

grandMA joins Beauty and the Beast in SA

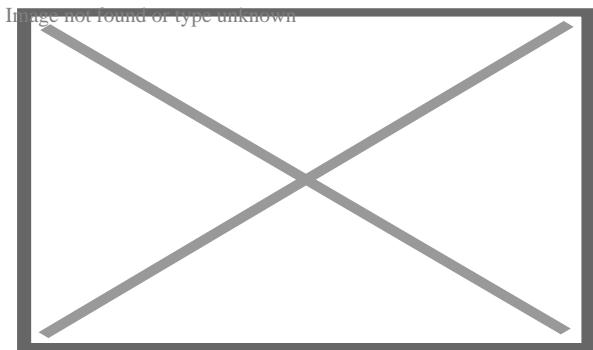


© Disney Disney's musical, Beauty and the Beast, produced in

South Africa by Pieter Toerien and Hazel Feldman, played to its first South African audience on 2nd October 2008 at the Montecasino Teatro Theatre in Fourways. The production made use of a grandMA full-size console. In addition, 42 Robe 700s were used.

Richard Knight, the Associate Lighting Designer who came out to recreate Natasha Katz's original design in Johannesburg, was also the original moving light programmer for the Beauty and the Beast tour which successfully ran in the United States from 2000 to 2004. The show is based on the original Broadway production produced in 1994.

The South African contingent of Programmers included Glenn Duncan, DWR Distribution's Nick Britz who lent a helping hand for a few days, and of course the South African Associate Designer Denis Hutchinson who also did his share of programming. Hutchinson explained, "The show was one of the first Broadway shows to use movers extensively and they work hard, although the rig has enough generics to get you out of jail if need be."



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Hutchinson commented that the rig was fairly conventional, with five over stage bars and corresponding ladders, with 42 Robe moving lights, plus copious lights for the upstage Bounce system to light the cloths.

The original Beauty and the Beast was programmed on another desk. “We got hold of an old data disc which had the conventional lighting on it,” said Knight. “Richard Lambert from MA Lighting helped us with the translation for the grandMA. I then transferred the moving light program across to the grandMA on top of the cue structure. The intention of importing the original files using the ASCII conversion was to get as close as possible to the original lighting structure. With the tight timescale of the SA production we needed to have a solid basis prepared to stand half a chance. Once we had that we could then add ideas for the South African production. If I know one thing it is that change is here to stay and that includes changes to lighting technology, so where possible we added to the excellent original.”

The show is being produced in South Africa by Pieter Toerien and Hazel Feldman. It was enjoyed by over 160,000 people in Johannesburg, and received massive acclaim for all aspects of the staging which is being overseen by the international Disney production team of Associate Producer Michael Cassel, Associate Director/Choreographer Jacqueline Dunnley-Wendt and the local South Africa resident team led by Resident Director, Alan Swerdlow.