

# The Lion King

***The Lion King*** is a 1994 American animated musical film produced by Walt Disney Feature Animation and released by Walt Disney Pictures. It is the 32nd Disney animated feature film, and the fifth animated film produced during a period known as the Disney Renaissance. *The Lion King* was directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, produced by Don Hahn, and has a screenplay credited to Irene Mecchi, Jonathan Roberts, and Linda Woolverton. Its original songs were written by composer Elton John and lyricist Tim Rice, with a score by Hans Zimmer. The film features an ensemble voice cast that includes Matthew Broderick, James Earl Jones, Jeremy Irons, Jonathan Taylor Thomas, Moira Kelly, Nathan Lane, Ernie Sabella, Rowan Atkinson, Robert Guillaume, Madge Sinclair, Whoopi Goldberg, Cheech Marin, and Jim Cummings. The story takes place in a kingdom of lions in Africa and was influenced by the Biblical stories of Joseph and Moses, and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

*The Lion King* tells the story of Simba (Swahili for lion<sup>[3]</sup>), a young lion who is to succeed his father, Mufasa, as King of the Pride Lands; however, after Simba's paternal uncle Scar murders Mufasa, Simba is manipulated into thinking he was responsible and flees into exile. After growing up in the company of the carefree outcasts Timon and Pumbaa, Simba receives valuable perspective from his childhood friend, Nala, and his shaman, Rafiki, before returning to challenge Scar to end his tyranny and take his place in the Circle of Life as the rightful King.

Development of *The Lion King* began in 1988 during a meeting between Jeffrey Katzenberg, Roy E. Disney, and Peter Schneider while promoting *Oliver & Company* in Europe. Thomas M. Disch wrote a film treatment, and Woolverton developed the first scripts, while George Scribner was signed on as director, being later joined by Allers. Production began in 1991 concurrently with *Pocahontas*, which wound up attracting many of Disney's top animators. Some time after the staff traveled to Hell's Gate National Park in Kenya to research the film's setting and animals, Scribner left production, disagreeing with the decision to turn the film into a musical, and was replaced by Minkoff. When Hahn joined the project, he was dissatisfied with the script and the story was promptly rewritten. Nearly 20 minutes of animation sequences were produced at the Disney-MGM Studios theme park in Florida. Computer animation was also used in several scenes, most notably in the wildebeest stampede sequence.

*The Lion King* was released on June 15, 1994, to a positive reaction from critics, who praised the film for its music, story, and animation. However, the film also drew several controversies, particularly for its similarities to Osamu Tezuka's 1960s anime series *Kimba the White Lion*. With an initial worldwide gross of \$766 million, it finished its theatrical run as the highest-grossing release of 1994, the highest-grossing animated film and the second-highest-grossing film of all time. It is also the highest-grossing traditionally animated film of all time,, as well as the best-selling film on home video, having sold over 30 million VHS tapes. *The Lion King* garnered two Academy Awards for its achievement in music and the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy. The film has led to many derived works, such as a Broadway adaptation; two direct-to-video follow-ups—the sequel, *The Lion King II: Simba's Pride* (1998), and the prequel/parallel, *The Lion King 1½* (2004); two television series, *Timon and Pumbaa* and *The Lion Guard*; a 3D re-release in 2011; and a photorealistic remake in 2019, which also became the highest-grossing animated film at the time of its release.

In 2016, the film was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".

It is, as of December 2019, the only Disney film to have been dubbed in Zulu, the only African language aside from Arabic to have been used for a feature length Disney dub.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Contents

Plot

Cast

Production

Development

Casting

Animation

Music

Release

The Lion King	
<span></span> <div>Theatrical release poster by John Alvin</div>	
Directed by	Roger Allers <div></div> Rob Minkoff
Produced by	Don Hahn
Screenplay by	Irene Mecchi <div></div> Jonathan Roberts <div></div> Linda Woolverton
Story by	Brenda Chapman <div></div> Barry Johnson <div></div> Andy Gaskill <div></div> Kevin Harkey <div></div> Tom Sito <div></div> Rick Maki <div></div> Burny Mattinson <div></div> Lorna Cook <div></div> Gary Trousdale <div></div> Jorgen Klubien <div></div> Larry Leker <div></div> Ed Gombert <div></div> Mark Kausler <div></div> Thom Enriquez <div></div> Jim Capobianco <div></div> Chris Sanders <div></div> Joe Ranft <div></div> Francis Glebas
Starring	Matthew Broderick <div></div> Jonathan Taylor Thomas <div></div> James Earl Jones <div></div> Jeremy Irons <div></div> Moira Kelly <div></div> Niketa Calame <div></div> Ernie Sabella <div></div> Nathan Lane <div></div> Robert Guillaume <div></div> Rowan Atkinson

Localization		Whoopi Goldberg
Home media		Cheech Marin <div>Jim Cummings</div> <div>Madge Sinclair</div>
Reception		
Box office		<b>Music by</b> <div>Hans Zimmer</div>
Original theatrical run		<b>Edited by</b> <div>Ivan Bilancio</div>
Re-releases		<b>Production company</b> <div>Walt Disney Pictures</div> <div>Walt Disney Feature Animation</div>
IMAX and large-format		
3D conversion		
Critical response		<b>Distributed by</b> <div>Buena Vista Pictures</div>
Accolades		<b>Release date</b> <div>June 15, 1994</div>
Controversies		<b>Running time</b> <div>88 minutes<sup>[1]</sup></div>
<i>Kimba the White Lion</i>		<b>Country</b> <div>United States</div>
Other controversies		<b>Language</b> <div>English</div>
Legacy		<b>Budget</b> <div>\$45 million<sup>[2]</sup></div>
Sequels and spin-offs		<b>Box office</b> <div>\$968.5 million<sup>[2]</sup></div>
CGI remake		
Video games		
Stage adaptations		
See also		
References		
External links		

## Plot

In the Pride Lands of Africa, a pride of lions rule over the animal kingdom from Pride Rock. King Mufasa's and Queen Sarabi's newborn son, Simba, is presented to the gathering animals by Rafiki the mandrill, the kingdom's shaman and advisor. Mufasa shows Simba the Pride Lands and explains to him the responsibilities of kingship and the "circle of life", which connects all living things. Mufasa's younger brother, Scar, covets the throne and plots to eliminate Mufasa and Simba, so he may become king. He tricks Simba and his best friend Nala (to whom Simba is betrothed) into exploring a forbidden elephants' graveyard, where they are attacked by three spotted hyenas, Shenzi, Banzai, and Ed, who are in league with Scar. Mufasa is alerted about the incident by his majordomo, the hornbill Zazu, and rescues the cubs. Though upset with Simba, Mufasa forgives him and explains that the great kings of the past watch over them from the night sky, from which he will one day watch over Simba.

