

THE BELL – a Hans Christian Andersen Musical

*The Triumph of Goodness *The Victory of Genius*

Hans Christian Andersen is Ready to Rock the World

Andersen's fairytale "The Bell" is re-imagined as a rock musical by Danish composer Johnny Runner and ready to tour the world.

A Scandinavian media darling at the age of 9 and member of a 70s-era major label boy-band by 12, Danish musician/composer Johnny Runner now celebrates his 50th year in showbiz with the release of *The Bell*, his new rock musical which is the product of 25 years of blood, sweat and tears invested in original songwriting.

"I have spent \$500,000 out of my own pocket, sold my house and cashed in my pension fund to be able to finish this musical. It's ready. I'm introducing it to 17 different countries over the next 6 years. I have finally finished my life's work."

The 59-year-old musician composed all of the music and lyrics of the uplifting multi-genre musical himself, basing it on Andersen's little-known fairytale *The Bell*, telling it in two acts through 14 soloists, 4 great choirs, a rock band, and a menagerie of dancers, actors and artists over a period of two hours. Unlike Andersen's version, however, the setting whisks us away from the Danish countryside and off to the indigenous jungles of Australia instead.

"Life is like a box of chocolates"

The former child star earned his "Runner" moniker when he became known for running marathons while singing and playing guitar. He's also well known in Denmark as the man who composed the Danish national hymn for the Sydney Olympics in 2000. He's been part of Copenhagen's cultural elite for decades.

Runner also quit his former position as CFO of one of Denmark's largest corporations, deciding to devote the rest of his life to music. "The musical aims to spread our national poet's message of happiness and the meaning of life, and I wrote it because I couldn't help myself. My life experiences have informed my mission: To get people dancing, singing and changing themselves," he says.

Partnerships abroad

Johnny Runner has enlisted an army of prominent tastemakers on the musical's steering committee, including one of Denmark's big business owners, Lars Kolind, as well as top-tier opera, theater and arts impresarios throughout Denmark and Australia.

"It makes me proud knowing that so many people have chosen to support *The Bell*. Proud that I'm able to spar with so many talented people and proud to have been approached by a London-based theater that wanted to buy my songs a few years back," he says. Runner turned down the offer then, feeling the musical was not yet ready.

"Back then things hadn't fallen into place yet, but now they have. Now I'm working on finding investors and business partners abroad – and on making my daughter happy. She has always said that the world needs to hear my songs, and it's a wonderful feeling to be able to finally tell her that it will."



JOHNNY RUNNER DENMARK

Idea, lyrics & composition

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Fact box: The Bell

Andersen's original fairytale is about a prince and a poor boy both lured by the sound of a mysterious bell, ultimately finding happiness and the meaning of life on a lush mountaintop. In Johnny Runner's interpretation, the prince is personified by the HRH The Danish Crown Prince, while the poor boy is Hans Christian Andersen himself. The story is modernized, taking place from 1968 – 2000, moving through eras and continents, from youth rebellion to aboriginal sacrament, finding its grand finale at the top of indigenous Australia's sacred Ayer's Rock.'

Check out some of the songs here: www.the-bell.dk

Producers of the musical are partnering with international backers for a worldwide release in 2017.

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Caption – photo 1:

The musical is a mixture of rock, rap, opera, gospel, ballet, aboriginal dance and artistry. "The composition is in English and it has taken me 25 years to make. It's my life's work," says the 59-year-old musician/songwriter/composer Johnny Runner.

Caption – photo 2:

His father's untimely death and his own life-changing divorce spurred Johnny Runner's return to music again after many years in the managerial chair at a big Danish corporation. This crisis of the soul lead him to Australia and Israel and to his personal epiphanies on 'the meaning of life.'

The musical The Bell premieres worldwide, next year.



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