

## Where to see 'Beauty and the Beast's' original Broadway Belle

**The Long Beach native, the original Belle from 'Beauty and the Beast,' performs Friday at Musical Theatre West.**

*By Richard Guzman, Press-Telegram*

Wednesday, March 15, 2017



Fans of Disney's "[Beauty and the Beast](#)" may want to consider seeing the live-action film early when it opens on Friday, March 17.

That's because that evening they can see Broadway's original Tony-nominated Belle live on stage in Long Beach.

"I'm really excited because this is a hometown crowd for me," said multi-talented performer [Susan Egan](#), who received Tony and Drama Desk nominations for best actress as the original Belle in Disney's 1994 Broadway production of "Beauty and the Beast."

Egan, who was born in Long Beach and lives in Huntington Beach, will be onstage at the Beverly O'Neill Theater as part of Musical Theatre West's "[Broadway in Concert](#)," series.

And the Broadway star, a 1988 graduate of the Orange County High School of the Arts, is no stranger to MTW.

"Susan began performing with us while still in high school, and we have been so proud of her accomplishments over the years, going on to star in several Broadway shows," Executive Director Paul Garman said in an email. "It's wonderful to be able to welcome her back to Musical Theatre West for this very special concert."

The one-night 8 p.m. show will include an appearance by singer and Broadway performer Deedee Lynn Magno, who will join Egan onstage for a couple of songs.

The night will highlight Egan's rich career with music from her many Broadway shows, as well as songs from musicals that have inspired her.

Between the music, Egan will talk about her life and how she got to where she is today.

So expect to hear songs from shows she's been in, such as "Cabaret," "Beauty and the Beast" and "Thoroughly Modern Millie," and songs from Broadway shows she admires, such as "Wicked," "Hamilton" and "West Side Story."

"They sort of help to tell my personal story," she said. "I started out at Memorial Hospital in Long Beach, so how did I end up in New York working on the stage? So I use music to sort of tell that story."

Egan, who says she was almost born on the 405 Freeway in 1970 as her parents were rushing to the hospital, will perform these songs with just a piano to accompany her, which the singer says offers a certain kind of freedom.

“It gives me a lot more flexibility to tell stories, all those behind the scenes, ridiculous things that happen in live theater on Broadway,” she said. “I can share all of that with some great music.”

And considering her career, which includes not just Broadway credits but also film and animation work as well as TV appearances while also headlining for more than 50 symphony orchestras, Egan will have plenty of stories to share.

Her film credits include roles in “13 Going on 30,” and the Disney Channel’s “Gotta Kick It Up.”

On TV she spent a couple of seasons on the WB’s “Nikki” and had guest-starring roles on such shows as “House” and “NYPD Blue.”

Currently she’s the voice of Rose Quartz on Cartoon Network’s “Steven Universe.”

Egan says she likes mixing it up with so many different genres because each offers her a different form of artistic satisfaction.

“Each one emphasizes a different strength,” she said.

In theater she gets the rush of a live performance, while in film, with the ability to do many takes, she can perfect and polish each scene.

And on TV she enjoys working with writers and developing characters over time.

“So they each have their own thing,” she said. “I think now more than ever you can be a film actor and a television actor and a theater actor and in the old days you had to be one or the other.”

With such a busy career Egan says her home in Orange County offers a much-needed rest from her Hollywood and Broadway life.

“We’re loving it,” she said. “It’s a friendlier pace. I feel like we have a bit of an escape. It’s a bit more of a mellow vibe. It literally just feels like we’re living in a vacation spot.”

But before she drives home to relax, Egan said she’s especially excited for the March 17 show because, since it’s on the same night the “Beauty and the Beast” film opens, it signifies her career coming full circle that night.

“It’s a fun time to kind of revisit the fact that I got to be the very first Belle on Broadway and what it was like developing that material, some of which will now be in the film that wasn’t in the original animated film,” she said.

And for those worried about missing the film on opening night, don’t worry. You’re in good company because Egan hasn’t seen it yet, so she’ll be catching it after it opens too.

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