

Disney – The Hunchback of Notre Dame Stage Production, originally called *Der Glockner von Notre Dame*.

This set of questions/answers refer to the stage production of The Hunchback of Notre Dame that ran for several years in Berlin, Germany and was called *Der Glockner von Notre Dame*. Fans of the musical remain hopeful that the show will surface again in English and play on Broadway or elsewhere.

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Stage Version of Hunchback

Question:

I was wondering how much darker is the stage version of "Hunchback" than the Disney movie (which was pretty dark to say the least!). Did Alan write any further Medieval and Gypsy music? I often think when listening to the score how much it reminds me of Mozart's or Faure's Requiems with the liturgical chanting. My piano and organ teacher is actually the organist at St Paul's, Knightsbridge, here in England - where I believe, you recorded some of the score. Please let me know more.

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

The stage version is a bit darker than the Disney movie, particularly the ending, which is closer to the ending of the original novel. As far as I know, Alan hasn't written any other medieval or gypsy music (though he did of course write some things for the show that were cut ultimately, which is what often happens in the development of musicals); with his usual stylistic skill, he adopted this particular "palette" (as he would put it) for the score of this particular work. I agree with you about the feel of some of the score recalling the Mozart and Faures Requiems, which happen to be two of my favorite pieces of music. Other classical influences were Orff's "Carmina Burana" and, conceptually if not musically, the end of the first act of Puccini's "Tosca" for the structure of "Hellfire". Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

James Lapine

Question:

What influenced the choice of James Lapine as director for Hunchback and did his work on Into The Woods and Sunday In The Park inform his work? Ciao

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

The choice of James Lapine as director for the stage version of HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME was based on many factors. James is a good friend of Alan Menken's and they had been wanting to work together for several years. The intelligence, visual style, and lack of sentimentality James has brought to other musicals he has directed, such as SUNDAY IN THE PARK and FALSETTOS, made the rest of the team feel he had strengths to bring to the project. Also, the fact that James is a writer as well, and that we knew the book would need extensive reconceiving, figured into the choice.

Der Glockner von Notre Dame

Question:

Hi Stephen, I was just reading a description of the German production of Hunchback on Peter Jenkins' INCREDIBLE website, and I was suddenly very angry that I never got to see the show in that theatre.

I was wondering what your thoughts were on the German production. Was the experience as a whole an enjoyable one? Were you proud and satisfied with the final production? Does it bother you that people in your country can't see the work you've done (which, judging by the OUT OF THIS WORLD cast album and the English lyrics on Pete's site, is just as impressive and accomplished as the rest of your work is!)? I've read snippets of your thoughts on specific issues regarding this show in your answers to other's questions, but I wanted to know your all around feelings about this project. (Also, are any more collaborations with Alan a possibility?) Caleb

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Dear Caleb: I did have a very good time. First of all, I always enjoy my collaborations with Alan Menken -- we just find we work very easily together. I also enjoyed and found fascinating my work with the excellent German translator, Michael Kunze, and I will be using our process for my upcoming Hans Christian Andersen project and its translation into Danish. And lastly, I very much enjoyed Berlin, which I found a lively and surprisingly friendly city. I was proud of the final production, although of course one always has reservations about certain things. I wouldn't necessarily say I felt it was a definitive production of the show, but there was much about it that was thrilling and beautiful, and for the most part, I felt it was very strong musically. Drew Sarich as Quasimodo was particularly good.

[question - Does it bother you that people in your country can't see the work you've done?]

Disney still has plans, albeit nowhere near their "front-burner", to do further productions of the show. And now that Disney has an alliance with Music Theatre International, I think an English version that can be produced in regional theatres, colleges, etc. will eventually be forthcoming. I would indeed be disappointed if the show were never done again, as it has always been one of my favorites musically.

[question - Also, are any more collaborations with Alan a possibility?]

I just spoke with Alan about this a couple of days ago. We continue actively to look for another project we can do together, as we both enjoy our collaboration so much. It is just a matter of finding the right project. Thanks for your interest and enthusiasm for HUNCHBACK OF N.D. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Collaboration/Orchestration/Translation, etc.

Question:

Alan and yourself have the German version of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" that played in Berlin. Did you translate and write the lyrics in German yourself? How does writing for a different language reflect the rhyme patterns you desire to use?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

The translation was done by the superb German lyricist Michael Kunze. I learned a little German, just to know the pronunciation and flow of the language, but of course I was not nearly adept enough to undertake the actual translation myself. Our process was that Herr Kunze would send his translations to me as a three-columned page: the first column was my original English lyric, the second was his translation in German, and the third was a literal translation of the German back into English. In this way I could check the German rhyme scheme and scansion, etc., and also evaluate how the original phrases had been altered. Herr Kunze is so good that not only did I have very few notes for him, I thought on occasion his German lyrics were superior to my original English ones! This process proved a perfect way to work, and one that I intend to employ on my upcoming Hans Christian Andersen project

which will be translated by Adam Price into Danish. In this instance, because I know in advance that my lyrics are going to be translated, I am taking into account how certain phrases, particularly the song titles, will be rendered in Danish as I write the music. Other than that, however, I am not trying to alter rhyme schemes or patterns, but am assuming that the talented Hr. Price will manage to accommodate them as Michael Kunze did.

