

Los Angeles Times CALENDAR weekend

February 2, 2006

THEATER

Taking the stage, then taking wing

One of the coolest parts of this 90-minute show based on the popular PBS series is when the dragons do what they do best: fly.

By Brenda Rees
Special to The Times

Broadway producers know that it's always tricky taking beloved characters from books or television and putting them on a stage for a live theatrical experience. Going from 2-D to 3-D is always a risky proposition. Still, some flat characters seem to cry out for the spotlights of the theater — especially if they can fly up to them with graceful leaps and bounds.

Such is the case with "Dragon Tales Live: Missing Music Mystery," a family-friendly production that today starts a weekend run at the Pantages Theater in Hollywood. Based on the popular PBS series, the 90-minute show has many highlights: 12 original songs, costumed characters, puppets and live child actors. But according to Vincent E. Egan, president of VEE Corp., one of the coolest parts is when the dragons do what they do best: fly.

"We have live people — Emmy and Max — hopping on Ord and Cassie to take them to a place in the clouds," Egan says. "It's quite a number."

"Dragon Tales Live" is a story about what happens when the music in Dragon Land disappears. Kids and adults can help Emmy and Max and their dragon pals bring back the tunes by solving riddles, offering suggestions and singing along.

The \$3-million production is a puppeteer's dream challenge. It takes two people to make the giant dragon Quetzal come to life, some intricate moves to properly animate Princess Kidoodle and only one nimble actor inside two-headed Zak and Wheezie.

"We'll have a lot of first-time theatergoers in the audience," Egan says. "We want to make this a thrilling experience for kids ages 0 to 99."

"Dragon Tales Live: Missing Music Mystery," Pantages Theatre, 6233 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood. 7 tonight; 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Friday; 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday; 1 and 4:30 p.m. Sunday. \$15 to \$39. (213) 365-3500.