Madagascar the Musical

Madagascar the Musical is based on the smash Dreamworks animated motion picture Madagascar, from the book by Kevin Del Aguila. The original music and lyrics are by George Noriega and Joel Someillan. The musical follows all your favourite friends as they make an unexpected journey to the madcap world of King Julien’s Madagascar.

Alex the Lion, and Melman the Giraffe, along with Gloria the Hippo have spent their whole lives in captivity, but when their friend Marty the Zebra’s curiosity gets the better of him and he does a bunk, they are forced to break out too in order to persuade him to return to their cushy home at Central Park Zoo. They embark on an adventure that could see Alex revert to his wilder instincts.

Alex the Lion is played by X-Factor winner Matt Terry

Scenery:

When we first enter the theatre we can see a rectangular opening which is the entrance to Central Park Zoo. The façade is of brownish red stone with modernistic designs on its face. Behind this there are two smaller openings of the same design, decreasing in size towards the back of the stage. These allow the cast to wheel on or remove props from the stage, and also represent the enclosures of the various zoo animals. On the right of the entrance one of the stones is pushed outwards and become the admissions booth for the zoo. Beneath this is a sign saying, “Wild Animals Inside. Caution”. When the zoo is open to visitors a gold coloured, semi-circular sign drops down from the theatre roof bearing the words “Central Park Zoo” in large letters

The floor of the stage is of different textured squares of a brown colour, rather like wood.

From the left and right of the stage a backdrop of skyscrapers with lighted windows slides across for the night time scenes.

A structure resembling red brick is wheeled on by the cast. It is hinged in the middle and opens up to reveal two long doors with vertical bars, this is Marty’s enclosure where he is visible to visitors. Half way down the structure is another set of hinges which when unfolded is a curved wall where Marty sits when resting. This prop is very versatile as it can be opened on the middle hinge to make a bigger 4 door enclosure and the shorter hinged sides can be pivoted to make different shaped cages.

The penguin’s enclosure is shaped like a white icy rock face and is wheeled on when required.

The Subway has a slatted wooden bench and a square neon sign between two lighted beacons that reads, “Subway. Grand Central. 42nd Street Station” with numbers at the bottom of the sign.

Aboard a ship we hear a ships horn, and flares of light like those of a lighthouse are projected across the stage. A wooden ship’s wheel is pushed on. One by one square and rectangular boxes are illuminated which are the wooden crates containing the animals.

King Julien’s Island is formed by two structures like sand banks sliding on from the left and right at the back of the stage. When joined in the centre the bank is covered in ferns and small shrubs. Seaweed dangles from the stage roof. In front of this beachy bank two light coloured rocky outcrops are pushed from either side of the stage. It has holes and crevices that the sea has formed and it is draped in seaweed and plants. In another part of the island, that Marty describes as “Paradise” are tall thick trunked trees with blossoms whose base is covered in exotic flowers and shrubs. King’s Julien’s house is a large circular grass hut, thatched with white fronds and decorated atop with colourful exotic flowers. The walls are of shiny green seaweed attached to wooden poles.

In contrast the Foosa’s side of the island is dark and menacing with thunder and lightning and twirling smoke. They prefer the rocky parts and crawl in and out of the crevices.

In the second act when Alex is dreaming a red ruched curtain covers the back of the stage.

Other props include three serving trollies draped in white cloths with round silver serving salvers on top. When the lids are lifted we see large red rib eye steaks. The bone part of the rib eye moves like a mouth and talks to Alex when he dreams.

There is a metal tread mill that Marty uses for exercise in his enclosure.

Dry ice is used to create atmosphere. A large wooden crate is used by Alex the Lion when he performs for the zoo’s visitors.

Lighting is cleverly used throughout the show, the background is sometimes lit in rainbow swirling colours, and changes in the time of day are represented with dark blue lighting for night time, or orange lighting to suggest sunsets.

Characters and costumes

The principal characters of Marty, Alex, Gloria and Melman, and also King Julien and the Foosa, are played by actors wearing all-in-one animal costumes with only their painted faces revealed. The monkeys, penguins and lemurs are cartoon-like puppets, about 2 feet tall, who are manipulated and voiced by actors onstage.

Marty is a quick-witted and free-spirited zebra who is bored and dejected at the zoo. He’s also an optimistic dreamer who is the catalyst for the adventure he and his friends have. His costume is white with black stripes, black hooves cover his hands and feet. His most prominent feature is his high black and white mohawk which fans out proudly down the centre of the back of his head. His two tall ears are perked up either side on the top of his head.

Marty is played by Antoine Murray-Straughan.

Although Alex the lion is physically imposing, he is content and has a heart of gold. He enjoys being the star attraction at the zoo and is a good friend until his hunger starts to get the better of him. His tan coloured costume is padded to show of bulging biceps, a large, proud chest and muscular legs. Fur paws cover his hands and feet. A glorious mane surrounds his face.

Alex is played by Matt Terry.

Gloria is a smart, resourceful and sassy hippo. She is sweet when she wants to be and tough when she needs to be, the level headed on of the group she is gargantuan yet graceful, equal parts ballerina and bouncer. Her pale grey costume is heavily padded, particularly around the middle in the centre of which is her belly button. On either side of her head two fat cheeks bulge and on the top of her head two dainty little ears perch.

Gloria is played by Timmika Ramsay.

Melman is a skittish, hypochondriac giraffe who is anxious and cautious. His bespectacled face peeks out from the start of his long brown-spotted neck. The actor has a stick to hold the head up like a puppet, he can use this to move the head around and open and close his mouth. Melman has prominent teeth, dark eyebrows and protruding ears.

Melman is played by Jamie Lee Morgan.

King Julien is the hyperactive and egotistical king of the lemurs, with a wacky accent and a penchant for busting some seriously booty-shaking dance moves, he loves to indulge and be in charge. The actor playing King Julien moves around on his knees to give the appearance of short legs with clawed feet. His costume is grey fur and he wears a floral cape which hides the actor’s legs. He has a thick bushy tail as tall as he is which stands up and bounces about behind him. He wears a headdress made from a coconut shell and long leaves. He carries a stick.

King Julien is played by Jo Parsons.

There are a few human characters in the show:

Zoo-keepers who wear brown dungarees over beige shirts with beige caps on their heads and beige convers high-tops on their feet.

A policeman in a black uniform complete with a belt which holds handcuffs, radio and gun.

Candy Hammernose, a TV news reporter in a pink skirt suit, wearing glasses and a curly brown wig.

An old lady with a hunched back, a scarf over her head, a heavy coat, and a floral skirt. She carries a black leather handbag and a walking stick.

The animal control officer wears a blue t-shirt with ’animal’control’ emblazoned on the back, Bermuda shorts and a cap.

The ship’s captain wears a typical Navy captain’s uniform, navy double breasted jacket with brass buttons over a white turtle-neck and cap with gold brocade.

The waitresses wear black dresses with white collars and cuffs, whit aprons and white hair-bands over curly ginger wigs.

The actors manipulating the puppets mostly wear camouflage khaki clothing but when the penguins are in the subway they wear dark overcoats, trilby hats and sunglasses.

The human characters and puppeteers are played by Shane McDaid, Laura Johnson, Jessica Niles, Victoria Boden, Matthew Pennington, Darren John and Brandon Gale.