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ENTERTAINMENT



Reworking a Classic Tale

Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella* gets an L.A. upgrade, thanks to a modern script and the real-life magic of award-winning costume designer William Ivey Long

By Lydia Siripakorn

Cinderella's Hollywood takeover has already begun, with Disney's new film version—directed by **Kenneth Branagh** and starring **Lily James**, **Richard Madden** and Oscar-winner **Cate Blanchett**—in theaters now. By now everyone knows the weathered rags-to-riches story of the girl forced into a life of servitude by her evil stepmother until a charming prince comes to her rescue. Yawn. Enter the Tony Award-winning Broadway production of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*, hitting DTLA's Ahmanson Theatre this month. The dated fairytale gets a modern upgrade with characters and plot twists while still keeping the classic story elements—the glass slipper, the pumpkin and the grandest of balls.

"As you'll see, it's all about the script," says the production's six-time Tony-winning costume designer **William Ivey Long**. "What makes this different from

the touring productions and television productions is the script."

Rodgers and Hammerstein—also the creators behind revered musicals like *South Pacific*, *The Sound of Music* and *The King and I*—originally wrote the music for the 1957 *Cinderella* television broadcast starring **Julie Andrews**. The show was a hit, but let's face it—that damsel in distress thing might have been cute in the '50s, but not so much anymore. This time around, *Cinderella* is more than just a babe in a ball gown.

"It's not just that she's validated because some prince smiles on her and thinks she's pretty and then does this crazy shoe search," says Long. "*Cinderella* is not a victim. She's empowered."

The Broadway adaptation delivers lots of laughs, thanks to the notorious wit of playwright **Douglas Carter Beane**, but it's the real-life magic from

KID-APPROVED

Disney's current revisiting of *Cinderella*, now in theaters, is ushering in a slew of other childhood classic renovations

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Emma Watson (*Harry Potter*, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*) will star as Belle in a live-action version of the Disney favorite. Joining her will be **Luke Evans** as Gaston and *Downton Abbey*'s **Dan Stevens** as the Beast. It's scheduled to start filming in London this May.



CINDERELLA: CAROL ROSEGG

DUMBO

Director **Tim Burton** recently made the announcement that he'll take on a non-animated version of Disney's classic 1941 film. Burton's other Disney project, *Alice in Wonderland: Through the Looking Glass*, is currently in production and slated for release in May 2016.



THE JUNGLE BOOK

Though not a live-action film, this one will most definitely pack theaters in April 2016 by featuring the voices of **Bill Murray**, **Lupita Nyong'o**, **Ben Kingsley**, **Idris Elba**, **Scarlett Johansson** and **Christopher Walken**.
—Stephan Horbelt



film

CAN'T STAND LOSING YOU

Opens April 3

★★★★★

A fantastic trip down memory lane, this enjoyable documentary about **Andy Summers** intercuts his personal stories with the 2007 reunion tour of The Police. The archival footage provides a terrific showcase for the band's early sound and the backstage drama that fueled The Police's music and frictions. *Can't Stand Losing You* features a poignant voiceover by Summers as he recounts his childhood, performing in various bands, the birth of punk and The Police, along with his family struggles, success, touring and his hobby taking photographs. Ultimately it's the music that matters as much as the memories, and in this regard, this film doesn't disappoint.



MARFA GIRL

Opens March 27

★★★★★

In this belated theatrical release of **Larry Clark's** 2012 film, teenagers skateboard, do drugs and have sex. There's also some gratuitous nudity. *Marfa Girl* has **Adam (Adam Mediano)** turning 16 and losing his

virginity; the title character (**Drake Burnette**), an artist, sleeping with various men; and Tom (**Jeremy St. James**) a border cop, behaving very, very badly. Until the jarring, violent last act, this slice of Texas life is oddly compelling despite some indifferent acting. Clark also overreaches by raising race, class, gender and identity issues. The uneven *Marfa Girl* insists he should just stick to chronicling wasted youth.

TRACERS

Opens March 20

★★★★★

Cam (**Taylor Lautner**) is a bike messenger with a \$15,000 debt. When he meets Nikki (**Marie Avgeropoulos**)—literally by accident—he ends up joining her gang of parkour-practicing thieves led by Miller (**Adam Rayner**). The nimble, high-energy action sequences—on an abandoned ship, inside an office building and through New York City traffic—elevate this otherwise clunky B movie. *Tracers* features too few narrative surprises, from a character's death to a double-cross to a contrived love triangle. And while Lautner is fun to watch doing handstands down stairs or vaulting between rooftops, it might be equally enjoyable to see him fall and chip some of his perfect teeth. —**Gary M. Kramer**



► *continued*

Long's extravagant costume design that makes the show a dream come true. Of the nine Tony Award nominations *Cinderella* received, it was Long who took home a statuette for Best Costume Design in 2013—*Cinderella's* first win, his sixth. "I really love this production. I couldn't be happier," Long says, and obviously the man knows what he's doing.

To execute his vision of mixed fantasy, magic and history, Long drew inspiration from the script itself as well as his studies of the outside world. "When we needed armor, we went back to the actual period, which is 16th century France, so it's the court of **Catherine de' Medici**. All of the courtiers sort of refer in their silhouettes to that period. Because it's in this magical forest, forest imagery is everywhere to be seen. The scenery has trees growing into columns, vines gnarled into chandeliers, and I of course have moths into butterfly imagery when the fairy godmother transforms herself."

