

# Disney's World On Ice skates to life

**Familiar cartoon characters brought to life via figure skating extravaganza, Disney style**

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It's Mickey! It's Donald! It's Snow White!

There was excitement in the air at the Thomas and Mack last Wednesday night as Walt Disney World On Ice, featuring Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, arrived.

For a couple of days, Las Vegas trimmed its adult entertainment image with a clean Disney atmosphere. Little did the seven dwarves know that there were things a mile away on the strip which would change their tune of "Heigh Ho." However, the T & M was a world of its own where children were the focus of the entertainment.

Disney has achieved another economic success with this show. Whoever thought of the original idea of bringing Disney entertainment on ice to cities throughout the country is a pure marketing genius.

There were plush toys, magic mirrors, coloring books and more for sale. There was a salesman outside the stadium yelling out: "Snow White coloring books for \$2." There were stands in the stadium where a

plethora of lighting mechanisms were sold. Hundreds of children must have convinced their parents or guardians to buy one because they were shining throughout the performance. These may seem like negligible details, but the marketing of Snow White merchandise is half the show!

The T&M was quiet until Mickey Mouse appeared, which set off a cheering frenzy by the young ones in the audience.

The first part of the show was a focus on reading. Before the story of "Snow White" began, a skating routine revolving around how reading can be educational and fun, was performed.

This segment introduced characters from many different Disney classic animation films. A big book near the entrance of the ice rink was "turned" to introduce a new story. "Beauty and the Beast," "Jungle Book," and "Aladdin" characters skated and sang around the theme that books are fun. Soon the last book, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves," was introduced and the show's featured story unfolded.

The story begins with Snow White's stepmother, the evil queen, asking the famous "Mirror, mirror on the wall" question.

Snow White, perfectly portrayed by Olympic skater Karen Preston, is found in the forest, where she meets Prince Charming, played by Russian skater Seruei Tartykov. Both skaters showed off their skill and techniques, offering double and triple-jump combinations.

er Mercer, said, "We were very happy to get some feedback, because the show has been in the studio for six months."

As far as relating to his character, Horman found some commonality. "It's a neat thing to tell a story through his words; that's what we've tried to do," Horman explained. "I can relate to the theme of the show—everyone is trying to find love, the meaning of love, that image, whether it's the lord or something like that. I have been feeding on that, instincts, that's basically [it]."

Brownlee, who represented unattainable love, described the experience as "exciting, frustrating and scary. We have been working on this since the beginning of school."

The actress also talked about the changes the cast had to go through. "The beginning was totally different from what the show is now and it's changing all the time," Brownlee said.

She also touched on some of the insecurities the actors had, in that this story was told with music. "When it's finally time to go up, we're scared. If we have a show, will the people like it? Will it make sense to them? Because there is no dialogue; we're telling the story with the music."

And while this is the end for the Las Vegas production, the show goes on. Jeff Koep, dean of the college of fine and performing arts and the show's producer, will showcase the musical will appear in the Odyssey Theatre in Los Angeles Feb. 7-10.



Snow White and the Seven Dwarves were featured in Disney's World on Ice.

The special effects of the show shine as Snow White runs through the "forest" where she is chased by trees. She also encounters alligators, who try to eat her as she skates near the edge of the ice.

The seven dwarves then make their appearance on stage. What seemed odd is these dwarves were taller than Snow White! I looked over this minor stumbling block and continued to enjoy the show. Despite the bulky costumes the dwarves wore, they per-

formed many crazy antics on ice without ever falling.

After the intermission the evil queen is seen transforming herself into the old hag who will trick Snow White. The special effects are in full force here as fireworks, smoke and an array of different colored spotlights focus on the ice.

Once the hag approached Snow White with the poison closing segment, characters from several classic Disney cartoons, such as *Alice in Wonderland* and the *Lion King*,

skate onto the ice.

"Disney's World on Ice" is pure magic. There is not much argument that Disney rules the family entertainment business. If they ever decide to stay permanently here in Las Vegas, I think they would quickly become the biggest family attraction out here. Disney would beat the upcoming King Kong attraction at the Stratosphere Tower, or any other attraction, because Disney has the familiar name that nobody can touch.

## Musical

from pg. 6

of the Juilliard School of Drama under John Houseman. He is now an associate professor and head of the theatre performance program at UNLV.

Brewer spent a year researching Mercer's life and music before beginning work on the production. He was ecstatic about the way the show turned out. "I'm very happy about the results of the play," Brewer said. "Everyone is interested in the musical because Johnny Mercer is so well known for his music."

Co-creator and choreographer Pessagno has seen his share of lights. The first major show the 19-year-old danced in was *Hellzapoppin'*, starring Jerry Lewis and Lynn Redgrave. Since moving to Las Vegas in 1994, he has choreographed *Damn Yankees*, *Guys and Dolls* and *Anything Goes*, to name a few.

"I'm really excited about the turnout," Pessagno said. "It's a good production and the story has fabulous music." He also gave praise to the cast, citing them as "a very talented group of people, individually gifted in their own ways."

Playwright Gagliano, another co-creator of the project, has credits of his own. Productions of his plays, *Conerico Was Here to Stay*, *Night of the Dunces*, *Father Uxbridge wants to Marry* and *The City Scene* have been seen off-Broadway. Horman, who played the old-

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