the little mermaid broadway musical

The Little Mermaid Broadway Musical has captivated audiences since its debut, bringing to life the enchanting story of Ariel, a young mermaid who dreams of becoming human. Based on the beloved Disney animated film released in 1989, the Broadway adaptation retains the charm of the original while introducing new elements that expand the narrative and deepen character development. This article explores the musical's background, key themes, notable songs, production elements, and its impact on both audiences and the theater community.

Background of The Little Mermaid Musical

The journey of **The Little Mermaid Broadway Musical** began with its premiere at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre in New York City on January 10, 2008. The show was directed by Francesca Zambello and featured a book by Doug Wright, with music by Alan Menken and lyrics by Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater. The musical is notable for its combination of classic Disney storytelling with Broadway's theatrical flair.

Inspiration and Adaptation

The musical draws heavily from the original 1989 animated film, which was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale of the same name. While maintaining the core story, the Broadway version introduces new songs and characters, enhancing the narrative and providing a fresh perspective on Ariel's journey.

Key Themes

The Little Mermaid delves into several themes that resonate with audiences of all ages:

- **Identity and Self-Discovery:** Ariel's quest to find her true self and her place in the world is central to the story. Her longing to be human reflects the universal desire for self-acceptance and belonging.
- **Love and Sacrifice:** The relationship between Ariel and Prince Eric showcases the lengths one will go to for love. Ariel sacrifices her voice for a chance at love, highlighting the theme of sacrifice inherent in romantic relationships.

- **Family and Responsibility:** Ariel's relationship with her father, King Triton, represents the struggle between independence and familial duty. The tension between her desires and her father's protective instincts adds depth to her character.

- **Consequences of Choices:** The musical emphasizes that choices come with consequences, as seen in Ariel's deal with Ursula, the sea witch. This raises questions about morality and the price of one's dreams.

Notable Songs

Music is a vital component of **The Little Mermaid Broadway Musical**, with several songs becoming fan favorites. The score includes both classic tunes from the animated film and new compositions that enrich the story. Some notable songs include:

1. **“Part of Your World”** - Ariel's iconic solo that expresses her longing to explore the human world.

2. **“Under the Sea”** - A lively and upbeat number performed by Sebastian, the crab, highlighting the beauty of ocean life and cautioning Ariel against her desires.

3. **“Kiss the Girl”** - A romantic duet that encourages Prince Eric to kiss Ariel and seal their bond.

4. **“Poor Unfortunate Souls”** - Ursula's powerful and seductive number that reveals her manipulative nature and offers Ariel a deal.

5. **“If Only”** - A poignant ballad that reflects Ariel's internal conflict and her longing for connection.

6. **“The World Above”** - A new song for the Broadway version, showcasing Ariel's excitement and wonder as she explores the human world.

These songs, among others, contribute to the musical's emotional depth and enhance character development, allowing audiences to connect with Ariel and her journey.

Production Elements

The production of **The Little Mermaid Broadway Musical** is notable for its

elaborate set design, costumes, and innovative use of technology. Here are some key elements:

Set Design

The set design, created by George Tsypin, transforms the stage into an underwater wonderland. The use of vibrant colors, intricate backdrops, and fluid set pieces helps evoke the magical atmosphere of the ocean. The design emphasizes the contrast between Ariel's underwater kingdom and the human world above the sea.

Costumes

Costume designer Tatiana Noginova crafted stunning costumes that bring the characters to life. The mermaids' costumes are particularly striking, featuring flowing fabrics that mimic the movement of water. The design of Ursula, with her tentacles and dramatic silhouette, adds to her villainous presence on stage.

Choreography

The choreography by Stephen Mear plays a crucial role in conveying the story's emotions and themes. The movement is fluid and expressive, reflecting the underwater setting while also incorporating traditional Broadway dance elements. The ensemble's choreography during numbers like “Under the Sea” is lively and engaging, drawing the audience into the mermaid world.

Impact and Reception

Upon its release, **The Little Mermaid Broadway Musical** received mixed to positive reviews from critics but was embraced by audiences. The musical ran for over 685 performances, showcasing its popularity despite some criticisms regarding pacing and narrative coherence.

Audience Reception

The musical resonated particularly well with families and younger audiences, who were already familiar with the animated film. The colorful visuals, catchy songs, and relatable themes made it a delightful experience for theatergoers. Many fans appreciated the new songs and character depth, feeling that the Broadway adaptation added layers to the beloved story.

Cultural Significance

The Little Mermaid holds a significant place in the cultural landscape of theater and film. It has contributed to the resurgence of Disney musicals on Broadway and paved the way for future adaptations of animated films. The show's themes of self-discovery and love continue to inspire adaptations and retellings across various media.

Conclusion

In conclusion, **The Little Mermaid Broadway Musical** stands as a beloved adaptation of a classic story, bringing new life to Ariel's journey and enriching the narrative with music, emotion, and stunning visuals. Its exploration of themes such as identity, love, and the consequences of choices resonates with audiences of all ages. The musical's successful blend of Disney magic and Broadway spectacle has left a lasting impact on the theater community and continues to enchant viewers worldwide. Whether through its memorable songs or its vibrant production elements, The Little Mermaid remains a testament to the power of storytelling and the magic of the stage.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the storyline of 'The Little Mermaid' Broadway musical?

The storyline follows Ariel, a young mermaid princess who dreams of living on land. She makes a deal with the sea witch Ursula to exchange her voice for legs, embarking on a journey of love and self-discovery.

Who are the main characters in 'The Little Mermaid' Broadway musical?

The main characters include Ariel, Prince Eric, Ursula, King Triton, Sebastian, Flounder, and Scuttle.

What are some popular songs from 'The Little Mermaid' Broadway musical?

Popular songs include 'Part of Your World,' 'Under the Sea,' 'Kiss the Girl,' and 'Poor Unfortunate Souls.'

Who composed the music for 'The Little Mermaid' Broadway musical?

The music for 'The Little Mermaid' was composed by Alan Menken, with lyrics by Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater.

When did 'The Little Mermaid' Broadway musical premiere?

The musical premiered on Broadway on January 10, 2008, at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre.

What themes are explored in 'The Little Mermaid' Broadway musical?

Themes include the struggle for identity, love, sacrifice, the conflict between dreams and reality, and the importance of understanding one's own voice.

Is 'The Little Mermaid' Broadway musical family-friendly?

Yes, 'The Little Mermaid' is family-friendly, appealing to audiences of all ages with its enchanting story and vibrant music.

How does the Broadway production differ from the animated film?

The Broadway production expands on the story with additional songs, deeper character development, and new scenes that enhance the narrative.

Has 'The Little Mermaid' won any awards?

Yes, the musical received several nominations, including Tony Awards for Best Original Score and Best Lighting Design, and it won the 2008 Broadway.com Audience Award for Favorite Musical.

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