Scar sets a trap for his brother and nephew, luring Simba into a gorge and having the hyenas drive a large herd of wildebeest into a stampede that will trample him. Scar himself does not interfere to save Simba, but instead informs Mufasa of Simba's peril, knowing that the king will rush to save his son. Mufasa saves Simba but ends up hanging perilously from the gorge's edge. Scar refuses to help Mufasa, instead, sending him falling to his death. He then convinces Simba that the tragedy was Simba's own fault and advises him to leave the kingdom and never return. He orders the hyenas to kill the cub, but Simba escapes. Scar tells the pride that both Mufasa and Simba were killed in the stampede and steps forward as the new king, allowing his three hyena minions and the rest of their large pack to live in the Pride Lands.

Simba collapses in a desert and is rescued by Timon and Pumbaa, a meerkat and warthog, who are fellow outcasts and chase away the vultures. Simba grows up in the jungle with his two new friends, living a carefree life under the motto "hakuna matata" ("no worries" in Swahili). Now a young adult, Simba rescues Timon and Pumbaa from a hungry lioness, who turns out to be Nala. She and Simba reunite and fall in love, and she urges him to return home, telling him that Pride Lands have become a drought-stricken wasteland under Scar's reign. Feeling guilty over his father's death, Simba refuses and storms off. He then encounters Rafiki, who tells him that Mufasa's spirit lives on in Simba. Simba is visited by the ghost of Mufasa in the night sky, who tells him that he must take his rightful place as king. Realizing that he can no longer run from his past, Simba decides to return to the Pride Lands.

Aided by his friends, Simba sneaks past the hyenas at Pride Rock and confronts Scar, who had just struck Sarabi. Scar taunts Simba over his role in Mufasa's death and backs him to the edge of the rock, where he reveals to him that he murdered Mufasa. Enraged, Simba pins Scar to the ground and forces him to reveal the truth to the rest of the pride. Timon, Pumbaa, Rafiki, Zazu, and the lionesses fend off the hyenas while Scar, attempting to escape, is cornered by Simba at the top of Pride Rock. Scar begs for mercy and attempts to blame the hyenas for his actions; Simba spares his life but orders him to leave the Pride Lands forever. Scar attacks his nephew, but Simba manages to toss him from the top of the rock. Scar survives the fall but is attacked and killed by the hyenas, who overheard his attempt to betray them. Afterward, Simba takes over the kingship as rain begins to fall. He also makes Nala his queen.

Later, with Pride Rock restored to its usual state, Rafiki presents Simba and Nala's newborn cub to the assembled animals, continuing the circle of life.

## Cast

- Matthew Broderick as Simba, son of Mufasa and Sarabi, who grows up to become King of the Pride Lands. Rock singer Joseph Williams provided adult Simba's singing voice. Mark Henn and Ruben A. Aquino respectively served as the supervising animators for young and adult Simba.<sup>[5]</sup>
  - Jonathan Taylor Thomas voiced young Simba, while Jason Weaver provided the cub's singing voice.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Jeremy Irons as Scar, Mufasa's younger brother and Simba's uncle, who takes the throne. Andreas Deja served as the supervising animator for Scar.<sup>[5]</sup>
- James Earl Jones as Mufasa, Simba's father, former King of the Pride Lands as the film begins. Tony Fucile served as the supervising animator for Mufasa.<sup>[5]</sup> James Earl Jones reprised his role in the 2019 remake.
- Moirá Kelly as Nala, Simba's best friend and later his wife and Queen of the Pride Lands. Sally Dworsky provided her singing voice. Aaron Blaise and Anthony de Rosa respectively served as the supervising animators for young and adult Nala.<sup>[5]</sup>
  - Niketa Calame provided the voice of young Nala while Laura Williams provided her singing voice.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Nathan Lane as Timon, a wise-cracking and self-absorbed yet somewhat loyal meerkat who becomes one of Simba's best friends and adoptive parents. Michael Surrey served as his supervising animator.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Ernie Sabella as Pumbaa, a naïve warthog who suffers from flatulence and is Timon's best friend and also becomes one of Simba's best friends and adoptive parents. Tony Bancroft served as his supervising animator.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Robert Guillaume as Rafiki, an old baboon (with mandrill markings<sup>[6]</sup>) who serves as shaman of the Pride Lands and presents newborn cubs of the King and Queen to the animals of the Pride Lands. James Baxter served as the supervising animator for Rafiki.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Rowan Atkinson as Zazu, a hornbill who serves as the king's majordomo (or "Mufasa's little stooge", as Shenzi calls him). Ellen Woodbury served as the supervising animator for Zazu.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Madge Sinclair as Sarabi, Mufasa's mate, Simba's mother, and the leader of the lioness hunting party. Russ Edmonds served as the supervising animator for Sarabi.<sup>[5]</sup>
- The three spotted hyenas who serve Scar were animated by Alex Kupershmidt and David Burgess.<sup>[5]</sup>
  - Whoopi Goldberg as Shenzi, the sassy and short-tempered female leader of the trio.
  - Cheech Marin as Banzai, an aggressive and hot-headed hyena prone to complaining and acting on impulse.
  - Jim Cummings as Ed, a dim-witted hyena who does not talk, only communicating through laughter. Cummings also voiced a mole that talks with Zazu and made a guest appearance as Scar in certain lines of "Be Prepared" after Irons blew his voice.<sup>[7]</sup>
- Zoe Leader as Sarafina, Nala's mother, who is shown briefly talking to Simba's mother, Sarabi.



A promotional image of the characters from the film. From left to right: Shenzi, Scar, Ed, Banzai, Rafiki, Young Simba, Mufasa, Young Nala, Sarabi, Zazu, Sarafina, Timon, and Pumbaa.

