

Disney PRESENTS

# THE LION KING

THE LANDMARK MUSICAL EVENT  
REGENT THEATRE MELBOURNE

**MEDIA RELEASE: 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY, 2015**

## ***“IT IS TIME”***

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1 <sup>st</sup> Preview Performance	February 13, 8pm
Media Call	February 18, 12noon
Opening Night	February 19, 7pm
Red Carpet	February 19, from 6pm

Booking through until June 23

Disney's ***THE LION KING*** will roar into Melbourne's Regent Theatre with preview performances of the award-winning Broadway musical beginning 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2015.

***THE LION KING*** has smashed box-office records around the country most recently becoming the highest grossing show in the 30 year history of Brisbane's Queensland Performing Arts Centre. As the Melbourne season gets under way, Australian ticket sales will have surpassed 1.1million.

Executive Producer of The Lion King (Australia), James Thane, said the company has been thrilled with the response from audiences of director Julie Taymor's vision of the African savannah.

"The interest for the show in Melbourne has been phenomenal and we are very excited as we bump-in to the beautiful Regent Theatre".

This homegrown production features the most multicultural cast of any Australian-produced stage musical to date, with performers from 13 countries across 5 continents.

The cast features representatives from Zimbabwe, China, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Brazil and the United States as well as principals from: New Zealand, Nick Afoa (Simba); South Africa Josslyn Hlenti (Nala) and Buyi Zama (Rafiki), and from Ghana, Terry Yeboah (Banzai).

Other principals include Josh Quong Tart who plays Scar, Rob Collins as Mufasa, Cameron Goodall as Zazu, Russell Dykstra as Pumbaa, Jamie McGrgeor as Timon, Ruvarashe Ngwenya as Shenzi and Andre Jewson as Ed (who are both from Melbourne).

This is the 9th production of **THE LION KING** running concurrently around the world with shows on Broadway and on tour across North America, in Tokyo and on tour in Japan, in London's West End and on tour throughout the UK, and in Hamburg and Madrid. A 10<sup>th</sup> production opens in Mexico City this March.

## **ABOUT THE LION KING**

In its 18<sup>th</sup> year, **THE LION KING** remains ascendant as one of the most popular stage musicals in the world. Since its Broadway premiere on November 13, 1997, 22 global productions have been seen by more than 75 million people and, cumulatively, run a staggering 112 years. Produced by Disney Theatrical Productions (under the direction of Thomas Schumacher), **THE LION KING** is only the second show in history to generate five productions worldwide running 10 or more years. Translated into seven different languages (Japanese, German, Korean, French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese), productions of **THE LION KING** can currently be seen on Broadway, London's West End, Hamburg, Tokyo, Madrid, and on tour across North America, the U.K., and Japan. Having played 19 countries on every continent except Antarctica, **THE LION KING's** worldwide gross exceeds that of any film, Broadway show or other entertainment title in box office history.

**THE LION KING** won six 1998 Tony Awards<sup>®</sup>: Best Musical, Best Scenic Design (Richard Hudson), Best Costume Design (Julie Taymor), Best Lighting Design (Donald Holder), Best Choreography (Garth Fagan) and Best Direction of a Musical. **THE LION KING** has also earned more than 70 major arts awards including the 1998 NY Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, the 1999 Grammy<sup>®</sup> for Best Musical Show Album, the 1999 Evening Standard Award for Theatrical Event of the Year and the 1999 Laurence Olivier Awards for Best Choreography and Best Costume Design.

The show's director, costume designer and mask co-designer Julie Taymor continues to play an integral part in the show's ongoing success. The first woman to win a Tony Award for Direction of a Musical, Taymor has in recent years supervised new productions of the show around the world.

The Broadway score features Elton John and Tim Rice's music from *The Lion King* animated film along with three new songs by John and Rice; additional musical material by South African Lebo M, Mark Mancina, Jay Rifkin, Julie Taymor and Hans Zimmer; and music from "Rhythm of the Pride Lands," an album inspired by the original music in the film, written by Lebo M, Mark Mancina and Hans Zimmer. The resulting sound of **THE LION KING** is a fusion of Western popular music and the distinctive sounds and rhythms of Africa, ranging from the Academy Award<sup>®</sup>-winning song "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" to the haunting ballad "Shadowland."

The book has been adapted by Roger Allers, who co-directed *The Lion King* animated feature, and Irene Mecchi, who co-wrote the film's screenplay. Other members of the creative team include: Michael Curry, who designed the masks and puppets with Taymor, Steve Canyon Kennedy (sound design), Michael Ward (hair and makeup design), John Stefaniuk (associate director), Marey Griffith (associate choreographer), Clement Ishmael (music supervisor) and Doc Zorthian (production supervisor). Anne Quart serves as associate producer.

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