Question:

Do you work with Alan at close quarters or was it a "fax and e-mail" process?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Alan and I live close to one another, so we always begin and end our songwriting process in the same room, usually his studio. Of course we will work separately at times during the songwriting process, particularly when I am setting lyrics to his music, but we check in with each other constantly, and as I say, spend a lot of time together.

Der Glocnker scenes and questions

Question:

Dear Stephen, firstly I'd like to say just how much I adore the music to this creative masterpiece, as a little kid I loved it for the fun, darkness and story, I loved singing the songs, as a teenager, I'm completely blown away at the depth the music and lyrics hold and just how truly beautiful they both really are. Thank you and Alan Menken so much! To the point, I was just curious, you said in one post that you had reservations about the final production, I was just curious to know what those were, If I'm not being out of place?

Then (I know this is asked hundreds of times but just in case there's been a change...!?!?!?) Are there any plans to bring Glockner to UK/Broadway!? Because I definitely think it holds one of the best!

Finally, how was the whole ending of the Topsy Turvy scene set, where they pelt Quasimodo? I was wondering how that was set? Thank you so much for your time. Sophie UK

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

There were two mailings about HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME that came in at the same time, so with apologies to Sophie and James, I am taking the liberty of combining them to answer.

I hear from the busy folks at Disney Theatricals from time to time about possibilities for an English-language stage version of HUNCHBACK ... I know it is still on their radar and they are trying to figure out how to realize it. The problem for Disney of course is that it is not as kid-friendly or light-hearted a project as their other big Broadway and West End shows, so that producing it under the Disney "label" is a bit misleading to their audience (after all, it's not really a show to which you should bring a six-year old.)

That being said, I know that Tom Schumacher, the head of Disney Theatricals, has always been a big fan of the piece, and he and his staff are looking for a way to move the project forward. Most probably will be some sort of regional production in the States, and then we'll all see what kind of future it might have. I think I am safe in saying that a big Broadway or West End production is unlikely, for the above reasons.

As to the production of DER GLOCKNER in Berlin, I basically liked it very much. Although beautiful to look at, I did feel it was a bit over-produced, but that might have been necessary for a theatre that size. There were story aspects we hadn't quite solved too, particularly how the Gargoyles function on stage and in a more "adult" context. Both of these are things we have discussed, and if there is another production, I'm sure it will be quite different in respect to both of those points. I guess the thing I'm most proud of (to answer James' question) in the stage adaptation is Quasimodo's second act aria "Made of Stone" ("Wie aus Stein" in German), which I think is one of the best songs Alan and I have come up with for the project. And the scene in which Esmeralda sang "God Help the Outcasts", with all its candles and projected re-creation of Notre Dame, I thought was absolutely stunning.

In answer to Sophie's question about "Topsy Turvy" -- it was considerably cut down for the stage production, and by the time of Quasimodo's pelting was long since over. If memory serves, I believe the musical accompaniment for the pelting was one of the Latin choruses Alan and I use throughout the piece, but to be honest, I don't entirely remember.

As to an anniversary DVD of the animated feature, I don't know of any plans for one, but that doesn't mean it isn't in the works. I seldom know about re-releases of that sort.

Let me close by saying that HUNCHBACK remains a piece that Alan and I are very proud of. (I have always felt it is Alan's best score.) I appreciate the enthusiasm and support of those like Sophie and James who have written to me about it. I know Disney would like to find a way to move it forward on stage, and I hope they do. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

More lyrics

Question not available

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

...Thank you for your message. I always wondered if anyone caught how much of "Hellfire" was taken from Victor Hugo, and particularly "He made the devil so much stronger than a man." It's very gratifying to know someone with some literary knowledge is listening.

In answer to your questions: The opening is a Latin translation of a fragment of the lyrics to "Someday", basically the section that goes: "God speed this bright millenium, let it come someday." The Latin is: "Olim, olim deus accelere hoc saeculum splendidum, accelere fiat venire olim."