## Production

### Development

The idea for *The Lion King* was conceived in late 1988 during a conversation between Jeffrey Katzenberg, Roy E. Disney and Peter Schneider on a plane to Europe to promote *Oliver & Company*. During the conversation, the topic of a story set in Africa came up, and Katzenberg immediately jumped at the idea.<sup>[8]</sup> The idea was then developed by Walt Disney Feature Animation's vice president for creative affairs Charlie Fink.<sup>[9]</sup> Katzenberg decided to add elements involving coming of age and death, and ideas from personal life experiences, such as some of his trials in his bumpy road in politics, saying about the film, "It is a little bit about myself."<sup>[10]</sup> In November of that year Thomas Disch (author of *The Brave Little Toaster*) wrote a treatment entitled *King of the Kalahari*,<sup>[11]</sup> and afterwards, Linda Woolverton spent a year writing drafts of the script, which was titled *King of the Beasts* and then *King of the Jungle*.<sup>[9]</sup> The original version of the film was very different from the final film. The plot was centered in a battle being between lions and baboons with Scar being the leader of the baboons, Rafiki being a cheetah,<sup>[10]</sup> and Timon and Pumbaa being Simba's childhood friends.<sup>[12]</sup> Simba would also not leave the kingdom but become a "lazy, slovenly, horrible character" due to manipulations from Scar, so Simba could be overthrown after coming of age. By 1990, producer Thomas Schumacher, who had just completed *The Rescuers Down Under*, decided to attach himself to the project "because lions are cool".<sup>[9]</sup> Schumacher likened the script for *King of the Jungle* to "an animated *National Geographic* special".<sup>[13]</sup>

*Oliver & Company* director George Scribner was the initial director of the film,<sup>[14]</sup> being later joined by Roger Allers, who was the lead story man on *Beauty and the Beast* in October 1991.<sup>[8]</sup> Allers brought with him Brenda Chapman, who would become the head of story.<sup>[9]</sup> Afterwards, several of the lead crew members, including Allers, Scribner, Hahn, Chapman, and production designer Chris Sanders, took a trip to Hell's Gate National Park in Kenya, in order to study and gain an appreciation of the environment for the film.<sup>[15]</sup> After six months of story development work Scribner decided to leave the project, as he clashed with Allers and the producers on their decision to turn the film into a musical, as Scribner's intention was of making a documentary-like film more focused on natural aspects.<sup>[8][16]</sup> Rob Minkoff replaced Scribner,<sup>[15]</sup> and producer Don Hahn joined the production as Schumacher became only an executive producer due to Disney promoting him to Vice President of Development for Feature Animation.<sup>[13]</sup> Hahn found the script unfocused and lacking a clear theme, and after establishing the main theme as "leaving childhood and facing up to the realities of the world", asked for a final retool. Allers, Minkoff, Chapman, and Hahn then rewrote the story across two weeks of meetings with directors Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale, who had just finished *Beauty and the Beast*.<sup>[15]</sup> The script also had its title changed from *King of the Jungle* to *The Lion King*, as the setting was not the jungle but the savannah.<sup>[8]</sup> It was also decided to make Scar and Mufasa brothers since the writers felt that it was much more interesting if the threat came from someone within the family.<sup>[17]</sup>

*The Lion King* was the first Disney animated feature to be an original story, rather than be based on an already existing work. The filmmakers have said that the story of *The Lion King* was inspired by the lives of Joseph and Moses, from the Bible, and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.<sup>[17]</sup> During the summer of 1992, the team was joined by screenwriter Irene Mecchi, with a second screenwriter, Jonathan Roberts, joining a few months later. Mecchi and Roberts took charge of the revision process, fixing unresolved emotional issues in the script and adding a comic business for Pumbaa, Timon, and the hyenas.<sup>[5]</sup> Lyricist Tim Rice worked closely with the writing team, flying to California at least once a month because his songs needed to work in the narrative continuity. Rice's lyrics—which were reworked up to the production's end—were pinned to the storyboards during development.<sup>[15]</sup> Rewrites were frequent, with animator Andreas Deja saying that completed scenes would be delivered, only for the response to be that parts needed to be reanimated because of dialog changes.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Casting

The voice actors were chosen for how they fit and could add to the characters—for instance, James Earl Jones was cast because the directors found his voice "powerful" and similar to a lion's roar.<sup>[18]</sup> Jones commented that during the years of production, Mufasa "became more and more of a dopey dad instead of [a] grand king".<sup>[19]</sup>

Nathan Lane originally auditioned for Zazu, and Ernie Sabella for one of the hyenas. Upon meeting each other at the recording studio, the actors, who at the time both co-starred in *Guys and Dolls*, were asked to record together as hyenas. The directors laughed at their performance and decided to cast them as Timon and Pumbaa.<sup>[18][20]</sup> For the hyenas, the original intention was to reunite Cheech & Chong, but while Cheech Marin accepted to play Banzai, Tommy Chong was unavailable. Thus his role was changed into a female hyena, Shenzi, who was voiced by Whoopi Goldberg.<sup>[12]</sup>

Matthew Broderick was cast as adult Simba early during production, and during the three years of voice acting only recorded with another actor once, and only discovered Moira Kelly voiced Nala at the premiere.<sup>[21]</sup> English actors Tim Curry and Malcolm McDowell were originally considered for the role of Scar,<sup>[22]</sup> however, Curry left the role due to *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York*, and it was ultimately won by English actor Jeremy Irons.<sup>[23]</sup> Irons initially refused the role due to not being comfortable going from the dramatic performance as Claus von Bülow in *Reversal of Fortune* to a comedic role. But once he came in, Irons' performance even inspired the writers to incorporate more of his acting as von Bülow—adding one of that character's lines, "You have no idea"—and animator Andreas Deja to watch both *Reversal of Fortune* and *Damage* to pick up Irons's facial traits and tics.<sup>[19][24]</sup>

## Animation

The development of *The Lion King* coincided with that of *Pocahontas*, which most of the animators of Walt Disney Feature Animation decided to work on instead, believing it would be the more prestigious and successful of the two.<sup>[17]</sup> The story artists also did not have much faith in the project, with Chapman declaring she was reluctant to accept the job "because the story wasn't very good",<sup>[9]</sup> and writer Burny Mattinson saying to co-worker Joe Ranft "I don't know who is going to want to watch that one."<sup>[16]</sup> Most of the leading animators either were doing their first major work supervising a character, or had much interest in animating an animal.<sup>[10]</sup> Thirteen of these supervising animators, both in California and in Florida, were responsible for establishing the personalities and setting the tone for the film's main characters. The animation leads for the main characters included Mark Henn on young Simba, Ruben A. Aquino on adult Simba, Andreas Deja on Scar, Aaron Blaise on young Nala, Anthony DeRosa on adult Nala, and Tony Fucile on Mufasa.<sup>[5]</sup> Nearly 20 minutes of the film, including the "I Just Can't Wait to Be King" sequence,<sup>[12]</sup> was animated at the Disney-MGM Studios facility. More than 600 artists, animators, and technicians contributed to *The Lion King*.<sup>[14]</sup> Weeks before the film was to be released, the 1994 Northridge earthquake shut down the studio and required the animators to finish their work from home.<sup>[25]</sup>

