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Little Mermaid in Philippines Will Be Divided By Eastern and Western Worlds

By Adam Hetrick
26 May 2011



Ann Go

The Manila production of Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, which will flip its fins this fall, will take a new approach to the musical, incorporating Eastern and Western styles of design and puppetry to delineate its unique worlds.

Bobby Garcia, who has staged *Next to Normal*, *Xanadu* and *Avenue Q* for Atlantis Productions, will direct *The Little Mermaid* alongside Chari Arespacochaga. The production will run Nov. 18-Dec. 11 at the Meralco Theatre.

The Manila engagement is among the first stagings of the musical since its Broadway run in 2008. *The Little Mermaid* will make its U.S. regional debut in June at the Tuacahn Amphitheatre and Center for the Arts in Utah. A U.S. national tour had been announced, but never surfaced. Music Theatre International licenses the property, which has also been produced internationally in Tel Aviv and Denmark.

Garcia and Arespacochaga have conceived a production in which the undersea kingdom will be designed using traditional Asian elements and the above-water world will be Western in theme. *The Little Mermaid* will incorporate puppetry ranging from Wayang shadow play, bunraku, nang kaloung and Western hand puppetry. Liz and Benny Batoctoy and Sam Fuentes will design and create the puppetry for the production.

The Little Mermaid in Manila will feature Ann Go and Erik Santos, as Ariel and Prince Eric, respectively. Additional casting will be announced shortly.

The production will also have choreography by Cecile Martinez, set design by Lex Marcos, costume design by Erik Pineda and lighting design by Jay Aranda.

The Little Mermaid features songs penned by Alan Menken and the late Howard Ashman for the Disney film ("Part of Your World," "Under the Sea," "Kiss the Girl," among others) as well as ten new tunes by Menken and Glenn Slater. Doug Wright (*I Am My Own Wife*, *Grey Gardens*) wrote the book.

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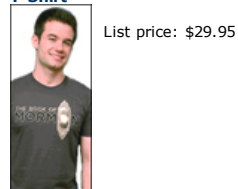
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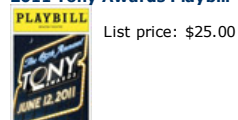
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