**Introductory Notes**

Nina Marni - welcome to the Audio Introduction for the Adelaide season of Disney’s ***Beauty and the Beast*** at the Adelaide Festival Centre.

The performance runs for approximately 2.5 hours with a 20-minute interval.

***Beauty and the Beast***is a classic tale exploring themes of looking beyond appearances, confronting toxic arrogance, and the importance of love and compassion.

There are themes and images which depict violence and coercion.

This performance includes flashes of light, theatrical smoke and a live orchestra playing from the orchestra pit.

**Set & Lighting**

Upon entering auditorium, the stage has celling to floor screen with a still projected image of a black shadow, silhouette image of the Beast and Belle in a heart-warming embrace: their silhouette rising from a mountain of rose petals amongst a galaxy of stars in the background. A single stemmed red rose glows between them. Words across the screen read: ***Beauty and the Beast*** in the cursive trademark Disney font.

There are multiple locations we visit as the story unfolds. The main locations depicted are; The Village (Main Street, Belle’s cottage, the tavern), the woods and the exterior and interior of the Beasts’ sprawling castle.

There are numerous set changes, they are swift and occur like magic.

Act 1 begins at the Castle for a Prologue scene. Shortly after, we visit a quaint village where Belle and her eccentric father live together: a cobble stone lined street, single fronted stone shops on either side of a wooden bridge with stairs connecting the two sides. Shop signs read: *Bakery,* *Astons, Rugs*. It’s a bustling small and busy street where townsfolk meet, greet and shop for local wares.

Belle lives in a small stone cottage: it is homely with a thatched roof and has large windows with flowers blooming from the windowsill box. Directly opposite her cottage, is stone water well, framed with a thriving pink rose trellis and complete with a well bucket connected on a rope.

Projection is used to indicate location and there are two large white screens. The screen at the front of the stage is semi-transparent allowing audience to see the performers action behind it. The screen at the back of the stage, extends the full length of the playing area.

Other locations depicted include, a sprawling rolling green and yellow canola filled hills, with utopian blue skies with fluffy white clouds, the Beast’s stone castle sitting high on the hill in darkness and inside the castle itself: the dungeon, guest room, kitchen, a library with ceiling to floor antiquated books, the beast’s dining room, a castle gallery walkway holding a myriad of antique gold guilt frames and impressionist art and the out of bounds Beast’s West Wing.

Occasionally, the projection is animated; a night sky with a galaxy of shooting stars or when in the woods, the wolves’ bodies bound through the darkness, with their eyes glowing red.

Inside the Beast’s castle is a large gold, staircase and the Beasts chair: an ornate, lushly upholstered chair with gold trim resting on a podium and close by, a red rose kept securely in a large glass domed container resting on a plinth – initially glowing but becomes weaker.

The castle is vast, gloomy and cold - the only source of light are suspended Fleur De Lys structures which hold a myriad of candles.

In the castle, the fabrics and furnishings are opulent, the Beast has wealth, but the surroundings are cold.

A single piece of furniture defines the room location; for example, the guest room holds a gold ornate chaise lounge, the dining room; a long table adorned with a draped, sliver beaded tablecloth, set with two large silver candelabras stems with an over-the-top floral arrangement. Elaborate chairs sit at either end of the long table.

In the ***Be Our Guest*** song, the use of a stage revolve supports a complex dance routine which occurs under a frame of flashing lights reminiscent of the Parisian Moulin Rouge. Additionally, an aerial camera captures and projects the dancers floor action and movement, akin to dance-director Busby Berkeley's distinctive style in the 1930’s: the choreography and visuals are elaborate: a kaleidoscopic of dance sequences, geometric patterns, and dreamlike settings.

Finally, we arrive at the Castle’s flourishing garden: stretching from the left-hand side to the right-hand side the playing area are multiple rows of arched trellis, magnificent roses in full bloom. In the middle at the back of the playing area are large, elaborate gold gates.

Minimal but significant props support each scene: Belle’s eccentric Father, Maurice rides a whacky, bespoke gopher with a cane picnic basket at the helm. It is also flanked with other collected paraphernalia and gadgets, a wooden box under the seat, a glass milk bottle and an umbrella.

The Castle characters have their own props which are integrated into their costume. Additionally, Mrs Pots pushes a tea trolley which holds tea accoutrements; atop the trolly sits an oversized Teacup.

**Characters and Costumes -** (in order of appearance)

Prologue: The Castle

We first meet an **Old Beggar woman** She’s a hunched figure in full length black cloak, her hood pulled over head. In the dark shadows she holds a red rose in her gnarly old hand, later transforming to a slender woman with coiffed silver white hair, spirit like, in a silver glitter dress with matching sleeves - overly long, loads of rippling fabric.

