

The music in Minnie

A new summer festival at Disneyland Paris is bringing big-screen soundtracks to life, writes **Lauren McCarthy**



music has the power to unite people and to conjure up memories of long-forgotten moments in time – but I hadn't realised how moving this could be until I tore my eyes away from the live performance of *Under the Sea* from Disney film *The Little Mermaid* to watch friends and families of all ages dancing together to the instrumental song.

As I joined the crowds gathered for the launch of the new Disney Music Festival, I realised music has a big part to play in why I'm such a big Disney fan. After 10 trips across both Disneyland Paris and Walt Disney World in Florida, I've always struggled to explain the overwhelming joy I feel when visiting the parks as an adult – but from the moment

I step through the gates, I am surrounded by songs from my favourite childhood films and familiar ride soundtracks such as *It's a Small World*. And at this summer festival in Disneyland Paris, I heard them played live on saxophone, drums, violin and many more instruments that made the nostalgic memories come flooding back.

FESTIVAL FEVER

The Disney Music Festival launched at the end of April and runs daily until September 7. It features a line-up of more than a dozen live concerts and musical 'encounters' every day including Donald and Daisy's *Accordionist*, Miguel's *Fiesta Latina*, Musical Meet-up with Rapunzel and Flynn, Timon's *Matadance* and more. Shows run from early in the morning to late at night, ➤

Minnie's Marching Band,
Disney Music Festival
Disneyland Paris/Marie Flament

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ASK THE expert

Louisa Kriouche-Leroy,
show director,
Disney Music Festival



What was the inspiration behind the musical event?
We wanted to do something around the music that brings people memories of joy with friends and family. We always have music in our lives and in the UK, you have multiple music festivals – so we said let's bring our own music festival to Disneyland Paris.

What makes the Disney Music Festival different from other shows and parades that are on regularly at the parks?

The live music makes such a difference. Disney music is iconic all around the world and we know songs from the movies from when we are very young. [Often, people] want to see two minutes of a show and move to another one but they stay and are hypnotised by the live music – it's such magic. During the day, you have 20 hours of continuous shows and to make it all work, we have a 200-person team.

What advice would you offer to get the most out of the experience?

Don't miss the Grand Orchestra Finale because all the casts are in it. So if you didn't catch the shows during the day, come at 7.30pm and you will have all the shows of the day represented.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Moana on stage with her musicians; writer Lauren McCarthy; Chip and Dale; Mary Poppins and Bert, with the Pearly Band

PICTURES: Disneyland Paris/Marie Flament



so children with early bedtimes can see plenty of live music during the day. The festival spirit even extends to the decorations across Disneyland Park and much-loved characters dressed in sparkly, radiant costumes that shine bright even on a cloudy day.

Disney songs are well known and recognised by different generations. One of the key selling points for parents or even grandparents is that the festival includes Disney classics from before 1970 through to modern-day songs from films such as *Frozen* and *Moana*.

One of my favourite shows was the Disney Music Hits Concert, a pop-rock event performed four times a day in the Videopolis Theatre. Even though I couldn't understand the sections in French, the energy from the performers made me want to get up to dance with them anyway. The finale sees bubbles and confetti streamers float down from the ceiling, which left every child in the audience looking up in awe as they danced to Chip and Dale's DJ set.

MINNIE ON THE MARCH

While taking a break from the rides, I strolled down Main Street USA and caught one of the five daily performances from Minnie's Marching Band. Seeing Minnie Mouse leading a troupe of trombonists, saxophonists, percussionists and even a sousaphone player marching proudly behind her while playing songs from the films *Frozen*, *Encanto* and *Beauty and the Beast* was a true highlight.

The final Disney Music Festival show of the day was The Grand Orchestra Finale at 7.30pm, which

took place, fittingly, in front of Sleeping Beauty Castle. Goofy, dressed in the glittering black and blue bow tie and tails of a conductor, complete with music note motifs, opened the show by directing the water fountains to dance in sync with music. After the cast from each of the day's shows had performed a reprise of their various musical numbers, Mickey Mouse emerged to conduct a closing performance of Disney Music Festival anthem, *Viva La Musique*.

Disney songs always find a way of getting stuck in your head, but this specially written track is so full of emotion, I think I will find myself singing along to *Viva La Musique* all summer – and reminding myself of the new memories I've made every time I hear it. **TW**

BOOK IT

Disneyland Paris offers a three-night stay at Disney Hotel New York – The Art of Marvel, including tickets to the parks and all Disney Music Festival performances, from £2,641 in total, for two adults and two children (aged three to 11) sharing a Superior Room with Garden View between July 7 and August 31. Book by June 1 for a bonus gift card worth €150. disneytravelagents.co.uk

Eurostar operates from St Pancras International to Paris Gare Du Nord, with one-way fares starting from £78. Children aged four to 11 get 30%-50% off the standard fare; under-fours travel free. eurostar.com