Aladdin the Musical
The National Theatre
April 19–30, 2023
Broadway, February 2014

Music by Alan Menken
Lyrics by Howard Ashman and Tim Rice
Book by Chad Beguelin
Directed and Choreographed by Casey Nicholaw
Packet prepared by Dramaturg Leayne C. Dempsey

Discover a whole new world at Disney's ALADDIN, the hit Broadway musical.

From the producer of The Lion King comes the timeless story of ALADDIN, a thrilling new production filled with unforgettable beauty, magic, comedy and breathtaking spectacle. It's an extraordinary theatrical event where one lamp and three wishes make the possibilities infinite.

Hailed by USA Today as “Pure Genie-Us,” ALADDIN features all your favorite songs from the film as well as new music written by Tony® and Academy Award® winner Alan Menken (Newsies) with lyrics penned by the legendary Howard Ashman (Beauty and the Beast), Tony Award winner Tim Rice (The Lion King, Aida), and book writer Chad Beguelin (The Wedding Singer).

Directed and choreographed by Tony Award winner Casey Nicholaw (The Book of Mormon, Something Rotten), this “Fabulous” and “Extravagant” (The New York Times) new musical boasts an incomparable design team, with sets, costumes and lighting from Tony Award winners Bob Crowley (Mary Poppins), Gregg Barnes (Kinky Boots), and Natasha Katz (An American in Paris). See why audiences and critics agree, ALADDIN is “Exactly What You Wish For!” (NBC-TV).

ALADDIN begins April 19, 2023 and is a theatrical performance recommended for children 6 years of age or older. The show runs for two hours and thirty minutes, including one intermission.
There are so many amazing lyrics in Aladdin the hit Broadway musical. In fact, I can remember purposefully using the captions on my tv to learn song lyrics while watching the VHS tape of the animated movie. Alan Menken’s music has a knack for remaining timeless. Yet, the lyrics above are the words that often stay with me the most. Perhaps it’s because they are words that ring so true to the human experience; to me and to you.

How often do we all find ourselves wishing that people knew who we truly are on the inside? How often do you wonder, if only they knew my dreams and passions and thoughts, then maybe they’d understand me a little better?

There is something innately human about wanting to find your place in the world. And there is something innately human about wanting to feel known. We long to have others realize that our outside appearances aren’t always reflective of how we feel about ourselves on the inside. And we long for others to know that no matter how much money we do or do not have, the amount in our pockets (or in our Apple Wallet apps) doesn’t exactly match the potential of how much impact we’re going to have on this world.

It’s very much like Aladdin, wouldn’t you say? Or even Jasmine. The two, from very different worlds, found themselves out of place in the societies they’ve been born into, and their coincidental encounter leads them on a “magic carpet ride” to a new life together.

Disney Theatrical Group’s Aladdin the hit Broadway musical whisks the audience away to a fictional city called Agrabah, set somewhere in the Middle East. Like the Arabian Nights stories that were inspired by Asian and African cultures, the creative team of this stage production incorporates elements of both continents within its theatrical design. Fabrics, crystals, song styles, and actors from cultures all around the world blend beautifully together to tell this ancient tale. It’s not just the story of a poor boy turned sultan; but is also the story of one who dared to defy the circumstances they’ve been given, for the sake of finding something entirely new; a whole new world.

Leayne Dempsey, Dramaturg
ALAN MENKEN  The composer of the beautiful Broadway production, *Aladdin* the hit Broadway musical. Menken is a composer who is very familiar with the Walt Disney Company. He has composed music for Disney’s *The Little Mermaid*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. He has also composed music for *Sister Act* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Menken has received prestigious awards such as Golden Globes and Grammys. He has won the most Oscars than any other living person; and eight Academy Awards.

**DC Connection:** The Kennedy Center featured Menken’s musical hits in a concert in 2019. The concert featured the National Symphony orchestra, and Broadway stars like Megan Hilty, Norm Lewis, and Patina Miller. [Watch it here.](#)

HOWARD ASHMAN  The late Howard Ashman wrote the lyrics for the musical *Aladdin*. Ashman was a stage director, lyricist, and playwright. In addition to *Aladdin*, Ashman wrote the lyrics alongside Alan Menken for *The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*.

