betrayal - When someone you trust deeply chooses their own interests over yours, breaking the bond between you in a way that can be very difficult to repair.

Broadway - A famous theatre district in New York City that has been home to some of the most celebrated and

beloved stage productions in the world, where performers, writers, composers, and designers come together to create live theatre at its most ambitious and spectacular.

Captivating - Something so beautiful, exciting, or compelling that it holds your attention 'captive', making it impossible to look away.

Cinematic - Something that looks and feels as big, bold, and breathtaking as a movie, with spectacular visuals and dramatic moments that make you feel like you are watching a moment which is much larger than life.

Corporate Puppetry - Where one performer wears or operates a number of puppets at the same time to multiply the number of those animals on stage.

Corruption - When someone in power acts dishonestly and selfishly, using their position to get what they want instead of doing what is right for the people around them.

Cyclorama - A large curved screen or backdrop at the back of a stage that can be lit in different colours to create the illusion of a sky, a horizon, or a vast open landscape stretching far into the distance.

Emmys® - The Emmy Awards® are the television industry prizes, recognising outstanding achievement in everything from drama and comedy series to documentary, music, and live event programming.

Ensemble - The full company of performers in a show who work together as a group, creating the world of the production through their collective singing, dancing, and movement.

Enthrall - To capture someone's complete attention and hold them in a state of total fascination and wonder, making them feel completely absorbed in what they are experiencing.

Esteemed - Highly respected and admired by others, recognised as someone or something of great value and importance.

Etiquette - A set of unwritten rules about how to behave respectfully and considerately in a particular situation, such as knowing when to be quiet and listen, when to applaud, and how to make sure the people around you aren't distracted during a show.

Faith - Faith* is believing deeply in something you can't actually see or prove, like trusting that the sun will rise tomorrow, or knowing your best friend has your back even when you're not in the room.

Full Length musical - A stage show that tells a complete story through a combination of spoken dialogue, songs, and dance, usually with a running of two or more hours with an interval in the middle.





Gaslighting - When someone intentionally makes another person doubt their own memory, feelings, or understanding of events in order to manipulate or control them, just as Scar convinces Simba that he is responsible for something he did not actually cause.

Gesture - A deliberate movement of the hands, arms, face, or body that a performer uses to communicate feeling, intention, or meaning to an audience without using words.

Golden Globes® - One of Hollywood's most glamorous and well-known awards ceremonies, celebrating the very best films and television shows of the year.

Grammys® - An annual music prize ceremony, recognising outstanding achievement across every genre of recorded music, from pop and rock to classical and everything in between.

Grant Tilly Actor of the Year Award - A special prize given every year at the Ngā Whakarākei O Whāitaitai/Wellington Theatre Awards in Aotearoa/New Zealand to recognise an outstanding acting performance.

Griot - A traditional West African storyteller, historian, and musician whose job is to keep their community's stories, history, and wisdom alive by passing them down through performance and oral storytelling rather than in written form.

Gross - The total amount of money a film, show, or production has earned from ticket sales before any costs or expenses are taken out.

Helpmann Award - One of Australia's most celebrated prizes for live performance.

Imposing - Something or someone that is so large, powerful, or impressive that it immediately commands your attention and makes you feel small by comparison.

Integrating - Bringing different things together and combining them so that they work as a single, unified whole rather than as separate parts.

Kopjes - Dramatic rocky outcroppings that rise unexpectedly from the flat grasslands of the African savannah, and it is these formations that inspired the design of Pride Rock in THE LION KING.

Laurence Olivier Awards - The United Kingdom's annual theatre prizes, named after the legendary British actor Sir Laurence Olivier, and recognising outstanding achievement across all forms of live theatrical performance.

Loyalty - The quality of standing by someone you care about through difficult times, choosing to support and protect them even when it is hard or costly to do so.

Maasai - A proud and distinctive people of East Africa, living primarily across Kenya and Tanzania, who are known for their rich cultural traditions, striking red clothing, elaborate beadwork, and deep connection to the land and their cattle.

Majordomo - The chief servant or most senior official in a royal or noble household, responsible for managing the running of the entire estate and ensuring that everything operates smoothly on behalf of their master, much like Zazu's role in the Pridelands.

MEAA - The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA*) is an organisation that looks after and supports people who work in creative industries like theatre, film, television, and the arts, making sure they are treated fairly and paid properly for their work.

