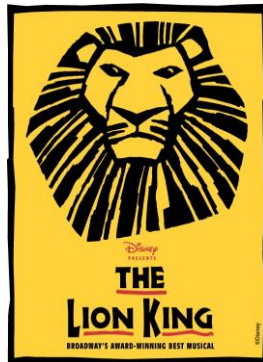


# Press Release



## A local star is born as first Singaporean joins the talented cast of Disney's landmark musical, **The Lion King** in Singapore

*Disney Theatrical Productions provides once-in-a-lifetime opportunity on the international stage to 11-year-old Nicholas Papayoanou*

**SINGAPORE (21 April, 2011)** – Disney Theatrical Productions in association with BASE Entertainment and Marina Bay Sands today revealed that 11-year-old Singaporean, Nicholas Papayoanou, will join the international cast of award-winning musical **THE LION KING** – making him the first Singaporean to be cast in a production of this calibre. Nicholas' debut will be at the Sands Theater on Saturday, 23 April at the 2pm matinee.

With only two younger roles in the entire production, Nicholas joins the team of 51 talented cast members to deliver a performance of a lifetime. The Singapore production is comprised of the cream of **THE LION KING** performers, including veterans of the acclaimed London and Paris productions and hails from 10 countries and 5 continents. The role of "Young Simba" will be alternated between Nicholas, **Lance Reblando** and **Warren David Saga**. Nicholas will be on stage with principal cast including **Jonathan Andrew Hume**, who plays "adult Simba", the lion prince born to be king and **Jean Luc Guizonne aka Jee-L** who plays "Mufasa", the great warrior and ruler of the Pridelands and father to Simba.

Born and raised in Singapore, Nicholas, a student at St. Joseph's Institution Junior (SJJ), received his first vocal training as a member of the St. Joseph's Institution Junior's choir and participated in the Singapore Youth Festival in 2008 and 2010. In 2009, Nicholas played the lead role of the Little Prince in Republic Polytechnic's musical adaptation of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. In 2010, Nicholas joined Kids Performing™ where he has further developed his vocal and performance experience as a member of the Kids Performing Choir. Nicholas said he is ecstatic about the biggest role of his acting career to date. "I'm excited about the role but I am also nervous! But every single person in **THE LION**



**KING** team has been very good to me and they are all making me feel very comfortable. I hope to do my best on the stage and make everyone proud," said Nicholas.

**THE LION KING** Singapore Resident Director Michael Eckel, said Nicholas instantly stood out during the auditions held at the Sands Theater in March. "Theater performance is an incredibly powerful form of expression. At the same time it's a very difficult platform as there are no second takes when a cast member executes an act in front of a live audience. Talent like Nicholas' is treasured immensely in our industry and we are lucky to have discovered him. You either have it or not. And just at 11 years of age, Nicholas certainly has it!"

Mr. George Tanasijevich, Interim Chief Executive Officer for Marina Bay Sands and Managing Director of Global Development for Las Vegas Sands Corp., said, "Marina Bay Sands created this beautifully designed Sands Theater with the aim of elevating the performing arts industry in Singapore. Disney's discovery of an exceptional talent like Nicholas' has not only helped us achieve this but has also put Singaporean talent on the global stage."

On stage, Director **Julie Taymor's** creative vision blends elements of African art and Broadway artisanship to depict anthropomorphic animal characters. The sardonic and deviously cunning "Scar" is played by **Patrick Brown**. **Puleng March** is the loyal lioness "Nala" and **Gugwana Dlamini** is the wise baboon shaman "Rafiki". **Lyll Ramsden** plays the prim and proper horn billed bird "Zazu". **Pierre van Heerden** is the carefree warthog "Pumbaa" and **Jamie McGregor** is the wisecracking meerkat "Timon".

The three evil hyenas are played by **Lavina Williams**, **Simon Gwala** and **Michael Bagg**. The role of "Young Nala" is alternated between **Christina De Leon**, **Myka Torre** and **Nikki Samonte**.