The character animators studied real-life animals for reference, as was done for the 1942 Disney film *Bambi*. Jim Fowler, renowned wildlife expert, visited the studios on several occasions with an assortment of lions and other savannah inhabitants to discuss behavior and help the animators give their drawings authenticity.<sup>[15]</sup> The animators also studied animal movements at the Miami MetroZoo under guidance from wildlife expert Ron Magill.<sup>[26]</sup> The Pride Lands are modeled on the Kenyan national park visited by the crew. Varied focal lengths and lenses were employed to differ from the habitual portrayal of Africa in documentaries—which employ telephoto lenses to shoot the wildlife from a distance. The epic feel drew inspiration from concept studies by artist Hans Bacher—which, following Scribner's request for realism, tried to depict effects such as lens flare—and the works of painters Charles Marion Russell, Frederic Remington and Maxfield Parrish.<sup>[15][27]</sup> Art

"*The Lion King* was considered a little movie because we were going to take some risks. The pitch for the story was a lion cub gets framed for murder by his uncle set to the music of Elton John. People said, 'What? Good luck with that.' But for some reason, the people who ended up on the movie were highly passionate about it and motivated."

Don Hahn<sup>[20]</sup>

director Andy Gaskill and the filmmakers sought to give the film a sense of grand sweep and epic scale similar to David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*. Gaskill explained: "We wanted audiences to sense the vastness of the savannah and to feel the dust and the breeze swaying through the grass. In other words, to get a real sense of nature and to feel as if they were there. It's very difficult to capture something as subtle as a sunrise or rain falling on a pond, but those are the kinds of images that we tried to get." The filmmakers also watched the films of John Ford and other filmmakers, which also influenced the design of the film.<sup>[28]</sup>

Because the characters were not anthropomorphized, all the animators had to learn to draw four-legged animals, and the story and character development was done through the use of longer shots following the characters.<sup>[12]</sup>

Computers helped the filmmakers present their vision in new ways. For the "wildebeest stampede" sequence, several distinct wildebeest characters were created in a 3D computer program, multiplied into hundreds, cel shaded to look like drawn animation, and given randomized paths down a mountainside to simulate the real, unpredictable movement of a herd.<sup>[29]</sup> Five specially trained animators and technicians spent more than two years creating the two-and-a-half-minute stampede.<sup>[5]</sup> The CAPS helped simulate camera movements such as tracking shots, and was employed in coloring, lighting, and particle effects.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Music

Lyricist Tim Rice, who was working with composer Alan Menken on songs for *Aladdin*, was invited to write the songs, and accepted on the condition of finding a composing partner. As Menken was unavailable, the producers accepted Rice's suggestion of Elton John,<sup>[18]</sup> after Rice's invitation of ABBA fell through due to Benny Andersson being busy with the musical *Kristina från Duvemåla*.<sup>[10]</sup> John expressed an interest in writing "ultra-pop songs that kids would like; then adults can go and see those movies and get just as much pleasure out of them", mentioning a possible influence of *The Jungle Book*, where he felt the "music was so funny and appealed to kids and adults".<sup>[30]</sup>

John and Rice wrote five original songs for the film ("Circle of Life", "I Just Can't Wait to Be King", "Be Prepared", "Hakuna Matata" and "Can You Feel the Love Tonight"), with John's performance of "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" playing over the end credits.<sup>[31]</sup> The IMAX and DVD releases added another song, "The Morning Report", based on a song discarded during development that eventually featured in the live musical version of *The Lion King*.<sup>[32]</sup> The score was composed by Hans Zimmer, who was hired based on his work in two films in African settings, *The Power of One* and *A World Apart*,<sup>[15]</sup> and supplemented the score with traditional African music and choir elements arranged by Lebo M.<sup>[31]</sup> Zimmer's partners Mark Mancina and Jay Rifkin helped with arrangements and song production.<sup>[33]</sup>

The *Lion King* original motion picture soundtrack was released by Walt Disney Records on April 27, 1994. It was the fourth-best-selling album of the year on the *Billboard* 200 and the top-selling soundtrack.<sup>[34]</sup> It is the only soundtrack for an animated film to be certified Diamond (10× platinum) by the Recording Industry Association of America. Zimmer's complete instrumental score for the film was never originally given a full release, until the soundtrack's commemorative 20th anniversary re-release in 2014.<sup>[35]</sup> *The Lion King* also inspired the 1995 release *Rhythm of the Pride Lands*, with eight songs by Zimmer, Mancina, and Lebo M.<sup>[36]</sup>

The use of the song "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" in a scene with Timon and Pumbaa led to disputes between Disney and the family of South African Solomon Linda, who composed the song (originally titled "Mbube") in 1939. In July 2004, Linda's family filed suit, seeking \$1.6 million in royalties from Disney. In February 2006, Linda's heirs reached a legal settlement with Abilene Music, who held the worldwide rights and had licensed the song to Disney for an undisclosed amount of money.<sup>[37]</sup>

## Release

For *The Lion King*'s first film trailer, Disney opted to feature a single scene, the entire opening sequence with the song "Circle of Life". Buena Vista Pictures Distribution president Dick Cook said the decision was made for such an approach because "we were all so taken by the beauty and majesty of this piece that we felt like it was probably one of the best four minutes of film that we've seen", and Don Hahn added that "Circle of Life" worked as a trailer as it "came off so strong, and so good, and ended with such a bang". The trailer was released in November 1993, accompanying *The Three Musketeers* and *Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit* in theaters; by then, only a third of *The Lion King* had been completed.<sup>[38][39]</sup> Audience reaction was enthusiastic, causing Hahn to have some initial concerns as he became afraid of not living up to the expectations raised by the preview.<sup>[38]</sup> Prior to the film's release, Disney did 11 test screenings.<sup>[40]</sup>

*The Lion King* had a limited release in North America on Wednesday, June 15, 1994, playing in only two theaters, El Capitan Theater in Los Angeles and Radio City Music Hall in New York City<sup>[41]</sup> featuring live shows with ticket prices up to \$30.<sup>[42]</sup>

The wide release followed on June 24, 1994, in 2,550 screens. The digital surround sound of the film led many of those theaters to implement Dolby Laboratories' newest sound systems.<sup>[43]</sup>

Upon release, *The Lion King* was accompanied by an extensive marketing campaign which included tie-ins with Burger King, Mattel, Kodak, Nestlé and Payless ShoeSource, and various merchandise,<sup>[44]</sup> accounting 186 licensed products.<sup>[45][46]</sup> In 1994, Disney earned approximately \$1 billion with products based on the film,<sup>[47]</sup> with \$214 million for *Lion King* toys during Christmas 1994 alone.<sup>[48]</sup>

