



The cast of Disney On Ice Rockin' Ever After show. Courtesy Feld Entertainment

Disney on Ice Rockin' Ever After brings favourite characters old and new to Dubai

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The talent-show format

If the ratings of shows such as American Idol are anything to go by, the talent-show concept is a massive draw. To keep what could easily be perceived as a kids' show relevant for the entire family, Rockin' Ever After marries the classic Disney tales with contemporary pop culture.

"We thought we could take these well-known stories a little bit out of context and put it in a relevant setting," says Nicole Feld, the executive vice-president of Feld Entertainment, the creators of the show.

"This is more like a talent show and it came out of what is happening on TV today.

"The show has this American Idol, X-Factor-type of feeling about it. It is like Mickey, Minnie, Donald and Goofy are presenting a talent show, introducing the different Disney stories."

Feld says Disney characters transcend age and culture, which allows them to take the show to different parts of the world. "These stories are so familiar to people and they look forward to hearing their favourite songs.

"As children grow up they find themselves falling in and out of love with different characters. So do their parents. And so both generations can enjoy the same classics together."

World-class skaters

They'll dangerously dangle from ropes, jump through hoops and weave around obstacles to hummable tunes from *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Tangled*. The show will have a Spanish web act by the cast of *The Little Mermaid*, where the skater playing Ariel will dangle above the stage.

"We go all over the world to source talent and are the largest employer of figure skaters," says Feld of the 39 artists who come from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia.

"Along with figure skaters, we also have trick and jump skaters. The choreography is very exciting and fresh. It isn't just an athletic show, but the performers can go wild, bringing edgy dance moves to the skating."

Setting the ice stage

The "stage" began taking shape a month before the cast got access to the hall, which has been transformed into an ice rink this week. About 48,000 litres of water and 425 man-hours later, the ice surface was ready for the two-hour production. The show has been brought to the UAE by Etisalat, Sports and Entertainment Solutions and Dubai Tourism and Commerce Marketing.

"The show was in the making for a year," says Feld. "We begin with the concept and discuss extensively which elements we want to bring to life."

This is the first time a Disney on Ice show is introducing the Brave characters, with the director Patty Vincent having developed Scottish dance choreography and stunts performed by skaters dressed as Scots of the MacIntosh, MacGuffin and Dingwall clans.

Rockin' Ever After is one of Feld Entertainment's newer shows, having toured in the US for two years. After its Middle East leg, the production will be heading to Eastern Europe and the UK.

The highlights

Feld says there are three sequences that will entertain the young and their parents. "They'll really enjoy a scene from *Tangled*, where our skater – who plays Rapunzel – has this dynamic chemistry with her partner. It is captivating."

The light-stick sequence at the end, where all the Disney characters reappear for a final farewell, is one of her favourite moments.

"And finally, there is a cute moment when the daughters of Triton from *The Little Mermaid* come out and dance to Madonna's song *Vogue*."

Disney on Ice in numbers

39 skaters in the cast

78 individual skates to lace

3 performances per day

10 costume changes

2 the number of suitcases allowed per skater

48,000 litres of water to make the ice rink at Dubai World Trade Centre

Disney on Ice Rockin' Ever After runs from Wednesday to Saturday at Dubai World Trade Centre. Tickets are priced from Dh175 and are available at Virgin Megastores and online at www.virginmegastores.ae

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