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A magical ride

Disney's Aladdin makes your heart fall in love with the tale all over again, writes SHIKHA JAIN

BookASmile, the charity initiative of BookMyShow, supports entertainment and enrichment in underprivileged communities. "At BookASmile, we believe that an education in culture and the arts holds as much value as the one gained in a classroom and that everyone should have equal access to this, irrespective of their socio-economic background. Exposing them to the arts, theatre, music, film and sport allows them to recognise opportunities and develop a mindset that they would not be privy to, otherwise," says Fazana Cama Balpande, Head of BookASmile. Disney's Aladdin was one of the multiple events hosted round the year.

Rekindling memories
 The story of Aladdin from the 1001 Arabian Nights has been such an integral part of everyone's growing up years, whether through books or the shows on DD. Elements like the magic lamp, flying carpet or the wish granting genie have seeped into our conversations and references over so often. "When the time came to stage this tale, it was an opportunity to bring forth all those wonderful memories and imaginative ideas that my attachment to the story brought with it. I wanted the audience to also experience reliving their childhood and add one more

memory to their attachment with the story of Aladdin," says Shrutu Sharma, Director of Disney's Aladdin. The joyfulness, exuberance and humour that Disney regularly brings to the stage is in full display.

Audience connection
 Even though they are part of a fairy tale, the characters of Aladdin have been always been easily relatable and understandable for the audience. From the coming-of-age underdog Aladdin, who eventually finds the courage and cleverness to do the right thing, to the feisty Jasmine who never shies away from questioning the system, the journeys of these characters touch the hearts of the audience directly. For someone like the truly magical, ageless and timeless Genie the question of relevance comes heavily into play. He is the all knowing magical being who repeatedly breaks the fourth wall and connects with the audience as though he is one them. This needs him to stay

topical and very now, and yet easily journey back into the land of Agrabah where Aladdin summons him. "A combination of dialogues, choice of jokes as well as his look and dancing style has gone into making sure that the character continues to defy his own boundaries and allows the audience to be as imaginative as him in absorbing the same," says Shrutu.

Past perfect

The wonderful thing about the relationship between the stage and the audience is the suspension of disbelief that it allows. It creates such an illusion with the audience ever so smoothly that despite there being technology and props being used, we travel with the story and stay with it through the performance. "The combination of LEDs, props and lights when used in sync, transfers the audience through the bylanes of Agrabah to the Sultan's Palace," points out Shrutu. You might just experience FOMO if you haven't watched it yet, because we are still



hooked!

FUN FACTS

COSTUMES:

- Disney's Aladdin comes alive with over 450 costumes, based on 183 individual designs
- The cast wears 178 pairs of custom shoes
- Jasmine's wedding outfit is embellished with over 2000 fine crystals
- The iconic Genie costume has more than 5000 crystals embedded in it
- At one point in the show, around 90 costume changes take place in a couple of minutes
- No less than 14 different locations from the story are deployed on stage
- The ornate palace has been purposely created with 'no windows' to depict Princess Jasmine's desire to explore the world outside the palace walls

