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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

PROFILE

"GREAT MOMENTS WITH MR. LINCOLN"

An "Audio-Animatronic" Show For
 The Illinois State Pavilion
 New York World's Fair 1964-1965

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Introduction

Walt Disney has long held the belief, shared by many other Americans, that more of us should recognize the extraordinary influence of historical events on our lives today. He has constantly searched for new and inviting ways to help Americans become more aware of history's significance in the future development of their nation.

His efforts have been recognized officially on several occasions. In February, 1963, former President Dwight D. Eisenhower presented Walt Disney with the Freedoms Foundation's coveted George Washington Award as "Ambassador of Freedom for the U. S. A." The citation reads in part:

"For his educational wisdom and patriotic dedication in advancing the concept of freedom under God.

"For his unfailing professional devotion to the things which matter most -- human dignity and personal responsibility.

"For his masterful, creative leadership in communicating the hopes and aspirations of our free society to the far corners of the planet."

Here, Walt Disney tells in his own words how he hopes to further these goals with his "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln" show.

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"Most Americans will agree with me that no man has had more of a positive impact on a nation than Abraham Lincoln has on our Country. He is venerated not only in our land but in many other parts of the world. Yet I have always felt that too few people realize that Lincoln's concepts and philosophies are as useful, as necessary, as applicable today as they were when he pronounced them a century ago. His analysis of freedom and its true meaning, his approach to justice and equality, his own courage and strength -- all are as vital in the 1960's as they were during the mid-1800's.

"There are many fine statues of the great Civil War President and an even larger number of Lincoln portraits and photographs. Many of us have spent memorable moments in theaters as some of our best actors have brought him to life on the stage or motion picture screen. Hundreds of volumes have been written about the man Lincoln, and some of his speeches and writings are still among history's most often quoted passages.

"Each of these has contributed to our knowledge of Lincoln and has given us some insights into his character.

"I felt for many years, however, that there must be some way . . . some undeveloped means of communication . . . perhaps some new art form . . . that could combine the best of traditional media to capture consistently the appearances and mannerisms, the warm sincerity and the contagious dedication of Abraham Lincoln.

"Such a medium, I realized, would have to offer the three-dimensional authenticity created by a talented sculptor, as well as the color and life left on canvas by the genius-painter's brush. The drama and personal rapport of the

theater were indispensable. This technique must have the artistic versatility and consistency of the motion picture. From the best literary sources would come the proper atmosphere which this medium must create. And, finally, Lincoln's own pen must supply the most important element of all -- the message.

"For more than a decade our staff of artists, sculptors, engineers, architects, researchers and other technicians have spent thousands of man-hours and more than \$1 million to develop and perfect the system we call "Audio-Anima-tronics." Recent improvements in this system now make it possible for us to utilize and combine the qualities of all of these more familiar art forms. It permits us to come as close as possible to capturing the true spirit, physical likeness and personality of Lincoln, which we can convey to so many people.

"The secret of its effectiveness, regardless of its amazing flexibility and efficiency, lies in its application. That is why we set the highest standards for our guidelines in preparing the show for the Lincoln Theater in the Illinois State pavilion. Imagination would have to be tempered with authenticity. Drama must intertwine with serenity. Fantasy would be entirely abandoned since its presence would defeat our purpose. Reserve was demanded, but it would have to take the form of subdued excitement. And dignity would have to be the constantly sounded keynote.

"When we set out to select the speeches and writing for the monologue in the show, we decided to bypass the "Gettysburg Address," even though its poetic qualities and poignant message are unexcelled. Because it is so familiar to nearly every American, we felt that it would not contribute significantly to our purpose -- an in-depth, fresh presentation of Lincoln's principles, ideals and philosophies.

"We hope the audiences in the Lincoln Theater agree that we have achieved our goals. We believe it is much more than a new entertainment medium or art form; it is a different and exciting way to stress history's importance to each of us and the applicability of its lessons to our everyday lives."

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DESCRIPTION OF THE "GREAT MOMENTS WITH MR. LINCOLN" SHOW

Created by Walt Disney and designed by WED Enterprises, Inc., "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln" brings to the theater stage a unique dramatization of our American heritage. At its heart is the president who saved our code of laws, the Constitution, in its greatest hour of crisis a century ago.

Special Disney techniques of three-dimensional animation ("Audio-Animatronics"), projection, staging and stereophonic sound combine to create the Lincoln show. At times, through the use of sound speakers located throughout the auditorium, the audience itself seems to participate in the proceedings . . . as though they are in the crowd at one of Mr. Lincoln's speeches.

Highlight of the show are excerpts from Abraham Lincoln's famous speeches and writings, delivered from the stage by Walt Disney's life-like Lincoln figure.