Like all the main characters in HUNCHBACK, Frolo is being explored in greater depth for the stage version, since a theatrical show is longer than a traditional animated feature. He is indeed part of the song "Esmeralda" that ends the first act, as well as having additional material in a song called "Sanctuary" that is an expansion of the intro to "Out There." There are several new songs for Esmeralda, Phoebus, and of course Quasimodo as well. We go into rehearsal March 1st. Wish us luck, and thanks once again for writing. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Un-used Songs - Hunchback

Questions

Dear Stephen: I was wondering if there have been any un-used songs in anything you have been involved with that you wish were used. For example "Top of the World" or "Someday" from Hunchback or "If I Never Knew You" from Pocahontas (assuming that these were written to be used in the featured animations). I think they are all absolutely fabulous songs and it's a shame they weren't used in the

features themselves. I also wanted to ask you if the song "Ein Bisschen Freude" was a brand-new song, or a song translated from when you worked on the featured animation. It's a neat little song and would have definitely been fitting in the animation! But out of everything, is there one particular song that you just wish would have been used? Thanks and best wishes for the millenium! –Kennan

And another Question:

Was "Top of the World" going to be in HoND? I know that "Someday", "In A Place of Miracles", and "As Long As There's A Moon" were. But was "Top Of The World?" - Kelly

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

This is a response to Kennan and Kelly, both of whom asked about the song "Top of the World" in HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME. While there were songs written for the animated feature of HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME that didn't make it into the film, none other than "Someday" is being used in the stage version. The songs "Top of the World" and "Rest and Recreation" (translated into the German as "Ein Bischen Freude") were both specifically written for the stage version, along with several others. They were translated into German to be part of the show in Berlin, and if there is an English-language stage production, they would most likely be part of that production as well. In all, about half the score of the stage version consists of new songs, as might be expected in expanding from an animated feature to a full-length stage production.

Hunchback (Stage) Court of Miracles

Question:

[Question about cutting of the song "Court of Miracles" from Der Gloeckner Von Notre Dame, the stage version of Hunchback of Notre Dame which was playing in Germany.]

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

It was in the show for a long time. We took it out during rehearsals in New York after seeing it in a couple of run-throughs. It just didn't seem to fit stylistically with what the show had become, and James Lapine was most definitely not a fan of it. So out it went, to be replaced ultimately by the Phoebus/Quasimodo duet, "Out of Love" and the Gypsy Dance, both of which seem more appropriate to me for the show. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Working With Translator on Hunchback/Song Titles

Question:

I am SO interested in the recent stage production of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." When I first saw the movie, I remember thinking "Some of the sets would be tricky, but those songs would work so well on stage!" I am just posting in the interest of finding out the procedure of writing. Obviously, the new songs were all written in English first, but how were the translations done? I've read a few translations, and they're quite different to their corresponding English movie counterparts.

Also, what are the English titles of the new songs? I've heard something like "Dance on a Rope" and "Made of Stone" or something. Oh, and the new song called "Esmeralda" needs no translation, I suppose! ;) – Pete J.

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

I had a great time working with the German translator, an incredibly talented man named Michael Kunze. The way we worked was that after I finished a song in English, he would translate it into German, and also do a literal translation of what he had done back into English, so I could see what he had

changed in order that the words in German would fit the music. By comparing the three columns, I could evaluate what I thought of the translation and ask for alterations where I felt they were needed. But Michael is so talented that usually I was very happy without any changes, and some of the things he did I thought were actually improvements on my original lyrics. The titles of the new songs, as the show appears in Berlin, are: "Balancing Act" (a song for Clopin, Esmeralda and the Gypsies); "Rest and Recreation" (introducing Phoebus); "Top of the World" (a song for Esmeralda to Quasimodo, with the Gargoyles also giving Quasimodo contrapuntal advice); "Esmeralda" (end of act one); "City Unde Siege" (opening of act two); "Out of Love" (a song for Phoebus to Quasimodo, which becomes a duet between them as they search for Esmeralda); and "Made of Stone" (a song Quasimodo sings to the Gargoyles). In addition, most of the songs originally in the movie had new work done on them, either musically or lyrically or both. I don't know what the future plans are for the show or what the extent of my future involvement will be, but I thought it turned out well in Berlin, and it was a particularly fascinating experience for me working with Michael Kunze. Thanks for your interest. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Someday

Question missing

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

The song "Someday" was originally written for the Disney animated feature THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME as a possible replacement for the song "God Help the Outcasts". Ultimately, we went with the other song instead, but "Someday" was then used over the end credits.

In the stage version, "Someday" has its own place in the story. In the film, the song(s) took place upon the character Esmeralda's first entrance into Notre Dame cathedral. She has never been in a church before, and is awed by the serenity and splendor of the place. But she brings with her a bitter and acute awareness of the injustice of her situation and that of her people and the less fortunate of society in general. So the song is meant to be a sort of prayer for justice and fairness, for society to change its ways.

One of the things that appealed to me about the moment was that THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME is set in 1482, yet the issues Esmeralda sings about are not any better today and in many ways are worse. Therefore the title "Someday" is both hopeful and ironic, particularly the ending line "someday soon", since six hundred plus years later that "someday" is as far away as ever. Other than trying to stay true to the tone and spirit of Victor Hugo's novel, I did not draw on any other sources for inspiration.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

See also the Hunchback of Notre Dame section of this Forum for the movie version.

For the German cast album, a show review of Der Gloeckner Von Notre Dame, and more information see <http://www.musicalschwartz.com/the-hunchback-stage.htm>

Victor Hugo novel: The Hunchback of Notre Dame