

# Mufasa: The Lion King

*Mufasa: The Lion King* is an upcoming American musical drama film directed by Barry Jenkins, written by Jeff Nathanson, and produced by Walt Disney Pictures and Pastel Productions. The film is photorealistic animated and both a prequel and sequel to the 2019 adaptation of the 1994 film *The Lion King*.<sup>[1]</sup> Donald Glover, Seth Rogen, Billy Eichner, John Kani and Beyoncé Knowles-Carter reprise their roles from the remake, and are joined by Aaron Pierre, Kelvin Harrison Jr., Tiffany Boone, Mads Mikkelsen, Thandiwe Newton, Lennie James, and Knowles-Carter's daughter Blue Ivy Carter in her feature film debut.<sup>[2]</sup>

Development on a prequel to *The Lion King* was confirmed in September 2020, with Jenkins attached to direct and Nathanson finishing a draft of the script. Pierre and Harrison Jr. were announced as the voice cast in August 2021, followed by further casting between September 2022 and April 2024. The film was officially announced when its official title was revealed in September 2022 at the 2022 D23 Expo announcement. Production on the film slowed down in July 2023 due to the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike.

*Mufasa: The Lion King* is scheduled to be released in theaters on December 20, 2024,<sup>[3]</sup> by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

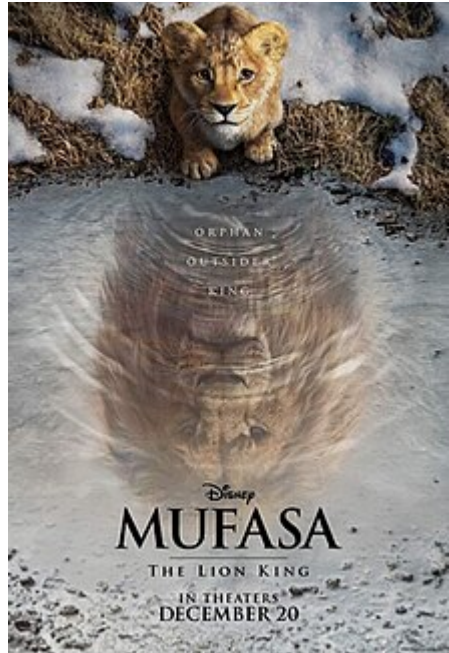
## Premise

The prequel is about the rise of one of the greatest kings of the Pride Lands, goes back to the African savannah where Rafiki tells Kiara — daughter of Simba and Nala — the story of her grandfather while Timon and Pumbaa add color commentary.

## Voice cast

- Aaron Pierre as Mufasa
- Kelvin Harrison Jr. as Taka
- Seth Rogen as Pumbaa
- Billy Eichner as Timon
- John Kani as Rafiki
  - Kagiso Lediga as young Rafiki

### Mufasa: The Lion King



Teaser poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Barry Jenkins</u>
<b>Screenplay by</b>	<u>Jeff Nathanson</u>
<b>Based on</b>	<u>Disney's <i>The Lion King</i></u> by <u>Irene Mecchi</u> <u>Jonathan Roberts</u> <u>Linda Woolverton</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Adele Romanski</u> <u>Mark Ceryak</u>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Aaron Pierre</u> <u>Kelvin Harrison Jr.</u> <u>John Kani</u> <u>Seth Rogen</u> <u>Billy Eichner</u> <u>Tiffany Boone</u> <u>Donald Glover</u> <u>Mads Mikkelsen</u> <u>Thandiwe Newton</u>

- [Tiffany Boone](#) as [Sarabi](#)
- [Preston Nyman](#) as [Zazu](#)
- [Mads Mikkelsen](#) as [Kiros](#), a formidable lion with big plans for his pride
- [Donald Glover](#) as [Simba](#), current king of Pride Rock and Mufasa's son
- [Beyoncé Knowles-Carter](#) as [Nala](#), Mufasa's daughter-in-law
- [Thandiwe Newton](#) as [Eshe](#), Taka's mother and Mufasa's adopted mother
- [Lennie James](#) as [Obasi](#), Taka's father and Mufasa's adopted father
- [Keith David](#) as [Masego](#), Mufasa's biological father
- [Anika Noni Rose](#) as [Afia](#), Mufasa's biological mother
- [Blue Ivy Carter](#) as [Kiara](#), Simba and Nala's daughter and Mufasa and Sarabi's granddaughter

Additionally, [Braelyn Rankins](#), [Theo Somolu](#), [Joanna Jones](#), [Folake Olowofoyeku](#), [Thuso Mbedu](#), [Sheila Atim](#), [Abdul Salis](#), and [Dominique Jennings](#) have been cast in undisclosed roles.

## Production

### Development

In September 2020, it was announced that a follow-up film to the live-action-styled [CGI photorealistic 2019 remake](#) of *The Lion King* (1994) was in development, with [Barry Jenkins](#) attached to direct.<sup>[4]</sup> Reports indicated that the project would have a story centered on Mufasa during his formative years, with additional scenes focusing on the events after the first film; comparing the movie to a similar structure as *The Godfather Part II* (1974).<sup>[5]</sup> By this point, [Jeff Nathanson](#), the previous installment's screenwriter, had completed a draft of the script.<sup>[6][7]</sup> The film was officially announced, with the title of *Mufasa: The Lion King* at the 2022 [D23 Expo](#).<sup>[8]</sup>

On December 13, 2023, the [Hollywood Handle](#) reported that the film's plot would involve Rafiki telling the story of Mufasa to his granddaughter, Kiara, marking the character's first on-screen appearance in an animated feature film since *The Lion King II: Simba's Pride* (1998), the [direct-to-video](#) sequel to the original animated film.<sup>[9]</sup> In regards on how much his film would adapt from *Simba's Pride*, Jenkins admitted that "some stuff" from the canon is very much alluded and referenced, but it isn't an adaptation per se.<sup>[10]</sup>

