

## DAVIS POLK'S TONY AWARD-WINNING RESTRUCTURING PARTNER

Brian M. Resnick took home a Tony Award for Best Musical as co-producer of 'Hadestown,' but his musical roots go far deeper.

**BY KIRK O'NEIL**

When restructuring partner Brian M. Resnick of Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP isn't busy representing clients in Chapter 11, he might be reading Broadway show scripts before investing in a show.

Resnick, who has represented debtors including Arch Coal Inc. and Patriot Coal Corp., lenders to Toys 'R' Us Inc. and Eastman Kodak Co. and ad hoc creditor groups of Vanguard Natural Resources Inc. and Legacy Reserves Inc., already has reaped the rewards of Broadway show investing after only one year in the game, taking home a Tony Award for Best Musical as a co-producer for "Hadestown" on June 9.

"Hadestown," a folk opera that reimagines the Greek myth of Eurydice and Orpheus during a post-apocalyptic depression, won eight Tony awards at the ceremony, topping all other plays or musicals.

Resnick's musical career goes back decades, but his show producing began about a year ago after he heard about technology attorney Phil Kenny's Broadway show investors' group, 42nd.Club, and inquired about investing in shows.

"I had heard about [Kenny] producing a bunch of shows through the 42nd. Club and just reached out to him to express my interest," Resnick said. "He's a really smart producer with good taste and a strong track record and has become a friend and mentor to me in this endeavor."

Kenny sent Resnick the "Hadestown" script, which he loved, and decided to invest in the show. Resnick also invested in Broadway show "King Kong" through 42nd.Club and plans to invest in more shows through the club and other sources, he said.



**BRIAN RESNICK** Davis, Polk & Wardwell LLP

"It's a little side hobby that allows me to be in the business side of Broadway," Resnick said.

He also is an executive producer of the upcoming independent film "Lazy Susan" written by and starring Sean Hayes, as well as Matthew Broderick and Allison Janney.

As a principal of 42nd.Club, Resnick was a co-producer of "Hadestown" and had the opportunity to attend the Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall in New York. When "Hadestown" won the best musical Tony, Resnick was among the recipients on stage to accept the award.

“I’ve never been on stage at Radio City Music Hall,” said Resnick, who has performed in many Broadway theaters. “I’ve played Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and all over the world, but that was my first time on stage at Radio City.”

Resnick, 44, worked his way through The Juilliard School in the late 1990s and Columbia Law School in the early 2000s as a freelance drummer and percussionist on 14 different shows.

His big musical break came after introducing himself to “Saturday Night Live” saxophonist and current musical director Lenny Pickett, who was teaching a master class at Juilliard. That meeting led to Resnick performing at gigs with Pickett shortly before he introduced the young student to Leroy Clouden, the regular drummer for Broadway show “Bring in ‘da Noise, Bring in ‘da Funk.”

Clouden hired Resnick to substitute on drums for “Bring in ‘da Noise,” which started his Broadway career. Around the same time, Juilliard alum Michael Hinton, who Resnick befriended, gave him the chance to substitute on percussion in “Miss Saigon.” Resnick played over 50 percussion instruments on that show, he said.

Those two Broadway freelance jobs led to Resnick playing in 12 other shows, including Elton John’s “Aida,” “Jesus Christ Superstar,” “Fosse” and “The Full Monty,” featuring André De Shields, who won this year’s best featured actor in a musical Tony for “Hadestown.”

Resnick remembered facing disaster in his first substitute performance for Fosse on the number “Big Spender.” The conductor had distracted him with a stare, prompting him to take his eyes off the finger cymbal he was playing. He completely missed the cymbal hit, which was obvious to almost everyone in attendance, he said.

“I thought my career was over, but I managed to survive and ended up subbing on ‘Fosse’ until the end of the run,” he said.

Resnick was a favorite drums and percussion substitute for many Broadway shows, since he lived a short distance from the Theater District at the time near 55th Street and Ninth Avenue in Manhattan.

“If a regular musician was stuck in traffic on a bridge, I could take a call at 7:50 and be in the orchestra pit at 8,” Resnick said.

Another memorable moment in Resnick’s musical career was when legendary opera singer Luciano Pavarotti reprimanded him for playing the castanets too loud while rehearsing for a performance of “Granada” in Italy.

“I was playing the castanets a little too enthusiastically, and Pavarotti turned around and told me to play quieter,” Resnick said.

The drummer also played in punk rock band Joker Five Speed that played around New York clubs, including CBGB in the East Village.

His friendship with Pickett landed him several performances on SNL in the early 2000s, as well.

After graduating from Columbia and enjoying a satisfying musical career, he gave up playing music the week he took the bar exam in 2003 and went to work full time at Davis Polk.

“When I started law school, I thought I may ultimately want to have a dual career, but after getting married in my second year of law school and having twins in my third year, I decided to go full force into my legal career,” Resnick said.

“After I got to Davis Polk, I fell in love with bankruptcy law,” he continued. “There’s really something meaningful in helping a company reorganize and save jobs. Arch Coal was a very successful reorganization from an employee and investor perspective.”

Still, he always wanted to do something on the business side of Broadway, and 42nd.Club presented the opportunity.

Resnick’s father, Alan, who passed away in 2016, was a longtime law professor at the Hofstra University School of Law and restructuring counsel at law firm Fried, Frank, Harris, Silver & Jacobson LLP.

Resnick, who grew up in Long Island, N.Y., said his father was very supportive of his music and would often watch him perform.

“He’d come down to CBGB wearing a suit,” Resnick said. ■