The woman converses with the **Young Prince** – he stands tall and proud with a head of dark hair. His long Royal purple robe is embellished with gold and his black velvet square cornered hat, is embroidered with a royal insignia in gold thread.

**The Beast** – has a huge shaggy head of black hair, like a Lions mane, pulled back into a rough pony tail. A pair of white bullock horns protrude from atop. His face has dark eye sockets and a broad bull-like nose. His wide muscle-bound shoulders are accentuated by a dark brown scaly leather jacket (like an Armadillo), over a red shirt, pulled in at the waist with a black belt and large silver buckle. His powerful muscular legs, in tight blue trousers are tucked into long black shiny leather boots with the tops folded over to create a wide cuff. He has expressive dark hairy hands, bushy eyebrows and a full beard and moustache.

ACT 1- in the French provincial village, marketplace:

**Belle** – is young woman, with large dark eyes, wide smiling face, long dark gently curled hair pulled back off her face in a softy draped hair style. She wears her deceased mother’s gold locket around her slim neck. She wears a simple non-fussy, blue knee-length peasant dress with a motif of pinky – purple tiny flowers, and a cream, softly checked ¾ sleeve blouse underneath. Her delicate matching blue court shoes have a small heel, double straps and buckles over the arch of her foot.

**The Villagers** include characters such as a Milkman, Bartender, Washer woman, Baker, Egg seller, Rug beater, Book seller and a Portrait Painter. They all wear old style French country clothes; rough, worn, practical working garments in multiple clashing colours and patterns, with aprons and caps and lace up leather boots and shoes. Some women wear layered dresses with petticoat skirts underneath, puffed sleeves, tight bodices with frilly collars and hats.

**Les Filles** (de la Village: The Girls of the Village) – Dressed identically but in different colours: yellow, blue and green, these three girls, with bouncing curls and long fluttering eyelashes, wiggle and giggle, as a trio, in extra frilly off- the-shoulder dresses, lashed into tight bodices of lace, ribbons and bows. Their full circle, knee-length skirts are ornately decorated in florals and lace frills and each wears matching colour court shoes with an elegant foot strap.

**LeFou** is Gaston’s dependable sidekick. LeFou is about 5’5 tall, a bouncy man, with short dark hair, sideburns, high expressive eyebrows and a cheeky grin. He wears a gold and black striped jacket, over a maroon patterned vest and cream undershirt. His red neck kerchief is knotted in front. He wears pale green shorts that come to his knees.

**Gaston** saunters in with commanding confidence. He’sa dashing, well-groomed young man, approx. 6’tall, dark flashing eyes and a broad white smile and dimples. His long dark hair is pulled back into a pony tail with a curly lock as a fringe, falling over one eye. His mighty muscular build is accentuated by his red leather sleeveless vest and yellow undershirt, buckled up leather arm guards, dark green trousers stretched over his bulging thighs with the bottoms tucked into knee-high brown boots. He has a leather knife pouch with a dagger, hanging from his belt.

SC 3: Belle’s Cottage

**Maurice –** Belle’s father, has wild grey curly hair, a long grey moustache and a battered felt hat with a wide brim. Maurice is a lovingly chaotic inventor, and wears clown-like red and white stiped sox, with green trousers rolled up to his knees, held up by pair of braces. His yellow and red striped shirt has a dusty blue checked jacket, over the top with the sleeves rolled up to his elbows.

SC 5: The Castle

**Cogsworth** is a human Clock – He’s an older English gentleman with thick gold circular reading glasses, and purple hair combed back, on top and rolled into a stiff curl below his ears. On his head he has an ornate head dress like the handle of a mantle clock. His tunic, in green marbled swirls and gold braid, is “A” framed, like the triangular body of a clock, complete with a gold pendulum behind a wire door on his front. He has wide matching trousers and gold shoes with short heels.

**Lumiere** is a human Candlestick with a distinct French accent –ThisYoung man with pure white styled and quaffed hair, wears a lavish elegant outfit consisting of a gold silky shirt and cravat, under a gold jacket and matching high-waisted trousers. Instead of hands, the end of the jacket sleeves each have a large white candle, in an ornate holder, with the French “fleur-de-lys” (or Lily flower) motif. Lumiere swans around the castle illuminating his candle hands, flicking them on and off with a flourish.

**Babette** – also French, is a human Feather duster – She has a slender build with red hair piled up on her head, under a square pill box hat. Babette wears a figure-hugging, marron, thin strap dress, with a gold braid, crisscross pattern. From the knees down the dress is a ruff of marron feathers which fluff around her as she shimmies and shakes and sashays around.

**Mrs. Pots** is a human T pot. An older motherly figure with an east London, cockney accent, she wears a white dress with a bell-shaped hooped skirt. The pale pink arches along the bottom edge, each have a gold Eifel Tower embroidered on them. One sleeve of her dress is wider and permanently turned up with a spout where her hand should be. The neck of the dress has bubble gum pink frills and buttons and her white hat/lid is perched on her swirly pink and white hair.