### Casting

In August 2021, [Aaron Pierre](#) and [Kelvin Harrison Jr.](#) were cast as the [voices](#) of young [Mufasa](#) and [Scar](#), respectively.<sup>[11]</sup> During an interview with [Fandango](#) in April 2023 about his film *Chevalier* (2022), Harrison Jr. confirmed that the film will explore Scar's backstory, portraying him in a "hilarious and very, very spicy" way and expressing interest in how the young and sweet Scar's relationship with his brother Mufasa evolves throughout the film.<sup>[12]</sup> By September 2022, it was revealed that [Seth Rogen](#), [Billy Eichner](#), and [John Kani](#) will reprise their roles as [Pumbaa](#), [Timon](#), and [Rafiki](#), respectively.<sup>[13][14]</sup>

	<div><a href="#">Lennie James</a></div> <div><a href="#">Blue Ivy Carter</a></div> <div><a href="#">Beyoncé Knowles-Carter</a></div>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<div><a href="#">James Laxton</a></div>
<b>Edited by</b>	<div><a href="#">Joi McMillon</a></div>
<b>Music by</b>	<div><a href="#">Hans Zimmer</a></div> <div><a href="#">Pharrell Williams</a></div> <div><a href="#">Lin-Manuel</a></div> <div><a href="#">Miranda</a></div> <div><a href="#">Nicholas Britell</a></div> <div><a href="#">Mark Mancina</a></div>
<b>Production companies</b>	<div><a href="#">Walt Disney Pictures</a></div> <div><a href="#">Pastel Productions</a></div>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<div><a href="#">Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures</a></div>
<b>Release date</b>	<div>December 20, 2024</div>
<b>Country</b>	<div>United States</div>
<b>Language</b>	<div>English</div>

In April 2024, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter and Donald Glover were confirmed to reprise their roles, with Blue Ivy Carter (in her feature film debut), Tiffany Boone (replacing Alfre Woodard), Kagiso Lediga, Preston Nyman (replacing John Oliver), Mads Mikkelsen, Thandiwe Newton, Lennie James, Anika Noni Rose, Keith David, Braelyn Rankins, Theo Somolu, Folake Olowofoyeku, Joanna Jones, Thuso Mbedu, Sheila Atim, Abdul Salis, and Dominique Jennings announced as new additions to the cast.<sup>[2]</sup> Jenkins considered to cast Blue Ivy as Kiara since he heard the audiobook version she did for his friend Matthew A. Cherry's *Hair Love* (2019) short film, but had reservations on whether she and her mother would want to act opposite each other, fearing it may hit "too close to home", but both Blue Ivy and Beyoncé were enthusiastic when he proposed them the idea. Coupled with Beyoncé's *Renaissance* tour, during which Blue Ivy participated as a dancer in a performance of one of *The Lion King: The Gift* album's songs, Jenkins felt there was some sort of synergy between mother and daughter with the film showcasing some type of "time capsule".<sup>[15]</sup>

## Visual effects

In September 2022, at D23, the first footage was played exclusively to attendees, thus revealing that production had been underway.<sup>[8][13][14]</sup> Moving Picture Company is returning to provide the visual effects.<sup>[16]</sup> In July 2023, production on the film slowed down due to the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Music

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In June 2022, Nicholas Britell was hired to serve as composer for the score on the film's soundtrack, after having previously collaborated with Jenkins on various projects.<sup>[18]</sup> In September 2022, it was announced that Hans Zimmer and Pharrell Williams would return for the film,<sup>[19]</sup> and in April 2024, it was announced that Lin-Manuel Miranda would write the songs for the film.<sup>[2]</sup> Jenkins approached Miranda to work on the film due to keeping in touch since Jenkins almost cast Miranda in his film *If Beale Street Could Talk* (2018).<sup>[10]</sup> Mark Mancina would also co-produce the songs with Miranda, with Lebo M providing additional vocals and performances.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Marketing

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During the D23, an exclusive preview for the film was shown to those who attended, which revealed that Mufasa was an orphaned cub. The preview also revealed that Rafiki and Timon will tell stories about Mufasa's past and his way to becoming king.<sup>[20]</sup> Barry Jenkins also appeared during The Walt Disney Studios' presentation of their 2024 theatrical slate at CinemaCon on April 11, 2024, to promote the film, where he remarked: "You are probably wondering... what is the director of *Moonlight* (2016) doing talking to me about an eight-quadrant tentpole legacy IP massive film? And I gotta say, the thought was very strange to me at first, as well. But oh my god. It was one of the best decisions I've ever made in my life, and I'm so glad I made this picture."<sup>[21]</sup>

The first teaser trailer and the official teaser poster debuted on April 29, 2024, on ABC's *Good Morning America*. The trailer's music track was bookended by a new instrumental rendition of "Circle of Life," confirming that some musical material by Elton John and Tim Rice from the previous film would be featured in the film in some way.<sup>[22]</sup> The trailer received a negative reception, some of whom deemed the film as "unnecessary" and a "soulless prequel to a soulless remake". Jenkins responded on Twitter writing,

"There is nothing soulless about *The Lion King* ... For decades children have sat in theaters all over the world experiencing collective grief for the first time, engaging Shakespeare for the first time, across aisles in myriad languages. A most potent vessel for communal empathy."<sup>[23]</sup>

## Release

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*Mufasa: The Lion King* is scheduled to be released on December 20, 2024.<sup>[3]</sup> It was previously scheduled for release on July 5, 2024, but was delayed to its current date due to the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike.<sup>[13][14]</sup>

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## External links

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- *Mufasa: The Lion King* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13186482/>) at IMDb
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