Menagerie - A collection of many different wild animals kept together in one place, or a wonderfully diverse and varied gathering of creatures, much like the extraordinary parade of animals that fills the stage at the opening of THE LION KING.



Minority - A group of people who are smaller in number than the main group in a society, and who may have different cultural backgrounds, languages, beliefs, or identities from the majority of people around them.

Mise en Scène - A French term used in theatre and film to describe everything the audience can see on stage or screen, including the set, lighting, costumes, props, and the positioning and movement of the performers, all working together to create a complete visual world.

MO Award - A Sydney based awards ceremony recognising excellence in live entertainment.

Moniker - A name or nickname that someone is known by.

NIDA - The National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA*) is a highly respected Australian performing arts training school located in Sydney, where actors, directors, designers, and other theatre makers come together to learn and build the skills and networks they need for a career in the performing arts.

Obie Awards - Annual prizes presented in New York City to celebrate outstanding and innovative work in off-Broadway and off-off-Broadway theatre.

Overture - The instrumental music played by the orchestra before a theatrical performance begins, often weaving together melodies from the songs in the show to set the mood and prepare the audience for the story they are about to experience.

Powerhouse - Someone or something that possesses extraordinary energy, strength, and ability, capable of making a huge and lasting impact on everything around them.

Preeminent - Widely recognised as the very best or most important in its/their particular field.

Preordained - Something that has already been decided or determined in advance, as though the outcome was fixed by fate or a higher power long before it actually happened.

Reign - The period of time during which a king, queen, or ruler holds power over their kingdom.

Replica productions - Versions of a show produced in different cities or countries around the world that are designed to look and sound as close to identical to the original production as possible, using the same costumes, set designs, choreography, and direction.

Resentment - The bitter, lingering feeling of anger and unfairness that builds up inside a person when they believe they have been treated badly or denied something they deserved.

Score - The complete collection of music written for a theatrical production or film, including every song, instrumental piece, and musical moment that occurs throughout the show.

Shame - The painful feeling that you are bad, wrong, or unworthy, often caused by something you believe you have done or failed to do.

Stooge - Someone who blindly follows and does the dirty work of a more powerful person, often without questioning whether what they are being asked to do is right, like the hyenas in THE LION KING who carry out Scar's cruel schemes without hesitation.

Stylised - Something that has been deliberately designed or performed in an exaggerated, artistic way rather than attempting to look or feel completely realistic, as seen throughout THE LION KING in its masks, costumes, and choreography.



Sydney Theatre Awards/The Syds - Prizes given out every year to celebrate outstanding work in professional Sydney theatre, covering everything from big mainstage productions to independent shows and musicals, with winners across more than 25 categories announced at a special industry celebration.

Synopsis - A brief summary of the story of a play, film, or book, giving the reader a clear outline of what happens without revealing every detail.

Tony Awards®/The Tonys® - America's most celebrated theatre prizes, given out every year in New York City to recognise the very best performances, productions, and creative work on Broadway*, a little like the Oscars but for live theatre.

Trait - A defining aspect of a person's personality, such as being brave, kind, cunning, or loyal.

Treachery - Betraying someone who trusts you, often through deliberate deception or secret scheming, in order to get something you want at their expense.

West End - A famous area in the heart of London, England, that is home to dozens of celebrated theatres and is one of the most beloved and exciting destinations in the world for anyone who loves live theatre and performance.

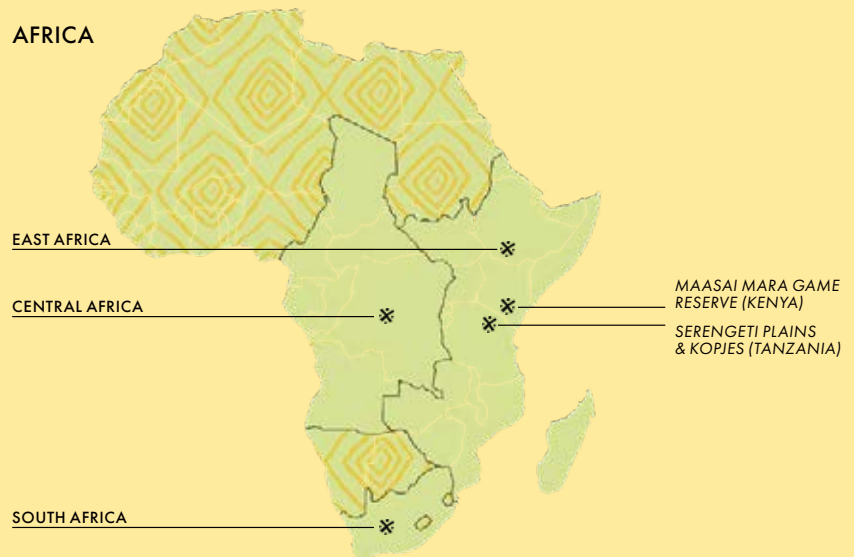
VAC - The Variety Artists Club of New Zealand (VAC*) is a club for all kinds of Kiwi performers, from actors to musicians to dancers. VAC* awards performers who are at the top of their games every year.

