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Marwa Noelle pictured at Bord Gáis Energy Theatre's magical show garden inspired by Disney's beloved musical Beauty and the Beast at this year's Bord Bia Bloom 2022. This is the first time a theatre has participated in the show garden event at the Bord Bia Bloom festival. The Olivier Award-winning stage musical Beauty and the Beast will run from the 24th of November 2022 until the 8th of January 2023. Picture Peter Houlihan

Campaign

Coming up Roses - Beauty and The Beast garden takes centre stage at Bloom

Description of Campaign

To promote Beauty and The Beast The Musical, Bord Gáis Energy Theatre conceptualised and produced a consumer-engaging show garden to take centre stage at Bloom 2022. The first of its kind, this unique event re-imagined the musical stage show in an enthralling enchanted garden, resulting in widespread coverage and talkability.



Organisation

Bord Gáis Energy Theatre

Background to the Campaign

The Broadway and West End production of Disney's Beauty and The Beast was first confirmed to play Bord Gáis Energy Theatre from 08 – 31 July 2021. Due to Covid 19, the event was put on hold and following careful consideration and planning was rescheduled to take place from 24 November 2022 to 08 January 2023.

The rescheduled dates were announced in February 2022 and therefore positioned the musical as the first big Broadway title to play to full capacity for a Christmas season since 2019.

The PR team at Bord Gáis Energy Theatre was tasked with devising a new publicity strategy that would publicise Beauty and the Beast as the must-see festive event for 2022 and inspire consumer confidence post-Covid.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the dates, the publicity strategy needed to ensure Beauty and the Beast became a talking point throughout the year to generate as much advance publicity as possible. The show needed to achieve sell-out status to meet all necessary targets. The stakes were high, and the campaign needed to include something out of the ordinary.

To capitalise on the busy summer season of festivals and events the theatre wanted to transfer the production into an arena that would be both thought-provoking and engaging.

To match the magic of the production and taking inspiration from the rose at the heart of the story, it was decided that an enchanted exhibition garden would make for an unforgettable feature at Bord Bia Bloom 2022.

Bloom would provide the perfect setting to engage with our key target audience and re-familiarise potential ticket purchasers through this novel opportunity, creating a stand-alone event within one of Ireland's busiest summer festivals.

The garden would need to stand out from the crowd and garner as much media and consumer attention as possible. Bord Gáis Energy Theatre became the first ever theatre to partake in the festival and what followed was a 'beast of a campaign' that transformed the publicity campaign and placed the magic of Beauty and the Beast at the centre of public consciousness, turning curiosity into record-breaking sales for the theatre.

Statement of Objectives

1. Create a one-of-a-kind event for Beauty and The Beast The Musical to promote the production's Irish premiere in November 2022.
2. Deliver a creative concept that would blend the world of musical fantasy into the sphere of horticulture, aligning with Disney's brand principles.
3. Create a wow factor garden exhibition that garnered acclaim from consumers and horticulturists alike.
4. Increase awareness of the product 'Beauty and the Beast the Musical' and re-ignite consumer interest post Covid.
5. Engage with our key demographic 'off-stage', in an unexpected and thought-provoking setting that would provide a novel opportunity to promote the musical.
6. Ensure all relevant stakeholders were informed and engaged throughout the planning process
7. Create a fun engaging promotional mechanic to drive footfall and increase awareness for Beauty and The Beast The Musical garden that would reach over 500k across social media.
8. Pre-publicise the event by highlighting the talented garden designers.
9. Garner quality advance coverage in the media, ideally with a broadsheet title to position the garden as a must-see attraction for Bloom 2022.
10. Achieve quality coverage on the ground at Bloom to continuously highlight the garden as a must-see attraction.
11. Leverage opportunities throughout the weekend of 'Bord Bia Bloom 2022' in terms of earned media.
12. Increase ticket sales for the musical in Dublin by 10-15% over the course of the weekend
13. Increase traffic to the newly designed Beauty and The Beast The Musical page on bordgaisenergytheatre.ie
14. Engage with influencers and create a bespoke event to specifically highlight the garden to a plethora of followers online, aiming to reach an audience of 1 million.
15. Gain further recognition by being awarded a sought-after medal prize.