**Chip,** Mrs. Pots’ son, is a human Teacup. Approx. 7years old, his head is magically encased in a large pink and blue Teacup with a golden curved handle, his face peeks out from one side. He is suspended on a series of elaborate tea trolleys where he magically appears to have no body, arms or legs.

# SC 18: Castle Bedroom

**Madame** de la Grande Bouche (of the Big Mouth) is human a Dressing Table. Her box skirt is a wide set of 4 wooden drawers, with pale knobs. Her head and torso appear from inside a mirror-like frame, in green and gold velvet fabric. Her elaborate white hairdo, reminiscent of wealthy ladies from the 1700’s, is wound up into a tall “bouffant” mountain of hair on top of her head with a bejeweled crown. Madame squeals with a sing song voice, as she and totters around, her long legs in green trousers, are patterned with brown table-leg designs.

SC 26: Towards the end of ACT 1 is stupendous song and dance number called **“BE OUR GUEST”** It’s an elaborate dancing ‘extravaganza’ which begins with the dancing girls dressed as dinner plates:

The **Female Plate dancers** have identical outfits and striking Blue hair /wigs, blue shimmery bodices, pink and white plate- like scales, sewn together into miniskirts, fish net tights and gold show-girl shoes. Each hold a 1x1m circular white plate with a Fleur-de-lys motif on the front, which they revolve in patterns around the space like a kaleidoscope.

The **Can Can Girls** skip and kick onstage in Purple bodices and big full-circle purple skirts with ruffle petticoats underneath.

The **Chorus Line Tap-dancing Girls** wear gold Jackets over pink bras with pink fringing, matching pink choker/bow ties, gold knickers with gold sparkly fish net tights, gold Ballroom dance shoes with a T-Bar, topped off with a tiny gold top hat on a jaunty angle of the top of their heads.

The **Male Dancers and Tap dancers** sportshimmerygold Top hats and Tails, matching trousers, with an iridescent blue or green shirt underneath and gold boots.

ACT 2

In the Castle:

SC 5: “Human Again” song includes the White Ballet:

**Male dancers** waltz in formation wearing, white shirts with voluminous sleeves, tucked into tight fitting white trousers and white shoes.

The **Female Dancers** appear in white dresses, with delicate off the shoulder sleeves and full circle, flowing, knee length skirts which fly and fan out as they are lifted and swirled around the floor.

# SC 7: In the Ballroom – Banquet:

Belle and The Beast are dressed in their finest clothes.

**Belle** appears in a stunning pale yellow full-length ballgown bejeweled with crystals. It sparkles like a cut diamond under the lights. The tight bodice is strapless with draped chiffon fabric on her upper arms, her delicate hands are in long yellow gloves to her elbows. The voluminous multilayered skirt, has jewel encrusted petal-like panels and her glistening tiara in floral pattern, is also encrusted with diamonds.

The **Beast** wears a striking Royal blue velvet jacket and trousers with lavish gold embroidery and sapphire blue gems. Underneath is a white silky shirt with long open cuffs and high collar and ruffles down the front. He dances elegantly in his gold block-heeled boots.

**Creative Team**

Bookwriter – Linda Woolverton

Composer – Alan Menken

Lyricist – Howard Ashman & Tim Rice

Direction and Choreography – Matt West

Scenic Designer – Stanley A. Meyer

Costume Designer – Ann Hould-Ward

Lighting Designer – Natasha Katz

Music Supervisor and Arrangements – Michale Kosarin

Sound Designer – John Shivers

Production Conception – Rob Roth

Orchestrator – Danny Troob

Video and Projection designer – Darrel Maloney

Hair & Make-up Designer – David H Lawrence

Illusion Designer – Jim Steinmeyer

Dance Music Arrangements – David Chase

Electronic Music Programming – Chrisoph Buskies

Fight Director – Rick Sordelet

Physical Movement Coordinator – Lorenzo Pisoni

Associate Director – Sam Scalamoni

Associate Choreographer – Jenn Rias

Associate Choreographer – Chandon Jones

**Main Cast**

Belle – Shubshri Kandiah

Beast – Brandan Xavier

Lumiere – Rohan Browne

Gaston – Jackson Head

Cogsworth – Gareth Jacobs

Mrs Potts – Jayde Westerby

Le Fou – Adam Di Martino

Maurice – Rodney Dobson

Babette – Hayley Martin

Madame – Alana Tranter

Additionally, there is a large Ensemble, swing cast and multiple young actors playing CHIP.

This completes the audio introduction for Beauty and the Beast. Your audio describers are Eliza Lovell and Carol Wellman Kelly.