VCA - The Victorian College of the Arts (VCA*) is a well respected Australian arts school located in Melbourne, where students can study performing and visual arts including drama, dance, film, music, and fine art, developing their creative skills through hands-on, practical training.



A SPELLBINDING SETTING

THE LION KING is set in a fictional African kingdom known as 'The Pridelands'. This vast, sunbaked landscape of open grasslands, rocky outcroppings, and sweeping skies draws its visual inspiration primarily from the East African savannah. The production team researched the landscapes of Kenya and Tanzania extensively, with the iconic Serengeti Plains and Kenya's Maasai* Mara game reserve serving as key visual references for the show's golden, sun-drenched aesthetic. One of the most iconic images in the production is Pride Rock, the towering formation from which 'The Lion King' surveys his kingdom, is inspired by the dramatic rocky outcroppings known as kopjes*, which rise unexpectedly from the flat grasslands of the Serengeti. Beyond the landscape, the show draws cultural inspiration from a much broader sweep of the African continent, incorporating the artistic traditions, music, and languages of South Africa, Central Africa, and East Africa to create a world that feels both specific and universal. The result is a setting that, while fictional, is deeply rooted in the real geography, ecology, and cultural richness of sub-Saharan Africa, from the acacia trees silhouetted against a burning orange sky established through the black backdrops and brilliantly illuminated rear cyclorama*, to the vast herds of animals moving through the aisles of the theatre and the stage itself in the iconic opening number, Circle of Life.



A DIRECTOR'S VISION

There are moments in theatre history when a single creative vision changes everything. When director Julie Taymor was invited to bring THE LION KING from the animated screen to the Broadway* stage in 1997, she faced a challenge that would have defeated a less courageous mind. The film was already beloved by millions. Its characters were fixed in the public imagination. Its music was iconic. What could the stage possibly offer that the screen had not already given? Taymor's answer was as simple as it was brilliant: the stage could offer a live exchange between human beings in real time.

Rather than attempting to recreate the animal world of the animated film, Taymor made a decision that would define every subsequent choice in the production. She would not hide her performers behind animal puppets and risk disconnection with their audience. She would not ask the audience to forget that real people were standing before them. Instead, she would place the human being and the animal character side by side, simultaneously visible, and trust the audience's imagination to hold both truths at once. She called this the 'Double Event,' and it became the foundation upon which the entire production was built. These morphed characters, represented through costume, makeup and puppetry as part human - part animal, Taymor describes as 'humanimals'.

To realise this vision, the creative team behind THE LION KING drew from the rich artistic traditions of Africa. Deeply inspired by African masks and traditional patterns, its theatrical designs are more abstract, more stylised*, and more minimalistic than the character designs of the animated film. In African artistic traditions, masks are functional works of art, used in ceremonies to tell stories, to mark important passages in life, and to connect the visible world with invisible spiritual forces. Most masks in THE LION KING sit above the performers' heads like headdresses, leaving the human face completely visible beneath. The fixed expression of the animal mask combines with the shifting, living emotion of the performers' faces to create an impact that neither could achieve alone.