Programme Planning and Strategy

We defined our target audience for Disney's Beauty and the Beast the Musical to be:

- Primary: ABC 1 and families
- Secondary: Female 16-40+
- Couples and older families

We believed a partnership with Bord Bia Bloom, which attracts 120k plus visitors (including 20k children) each year with a similar customer profile (below), would provide the perfect opportunity to re-introduce Beauty and the Beast the musical to the Irish consumer market.

- 45% Families with children
- 64% Aged 54 and under
- 36% Aged 55 and over

The Garden Space

With tough competition for limited show garden spaces at Bloom, the pitch to present a garden at Bloom needed to stand out and appeal to all stakeholders including Bloom organisers, event visitors, and Disney Theatrical. Naturally, Disney Theatrical had concerns about how this magical stage show would transfer to a festival such as Bloom. However, encouraged by the positive re-enforcement from the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre publicity team they realised the merit of promoting the production in a novel environment. Bord Gáis Energy Theatre would be the first ever theatre to present a show garden at Bloom and promised to deliver an experiential, consumer-engaging concept that would be a first for Bloom, the theatre and Disney Theatrical.

The Garden Designer

To ensure our brief was realised it was imperative we found the right candidate to collaborate with. Our search began for a highly creative and award-winning designer to take on the task of conceptualising and designing the show garden. A number of garden designers were eager to work on the project –Beauty and the Beast had already stirred up a frenzy in the horticultural world before one single rose was planted! Faced with many incredible submissions, the stand-out vision came from previous gold medal winner Cornelia Rafferty assisted by Tom Leavy who were chosen by Bord Gáis Energy Theatre and Disney Theatrical to bring the vision to life. After a series of initial sketches were tweaked and agreed upon, work got underway and the seeds were sown!

The Garden Concept

Bord Gáis Energy Theatre worked with designer Cornelia to create an exceptional garden design that blended the worlds of musical fantasy and horticulture while aligning with Disney's brand principles. Placing the enchanted red rose at the centre of the garden, the actual rose dome from the Broadway production could be viewed, under a glass globe within a pavilion surrounded by red roses. These roses tapered into petal-shaped beds, representing the falling rose petals from the fairy tale.

The garden's contrasting plants and colours reflected the palette of the stage production. Mixing perennial beds of blues, purples, and greens mirrored the overgrown nature of the bewitched castle and alluded to the enchanted prince. The variety of red, pink, peach, cream, and white roses symbolised Belle's arrival at the castle.

Further bringing the musical to life, Bord Gáis Energy Theatre engaged a string quartet to play the soundtrack from the musical live each day. Theatre chairs decorated the outside of the garden, allowing attendees to stop, look and smell the roses!

Promotional Mechanic

To capitalise fully on our presence at Bloom we created an interactive promotion to run at the garden. Visitors were encouraged to take 'poses with the roses' and upload their image to social media with the #BeautyAndTheBeastBloom – the best pose winning VIP opening night tickets. The purpose of the promotion was to leverage further promotional opportunities for the show during Bloom, increase footfall and social media engagement and to pre publicise the event dates to all attendees. Alongside the garden a promotional tent displayed images from the production, showcasing props such as candelabras and theatre seats to encourage attendees to get creative with their poses. In addition, we had a pamphlet designed specifically for Bloom including a QR code to purchase tickets directly from the event. Our promotional team ran the mechanic throughout the weekend which accumulated a strong presence across social media.

Timeline

Day 1 - The Launch

Beauty & The Beast The Musical Garden at Bloom was launched by offering an exclusive first look at the garden before the festival opened to the general public. A press release was issued nationally, inviting the media to view the exquisite, enchanted garden. Garden designer Cornelia Rafferty and Claire Whelan Head of PR and Marketing were on the ground to represent the garden and provide further context for the media.

We also created a launch photo opportunity at the garden to complement the media release. To represent Belle, actor Marwa Noelle posed for pictures dressed as the iconic princess from the musical and interacted with the actual Rose Dome from the Broadway production, which was placed at the centre of the garden. Pictured alongside Marwa was the Castle String Quartet who delivered a stunning live performance of classics from the musical, in the June sunshine.

Day 2 - Festival Opens to the Public

Bloom officially opened to the public on Thursday 02 June. The press team at Bord Gáis Energy Theatre awoke to coverage across titles such as The Irish Daily Star, The Irish Examiner, and Independent.ie, Newstalk, 98FM, and Ireland AM. Word was out and attendees were flocking to the garden. Bord Gáis Energy Theatre sought to generate as much engagement with the general public as possible, driven mainly through the promotional mechanic 'poses with roses'. The string quartet was hugely popular, with many attendees live-streaming the music from the event. Across day two more interview opportunities were secured for our garden designers, including landscaper Tom Leavy conducting an interview with RTÉ Lyric FM- Marty in the Morning, live from Bloom!

