

THE BIG
NEW SHOW

PHOTOS: DEEN VAN MEER, DALIA DAWOOD, LOGO: DISNEY



THEATRE

Aladdin

The story of *Aladdin* is familiar (writes Dalia Dawood, below) – a good-hearted ‘street rat’ meets a Genie who grants him the wish of becoming a prince to woo the princess.

I’ve watched the film more times than I can remember, and it’s always a delight. How can a stage show reproduce that? It can’t. So it simply tops it. Forget a whole new world; this

is a whole new magical universe where the exotic allure of Arabia bursts into life in a crash of colour and splendour.

Every moment leaves you breathless: from the energetic choreography and top-class performances to the detail in each dazzling costume (there are 337 costumes with 712 styles of beads!). It’s an impressive cast, including former Sugababe Jade Ewen, who plays Jasmine, Dean John-Wilson as Aladdin, and American actor Trevor Dion Nicholas as Genie (see right).

All of this is set against a jaw-dropping background – the stage production is among the most impressive I’ve seen. The Cave of Wonders is there, before your eyes, as a glistening golden grotto. But even more captivating is its inhabitant: namely, one of the highlights of the show – Genie. He sparkles in every

way and his performance of the song *Friend Like Me* is a frenzy of fun.

Another showstopper is the flying carpet scene. Aladdin and Jasmine float in the air, lit against a starry night sky... you could actually hear it take the audience’s breath away.

You’ll walk away in the full belief that magic really exists. A thrilling spectacle, it’ll leave you on a high even a magic carpet couldn’t reach.

★★★★★

Aladdin is now playing at the Prince Edward Theatre, London. Visit aladdinthemusical.co.uk



GENIE-US!

The Gazette catches up with Trevor Dion Nicholas, who stars as the Genie in *Aladdin*

Q How does it feel to be starring in the show?

I’m really excited to get to put my own stamp on the role and to make it my own. It’s not just a transfer of exactly what we were doing on Broadway [Trevor also played the role in New York], but something unique and fun that the London audience can identify with.

Q Do you have a favourite moment in the show?

I love my entrance, which feels incredible, the adrenalin rush that comes from that moment! The first time the lamp gets rubbed and you feel the audience’s anticipation – we all share the joy in this moment.

Q If you could have one wish granted by a genie, what would it be?

I want to see my children succeed. They are six and eight and I want to see them have as much joy and success in their lives as I’ve been granted. I hope they will work hard and achieve whatever dreams they have as they grow up.

Q Which was your favourite Disney film when you were growing up?

I have a double answer! My favourite Disney musical film is *Aladdin*. I watched it on repeat when I was young and I learnt the lyrics to every song and sang them over and over again. My other favourite is *The Nightmare Before Christmas*.

Q Finally, which five Waitrose items would we find in your dressing room fridge?

Some Diet Coke, coconut water, bananas, Waitrose peanut butter and protein bars!



The RA Summer Exhibition 2016

This year’s Royal Academy Summer Exhibition features works by well-known names like Tracey Emin alongside paintings, drawings, sculptures and prints by complete unknowns, and the whole shebang has been co-ordinated by sculptor Richard Wilson RA (sadly not the *One Foot In The Grave* actor).

While last year’s show was a riot of hot pink painted walls, this year’s feels

lower-key. There are some gems on display, but you may want to give Jake and Dinos Chapman’s creepy sculpture *The New Arrival* a swerve. Most artworks are for sale ranging from £200 upwards.

The exhibition runs until 21 August and Partners get in free with their Partner Discount Card. Tickets normally cost £12 (under 16s free). royalacademy.org.uk
Jeremy Mark



PHOTO: STEPHEN WHITE