### Localization

When the movie was first released in 1994, it numbered 28 versions overall in as many languages and dialects worldwide, including a special Zulu version made specifically for the movie in South Africa, where a Disney USA team went to find the Zulu voice-actors. This is not just the only Zulu dubbing ever made by Disney, but also the only one made in any African language, other than Arabic.<sup>[49][50]</sup> *The Lion King* marks also the first time a special dubbing is released in honour of a Disney movie background, but not the last: in 2016 the movie *Moana* received a special Tahitian-language version,<sup>[51]</sup> followed in 2017 by a Māori version,<sup>[52]</sup> and in 2018 by a Hawaiian version;<sup>[53]</sup> in 2019 the movie *Frozen 2* was dubbed into Northern Sami, even though the first movie wasn't.<sup>[54][55]</sup>

## Home media

*The Lion King* was first released on VHS and laserdisc in the United States on March 3, 1995, under Disney's "Masterpiece Collection" video series. The VHS tape contained a special preview for Walt Disney Pictures' then-upcoming animated film *Pocahontas*, in which the title character (voiced by Judy Kuhn) sings the musical number "Colors of the Wind".<sup>[56]</sup> In addition, Deluxe Editions of both formats were released. The VHS Deluxe Edition included the film, an exclusive lithograph of Rafiki and Simba (in some editions), a commemorative "Circle of Life" epigraph, six concept art lithographs, another tape with the half-hour TV special *The Making of The Lion King*, and a certificate of authenticity. The CAV laserdisc Deluxe Edition also contained the film, six concept art lithographs and *The Making of The Lion King*, and added storyboards, character design artwork, concept art, rough animation, and a directors' commentary that the VHS edition did not have, on a total of four double sided discs. The VHS tape quickly became the best-selling videotape of all time: 4.5 million tapes were sold on the first day<sup>[57]</sup> and ultimately sales totaled more than 30 million<sup>[58]</sup> before these home video versions went into moratorium in 1997.<sup>[59]</sup> The VHS releases have sold a total of 32 million units in North America,<sup>[60]</sup> and grossed \$520 million in sales revenue.<sup>[61]</sup> In addition, 23 million units were shipped overseas to international markets.<sup>[62]</sup>

On October 7, 2003, the film was re-released on VHS and released on DVD for the first time, titled *The Lion King: Platinum Edition*, as part of Disney's Platinum Edition line of animated classic DVDs. The DVD release featured two versions of the film on the first disc, a remastered version created for the 2002 IMAX release and an edited version of the IMAX release purporting to be the original 1994 theatrical version.<sup>[63]</sup> A second disc, with bonus features, was also included in the DVD release. The film's soundtrack was provided both in its original Dolby 5.1 track and in a new Disney Enhanced Home Theater Mix, making this one of the first Disney DVDs so equipped.<sup>[64]</sup> By means of seamless branching, the film could be viewed either with or without a newly created scene — a short conversation in the film replaced with a complete song ("The Morning Report"). A Special Collector's Gift Set was also released, containing the DVD set, five exclusive lithographed character portraits (new sketches created and signed by the original character animators), and an introductory book entitled *The Journey*.<sup>[59]</sup> The Platinum Edition of *The Lion King* featured changes made to the film during its IMAX re-release, including re-drawn crocodiles in the "I Just Can't Wait to Be King" sequence as well as other alterations.<sup>[63]</sup> More than two million copies of the Platinum Edition DVD and VHS units were sold on the first day of release.<sup>[57]</sup> A DVD box set of the three *The Lion King* films (in two-disc Special Edition formats) was released on December 6, 2004. In January 2005, the film, along with the sequels, went back into moratorium.<sup>[65]</sup> The DVD releases have sold a total of 11.9 million units and grossed \$220 million.<sup>[66]</sup>

Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment released the Diamond Edition of *The Lion King* on October 4, 2011.<sup>[67]</sup> This marks the first time that the film has been released in high-definition Blu-ray and on Blu-ray 3D.<sup>[67][68]</sup> The initial release was produced in three different packages: a two-disc version with Blu-ray and DVD; a four-disc version with Blu-ray, DVD, Blu-ray 3D, and digital copy; and an eight-disc box set that also includes the sequels *The Lion King II: Simba's Pride* and *The Lion King 1½*.<sup>[67][68]</sup> A standalone single-disc DVD release also followed on November 15, 2011.<sup>[67]</sup> The Diamond Edition topped the Blu-ray charts with over 1.5 million copies sold.<sup>[69]</sup> The film sold 3.83 million Blu-ray units in total, leading to a \$101.14 million income.<sup>[70]</sup>

*The Lion King* was once again released to home media as part of the *Walt Disney Signature Collection* first released on Digital HD on August 15, 2017, and on Blu-ray and DVD on August 29, 2017.<sup>[71]</sup>

*The Lion King* was released on Ultra HD Blu-ray and 4K digital download on December 3, 2018.<sup>[72]</sup> It was the first traditionally animated, "classic" Disney film to be re-released in 4K.

## Reception

### Box office

*The Lion King* grossed \$422.8 million in North America and \$545.7 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$968.5 million.<sup>[2]</sup> It is currently the 46th highest-grossing film of all time,<sup>[73]</sup> the eleventh highest-grossing animated film of all time worldwide and the third highest-grossing film of Walt Disney Animation Studios (behind *Frozen* and *Zootopia*).<sup>[74]</sup> The film was also the highest-grossing motion picture of 1994 worldwide.<sup>[75]</sup> After its initial run, having earned \$763.4 million,<sup>[76]</sup> it ranked as the second-highest-grossing film of all time worldwide, behind *Jurassic Park*.<sup>[77]</sup> It held the record for the highest-grossing animated feature film (in North America, outside North America, and worldwide) until it was surpassed by the computer animated *Finding Nemo* (2003). With the earnings of the 3D run, *The Lion King* surpassed all the aforementioned films but *Toy Story 3* to rank as the second-highest-grossing animated film worldwide—later dropping to ninth, and then tenth, surpassed by its photorealistic CGI remake counterpart—and it remains the highest-grossing hand-drawn animated film.<sup>[78]</sup> It is also the biggest animated movie of the last 50 years in terms of estimated attendance.<sup>[79]</sup> *The Lion King* was also the highest-grossing G-rated film in the United States from 1994 to 2003 and again from 2011 to 2019 until its total was surpassed by the computer-animated *Toy Story 4* in August 2019 (unadjusted for inflation).<sup>[80]</sup>

### Original theatrical run

In the first two days of it limited release in two theaters it grossed \$622,277 and for the following weekend it earned \$1,586,753, standing at the tenth place of the box office ranking.<sup>[81]</sup> The average of \$793,377 per theater stands as the largest ever achieved during a weekend.<sup>[82]</sup> The film grossed \$3,766,690 from the 2 screens in just 10 days.<sup>[83]</sup>