**DC Connection:** Howard was born in nearby city and state, Baltimore, Maryland.

CHAD BEGUELIN  A six-time Tony nominee who wrote the book for *Aladdin*. Beguelin is also known for his work on: *The Prom, The Wedding Singer*, and *Elf The Musical*. He was nominated for Best Original Book and Best Original Score for his work on *Aladdin*.

**DC Connection:** Wrote the book and lyrics for the musical *The Rhythm Club* which debuted at Signature Theatre in 2000.

TIM RICE  Sir Tim Rice is no stranger to writing lyrics for hit Broadway musicals. Tim Rice is a lyricist who is known for his work on Broadway musical hits such as: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Jesus Christ Superstar, Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Lion King*. After Howard Ashman passed, Tim Rice stepped in to work with Alan Menken on the completion of *Aladdin*. Tim Rice and Alan Menken created the very popular song, “A Whole New World,” together.


CASEY NICHOLAW  The director and choreographer of *Aladdin* the musical. Nicholaw has also directed and choreographed popular shows like: *The Drowsy Chaperone, The Book of Mormon, Mean Girls, The Prom*, and more. Casey Nicholaw is currently the director for the on screen adaptation of *Spamalot* the musical.

**DC Connection:** *Mean Girls* the musical, directed by Nicholaw, had its world premiere at The National Theatre in Washington, DC, in 2017.

**ADDITIONAL CREATIVE TEAM:**

- **BOB CROWLEY**  Scenic Design
- **GREGG BARNES**  Costume Design
- **NATASHA KATZ**  Lighting Design
- **KEN TRAVIS**  Sound Design
- **JEREMY CHERNICK**  Special Effects Design
How much inspiration for the design did you take from the film. Where did you make it your own?

Broadway’s “Aladdin” is inspired by the animated film which uses a lot of anachronistic design references. The design for the show is equally irreverent in a way.

In some cases, we were faithful to the film (especially with the principal characters), but I also looked outside the box and made a marriage of what an audience expects to see with my own vision.

Some of the things I looked at: Belly dancers, “Dancing with the Stars”, Roxy ushers, The Cotton Club (believe it or not), Hollywood Kitsch and MGM musicals, modern wedding dresses, tattoo art, Islamic architecture, jewelry (both ethnic and Cartier), carved wood blocks, and calligraphy.

All of these things and many more were then used to inspire the shapes and the palette of the finished design. The story of “Aladdin” is set in the city of Agrabah, which is a fictional place. “Aladdin” is a fable and by mix-mastering all of these images and inspirations, we hopefully ended up with a design vision that is unique to the particular telling of this wonderful story.
What’s the first thing you do when you find out you got a show? Sketch, source potential fabric, read into the story? What’s your process?
I always begin by listening to the other members of the creative team. We work as a collective and you never know where the best idea might come from. It has happened more than once that the solution for your finale costume might come from the fight director or your opening palette from the lighting designer. As things start to percolate, (and after extensive research), I begin the drawing and painting process. In the case of “Aladdin”, that might take six months, hundreds of sketches to be created, and then shoe drawings, hat drawings, beading samples, detail drawings, back views. It goes on and on. While that work is being accomplished and revised, there is a team seeking out textiles and embroideries and feathers and all of the elements you will eventually need to realize the design. After all of that is on paper, you get bids from the various shops that will create the clothes and off you go!

A lot of people don’t realize certain fabrics, colors, and styles are off limits for the sake of movement on stage and lighting. What do you have to avoid using for a show like this?
I always say that a costume must look like a butterfly and wear like an iron maiden. There are many tricks to making this happen and a lot of experimentation and learning from past mistakes help in the process. Collaboration is always the key. Careful meetings with the set and lighting designer help with color and for durability; no one knows better than the Wardrobe Supervisor—what to avoid to keep things looking like they were just delivered to the theater that day. We use a lot of silk in “Aladdin”, which some might think is excessive, but it lights the best and it paints beautifully so the color is always extraordinary. A careful blend of the fragile and the sturdy, the exotic and the ordinary can make magic when balanced in the right way.

