

Boys Choir of Harlem turns in versatile performance

BY JENNIFER EVANS
STAFF A & E WRITER

From classical to spiritual, to jazz and R&B, the Boys Choir of Harlem sang it all in their Feb. 12 performance at Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall.

The concert, which was a fundraising event for the Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., was the first in the "Family Affair" concert series at Ham Hall.

Twelve-year-old soprano Daniel Lane was the featured soloist for the opening number, "Vesperae Solennes de Confessore," written by Mozart. The innocence of Lane's voice and the spirit of the song touched the hearts of the audience, which ranged from youngsters to the senior set.

Another highlight was the spiritual heritage songs the choir performed. With the choir decked out in scarves bearing African patterns and singing in the background a harvest song that brings life to Mother Africa's people one choir member, donned in a white robe and holding a stick, took his place in front of the choir and spoke about what Mother Africa's harvest means to her people.

After intermission, the choir spiced up their music



The choir performed to an enthusiastic crowd.

by adding a few jazz songs to their genre. The audience then stood up and clapped in rhythm with the old African American spirituals, "Liya Zula" and "Byede Mandela."

Near the close of the show, the choir began to dance as they sang a contemporary song called "Power." Once more, the audience got up and began to make some moves of their own to the R&B sounds of the choir. The Boys Choir of Harlem ended their formal presentation with "Children of the World," a song dedicated to the children of Las Vegas.

Although the audience thought the performance was over, the choir began to rock out on the stage, singing "Celebration." They ran through the aisles, making their way

to the lobby to bid farewell to the audience as they departed.

The choir's enthusiasm showed through their smiles as they politely shook the hands with the departing audience.

"We've wanted to bring the boy's choir here for years," said Diane Walker, chair of Delta Sigma Theta's Ways and Means Committee. "We're eager to expose audiences to the exceptional talent of this group that has been performing for more than 25 years in Harlem and around the world. Not everyone knows about this talented choir."

Walker also said, "education has always been a thrust of (the sorority), so we feel that it has been important to raise

About the choir

Founded by Walter J. Turnbull in 1968 as the Ephesus Boys Choir, the group was incorporated in 1975 as The Boys Choir of Harlem, a non-profit organization.

The choir conducted its first European tour in 1979, and a film called "From Harlem to Haarlem" about the tour won an Emmy Award.

Under the direction of Turnbull, the choir, which regularly tours with 35-40 students, has performed world-wide. Their repertoire ranges from popular and classical music to spirituals, gospel and jazz.

Many of the group's concerts have been performed in such halls as the Lincoln Center in New York, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, and Budokan Concert Hall in Tokyo.

The choir has sung with or backed up some of the most popular names in music, including Luciano Pavarotti, Michael Jackson, Paul McCartney, Ray Charles, Wynton Marsalis and Stephen Sondheim.

Students are given a broad-based education through a holistic program of education, counseling and the performing arts.

--Jennifer Evans

money for scholarships."

The "Family Affair" series was developed by Rick Romito, director of the UNLV Performing Arts Center.

"We had been talking for a number of years here about the aging of our audience," Romito said. "We looked at the average age of the people coming to the events at the center, they keep getting older and older. We started to get worried, thinking about what that meant for our audiences 20 years from now."

Romito said the series was created to involve the parents

and children in performing arts. "Parents are not in the habit any more of bringing their kids with them when they come to the theatre."

"A lot of times the parents think of it as a night away from the kids, they are going to get dressed up and go out and see a nice orchestra or a performer, something like that."

For information about upcoming "Family Affair" events, call the Performing Arts Center box office at 895-3801.

Calendar of Events

Unityfest '96

The Unityfest '96 committee is soliciting participants that have an interesting or unique talent, and departments or clubs that want to sponsor a booth for food or crafts for the event, set for March 13.

The committee is also looking for ideas for activities and programs, speakers about the importance of human and cultural diversity for students and staff at UNLV, or anything of cultural importance students and staff would like to see presented at the festival.

For more information, contact Dane Roberts, chair of the Unityfest '96 committee at 895-3221.

Collaborations '96

A two-day conference on using art to teach or administer will be held at the Midby-Byron Center at the University of Nevada, Reno, March 3 and 4.

One-day registration is \$25; two-days are \$35. The price includes breakfast, lunch and program materials. The registration deadline is Wednesday. For more information, contact Bob Parker or Sharon Rosse at (702) 687-6680.

Dance

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ticore," was a story-like sequence, told by both the UNLV Ballet Ensemble, and the University Singers under the direction of David Weiller.

Louis Kavouras, chair of the dance department, had a hand in the scene design and construction. The piece was choreographed by Margot Mink Colbert and Kavouras.

The props were very simple, but fulfilled their purpose. The

trees were constructed of simple plywood and painted accordingly. The different character's heads were placed on sticks for the dancers to carry as they portrayed them in each scene, bringing the story about the strange man in the castle, the unicorn, the gorgon and the manticore to life.

The dancers in this piece were more ballet-oriented than in any of the other numbers. The choir got into it, singing their parts with zest and quality. The singers and dancers moved the benches the choir stood on to sing with

ease, even using them as tree trunks in one scene.

All in all, this was one entertaining evening. For those that missed this performance, others are coming up soon. The Department of Dance Arts will present Indranee Clark's Masters Dance Concert in Studio One of the Alta Ham Fine Arts Building on March 2 at 8 p.m. and March 3 at 4 p.m. Admission is \$6 general and \$4 for students and seniors.

To check dates and times of this or other performances, call the Performing Arts Center box office at 895-3801.

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Interview Date:

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