When it opened wide, *The Lion King* grossed \$40.9 million — which at the time was the fourth biggest opening weekend ever and the highest sum for a Disney film — to top the weekend box office.<sup>[14]</sup> It also earned a rare "A+" rating from CinemaScore.<sup>[84]</sup> In September 1994, Disney pulled the film from movie theaters and announced it would be re-released during Thanksgiving in order to take advantage of the holiday season.<sup>[85]</sup> By the end of its original theatrical run, in spring 1995, it had earned \$312.9 million,<sup>[2]</sup> being the second-highest-grossing 1994 film in North America behind *Forrest Gump*.<sup>[86]</sup> Box Office Mojo estimates that the film sold over 74 million tickets in the US in its initial theatrical run,<sup>[87]</sup> equivalent to \$812.1 million adjusted for inflation in 2018.<sup>[88]</sup>



Outside of North America, the film grossed \$358 million in 1994, before grossing \$103 million worldwide in 1995.<sup>[89]</sup> It went on to earn \$455.8 million overseas during its initial run, for a worldwide total of \$768.6 million.<sup>[76]</sup>

## Re-releases

### IMAX and large-format

The film was re-issued on December 25, 2002, for IMAX and large-format theaters. Don Hahn explained that eight years after *The Lion King* got its original release, "there was a whole new generation of kids who haven't really seen it, particularly on the big screen." Given the film had already been digitally archived during production, the restoration process was easier, while also providing many scenes with enhancements that covered up original deficiencies.<sup>[40][90]</sup> An enhanced sound mix was also provided to, as Hahn explained, "make the audience feel like they're in the middle of the movie."<sup>[40]</sup> On its first weekend, *The Lion King* made \$2.7 million from 66 locations, a \$27,664 per theater average. This run ended with \$15.7 million on May 30, 2003.<sup>[91]</sup>

### 3D conversion

In 2011, *The Lion King* was converted to 3D for a two-week limited theatrical re-issue and subsequent 3D Blu-ray release.<sup>[67][92]</sup> The film opened at the number one spot on Friday, September 16, 2011, with \$8.9 million<sup>[93]</sup> and finished the weekend with \$30.2 million, ranking number one at the box office. This made *The Lion King* the first re-issue release to earn the number-one slot at the American weekend box office since the re-issue of *Return of the Jedi* in March 1997.<sup>[78]</sup> The film also achieved the fourth-highest September opening weekend of all time.<sup>[94]</sup> It held off very well on its second weekend, again earning first place at the box office with a 27 percent decline to \$21.9 million.<sup>[95]</sup> Most box-office observers had expected the film to fall about 50 percent in its second weekend and were also expecting *Moneyball* to be at first place.<sup>[96]</sup>

After its initial box-office success, many theaters decided to continue to show the film for more than two weeks, even though its 3D Blu-ray release was scheduled for two-and-a-half weeks after its theatrical release.<sup>[95]</sup> In North America, the 3D re-release ended its run in theaters on January 12, 2012, with a gross \$94.2 million. Outside North America, it earned \$83.4 million.<sup>[97]</sup> The successful 3D re-release of *The Lion King* made Disney and Pixar plan 3D theatrical re-releases of *Beauty and the Beast*, *Finding Nemo*, *Monsters, Inc.*, and *The Little Mermaid* during 2012 and 2013.<sup>[98]</sup> However, none of the re-releases of the first three films achieved the enormous success of *The Lion King 3D* and the theatrical re-release of *The Little Mermaid* was ultimately cancelled.<sup>[99]</sup> In 2012, Ray Subers of Box Office Mojo wrote that the reason why the 3D version of *The Lion King* succeeded was because, "the notion of a 3D re-release was still fresh and exciting, and *The Lion King (3D)* felt timely given the movie's imminent Blu-ray release. Audiences have been hit with three 3D re-releases in the year since, meaning the novelty value has definitely worn off."<sup>[100]</sup>

## Critical response

*The Lion King* was released to critical acclaim. On Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds a rating of 93%, based on 128 reviews, with an average rating of 8.39/10. It also ranked 56th on their "Top 100 Animation Movies".<sup>[101]</sup> The site's critical consensus reads, "Emotionally stirring, richly drawn, and beautifully animated, *The Lion King* stands tall within Disney's pantheon of classic family films."<sup>[102]</sup> On Metacritic, the film has a score of 88 out of 100, based on 30 critics, indicating "universal acclaim".<sup>[103]</sup> CinemaScore reported that audiences gave the film a rare "A+" grade.<sup>[104]</sup>

Roger Ebert gave the film three and a half stars out of a possible four and called it "a superbly drawn animated feature" and wrote in his print review, "The saga of Simba, which in its deeply buried origins owes something to Greek tragedy and certainly to *Hamlet*, is a learning experience as well as an entertainment."<sup>[105]</sup> On the television program *Siskel & Ebert*, the film was praised but received a mixed reaction when compared to previous Disney films. Ebert and his partner Gene Siskel both gave the film a "Thumbs Up" but Siskel said that it was not as good as earlier films such as *Beauty and the Beast* and was "a good film, not a great one".<sup>[106]</sup> Hal Hinson of *The Washington Post* called it "an impressive, almost daunting achievement" and felt that the film was "spectacular in a manner that has nearly become commonplace with Disney's feature-length animations", but was less enthusiastic toward the end of his review saying, "Shakespearean in tone, epic in scope, it seems more appropriate for grown-ups than for kids. If truth be told, even for adults it is downright strange."<sup>[107]</sup>

Owen Gleiberman of *Entertainment Weekly* praised the film, writing that it "has the resonance to stand not just as a terrific cartoon but as an emotionally pungent movie".<sup>[108]</sup> *Rolling Stone* film critic Peter Travers praised the film and felt that it was "a hugely entertaining blend of music, fun, and eye-popping thrills, though it doesn't lack for heart".<sup>[109]</sup> James Berardinelli from ReelViews praised the film saying, "With each new animated release, Disney seems to be expanding its already-broad horizons a little more. *The Lion King* is the most mature (in more than one sense) of these films, and there clearly has been a conscious effort to please adults as much as children. Happily, for those of us who generally stay far away from 'cartoons', they have succeeded."<sup>[110]</sup>

Some reviewers still had problems with the film's narrative. The staff of *TV Guide* wrote that while *The Lion King* was technically proficient and entertaining, it "offers a less memorable song score than did the previous hits, and a hasty, unsatisfying dramatic resolution."<sup>[111]</sup> *The New Yorker's* Terrence Rafferty considered that despite the good animation, the story felt like "manipulat[ing] our responses at will", as "Between traumas, the movie serves up soothingly banal musical numbers and silly, rambunctious comedy".<sup>[112]</sup>