**COSTUME TRIVIA**

**answers below**

1. How many custom made shoes are in the show? A. 50   B. 250   C. 161
2. How many fabrics and trims are used in the costume design? A. 165   B. 617   C. 2,039
3. How many costumes are in the show? A. 75   B. 337   C. 285
4. How many hours did it take costume designer Gregg Barnes to paint and sketch one design? A. 2 hours   B. 4 hours   C. 6 hours
5. How much does Jasmine’s wedding dress weigh? A. 5 lbs   B. 7 lbs   C. 12 lbs

**DID YOU KNOW?**

There are over 2 million Swarovsky crystals used in the costume design of the show!
After great success in writing another Disney favorite, The Little Mermaid, Alan Menken created another masterpiece; Aladdin. The animated Disney version of Aladdin is inspired by the original story of Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp. The story of Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp can be found in the Arabian Nights stories, also known as One Thousand and One Nights. The animated movie debuted 1992 with great success and recognition.

It wasn’t until 2009, that the Disney Theatrical Group set out to create Aladdin the Broadway hit musical. As the show was developed, some of the original ideas of Menken and the late Howard Ashman were put back into the production. One of the most obvious changes is that Aladdin’s furry friend and sidekick Abu is replaced by his “street friend” trio: Babkok, Omar, and Kassim. And although Abu is no longer present, Babkok, Omar, and Kassim bring the classic trio motif that we see reoccur in other works by Menken. (Hint: The three urchins in Little Shop of Horrors). The Genie also received a transformation for the Broadway production that was a part of Menken’s original idea. In the stage production, the Genie’s style and character is inspired by the culture of the famous African-American jazz singers like Cab Calloway. Despite these changes, there are many elements of the animated film that remain in the stage production.

One of those favorites that remain is the Academy Award winning song, “A Whole New World.” The moment is as magical on stage as it is in the animation.

Aladdin, the Broadway hit musical, had a successful opening on Broadway in 2014. Since then, Aladdin has opened a national Broadway touring cast, and international runs in places such as: Germany, Japan, and the West End.

Now, how could such a story become such the focus of intrigue for a company like Disney? What is it about the story of Aladdin that makes it so magical and exciting? It all has to do with where the story came from in the first place; the One Thousand and One Stories, or One Thousand and One Nights, or the 1001 Arabian Nights. These stories were written by many authors, and some of its stories come from as early as the 8th century.

Why so many titles? In English, we often refer to these stories as the Arabian Nights stories, but over time and throughout Middle Eastern, Asian, African, and European history, these stories have been referred to as One Thousand and One Stories or One Thousand and One Nights (1,001 Nights).

1,001 Nights uses the story of a king who is embittered by his prior wife’s infidelity. As a result of his embitterment, he vows to slay each of his wives after the first day. Sheherazade becomes the king’s wife, and in order to save her life, she plans to tell the king 1,001 stories to prolong her time alive. The stories that are then told, are the stories of those 1,001 nights. Originally, the king in this story was said to be of Indian or Chinese descent. In fact, even the story of Aladdin originated as a Chinese story prior to it becoming a Middle Eastern folktale. In the Chinese tale, Aladdin is merely a lazy boy who upsets his father, and not an orphaned poor boy. That’s the beauty of a folktale. As it gets passed on through generations, it takes on various versions and cultures depending on where it ends up. Webster’s Dictionary defines a folktale as, “a characteristically anonymous, timeless, and placeless tale circulated orally among a people.” These tales are thousands of years old! And the story of Aladdin is a part of that tradition.

The full title of Aladdin’s story is, Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp or Aladdin and the Magical Lamp. Although it wasn’t originally a part of the 1,001 Nights, the story of Aladdin was added once a 16th century manuscript of the story was found by French traveler Antoine Galland. As the story has been told and retold, the story of Aladdin has captured many hearts, inspired many film adaptations, and has graced many stages around the world.
Have you ever wanted to be a cartoon?! Voiceover artistry is another career in the performing arts that you could pursue! So cool!

“Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves” is a story found in the Arabian Nights and 1001 Nights stories. Scheherazade is also a character in the Arabian Nights story. She is actually the main narrator who has decided to tell the Sultan 1001 stories in order to save her life. You see, the Sultan vowed to slay each of his wives after the first night. These stories The story of Aladdin is one of those stories.

