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Metorious Artist and deputy director of Việt Nam Youth Theatre Sĩ Tiễn. Photo nhandan.com.vn

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Veteran artist Sĩ Tiễn, deputy director of the theatre, speaks about the making of the musical.

**In recent years, musical production has become more popular in Việt Nam. Is this why your theatre had made a musical production?**

Musicals are not new in the world. It is true that musicals are currently attracting interest in Việt Nam. My theatre has been known for different genres of art including singing, dancing and drama.

Factually, we wanted to make a musical a long time ago but we didn't have enough favourable

conditions to do this.

We wanted to make it professionally not only because it is trendy. Making a good musical is our dream. We want to give the theatre's artists the chance to experience a musical.

However, few actors meet the demands of a musical. Recently, we held casting for the musical but only a few artists could sing and dance, not to mention act.

The selected actors have six months to improve their performing skills.

**Could you tell us more about the musical?**

This is a Vietnamese musical about women. These women are fragile and loving but also strong and determined to find their happiness.

I invited talented director Triu Dong to make it. Dong studied abroad and we hope he can do it well to combine typical Vietnamese cultural characteristics and a Western musical.

**Most musical fans are educated and this art is known for having some classical works. Have you encountered difficulties with the musical?**

The highlight of the theatre's repertoire is drama. We are looking for an opportunity with the musical. It is difficult because we do not have experience making a musical. But it is also interesting.

I'm excited by challenges and creativity.

**What is your plan to popularise musicals in the context of a small audience?**

Surely making the musical is a long-term project. We want to bring the Western musical closer to the Vietnamese audience.

The musical will promote art activities and give them a lift by making artists change themselves.

The audience will get benefit from seeing different genres of art such as dancing, singing and acting in the musical.

We also plan to produce a musical for children from five to seven years old. This is the way we build an audience for musicals.

**Some have said audiences are less interested in stage arts as they haven't seen much change from the theatres over the years. What do you think?**

Theatres lack an audience partially because of ineffective communication. Otherwise, the theatre also requires a polite audience including their external appearance and artistic enjoyment.

I believe that a large audience may not come to the theatre this time but they will come on a better day. There is a cross-cultural exchange at the theatre and the audience will find themselves.

My theatre is focusing on building an audience of children to make them more knowledgeable and more confident. I think we need to nurture love and the habit of enjoying art from a young age.

Art in general and theatre as well help children think independently and develop their imagination - one of the most important skills of the 21st century.

### **What makes artists like you believe in the future of theatre?**

We should not avoid difficulties, the more difficult the more we must try. The world is always moving and changing. It is the same for art. There are many opportunities ahead of us.

I saw the success of the Việt Nam Youth Theatre in the early 2000s with the comedy series *Đời tôi cười* (Laughing Life).

The ever-changing tastes require the artist to be creative. This will develop entertainment art.

Our theatre is a member of the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People where all members discuss different trends of the theatre.

I had a chance to visit a popular theatre in Japan. It was amazing to see the *Lion King* and *Aladdin's Magic Lamp* which the Japanese theatre bought the copyright for.

They made the works of Broadway marvellously. To perform like them it takes human and financial resources. We cannot do it right now but we need to step by step upgrade the stage to a higher level. VNS

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