## Accolades

*The Lion King* received four Golden Globe Award and Oscar nominations. The film would go on to win two Golden Globes; for Best Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy and Best Original Score,<sup>[113]</sup> as well as two Academy Awards, for Best Original Score (Hans Zimmer) and Best Original Song with "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" by Elton John and Tim Rice.<sup>[114]</sup> The songs "Circle of Life" and "Hakuna Matata" were

also nominated.<sup>[114]</sup> "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" also won the Grammy Award for Best Male Vocal Performance.<sup>[115]</sup> *The Lion King* also won Annie Awards for Best Animated Feature, Best Achievement in Voice Acting (for Jeremy Irons) and Best Individual Achievement for Story Contribution in the Field of Animation.<sup>[116]</sup>

At the Saturn Awards, the film was nominated in two categories, Best Fantasy Film and Best Performance by a Younger Actor although it did not win in either category.<sup>[117]</sup> The film also received two nominations at the British Academy Film Awards, for Best Sound as well as the Anthony Asquith Award for Film Music although it lost in both categories to *Speed* and *Backbeat* respectively.<sup>[118]</sup> The film received two BMI Film & TV Awards for Film Music and Most Performed Song with "Can You Feel the Love Tonight."<sup>[119]</sup> At the 1995 MTV Movie Awards, the film received nominations for Best Villain and Best Song, though it lost in both categories.<sup>[120]</sup> *The Lion King* won the Kids' Choice Award for Favorite Movie at the 1995 Kids' Choice Awards.<sup>[121]</sup>

In 2008, *The Lion King* was ranked as the 319th greatest film ever made by *Empire* magazine,<sup>[122]</sup> and in June 2011, *TIME* named it one of "The 25 All-TIME Best Animated Films".<sup>[123]</sup> In June 2008, the American Film Institute listed *The Lion King* as the fourth best film in the animation genre in its AFI's 10 Top 10 list,<sup>[124]</sup> having previously put "Hakuna Matata" as 99th on its AFI's 100 Years...100 Songs ranking.<sup>[125]</sup>

In 2016, the film was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".

## Controversies

### *Kimba the White Lion*

Certain elements of the film were considered to bear a resemblance to Osamu Tezuka's 1960s Japanese anime television series, *Jungle Emperor* (known as *Kimba the White Lion* in the United States), with characters having similar analogs, and various individual scenes being similar in composition to the show. Matthew Broderick believed initially that he was, in fact, working on an American version of *Kimba* since he was familiar with the Japanese original.<sup>[126]</sup> *The Lion King* director Roger Allers claimed complete unfamiliarity with the show until the movie was almost completed, and did not remember it being ever mentioned during development.<sup>[127]</sup> However, Allers had previously lived in Tokyo and worked in animation there during the 1980s, when Tezuka had already become known as "Japan's Walt Disney" and a remake of *Kimba* was airing on prime time television.<sup>[128]</sup> Co-director Rob Minkoff also stated that he was unfamiliar with it.<sup>[129][130]</sup> Minkoff also observed that whenever a story is based in Africa, it is "not unusual to have characters like a baboon, a bird or hyenas."<sup>[129]</sup> Yoshihiro Shimizu, of Tezuka Productions, which created the anime series *Kimba the White Lion*, has refuted rumors that the studio was paid hush money by Disney but explains that they rejected urges from within the industry to sue because, "we're a small, weak company. It wouldn't be worth it anyway ... Disney's lawyers are among the top twenty in the world!"<sup>[131]</sup> Fred Ladd, who was involved early on with importing *Kimba* and other Japanese anime into America for NBC, expressed incredulity that Disney's people could remain ignorant.<sup>[132][130]</sup> Ladd stated there was at least one animator remembered by his colleagues as being an avid *Kimba* fan and being quite vociferous about Disney's conduct during production.<sup>[132]</sup> Animators Tom Sito and Mark Kausler, who both have story credits, have admitted to watching *Kimba*, and assumed many of their colleagues had too, especially if they grew up in the 1960s. However, Sito insisted there was no conscious effort to derive work from *Kimba*, and Kausler emphasized Disney's own *Bambi* as being their model during development.<sup>[133][134]</sup>



Screenshot from an early presentation reel of *The Lion King* that shows a white lion cub and a butterfly.

The 1994 release of *The Lion King* drew a protest in Japan, where *Kimba* and its creator Osamu Tezuka are cultural icons. 488 Japanese cartoonists and animators, led by manga author Machiko Satonaka, signed a petition accusing Disney of plagiarism and demanding that they give due credit to Tezuka.<sup>[135][136]</sup> The controversy surrounding *Kimba* and *The Lion King* was parodied in a 1995 episode of *The Simpsons*, where a lion appearing in the clouds is saying, "You must avenge my death, Kimba... I mean, Simba."<sup>[137]</sup>

### Other controversies

Protests were raised against one scene where it appears as if the word "SEX" might have been embedded into the dust flying in the sky when Simba flops down,<sup>[138]</sup> which conservative activist Donald Wildmon asserted was a subliminal message intended to promote sexual promiscuity. Animator Tom Sito has stated that the letters spell "SFX" (a common abbreviation for "special effects"), not with an "E" instead of the "F", and were intended as an innocent "signature" created by the effects animation team.<sup>[139]</sup>



The alleged "SEX" frame.

Hyena biologists protested against the animal's portrayal, though the complaints may have been somewhat tongue-in-cheek. One hyena researcher, who had organized the animators' visit to the University of California, Berkeley's Field Station for the Study of Behavior, Ecology, and Reproduction, where they would observe and sketch captive hyenas,<sup>[140]</sup> listed "boycott *The Lion King*" in an article listing ways to help preserve hyenas in the wild, and later "joke[d] that *The Lion King* set back hyena conservation efforts."<sup>[141][142]</sup> Even so, the film was also credited with "spark[ing] an interest" in hyenas at the Berkeley center.<sup>[142]</sup>

The film has also been criticized for race and class issues. The hyenas have also been seen as reflecting negative stereotypes of black and Latino ethnic communities.<sup>[143][144][145][146]</sup> The film has also been criticized for advancing a fascist narrative in its portrayal of the lion kingdom and the circle of life where "only the strong and the beautiful triumph, and the powerless survive only by serving the strong."<sup>[147]</sup>



