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Italian musical 'Pinocchio' to debut in Seoul



In recent years, musicals from countries like the Czech Republic and Russia have been making inroads into the domestic musical market long-dominated by Broadway and West End hits. The Czech shows "Hamlet" and "The Three Musketeers" introduced in 2008 and earlier this year received a positive response from the audience for their excellent musicality.

Experts say that shows from non-English-speaking countries, especially European, are doing quite well, appealing to the Korean audience with their unique style - their focus on music rather than plot, for example - that differentiates them from U.S. or British shows.

Yet, such shows still have a relatively smaller audience size compared to mainstream productions like "Mamma Mia" or "Chicago," mostly due to their unfamiliarity.

Adding to the variety of nationalities, an Italian musical is making its debut in Korea next month.

"Pinocchio" will be shown from Aug. 7-23 at Seoul Arts Center.

The show based on the fairytale classic "The Adventures of Pinocchio" by Carlo Collodi combines factors of traditional Italian operas with the spectacles of Broadway musicals. It has already proven its success in Europe, touring more than 20 nations since premiering in 2003, according to a spokesperson for SMI Entertainment, which organized the performance.

It is notable that the upcoming performance is the show's first tour outside Europe.

The show's music, which has touches of Italian sensitivity, has been a major factor behind its popularity, the SMI spokesperson said. Korean soprano Jo Su-mi highly praised the show after watching it in Rome and strongly suggested bringing it here.

Starting off with a rock ballad, the musical will feature such diverse genres of music as hip-hop, Cansone, traditional Italian pop and even Latin. The tunes were composed by well-known Italian pop duo, I Pooh.

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"The creativeness of the show, meanwhile, was maximized by director Saverio Marconi, a popular Italian film director, as well as the sophisticated stage design, vivid-colored diverse costumes and make-up, plus various shifts in scenes," the SMI spokesperson said.

Tickets run from 40,000 won to 150,000 won. For further information, call (02) 3461-0976 or go to www.musicalpinocchio.com

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