



News Release

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Disney
THE LION KING
THE WORLD'S #1 MUSICAL

**Casting Announced for
Disney's The Lion King
Broadway's Award-Winning Best Musical**

**Cleveland's Limited Return Engagement Plays
Wednesday, July 8 to Sunday, August 16 at Playhouse Square**

CLEVELAND, OH - Casting has been announced for Cleveland's engagement of **Disney's *The Lion King***. Cleveland's most eagerly awaited stage production ever will leap onto the stage at Playhouse Square from Wednesday, July 8 to Sunday, August 16. The press opening night is Thursday, July 9 at 7:30 p.m.

The production features **Peter Hargrave** (Scar), **David D'Lancy Wilson** (Mufasa), **Zama Magudulela** (Rafiki), **Nick Cordileone** (Timon), **Nick LaMedica** (Zazu), **Danny Grumich** (Pumbaa), **Gilbert Domally** (Simba), **Thembelihle Cele** (Nala), **Forest VanDyke** (Banzai), **Martina Sykes** (Shenzi), **Robb Sapp** (Ed), **William John Austin** (Standby Scar, & Pumbaa) and **Thom Christopher Warren** (Standby Scar, Zazu, Timon & Pumbaa).

Adding a hometown connection to the production, Cleveland's own Robb Sapp returns to Playhouse Square in the role of Ed. Sapp has played Ed in the Broadway production of ***The Lion King*** since 2021 and has previously performed with the show's Las Vegas sit-down production and the North American tour. His other Broadway credits include *Wicked* and *Shrek*. Sapp will perform at Playhouse Square in Cleveland from Wednesday, July 8 – Sunday, August 16.

To download Sapp's bio and headshot, as well as *The Lion King* production photography and b-roll, click [HERE](#).

The role of "Young Simba" is alternated between **Aaron Chao** and **Josiah Watson** and the role of "Young Nala" is alternated between **Journey Compas** and **Marley Gomes**.

Rounding out the cast are **Kayla Rose Aimable**, **Ellen Akashi**, **Aja Simone Baitey**, **Eric Bean, Jr.**, **Vernon Brooks III**, **Shaquelle Charles**, **Reoagile Choabi**, **Daniela Cobb**, **Lyric Danae**, **Maurice Dawkins**, **Cedrick Ekra**, **Camryn Hampton**, **Quiana Onrae'l Holmes**, **Valérieane Louisy Louis Joseph**, **Joel Karie**, **Gabisile Manana**, **Keyveontae' Martin**, **Morgan Reed McDaniel**, **Justin Mensah**, **Aaron Nelson**, **Yuka Notsuka**, **Sicelo Ntshangase**, **Sayiga Eugene Peabody**, **Poseletso Sejosingoe**, **Jennifer Theriot**, **Brena K. Thomas**, **Courtney Thomas**, **Ben Toomer**, **Denzel Tsopnang**, and **Jordan Nicole Willis**.

In Cleveland, *The Lion King* will play Tuesdays through Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 1:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 1:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Additionally, matinee performances are scheduled for Thursday, July 9 at 1:30 p.m., Thursday, July 30 at 12:00 p.m., and Thursday, August 13 at 1:30 p.m. Extra Magic Packages, which include an excellent seat in the theater and show merchandise, are also available. Tickets are available online at playhousesquare.org or by calling 216-241-6000 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday. Orders for groups of 10 or more may be placed by calling 216 -640-8600.

The Lion King has been touring North America for more than 24 years, and during that time has welcomed over 28 million theatergoers, making it North America's longest-running and most-attended Broadway tour. Having already played more than 10,000 performances in over 90 cities across North America, *The Lion King* now proudly returns to Cleveland at Playhouse Square.

ABOUT THE LION KING

Approaching 30 landmark years on Broadway, *The Lion King* continues ascendant as one of the most popular stage musicals of all time. Since its premiere on November 13, 1997, 32 global productions have been seen by over 130 million people. Produced by Disney Theatrical Group, under the direction of **Andrew Flatt** and **Anne Quart**, *The Lion King* has made theatrical history with two productions worldwide running 20 or more years and three others running 25 or more years.

Performed over its lifetime in nine different languages (English, Japanese, German, Korean, French, Dutch, Spanish, Mandarin and Portuguese), there are currently nine productions of *The Lion King* around the world: Broadway, London, Paris, Hamburg, Madrid, Tokyo, Mexico City and on tour across North America and Australia. *The Lion King* has played over 100 cities in 24 countries on every continent except Antarctica. Its 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®: 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 (**Julie Taymor**). *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® 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.

Julie Taymor, who conceived and directed the production and is its costume designer and mask co-designer, was the first woman to win a Tony Award for Best Direction of a Musical. She remains actively involved in the show, launching new productions and maintaining the flagship Broadway production.

The Broadway score features **Elton John** and **Tim Rice**'s songs from *The Lion King* animated film along with three new songs by John and Rice; additional music and lyrics 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®-winning song "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" to Lebo M's rich choral numbers.

Elton John, Lebo M and Hans Zimmer all collaborated on the 2019 version of the film, executive produced by Julie Taymor and Thomas Schumacher, which has gone onto extraordinary worldwide success.

The book has been adapted by **Roger Allers**, who co-directed the animated *The Lion King* feature, and **Irene Mecchi**, who co-wrote the film's screenplay. The stage production was originally produced by **Peter Schneider** and **Thomas Schumacher**. 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), **David Kreppel** and **Sean Mayes** (music supervisors), **Anthony Lyn** (associate director), **Marey Griffith** (associate choreographer), **Lisa Dawn Cave** (production supervisor), **Michael Bolgar** (general manager), **Robert Elhai** (associate music producer), **Michael Keller** (music coordinator), **Robert Elhai** and **David Metzger** (orchestrators), **Rick Sordelet** (fight director) and **ARC/Mark Brandon, CSA** (casting).

For more information worldwide, visit LionKing.com, www.facebook.com/thelionkingusa and www.instagram.com/thelionking.

The Cleveland engagement of **Disney's *The Lion King*** is presented by arrangement with Playhouse Square

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Media assets, including b-roll and production photos, available [here](#).

Tickets are available for purchase online at playhousesquare.org or by phone at 216-241-6000.

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Playhouse Square, the nation's premier home for touring Broadway, is a globally recognized arts district. A not-for-profit presenter and producer of performing arts experiences, Playhouse Square is a champion of arts education and the vitality of downtown Cleveland. It proudly serves as home to eight resident companies: The City Club of Cleveland, Cleveland Ballet, Cleveland International Film Festival, Cleveland Play House, Cleveland State University Department of Theatre and Dance, DANCE Cleveland, Great Lakes Theater, and Tri-C JazzFest.