

Geppetto/My Son Pinocchio

Geppetto original aired on The Wonderful World of Disney in May, 2000. It was Stephen Schwartz's first experience in writing a made-for-television musical, and included eight original songs by Schwartz. There is a DVD of that version.

Later, bookwriter David Stern worked with Stephen Schwartz to create a stage play, called *Geppetto and Son*. This show was tested and performed in several locations. It was recently renamed *My Son Pinocchio* and it is available for licensing from Music Theatre International.

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Post Production on Geppetto for TV

Question:

On 1/27/2000 you said you were working on post-production for GEPETTO. Pardon my ignorance, but I hardly know what pre/during/post involves, besides you sitting at your piano writing and probably having lots of meetings. While it's fresh in your mind, could you give us a hint about what you do during post-production?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

"Post-production" in this instance, in my case, means finishing the score. In other words, the film is all shot and edited, and all the songs have been recorded (actually, they were all recorded, for obvious reasons, before the film was shot.) Now comes the work of adding the special effects, improving the sound on dialogue lines and adding background dialogue (known as ADR), doing the color-correcting, etc. For me, it means: writing the music that leads into and out of the songs and the music under the dialogue sections in the middle of songs; supervising the rest of the underscoring, which will be written by a very talented orchestrator, Martin Erskine; overseeing the recording sessions and music mixing sessions; and completing the soundtrack album. All lots of fun, but done AFTER the actual shooting of the film, hence the term POST-production. Thanks for your interest. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Geppetto Q and A

Question:

Do you recall how that project came about?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

GEPETTO was originally David (Stern)'s idea. He began thinking about wanting to write something about fatherhood and what it really means to be a father, after the death of his own father. He came to me with the idea, and since I'm always interested in both that theme and the idea of looking at familiar stories from another point of view (as in WICKED and CHILDREN OF EDEN), it seemed a natural for me.

Question:

Do you remember which songs David Cullen orchestrated?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

I don't actually remember which songs David Cullen had a hand in orchestrating. The orchestrations were principally done by Martin Erskine, and Martin oversaw the work of the other contributors, which in addition to David included other excellent orchestrators such as Danny Troob and Larry Hochman.

Question:

Did you write any songs that didn't make it into the score?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

As with almost all musicals, there were songs that didn't make it into the final score. One, called "Were You Born Yesterday", was sung to Geppetto in a town run by children, and David and I may restore that scene to our stage version. A few others (entitled "Dad", "Vanilla Ice Cream and the Color Blue" and "When You Wish") were replaced by "And Son", "Satisfaction Guaranteed" and "Just Because It's Magic" respectively, all better songs than my first tries.

Thanks again for taking the time to write, sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

TV work different from Movies? Score & Songs; Feedback Cycle

Question:

Dear Stephen: I hope you are celebrating completion of Geppetto. I wonder if working on a production for TV is different from working on a movie. Would you ever do a full score again? How many songs did you end up writing? Do you ever have to adjust the song for the singers?

I'm curious about the feedback cycle. At what stages do the producers, director, actors, orchestrator, and test audiences give you feedback? Any stories about how it was or wasn't helpful? I hope you get a vacation. - Carol

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Dear Carol: Thanks. I am going on vacation TODAY!!! (Can you tell I'm looking forward to it?) The main difference I found in writing for television was mostly that there was less time to do everything than in the movies or theatre. It was sort of like doing one-show-a-week summer stock. That being said, I had a great time, so much so that I would definitely do a full score again if the right project or opportunity presented itself. I wrote eight songs for GEPETTO, plus about half the underscoring (the rest of the underscoring was written by my brilliant orchestrator Martin Erskine.)

I didn't make too many adjustments in the songs for the cast members, other than setting keys that would work for them. I did replace one song called "Dad" with a new one called "And Son" once I knew that Drew Carey was playing Geppetto, because I wanted to give Drew a funnier and more up song in that spot. In any event, the new song was vastly superior. In the case of GEPETTO, there has been no audience or preview feedback, since the show doesn't get finished till right before it's aired, or at any rate, when it's too late to change anything.

There was feedback all along the way from the producers, director, and Disney executives, but I have to say that in this instance they left me pretty much alone in terms of the music and lyrics. I made a couple of minor lyric adjustments, again definitely for the better, at the suggestion of one or another of my collaborators, but as I said, I have essentially been given autonomy over the music on this one, so if you don't like it, you know who to blame. Hope you enjoy the show when you see it; thanks for your interest. Sincerely, Stephen

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Disney's My Son Pinocchio (Formerly Geppetto and Son) is licensed by Music Theatre International
www.MTISHOWS.com

<http://www.musicalschwartz.com/disneys-my-son-pinocchio.htm>

For more background information and photos.