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'Batman Live' show at coliseum adds to character's legend with lavish production

See the Caped Crusader in action during shows Tuesday and Wednesday.

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel
Thursday, November 29, 2012 - 12:01 am

The legend of the Batman character looms large in American pop culture.

Since 1939, America has followed the adventures of the crime-fighting caped crusader through countless comic books, films, television shows, games and several mega-successful movies.

Now, in 2012, a show called "Batman Live," which roars its way to Memorial Coliseum next Tuesday and Wednesday, brings an enormous production to arenas across the United States featuring 42 actors and circus-trained acrobats, a 3-D Gotham landscape, a 105-foot-wide, bat-shaped LED video wall, pyrotechnics, and a newly designed Batmobile.

"Batman Live," which premiered in July 2011 in England, was a huge success in Europe, playing to more than a half-million people in 15 countries.

In September 2012, the show began its first tour of America, home of the Batman character. George Turvey, the actor who plays Bruce Wayne/Batman in "Batman Live," said that, while the production was a hit overseas, American audiences have a special affinity for the show.

"The American audiences certainly get it a lot more than the audiences in Europe," Turvey said in a telephone interview. "I mean, they definitely enjoyed it in Europe, but here I think everybody's grown up with Batman, so they know him so well and love him so much that they certainly — they get it a lot more than anywhere else we've been.

"It's been so exciting because, as I say, they know these characters so well, and so every time a new character comes onstage, they give him a massive cheer, which is a such a joy to be able to perform to that type of audience," Turvey added.

"And for me, with Batman, I get the biggest cheers, so that's great, but they've been really, really good, the audiences here."

Turvey said fans of all ages will enjoy the "Batman Live" production. For anyone who's grown up loving Batman, this show has about all the elements a fan could want to see in a live presentation of the Batman saga.

"It's got an original story line," Turvey said, "and it's got a host of the iconic characters from the Batman universe.

"You've got Batman, you've got Robin, you've got the Joker, you've got Two-Face, Penguin, Catwoman. You've got a brand-new design of the Batmobile that comes out and is live onstage.

"You've got amazing acrobatics. You've got fighting. You've got illusions. So it's everything that you could kind of want from a live-action sort of comic book."

While Turvey has a theatrical background and has performed in plays such as "Romeo and Juliet" and the film "The Other Boleyn Girl," he wasn't quite sure what to expect from a production like "Batman Live." He's found it quite challenging.

"I think it's far more than I expected it to be because there's so much going on," Turvey said of his role. "I mean, it's a very physically demanding role, the Batman role, because you've got flying at points and then you're fighting at points, and there's some really great acting scenes.

"It's a lot more challenging than I expected it to be, but in a very, very good way," he added. "It's even more



More Information

An interview with George Turvey of "Batman Live"

The News-Sentinel Interview with ...

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Superhero show

What: "Batman Live," a live-action arena show, features an original story and all of your favorite Batman characters.

When: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday and 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. Wednesday

Where: Memorial Coliseum, 4000 Parnell Ave.

Cost: \$19.50, \$39.50, \$49.50 and \$79.50. Tickets available at the coliseum ticket office, select Walmart stores, www.ticketmaster.com or charge-by-phone at 1-800-745-3000. Parking is \$4 per vehicle main lot and \$8 per vehicle preferred lot.

Listen in

To hear excerpts from our interview with George Turvey, who plays the Bruce Wayne/Batman character in "Batman Live," click on the link with this story.

enjoyable than I expected it to be.”

When he was a child growing up in the United Kingdom, Turvey said he and his three brothers used to watch reruns of the 1960s Adam West “Batman” television series, and that's when he became a fan of Batman.

Because he had an early connection to the Batman character and the Batman universe, which includes cool things like the Batmobile, Turvey said just being able to become Batman is the real fun of the show for him.

“Just putting the costume on and when you catch the shadow of yourself in the costume,” he said. “I get so excited by that every time because it's such an iconic image, the outline of this bat costume.

“And getting to play with the Batmobile. Because as I said before, it's a brand-new design of the Batmobile. It's designed by a professor called Murray who designed the F1 McLaren car. It's a really, really cool car. Every time that comes out, I absolutely love that.”