## Sequels and spin-offs

The first *Lion King*-related animated projects involved the characters of Timon and Pumbaa. First, the duo starred in the animated short "Stand by Me", featuring Timon singing the eponymous song, which was released in 1995 accompanying the theatrical release of *Tom and Huck*. The duo then received their own animated series, *The Lion King's Timon & Pumbaa*, which ran for three seasons and 85 episodes between 1995 and 1999. Ernie Sabella continued to voice Pumbaa, while Timon was voiced by Quinton Flynn and Kevin Schon in addition to Nathan Lane.<sup>[148]</sup>

Disney released two direct-to-video films related to *The Lion King*. The first was sequel *The Lion King II: Simba's Pride*, released in 1998 on VHS. The film centers around Simba and Nala's daughter, Kiara, who falls in love with Kovu, a male lion who was raised in a pride of Scar's followers, the Outsiders.<sup>[149]</sup> *The Lion King 1½*, another direct-to-video *Lion King* film, saw its release in 2004. It is a prequel in showing how Timon and Pumbaa met each other, and also a parallel in that it also depicts what the characters were retconned to have done during the events of the original movie.<sup>[150]</sup>

In June 2014, it was announced that a new TV series based on the film would be released called *The Lion Guard*, featuring Kion, the second-born cub of Simba and Nala. *The Lion Guard* is a sequel to *The Lion King* and takes place during the time-gap within *The Lion King II: Simba's Pride*,<sup>[151]</sup> with the last 2 episodes of Season 3 taking place after the events of that film. It was first broadcast on Disney Channel as a television film titled *The Lion Guard: Return of the Roar* in November 2015 before airing as a series on Disney Junior in January 2016.<sup>[152][153]</sup>

## CGI remake

In September 2016, following the critical and financial success of *The Jungle Book*, Walt Disney Pictures announced that they were developing a CGI remake of *The Lion King* by the same name, with Jon Favreau directing.<sup>[154]</sup> The following month, Jeff Nathanson was hired to write the script for the film.<sup>[155]</sup> Favreau originally planned shoot it back to back with the sequel to *The Jungle Book*.<sup>[154][156]</sup> However, it was reported in early 2017 that the latter film was put on hold in order for Favreau to instead focus mainly on *The Lion King*.<sup>[157]</sup> In February 2017, Favreau announced that Donald Glover had been cast as Simba and that James Earl Jones would be reprising the role of Mufasa.<sup>[158]</sup> The following month, it was reported that Beyoncé was Favreau's top choice to voice Nala, but she had not accepted the role yet due to a pregnancy.<sup>[159]</sup> In April 2017, Billy Eichner and Seth Rogen joined the film as Timon and Pumbaa, respectively.<sup>[160]</sup> Two months later, John Oliver was cast as Zazu.<sup>[161]</sup> At the end of July 2017, Beyoncé had reportedly entered final negotiations to play Nala and contribute the soundtrack as well.<sup>[162]</sup> The following month, Chiwetel Ejiofor entered talks to play Scar.<sup>[163]</sup> Later on, Alfre Woodard and John Kani joined the film as Sarabi and Rafiki, respectively.<sup>[164][165]</sup> On November 1, 2017, Beyoncé and Chiwetel Ejiofor were officially confirmed to voice Nala and Scar with Eric Andre, Florence Kasumba, Keegan-Michael Key, JD McCrary and Shahadi Wright Joseph joining the cast as the voices of Azizi, Shenzi and Kamari, young Simba and young Nala, respectively while Hans Zimmer would return to score the film's music.<sup>[166][167][168][169][170]</sup> On November 28, 2017, it was reported that Elton John had signed onto the project to rework his musical compositions from the original film.<sup>[171]</sup>

Production for the film began in May 2017.<sup>[172]</sup> It was released on July 19, 2019.<sup>[173]</sup>

## Video games

Along with the film release, three different video games based on *The Lion King* were released by Virgin Interactive in December 1994. The main title was developed by Westwood Studios, and published for PC and Amiga computers and the consoles SNES and Sega Mega Drive/Genesis. Dark Technologies created the Game Boy version, while Syrox Developments handled the Master System and Game Gear version.<sup>[174]</sup> The film and sequel *Simba's Pride* later inspired another game, Torus Games' *The Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure* (2000) for the Game Boy Color and PlayStation.<sup>[175]</sup> Timon and Pumbaa also appeared in *Timon & Pumbaa's Jungle Games*, a 1995 PC game collection of puzzle games by 7th Level, later ported to the SNES by Tiertex.<sup>[176]</sup>

The Square Enix series *Kingdom Hearts* features Simba as a recurring summon,<sup>[177][178]</sup> as well as a playable in the *Lion King* world, known as Pride Lands, in *Kingdom Hearts II*. There the plotline is loosely related to the later part of the original film, with all of the main characters except Zazu and Sarabi.<sup>[179]</sup> *The Lion King* also provides one of the worlds featured in the 2011 action-adventure game *Disney Universe*,<sup>[180]</sup> and Simba was featured in the Nintendo DS title *Disney Friends* (2008).<sup>[181]</sup>

## Stage adaptations

Walt Disney Theatrical produced a musical stage adaptation of the same name, which premiered in Minneapolis, Minnesota in July 1997, and later opened on Broadway in October 1997 at the New Amsterdam Theatre. *The Lion King* musical was directed by Julie Taymor<sup>[182]</sup> and featured songs from both the movie and *Rhythm of the Pride Lands*, along with three new compositions by Elton John and Tim Rice. Mark Mancina did the musical arrangements and new orchestral tracks.<sup>[183]</sup> The musical became one of the most successful in Broadway history, winning six Tony Awards including Best Musical, and despite moving to the Minskoff Theatre in 2006, is still running to this day in New York, becoming the third longest-running show and highest grossing Broadway production in history. The show's financial success led to adaptations all over the world.<sup>[13][184][185]</sup>

*The Lion King* inspired two attractions retelling the story of the film at Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. The first, "The Legend of the Lion King", featured a recreation of the film through life-size puppets of its characters, and ran from 1994 to 2002 at Magic Kingdom in Walt Disney World.<sup>[186]</sup> Another that is still running is the live-action 30-minute musical revue of the movie, "Festival of the Lion King", which incorporates the musical numbers into gymnastic routines with live actors, along with animatronic puppets of Simba and Pumbaa and a costumed actor as

Timon. The attraction opened in April 1998 at Disney World's Animal Kingdom,<sup>[187]</sup> and in September 2005 in Hong Kong Disneyland's Adventureland.<sup>[188]</sup> A similar version under the name "The Legend of the Lion King" was featured in Disneyland Paris from 2004 to 2009.<sup>[189][190]</sup>

## See also

- Cultural depictions of lions
- Hamlet*

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## External links

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