Day 3 - Medal Winning Garden

With a constant stream of visitors and sustained traction across social media, our garden continued to attract a huge amount of interest and talkability for Beauty and the Beast The Musical. As a result of engaging with consumers, handing out promotional information, and informing visitors on how to win and purchase tickets, many attendees stopped to comment on what was by now a must-visit spectacle at Bloom 2022. Finishing day three on a high, we were awarded the silver medal in the Small Show Garden category. A press release was issued nationally to celebrate this success.

Day 4 - Media and Influencer Event

From the outset we were keen to engage with key media and influencers who could further promote the garden and the musical across their platforms. Knowing that we had an 'instagrammable' garden we had decided in advance to host a specially curated garden party for a select group of media, influencers and celebrities. Attendees were treated to themed food and drink, including a specially created Rosé Cocktail. Despite the sudden change in weather, the list of attendees included influencers Ellie Kelly, Dancing with the Stars judge Arthur Gourounlin and pro-dancer Laura Nolan, and TV presenter Brian Dowling. Social images were captured with the guests receiving personal garden tours from the designers. The string quartet provided the soundtrack to the evening. VIP Magazine, Evoke.ie and Extra.ie covered the event, reaching a further online audience outside of Bloom attendees.

Day 5 - Event Closing

Such was the success of the garden and the resulting media coverage - one visitor concluded that our garden would be the perfect place for a marriage proposal! On the final day, Bloom attendee Conor Kerley requested permission propose to his partner Nicola in front of the enchanted rose dome. Beauty and the Beast had been Nicolas's favorite Disney adaptation since childhood. Spotting a diamond PR opportunity (and with Conor and Nicola's permission), we alerted the media tent on-site and the romantic proposal was captured by media including Extra.ie, Her.ie, Irish Independent, Irish Mirror and The Herald. It was a fairy-tale ending to what had been a truly magical event!

Measurement

1. Bord Gáis Energy Theatre became the first theatre to ever enter a show garden at Bloom Festival. Beauty and The Beast The Musical was also the first ever theatre production to enter Bloom.
2. Bord Gáis Energy Theatre successfully blended the worlds of musical fantasy and horticulture, while aligning with Disney's brand principles, securing elements such as the Rose Dome, theatrical chairs, and the string quartet to enhance the theatre connection to the garden.
3. Over 110,000 people visited The Beauty and the Beast The Musical Garden.
4. Over 60,000 pamphlets detailing a QR code were distributed over the festival weekend
5. Traffic to the Beauty and The Beast The Musical web page increased by 35% over the weekend
6. Disney representatives from the UK and Ireland were in attendance for the duration of Bloom, including Chris Adams International Marketing Manager from Disney Theatrical, who hailed the garden as 'magnificent' and a 'beautiful setting for Belle and the Beast'.
7. The Promotional mechanic activated at Bloom had a social reach of over 750k.
8. Sales for Beauty and The Beast The Musical increased by 261% following the Bloom activation
9. Our social media following increased following Bloom
10. The Sunday Independent Life Magazine published double- a page spread ahead of Bloom which featured an interview with Designer Cornelia Rafferty.
11. Landscaper Tom Leavy completed interviews on the ground including a live interview with RTÉ Lyric FM Marty in the Morning.
12. The launch photocall resulted in 11 pieces of media coverage.

- 13.** Over 31 pieces of coverage were secured overall; including Virgin Media One Ireland AM, Newstalk Pat Kenny Show and The Irish Times.
- 14.** The influencer event reached a potential audience of 1.5million and resulted in five additional features.
- 15.** The 'engagement' on day five resulted in seven news pieces across titles such as The Irish Independent, The Herald, and HerFamily.ie, creating a news splash after the event had finished.
- 16.** Bord Gáis Energy Theatre was awarded a silver medal in the Garden Concept Category.

This campaign was carried out by Bord Gáis Energy Theatre's Claire Whelan (Head of PR and Marketing), Michelle Beatty (Senior PR Account Manager) and Gillian Temple (PR Account Manager) over a 5-month period.

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