

Broadway Musical *Aida*

Press Release

(Press Conference / Tickets Release Ceremony)

- **One of the Most Well-known Disney Musicals**
- **Presented by Nederlander Worldwide Entertainment**
- **Produced by Big League Productions**

Broadway Musical *Aida*

Time: September 25th – October 12th 2008 (About 20 performances in Total)

Venue: Shanghai Majestic Theatre

Price: 100 – 800 RMB (Weekdays)

180 – 1080 RMB (Weekends and Holiday Nights)

Broadway Musical *Aida* Premier in Shanghai

The global hit contemporary Broadway Rock Musical *Aida* will debut in Shanghai Majestic Theatre on September 25th, 2008, opening its China Tour. The world acclaimed singer / songwriter Sir Elton John composed this musical for Disney (he also composed the Musical *The Lion King*). *Aida* came to be one of the longest running Disney musicals on Broadway.

Crossing time and space to ancient Egypt, Musical *Aida* allows audiences to appreciate a grand epic tale of love, loyalty and betrayal. Composed by Elton John and his continued collaboration with lyricist Tim Rice after their first collaboration work – Disney worldwide phenomenon *The Lion King*, *Aida* is a spectacular musical combined with contemporary pop-rock elements. As the postmodern Broadway interpretation of classic Verdi opera, the Musical *Aida* features modern dance choreographed by Sarita Allen – a former principal dancer with Alvin Ailey

American Dance Company. Big League Productions, by special permission from Disney Theatrical Productions, acquired the rights to create this fresh and new touring production of Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*. This production has been touring in North America and all over the world with huge success.

Musical *Aida* in Shanghai was presented by Nederlander Worldwide Entertainment in association with Eastern Shanghai International Culture Film & Television Group. Adapted from the classic Verdi opera, Musical *Aida* is an authentic Broadway Musical. Starting from its premiere in 2000, Musical *Aida* kept running on Broadway for almost 5 years and later successfully toured in big cities in USA and throughout the world. Musical *Aida* guarantees the same excitement and excellence as *The Lion King*, which had 100 performances in Shanghai in 2006.

***Aida* story well-known by Shanghai Audience**

Disney and Elton John worked together, Created the Best Musical

Musical *Aida* was created in 2000 based on the same story line of the Opera *Aida*. Composer Elton John mixed Rock & Roll, Pop, Jazz, Gospel Soul, and other trendy music elements into the musical, which became a smash hit on Broadway after its premier, and won 4 Tony Awards in the same year, including Best Original Musical Score, Best Actress, Best Scenic Designer, and Best Lighting Designer. *Aida* also won the Grammy Awards for Best Musical Show Album in 2000. In addition to the modern choreography and the glamorous multi-media effect, the creative team, which wrote music for *The Lion King* and other Disney Cartoons, worked together again for *Aida*, and came up with this stage spectacular.

Having experienced the Opera version of *Aida*, which took place several years ago in Shanghai Stadium, Shanghai audiences are already familiar with the plot of *Aida*. Elton John's music itself is very persuasive, and Chinese audience prefer to see shows created by Disney, because they've been frequently exposed to Disney musicals, stage shows, movies/TV series in the past few years. As a result, musical *Aida* was "born to be" a success in China.

At the meantime, East Ticketing is going to be Broadway Musical *Aida*'s General Ticketing Agency in Shanghai (Hotline: 962388). General Box Office is set up in Shanghai Drama Academy. (Tel: 62485600)

The 6 Reasons for *Aida* to be a Must-See

1. The new Post-Modern Taste of a Classic Opera

Italian composer Verdi's Classic Opera, *Aida*, is a well-known master piece, but "Opera", as a kind of High Arts, sounds too noble for the Chinese audience. However, Musical *Aida* is offering an opportunity for Chinese audience to be touched by this timeless love legend. Domingo, who performed in the Opera version of *Aida*, said: "Aida musical version is the best pop adaptation of the opera."

2. Modern Rock & Roll Musical Rocks the World

The "classic" Broadway Musical is known to have long history and makes it hard for audience nowadays to relate to themselves. The operatic tragedy musicals from U.K. are not popular enough for the audience either. Nevertheless, the music with Rock rhythms and the dance with modern passions make *Aida*, the musical, much easier for audiences to enjoy and to appreciate the love legend from ancient Egypt. *Aida* successfully elaborated on different global topics, including love, responsibilities, sacrifice, betrayal, and tells a timeless love story in a trendy way.

3. Outstanding piece of Elton John, the Pop Music Master

Elton John has been a legend of music industry in Europe and America for around 40 years. His famous hits, such as *Can you Feel the Love Tonight*, *Circle of Life*, etc, always reached the top of *Billboards*. He is an honorable Broadway Musical composer. *The Lion King*, which was composed by him, was a smash hit on Broadway. *The Lion King* has kept running since 1998, and won 6 Tony Awards (the Oscar in American theatre industry), including Best Musical, Best Director, etc. *Aida* also rocked Broadway, and kept running for more than 4 years.

4. Family-Friendly Musical in Typical Disney Style

Musical used to be the entertainment just for adults. But it has been changed since Disney Theatrical started its business on Broadway in the 90's. Disney blew Broadway audience away by its kids-friendly stories, moving music melodies, cheerful dance, and marvelous stage set. It was the first time that musicals opened doors to children, and brought the whole family into the theatres.

