

JODI BENSON

Jodi Benson, a native of Rockford, Illinois, has received worldwide recognition and critical acclaim as the voice of Ariel in the Academy Award winning Walt Disney animated feature film, *The Little Mermaid* as well as the bubbly voice of Tour Guide Barbie in Disney's *Toy Story II*, winner of the Golden Globe Award for Best Picture. She also gave life to the spirited Weebo in Disney's live action *Flubber* co-starring Robin Williams. For Warner Brothers, she created the title voice of *Thumbelina*, a Don Bluth animated feature with songs by Barry Manilow.

Jodi's recent projects include *The Little Mermaid III*, *The Little Mermaid II: Return To The Sea* as Ariel, *Lady and The Tramp II* as Lady, *101 Dalmatians II* as Anita, DreamWorks's animated video *Joseph: King of Dreams* as his wife Asenath starring Ben Affleck, and in *Balto II* and *III* as Jenna for Universal Studios. She appears as "Sam" (Patrick Dempsey's asst.) in Disney's film, *Enchanted* as a real live person- with legs!

Ms. Benson received a Tony Award and a Helen Hayes Award nomination for Best Actress in a Musical for creating the starring role of Polly in the Tony Award winning Broadway Gershwin musical *Crazy For You*. Other Broadway credits include: creating the starring role of Doria Hudson in the Howard Ashman/Marvin Hamlisch musical *Smile*, Betty Bursteter in Cy Coleman's *Welcome To The Club*, and Virginia in Kenny Ortega's *Marilyn: An American Fable*. Internationally, Ms. Benson has had the honor of sharing the stage with her husband Ray Benson in the European Premiere of Gershwin's *My One and Only*, starring as Miss Edythe Herbert.

In Los Angeles, Ms. Benson starred in the critically acclaimed Reprise/UCLA production of *Babes In Arms* as Bunny, Nellie Forbush in *South Pacific*(Pasadena Civic), *Flora the Red Menace*(Pasadena Playhouse), Ado Annie in *Oklahoma!*(Dorothy Chandler Pavilion), Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*(Alex Theatre), and as Florence Vassey in *Chess*(Long Beach Civic Light Opera) for which she won the Drama-Logue Award for Best Actress.

Jodi can be heard on several recordings including Disney's *Songs From the Sea*, *Disney Classics*, *Splash Hits*, *The Little Mermaid* soundtrack, and *The Princess Collection*; Varese Sarabande's *Unsung Musicals I* and *A Hollywood Christmas*, EMI/Angel's *Crazy For You* cast album, Warner Brothers' *Thumbelina* soundtrack, and with EMI/Sparrow Records: Jodi Benson and the *Beginners Bible I* and *II*, *Guideposts Junction*-a six part video series and album. Her newest project for kids is a 6 part DVD series entitled *Babyfaith* from the creators of *Baby Einstein*.

Her animated television series include the newest Cartoon Network hit *Camp Lazlo*, the Emmy Award winning *The Little Mermaid*, *Pepper Ann*, *Pirates of Dark Water*(Hanna-Barbera), *P.J. Sparkles*, the *Barbie* primetime series as the voice of Barbie, Disney's animated series *Hercules* as the ever "perky" Helen of Troy, *Batman Beyond*, *The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy*, *The Wild Thornberry's* and many others.

On the concert stage, Ms. Benson had the honor of appearing as the guest soloist at the Kennedy Center Honors for Ginger Rogers, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Gershwin Tributes, *Walt Disney: 75 Years of Music* at The Hollywood Bowl with conductor John Mauceri. Jodi has performed with symphonies all over the world including The National Symphony, Cleveland, Dallas, Tokyo Philharmonic, San Francisco and Chicago. She has starred in Disney's Premiere in Central Park with *Pocahontas*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* premiere at the New Orleans Superdome, and The Walt Disney World 25th Anniversary Spectacular, and Disney's 100 Years of Magic. Ms. Benson is honored to be the resident guest soloist for the Walt Disney Company/Disney Cruise Line and ambassador for feature animation.

Jodi gives thanks and praise to God for her family, friends, for her loving husband, Ray and her precious children; son McKinley and daughter Delaney.