

Disney on Broadway: A Wonderful Combination

by Sue Mauro, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Disney on Broadway. What a wonderful combination! Actually my Disney obsession is what started my Broadway obsession. Back in 1994, I had a 10 year-old daughter and I received a notice for tickets to see *Beauty and the Beast* in previews (theater talk for performances before the official opening). It sounded like something fun to fill the void between Walt Disney World trips. As a Connecticut resident, we could take the train from New Haven. I used Mother's Day as an excuse to take my mom and my daughter off to see a Broadway play, my daughter's first one. And what a good one it was! We bought the cassette (keep in mind, it was 1994) and listened to it so many times we wore it out and had to buy another one. Knowing I needed to save some time and money on the train ride, I planned the next trip with my sister, who is a little more adventurous and willing to drive into New York City. This time we saw the premier of *The Lion King* (the movie) at Radio City Music Hall.

I learned how to drive in and find parking near the theater district. Now there was no stopping us. We saw show after show after show. Amongst many others, we did see *The Lion King* (the musical) and *Aida*. *Phantom of the Opera*, *Grease* (with Rosie O'Donnell and Brook Shields), *Les Miserable*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Titanic*... the list goes on and on. When we saw *Beauty and the Beast* Steven Spielberg was in the audience, and for *The Lion King* Val Kilmer was in the house.

In the '90s the night of the Tony Awards was a big deal at our house. We had a contest to see who could pick the most correct winners, and we dressed up for the occasion. I won most of the time. Generally in the 90s I had seen more of the musicals nominated for Tony Awards than I had seen movies that were nominated for Oscars. Things started to slow down when my daughter turned 16 and got a job. Now her weekends were filled and I had to find other friends to go with me to Broadway. Now that she is out of college and working full time, we have started going back a few times a year. In 2008 we saw *Crybaby*, *Legally Blonde*, and *Hairspray*, and earlier this year we saw *The Little Mermaid*. I hope we get a few more in for 2009. Perhaps even *Shrek the Musical*. The best part now is that my daughter pays for herself.

Here is the complete list of Disney on Broadway shows along with their opening and closing dates (if applicable):

Show: Opening Date - Closing Date

Beauty and the Beast: April 18, 1994 - July 29, 2007

The Lion King: November 13, 1997 - ?

Aida: March 23, 2000 - September 4, 2004

Tarzan: May 10, 2006 - July 8, 2007

Mary Poppins: November 16, 2006 - ?

The Little Mermaid November 3, 2007 The only Disney on Broadway show I did not see was Tarzan. I am not sure how that one got away from me. I was a fan of the Tarzan Rocks show at Disney's Animal Kingdom, and I think a man in a loin cloth just can't be a bad thing. I do have the sound track. Disney Theatrical Productions has produced other shows, such as a German version of The Hunchback of Notre Dame and a version of Peter Pan that played in Los Angeles, but these shows did not appear on Broadway (at least not yet).

Sadly my two favorite shows have closed - Beauty and the Beast and Aida. Aida actually makes the list of my top "All-Time Favorite Broadway shows." Along with Le Mis and Jekyll and Hyde, Aida makes up the top three. I can't even put them in order; it depends on my mood which wins at any given time. Each is very different.

I enjoyed The Lion King, Mary Poppins, and The Little Mermaid very much, but I have seen each only one time and I don't have plans to go back anytime soon. I saw Beauty and the Beast at least four times that I can think of, Aida twice (only because it's run was not as long as the others) and Jekyll and Hyde seven times. Remember, I did say this was an obsession.

Oddly, The Little Mermaid is my favorite Disney animated film. Others that I think would make great musicals are Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, and Snow White. I guess I would have to say Aladdin, too, because the show at Disney's California Adventure is very close to a Broadway production, just shorter.

I did not see any speculation on playbill.com as to what Disney has up its sleeve for the future, and in this economy I would not expect anything new to come out. Playbill did have a discount for Mary Poppins you may want to check out, but Little Mermaid and Lion King are still selling out regularly, and discounts are very limited on those shows. Each show does have a limited number of cheaper seats in the back of the theater and these are really not as bad as you might imagine. Broadway theaters are very compact and even if you are in the last row, you can still see what is going on and you can save a bundle this way.

[Ed.: Between now and April 19, 2009, Disney on Broadway has a "[buy one](#)

[ticket, get a second ticket at \\$15](#)" offer on selected performances (mostly weekday evenings) between now and May 31, 2009. Alas, it does not apply to the May 31 Saturday night performance, which is our Decade of Dreams on Broadway Evening.]

About The Author: Sue Mauro is a first time contributor to PassPorter News. She lives with her family in Connecticut and goes in to NYC to see a Broadway show every chance she gets.

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