Lincoln first appears seated in thoughtful dignity. But as the narrator introduces his address, he "comes to life." Apparently immobile moments before, he rises to his feet and speaks, delivering his address with complete coordination of movements and speech . . . and many mannerisms of the 16th President.

An emotion-stirring finale finds Lincoln again seated, now silhouetted against the imposing dome of the Capitol building in the early light of dawn.

As singing voices, joined in harmony, seem to move through the audience like an invisible procession, viewers are encompassed in a stereophonic choral presentation of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." At the same time, the crimson and white sky behind Lincoln dissolves into a symbolic representation of the American flag, the clouds billowing into stripes, the stars twinkling in a field of blue. With the curtains fully opened, this "flag" spreads across the background of the entire stage.

Shows will be presented on a 12-minute cycle, or five complete performances per hour. The Lincoln Theatre will accommodate 500 persons, enabling 2500 persons per hour to view the show.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON LINCOLN FIGURE

The prototype Lincoln figure was first developed about five years ago and has been used since for experimentation, refinement and improvement. Work has resulted in sophistication of techniques and devices to be used in the new figure.

WED "imagineers" -- artists, model-makers, sculptors, engineers and mechanics -- spent a total of more than five months in research alone to assure exact likeness and measurements.

Dimensions of the face were taken from an actual life-mask of Lincoln. The eyes were created from an intensive study of many photographs, paintings and written descriptions, including one in Mrs. Lincoln's diary.

Other dimensions came from biographical works, although not all historians agree on Lincoln's height and weight.

Work on the new figure began with the creation of the head. A detailed model was first sculptured in plastiline (plastic clay) using Lincoln's life mask. From this, a flexible skin was then fabricated over a rigid plastic structure. The features from the original model were maintained to the most minute detail.

The hair and beard were created by a professional wig maker. Hands were cast from actual hands of a man of comparable size. Eyes were created by WED artists, using techniques similar to those employed by prosthetic eye manufacturers, and dental techniques were used to design the gums and teeth.

The figure stands approximately six feet, four inches and weighs about 140 pounds. (Lincoln is believed to have weighed about 180 pounds, but this figure is lighter because of a specially designed metal framework to facilitate movement.)

The new figure will be capable of 48 separate body actions, as well as 17 head motions and facial expressions, all performed in life-like movement and mannerisms. This flexibility permits a total of nearly 275,000 possible combinations of action.

Costuming includes a black suit; white, high-collar shirt; black string bow tie; vest; watch chain; and black high-top shoes.

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FACTS ON THE "AUDIO-ANIMATRONIC" SYSTEM

Life-force of the "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln" show is highly versatile system of three-dimensional animation called "Audio-Animatronics," an entirely new concept in theatrical entertainment. This WED-designed medium electronically combines and synchronizes voices, music and sound effects with the movements of animated objects, ranging from remarkably life-like human, animal, bird and flower figures to their imaginative, highly stylized counterparts from the realm of fantasy.

Various degrees of sophistication -- from one or two simple movements to many complex body actions and facial expressions, such as those made by the Lincoln figure -- can be preprogrammed for each figure. In fact, the entire show -- theatre lighting, sound effects, stage-curtain operation and background music -- are controlled by "Audio-Animatronics."

To accomplish these amazing feats, WED "imagineers" record audible and inaudible sound impulses, music and dialogue on separate magnetic tapes. Then, with precision usually characteristic only of space-age industries, they transfer these taped "messages" to a single, one-inch magnetic tape, which has up to 32 channels (tracks) controlling as many as 438 separate actions.

Play-back simultaneously relays music and voices to speakers, while sound impulses activate pneumatic and hydraulic valves within the performing figure. Air and fluid tubes and devices expand and contract accordingly to bring about animation. Sound impulses also control stage and theater lighting, permitting an entire show to be controlled from one tape.

The evolution of "Audio-Animatronics" began more than 10 years ago with work on mechanical (cam and lever) $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch scale model human figures. Seeking more polished and versatile movements, WED launched the electronic-hydraulic-pneumatic approach in combination with the cam-lever principle for several Disneyland attractions, including inhabitants of Nature's Wonderland and the Adventureland Jungle Cruise.

Abandoning cams and levers entirely, WED introduced the first pure form of "Audio-Animatronics" with the summer, 1963, opening of Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room at Disneyland. To the astonishment and pleasure of audiences, 225 "Audio-Animatronic" figures from the South Seas -- birds, tiki gods and flowers -- gather 'round a magic fountain to talk, sing, chant and beat drums. The entire show lasts for 17 memorable minutes.

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NOTE: The basic concept for combining life-like and fanciful objects with sound, preprogrammed and coordinated by tape, is subject to patent protection. All patent rights are owned by WED Enterprises, Inc. Patents have been applied for other features, devices, techniques and processes.