# Disney’s Hercules musical extends West End run despite mixed reviews and character changes



Disney’s stage adaptation of Hercules has opened at London’s Theatre Royal Drury Lane, aiming to continue the trend of bringing beloved animated classics to the West End. Featuring music by Alan Menken and lyrics by David Zippel, with a new book by Robert Horn and Kwame Kwei-Armah, the production seeks to capture the spirit of the 1997 animated film. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, the musical stars Luke Brady as Hercules, Mae Ann Jorolan as Meg, Trevor Dion Nicholas as Phil, and Stephen Carlile as Hades. Following a blend of adventure, self-discovery, and love, the show has already extended its run until 28 March 2026, reflecting confidence in its appeal.

Despite its promising elements, the Hercules musical has been met with a mixed reception, described by some as neither a definitive success nor a failure. Fans may find themselves both entertained and occasionally frustrated by choices in the adaptation. Notably, several beloved characters and scenes from the original movie are absent or altered. Pegasus, for example, does not appear as a live character but rather as a grass sculpture during the 'I Won't Say (I'm in Love)' sequence. Meanwhile, Pain and Panic have been replaced by two human sidekicks named Bob and Charles, an odd change given the availability of puppetry to portray other creatures like the Hydra. The lack of the Fates and Titans, especially during the climactic finale, also detracts from the spectacle, with the earlier Hydra battle proving visually more compelling than the toned-down Titan conflict.

One of the production’s significant strengths lies in its rendering of the Muses. Their expanded role, particularly in the number 'The Gospel Truth,' which is extended to six parts, provides a vibrancy and energy on stage that captivates audiences. The five Muses—portrayed by Sharlene Hector, Brianna Ogunbawo, Robyn Rose-Li, Kamilla Fernandes, and Kimmy Edwards in the production attended—are lauded for their powerful vocals and magnetic stage presence, becoming the highlight and arguably the saving grace of the musical experience.

The principal cast brings solid performances to the production. Luke Brady portrays a charming and earnest Hercules, while Mae Ann Jorolan delivers a standout take on Meg, both acting-wise and vocally, particularly in her rendition of 'I Won't Say (I'm in Love).' Trevor Dion Nicholas, reprising his knack for memorable Disney sidekicks after his role as Genie in Aladdin, infuses Phil with playful energy, and Stephen Carlile’s campy portrayal of Hades adds a devilish charm suitable for family audiences. However, aside from the Muses, the new songs added to the musical generally lack memorability compared to the original soundtrack, though a few—such as Hercules and Meg’s duet 'Forget About It' and the emotional ballad 'To Be Human'—add depth to the narrative.

Visually, the staging is eye-catching, utilising moving columns and innovative special effects, including a striking representation of the underworld's vortex that substitutes for the River Styx. Yet, the second act, running just over 40 minutes including the curtain call, feels rushed and underdeveloped, leaving some scenes lacking the depth and impact seen in other Disney stage adaptations like The Lion King.

Overall, while Hercules may not reach the iconic status of Disney's more celebrated stage musicals, it offers an enjoyable spectacle for family audiences, with energetic performances and striking visuals. It stands as a fun addition to the West End, particularly for fans of the original film and those eager for a lively musical evening, even if it may not inspire repeated visits.

The musical continues its run at London's Theatre Royal Drury Lane with performances scheduled until the end of March 2026. Tickets are available starting from £29.50, with a range of pricing tiers depending on seating preference.

### 📌 Reference Map:

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2. <https://www.theatreweekly.com/disneys-hercules-extends-west-end-run-at-theatre-royal-drury-lane-until-march-2026/> - Disney's 'Hercules' musical has extended its run at London's Theatre Royal Drury Lane until 28 March 2026. The production features music by Alan Menken, lyrics by David Zippel, and a new book by Robert Horn and Kwame Kwei-Armah. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, the cast includes Luke Brady as Hercules, Mae Ann Jorolan as Meg, Trevor Dion Nicholas as Phil, and Stephen Carlile as Hades. The show offers a blend of adventure, self-discovery, and love, inspired by the 1997 animated film.
3. <https://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/hercules> - Disney's 'Hercules' musical, adapted from the 1997 animated film, is set to open at London's Theatre Royal Drury Lane in June 2025. The production features music by Alan Menken, lyrics by David Zippel, and a new book by Robert Horn and Kwame Kwei-Armah. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, the cast includes Luke Brady as Hercules. The show follows the story of Hercules, exploring his journey from a half-god to a hero, with themes of adventure and self-discovery.
4. <https://www.atgtickets.com/shows/disneys-hercules-the-musical/theatre-royal-drury-lane/> - Disney's 'Hercules' musical is scheduled to run at London's Theatre Royal Drury Lane from 6 June 2025 to 10 January 2026. The production features music by Alan Menken, lyrics by David Zippel, and a new book by Robert Horn and Kwame Kwei-Armah. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, the cast includes Luke Brady as Hercules. The show offers a blend of adventure, self-discovery, and love, inspired by the 1997 animated film.
5. <https://www.broadwayworld.com/westend/article/Disneys-HERCULES-Extends-at-Theatre-Royal-Drury-Lane-20250606> - Disney's 'Hercules' musical has extended its run at London's Theatre Royal Drury Lane until 28 March 2026. The production features music by Alan Menken, lyrics by David Zippel, and a new book by Robert Horn and Kwame Kwei-Armah. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, the cast includes Luke Brady as Hercules, Mae Ann Jorolan as Meg, Trevor Dion Nicholas as Phil, and Stephen Carlile as Hades. The show offers a blend of adventure, self-discovery, and love, inspired by the 1997 animated film.
6. <https://www.kiddoadventures.com/2025/06/10/hercules-live-on-stage-disneys-latest-west-end-spectacle-review/> - Disney's 'Hercules' musical, now playing at London's Theatre Royal Drury Lane, offers a high-energy performance with powerful vocals and stunning visuals. The set design features moving pillars and digital screens, blending seamlessly with physical props. The Muses deliver standout performances with stunning voices and unmatched energy. The show is recommended for families and Disney fans, with ticket prices starting from £29.50. The production is inspired by the 1997 animated film and the ancient Greek legend.
7. <https://www.theatreweekly.com/disneys-hercules-extends-west-end-run-at-theatre-royal-drury-lane-until-march-2026/> - Disney's 'Hercules' musical has extended its run at London's Theatre Royal Drury Lane until 28 March 2026. The production features music by Alan Menken, lyrics by David Zippel, and a new book by Robert Horn and Kwame Kwei-Armah. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, the cast includes Luke Brady as Hercules, Mae Ann Jorolan as Meg, Trevor Dion Nicholas as Phil, and Stephen Carlile as Hades. The show offers a blend of adventure, self-discovery, and love, inspired by the 1997 animated film.