In many African cultures, the sun is the greatest symbol of life and energy, rising and setting in a perfect daily circle. This same spherical shape echoes throughout many design elements in the production, acting as a visual reminder of the circular nature of life itself. Also central to THE LION KING's visual language is the extraordinary character of Rafiki who, alone among the principal characters, wears no mask. Her animal persona is created entirely through costume and makeup, and she carries a staff instead, the medicinal bottles and shells on her costume suggesting the true inspiration for this entrancing character: the Sangoma, the South African healers and truth-tellers whose role as a bridge between the living world and the spirit world stretches back thousands of years. In making this ancient tradition the spiritual heart of one of the world's most watched productions, THE LION KING honours the cultural influences that run through every aspect of the production. The music weaves together six African languages, creating a soundscape unlike anything else in the history of musical theatre. The choreography draws on African dance traditions, making every movement as meaningful as every lyric. The call and response structure running through the show's music reflects a performance tradition in which the audience has never been a passive, silent presence, but an active and essential part of the story being told.

The sun rises. The circle turns. And every night, somewhere in the world, a performer lifts a mask above their head, steps into the light, and reminds an audience of something they already knew but needed to hear again: that we are all part of something larger than ourselves, and that the story never truly ends. This education pack is your invitation to explore that story from the inside out, unpacking the African artistic traditions that inspired the production's visual language, the cultural heritage woven into every song, the evocative writer's techniques harnessed in every lyric, the theatrical conventions that Taymor both honours and reinvents, and the extraordinary craft of the creative team who bring it all to life.

TOP TECHNOLOGIES

When the lights go down in the theatre and THE LION KING begins, the audience is set to witness some truly breathtaking theatrical technology. Every piece of machinery, every technical system, and every carefully engineered effect exists for one purpose only: to transport you into the heart of the African Pridelands. As you watch this epic story unfold, you will be treated to a range of theatrical technology, some concealed to help establish a sense of magic and illusion, and others completely visible to the audience to invite us into the process of creation.

Above the stage, hidden from your view, sits one of the theatre's most powerful tools: the fly tower, a vast vertical space extending high above the stage into which entire sections of scenery can be raised and lowered in seconds. In THE LION KING, the fly tower allows the production to transform the stage from an open savannah to Pride Rock to a lush jungle almost instantaneously, with enormous scenic pieces descending from above like magic.



Equally astonishing are the production's inflatable plants, expanding and blooming into a riot of extraordinary vegetation almost instantly, a lively jungle appearing to burst from nowhere before your eyes. Combined with fog machines that send great rolling clouds of mist across the stage floor, catching the light and turning the air itself into something tangible and atmospheric, these technologies create a world that feels real and dreamlike at the same time.

And then there are the puppets. THE LION KING contains some of the most intricate and varied puppetry ever seen on a theatrical stage, ranging from the enormous sculptures of the elephant and giraffe characters that tower above the performers operating them, to the tiny, delicate birds that flutter on the end of a performer's outstretched hand. Some puppets require a single operator, while others demand the perfectly synchronised effort of three or four performers working together in complete physical harmony.

The wildebeest stampede, one of the show's most technically astonishing sequences, uses a combination of puppetry, movement, lighting, set and sound design to create the terrifying sensation of hundreds of animals thundering across the stage, achieved with a fraction of that number of performers.

As you watch this awesome production, pay attention to the moment when you stop seeing the performer and the animal as separate, because that moment, when your imagination takes over completely, is exactly what the team behind THE LION KING has been working towards all along.



AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE*



Let's look through the following information about how to maximise everyone's enjoyment of THE LION KING.

ARRIVE EARLY Please try to arrive at least 20 minutes before the show starts to find the closest door to your seats and to use the bathrooms-theatre waits for no one!

BE AISLE KIND Be aware of people who may already be seated in the row where your chair is, and kindly thank them for making room for you to pass.

DON'T KICK SEATS You might already know how frustrating this can be from catching the school bus!

NO FOOD IN THE THEATRE Please eat before or after the performance.

SWITCH OFF PHONES AND DIGITAL WATCHES Be here, with us, in the theatre during the performance. Feel free to take selfies in the foyer or in front of the theatre outside before or after the show.

DON'T TALK OR CALL OUT DURING THE PERFORMANCE Wait until afterwards to share your thoughts.

GIVE BACK TO THE PERFORMERS Feel free to laugh and cry when the performance moves you to, and make sure you clap loudly when you are impressed, especially in the curtain call when the performers take a bow.

THE LION KING is suitable for a general audience. As it is a full-length musical*, it is recommended for ages 6 and up. Please note that there is a strict lockout policy for latecomers, but once the lockout is lifted, the venue staff will be able to escort you to your seat. Please be advised that theatrical smokes, fog effects, flashing lights, and loud noises are used during the performance.