5. Touring All Over China

Because of the big size of the production, Disney could just produce sit-down tours. Musical The Lion King had 100 performances in Shanghai but was not able to tour in other cities. However, like the national tour of 42nd Street last year, Aida is going to tour in around 12 cities in China, and to entertain Chinese audience throughout the country with this family-friendly musical. Do you feel regret that you didn't get chance to see The Lion King? Aida is a show that you can't miss.

6. Dedications from Modern Dance Master

The Choreographer of Aida, Sarita Allen, was principal dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Company for 17 years. She embraced the dance language of Alvin Ailey for her choreography for Aida. Last year, Alvin Ailey Dance Company toured its masterpiece "Revelation" in China, and achieved huge Box Office success. This year, all the Ailey Fans could get chance to enjoy the fabulous dance. So will those who missed the opportunities last year.

Musical *Aida* – Synopsis

In the Egyptian wing of a modern museum, a man and a woman touring the exhibit catch each other's eyes... Time transported us to ancient Egypt, where Radames, captain of the Egyptian army, found himself in love with Aida, the princess of Nubia, Egypt's long-time enemy. Meanwhile, Amneris, the Egyptian princess also fell in love with Radames. Aida, Amneris, and

Radames are entangled in conflicted loyalties and emotions. Radames and Aida sacrifice everything, including their own lives, for love. Facing death, Aida looks to Radames for strength. As they are slowly deprived of light and air, Radames swears he will search through a hundred lifetimes to find her again... Back in the contemporary museum, the spirit of Amneris watches as the modern man and woman are strangely drawn to each other. They are the reincarnations of Aida and Radames, finding in each other a new beginning... Their love exceeds even the boundaries of death.

***Aida* – Top Artistic Creative Team**

- **Composer: Elton John.**

Elton John is one of the top-selling solo artists of all time with over 200 million records sold worldwide. Elton has won a wide array of industry awards including Grammys, Tonys and an Oscar and continues to add innovative work to his personal repertoire of 35 gold and 25 platinum albums. In December of 2004, Elton received the Kennedy Center Honor for his lifetime contributions to American culture and excellence through the performing arts. In 1998, he was knighted by the Queen of England who honored him with the title Sir Elton John, CBE.

- **Lyricist: Tim Rice.**

Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote four shows together: *Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1968), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1969-71) and *Evita* (1976-78). In the nineties he worked primarily with the Disney empire, contributing lyrics to the movies *Aladdin* (music Alan Menken) and *The Lion King*, (music Elton John and Hans Zimmer) and to the stage shows *Beauty and the Beast* (Alan Menken), *The Lion King* and *AIDA* (both Sir Elton).

- **Book: David Henry Hwang.**

David Henry Hwang was awarded the 1988 Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics and John Gassner Awards. For his play *Golden Child*, he received a 1998 Tony nomination and a 1997 Obie Award. His new book for the Rodgers & Hammerstein musical *Flower Drum Song* earned him his third Tony nomination in 2003.

- **Choreographer: Sarita Allen.**

As principal dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Company for 17 years, Sarita Allen enriches *Aida*'s dance with her choreography. Alvin Ailey toured to China last year with great box office success.

***Aida* – Media Quotes and Creative Team Comments**

- “*AIDA* is not opera. It’s truly a pop musical with spoken dialogue and all kinds of recognizable song types: urban-based rhythm and blues, gospel inspired songs, ballads and, of course, Crocodile Rock songs.” – Elton John, Composer
- “*Aida* was one of those rare opportunities for me to write songs that not only served the character and plot but is what I believe personally. When that happens, you hope that what starts as a personal statement also has universal meaning. That the audience will hear the words and say ‘yes, I understand. I believe that, too.’” – Tim Rice, Lyricist
- “This is a story about people torn between personal passion and political responsibility, about love transcending hate and ancient division. And we can offer no easy answer. On the other hand, love isn’t impotent. It does affect change – a major social change in the end. I wanted to get as much of that complexity and ambiguity into the story as I could.”
– David Henry Hwang, Book
- “An appealing soft-rock score by Elton John and Tim Rice. Rice’s soulful lyrics are a perfect complement to John’s luscious melodies.” – Time Magazine
- “What you will find is Elton John’s lovely melodies, catchy hooks, bittersweet ballads, and delicious harmonies.” – The New Yorker

***Aida* – Presenters**

- **Nederlander Family**

Established in 1912 by David T. Nederlander, the Nederlander's collectively operate one of the largest live entertainment organizations in the world with over 30 theatres across the United States and London. On Broadway, the Nederlander's operate 9 theatres, currently home to some of Broadway's most outstanding productions, including Disney's Lion King and The Little Mermaid, Hairspray, Rent, Legally Blonde, Crybaby, Grease, Wicked, and the 2008 Tony award winner for Best Musical In the Heights.

Through three generations, the Nederlander's expertise covers the gamut of theatre management and operations, and all facets of live entertainment, including ticketing, management, promotion, marketing, and advertising. The Nederlander's are regarded as one of the most important leaders in the international theatre performing industry.

- **Eastern Shanghai International Culture Film & Television Group**