Milan Rokic, Vice President and Managing Director of BASE Entertainment Asia said, "This musical has been brought here to Singapore to build from the ground up and together with the artists from around the world and now within Singapore; we are thrilled to be able to provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Singaporeans such as Nicholas who are keen to pursue theater and the entertainment industry as a career". This production just keeps embracing Singapore and in return Singapore is enjoying what true, quality Broadway Theater is all about and I know that Nicholas will do everyone proud."

Singapore is the latest leading city to host **THE LION KING** after sell out performances in New York, London, Hamburg, a North American tour, Tokyo and Las Vegas. The musical is of the same Broadway-quality standards, spectacular music, dance, sets and costumes that have made it a worldwide phenomenon, however, it has also added some local elements to make this production unique to Singapore.

**THE LION KING** began as a 1994 animated feature-length film developed and produced by the Walt Disney Company. The story, a coming of age parable set among animals indigenous to its setting, the African savanna, tells the tale of Simba, the lion cub who rises to be the King of the jungle.



**THE LION KING**'s presenting sponsor is OCBC Bank, while MediaCorp TV 5 is the Official TV Station, Class 95 is the official radio station and Showbiz Asia is the official packaging partner; Singapore Airlines is the official airline, and it's proudly supported by the Singapore Tourism Board.

### TICKETING INFORMATION

Day/Times	PLATINUM	A Reserve	B Reserve	C Reserve	D Reserve	E Reserve
Tues – Fri: 8pm Sat - Sun: 2pm & 8pm	\$240	\$185	\$165	\$125	\$85	\$65

- *Booking Fee of SGD\$3 applies per ticket*

**Group Rates:**

Groups of 20+ 8% discount  
Groups of 100+ 10% discount  
Groups of 500+ 15% discount

Tickets are available at any Marina Bay Sands Box Offices, by calling +65 66 88 88 26, via the Internet at [www.marinabaysands.com/TheLionKing](http://www.marinabaysands.com/TheLionKing) or at any SISTIC sales channel.

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### **ABOUT THE LION KING**

As it begins its 14<sup>th</sup> year **THE LION KING** remains ascendant, continuing to reign as a cultural phenomenon and one of the most popular stage musicals in the world. Since its 1997 Broadway premiere, 17 global productions have been seen by more than 54 million people, and grossed over \$4.2 billion to date. Produced by Disney Theatrical Productions (under the direction of Thomas Schumacher), **THE LION KING** is the eighth longest-running musical in Broadway history and one of only five productions in theatre history to play for ten years or more, both on Broadway and in the West End. Translated into five different languages (Japanese, German, Korean, French, Dutch), the show has been performed in 13 different countries on five continents. **THE LION KING** can currently be seen on Broadway (its flagship production), on stages across North America, and in Las Vegas, London's West End, Hamburg and Tokyo.

### **ABOUT MARINA BAY SANDS**

Marina Bay Sands is the leading business, leisure and entertainment destination in Asia. It features large and flexible convention and exhibition facilities, 2,560 hotel rooms and suites, the rooftop Sands SkyPark, the best shopping mall in Asia, world-class celebrity chef restaurants, a casino, Paiza Club for premium players and an outdoor event plaza. Its two theaters showcase a range of leading entertainment acts and will include our resident performance, "**THE LION KING**". Completing the line-up of attractions is the ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands which plays host to permanent and marquee exhibitions. For more information, please visit [www.marinabaysands.com](http://www.marinabaysands.com).

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### **ABOUT BASE ENTERTAINMENT**

BASE Entertainment specializes in the development, production, programming and management of live entertainment properties and theatre operations. BASE develops, produces and manages intellectual properties which reach audiences through various platforms, including live, digital, broadcast and licensing. BASE Entertainment founders include Brian Becker and Scott Zeiger, who have 45 years combined experience in the live entertainment industry. The company has offices in Singapore, New York, Las Vegas, and Houston.

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