When it comes to critical outfits like *Cinderella's* ball gown (which has 14 layers of thin fabric), Long went all-in. "Because if you don't get the ball right, you miss, all of us focused on the ball," he says. "The ballroom scene, the men and the women in their court outfits, they're all based on flying

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Out Now

Cinderella
The Cobbler
Kumiko, the Treasure Hunter
Merchants of Doubt
Run All Night

March 20

Accidental Love
Insurgent

March 27

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Will Farrell and Kevin Hart



(From left) William Ivey Long hard at work on the costumes for *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*; Kecia Lewis and Paige Faure in the production's national tour

RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S CINDERELLA

Ahmanson Theatre
March 28 - April 26
centertheatregroup.com

creatures—butterflies, birds—the wing imagery is sort of built into the cut of the men's jackets and the ladies' dresses. They're all very see-through and very large. When they're lifted in the air, they look like they're flying, and you can see the light shining through. I hope it's as magical as I think it is."

And for a little extra sparkle, Cinderella's glass slipper got the magic touch of luxury shoe designer **Stuart Weitzman**. "If you actually think about a glass slipper, it doesn't read to the back of the house," says Long. "It's sort of see-through. So I made a mockup one on a real sort-of-plastic insert shoe and put a lot of crystals—aurora borealis and regular crystals—so it would shine so that you would know that was the slipper. And lo and behold, Stuart Weitzman himself agreed to design and make these shoes. He has made all the shoes for all the understudies, all the Cinderellas, and for everybody who wears them in our tour as well. They are pretty beautiful shoes, I must say."

Rodgers & Hammerstein's stage production will be treating us to the fairy tale life through late April, and as a recently announced treat just for L.A. theatergoers, the role of the evil stepmother will be played by none other than **Fran Drescher**. Let the magic begin! ■

music

MARC ALMOND

The Velvet Trail
(Cherry Red)

★★★★☆

It's hard to believe Soft Cell's iconic singer had pondered retiring a few years ago. Then out of the blue last year, a pop songwriter named **Chris Braide** (who has written/produced for **Britney Spears** and **Lana Del Rey**) contacted him with some synth-pop instrumentals he thought would be perfect for him. Through email correspondence only they birthed this interesting new collaboration. Almond is in fine voice, lyrically covering familiar themes—lust, love, betrayal and the seedier side of sexual pleasures. A few ballads are a little overwrought, but others are cathartic and expansive. The highlight is a perky earworm duet with Gossip's **Beth Ditto**, soon to be ruling queer dance floors very soon. All told, Almond delivers a heady mix of shiny orchestrations, exotic torch songs and a few moments of sprite electropop. —**Paul V. Vitagliano**



PRIME CUTS:
"When the Comet Comes"
"Bad To Me"
"Demon Lover"



LOWER DENS

Escape from Evil
(Ribbon Music)

★★★★☆

PRIME CUTS:

"Ondine"
"To Die in L.A."
"Your Heart Still Beating"

Post-punk indie reaches a contemporary apotheosis on Lower Dens' third release, *Escape from Evil*. The Baltimore quartet, which has previously trafficked in a punk-laced form of Krautrock, have hit upon a lush vein of sound that stretches as far back as Siouxsie and the Banshees all the way up through Stereolab and Beach House. (**Chris Coady**, who has worked with the latter, mixed the record.) **Jana Hunter's** commanding contralto updates **Siouxsie Sioux's** unbridled emotionalism into a dizzying display of late-night confessionals, each tune anchored by a primal, fetching plaint masquerading as a vocal hook—"I would treat you better" or "I wanna be alone with you" or "all of my fears coming to life"—direct phrases that heighten the complicated emotions brought forth from haunting, contradictory music. One of 2015's best. —**Dan Loughry**

MARINA AND THE DIAMONDS

Froot
(Neon Gold/Atlantic)

★★★★☆

Subtlety has never (and will never be) the point of Marina and the Diamonds. That being said, this third album is as complex and nuanced as I'd like to see the UK pop starlet get. Each song on *Froot* requires complete attention. They're all bursting with ideas, complicated song structures and rewarding but surprising chord changes. Marina owes more to **Kate Bush** than she does **Madonna**, but that's not to say she doesn't fill her dance card with plenty of drum machines and electronic noises, it's just ... that's not the point of this album. Where her previous LPs—*The Family Jewels* and especially *Electra Heart*—were overstuffed and almost needy, these songs are simpler, less chaotic yet still unmistakably Marina. It's about a balance, and here on *Froot*, Marina and the Diamonds have finally found that balance. —**Dominik Rothbard**



PRIME CUTS:
"I'm A Ruin"
"Better Than That"
"Can't Pin Me Down"

music >> NEW RELEASES

Out Now

Madonna
Rebel Heart

Modest Mouse
Strangers to Ourselves

of Montreal
Aureate Gloom

March 24

Laura Marling
Short Movie

Steve Grand
All-American Boy

Van Morrison
Duets: Re-Working the Catalogue

March 31

Boz Scaggs
A Fool to Care

Sufjan Stevens
Carrie & Lowell

The Prodigy
The Day is My Enemy