So what happens after Scheherazade tells the last story? You’ll have to read Arabian Nights and a 1001 Stories to find out!
A shah is the title of an Iranian ruler in the past. The last Iranian ruler was during the Iranian revolution. This word may sound familiar if you've been to a magic show. Historically, abracadabra has been used as a magical word used as an incantation on amulets.

A Middle Eastern dessert made of a thin pastry, nuts, and honey.

But master you in luck 'cause up your sleeves
You got a brand of magic never fails
You got some power in your corner now
Some heavy ammunition in your camp
You got some punch, pizzazz, yahoo and how
See all you gotta do is rub that lamp

And I'll say:
Mister Aladdin, sir
What will your pleasure be?
Let me take your order
Jot it down
You ain't never had a friend like me
No no no

Life is your restaurant
And I'm your maitre d'
C'mon whisper what it is you want
You ain't never had a friend like me
Yes sir

We pride ourselves on service
You're the boss
The king, the shah
Say what you wish
It's yours! True dish
How about a little more Baklava?

There it is
C'mon fellas, help me out
Have some of column "A"
Try all of column "B"
I'm in the mood to help you dude
You ain't never had a friend like me
Now watch me sell it

Wah-wah-wah! (Oh my!)
Wah-wah-wah! (Oh no!)
Wah-wah wah!

Can your friends do this?
Can your friends do that?
Can your friends pull this out their little hat?
Can your friends go, poof?
Well, looky here
Can your friends go, Abracadabra, let 'er rip
And then make the sucker disappear?
So doncha sit there slack jawed, buggy eyed
I’m here to answer all your midday prayers
You got me bona fide, certified
You got a genie for your chare d’affaires

I got a powerful urge to help you out
So what-cha wish? I really wanna know
You got a list that’s three miles long, no doubt
Well, all you gotta do is rub like so
C’mon, yes

Mister Aladdin, sir, have a wish or two or three
I’m on the job, you big nabob
You ain’t never had a friend like me

Can your friends do this?
No really, can they?
You’re welcome

Or maybe, our lucky contestant
Would like to wish for a talent of fame
Welcome to, Dancing With The Scimitars

Grab Aladdin by the hand
Swing him ‘round ‘till he can’t stand
Chicken in the baskets
Barrel in a tree
Never had a friend like me

I would like to bring the house down a little bit
Sing a few old classics
Couple of favourites of mine
I’ll get back to you in a second
Thank you!

Tale as old as time
True as it can be
Barely even friends
Beauty and the...

Look at this stuff
Isn’t it neat?
Wouldn’t you think my collections complete?
Wouldn’t you think I’m the genie who has everything?

Babadabop bop
Badop bop ba-dop
Babadabop bop
Badop bop bop
And you'll never hear the wolf cry
To the blue corn moon
For whether we are white or copper skinned

I want adventure in the great wide

Ever just the same
Ever a surprise

Though he's sitting here
Watch Al disappear
Right before your eyes

Yes!

Can your friends do this?
Can your friends do that?
Can your friends do tap?

Can your friends do this?
Can your friends do that?
Can your friends go, Abracadabra, let 'er rip

Gimme a doggy bag, I'm takin' it home

Mister Aladdin, sir, have a wish or two or three
I'm on the job, you big nabob
You ain't never had a friend, never had a friend
You ain't never had a friend, never had a friend
You ain't never had a friend like me
You ain't never had a friend like me
BEHIND THE SCENES

HEAR FROM THE CREATIVE TEAM!

Casey Nicholaw

Alan Menken

Gregg Barnes

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A STEAM (Science, Technology, Arts, Engineering, or Mathematics) CAREER?

Check out this cool video on the 3-D printed magic lamp used in the show!
“Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp | the Blue Fairy Book | Traditional | Lit2Go ETC.” Usf.edu, 2019, etc.usf.edu/lit2go/141/the-blue-fairy-book/3132/aladdin-and-the-wonderful-lamp/.


“Disney ALADDIN | the Hit Broadway Musical | Creative Team.” Disney ALADDIN | the Hit Broadway Musical, aladdinthemusical.com/creative-team/.


