

ENTERTAINMENT

# Group to perform South African songs, dances at Ham Hall

By Sharon Y. Savage  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Enjoy a taste of South Africa when Ladysmith Black Mambazo takes the stage March 16 at UNLV's Artemus Ham Hall.

You will hear moving songs about apartheid, homelessness and love. The ensemble will also sing the South African national anthem, in commemoration of their dedication to educating the world on South African culture. There will also be dancing and audience participation.

The Grammy-Award winning Mambazo will grace the stage for the performance.

They rose to prominence in the United States a little more than a decade ago when musician Paul Simon incorporated the group's traditional South African sound into his Graceland album. The group has since gone on to record numerous albums and garner numerous awards and are touted as the number one record selling group in Africa.

Mambazo sings traditional music termed Isicathamiya. The music's roots lie in turmoil.

Imagine being taken from home by train, working in a mine for paltry pay and living in squalor. How would you keep your spirits lifted?



LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO

Singing and dancing kept the miners entertained. Ever cautious of camp guards catching wind of the folly, they would sing quietly and tip toe dance.

When they returned to their respective homelands, this style of singing and dancing soon transformed into competition, eventually dancing its way into the traditional culture.

After singing in other groups, Joseph Shabalala founded this group, oddly enough, because he heard a particular harmony in a dream. The initial group was comprised of Shabalala's brothers and cousins.

Each word in the acapella singing group's name is significant. Ladysmith is the Shabalala's hometown, black represents the black oxen, the strongest animal on the farm, and "mambazo" is the Zulu word for ax (as in chopping

down the competition).

Barbara Nielsen and Jeff Lewis of Bard Productions brought the performers to Las Vegas and expects them to be crowd pleasers. "This is the most incredible group you will witness perform," Nielsen said. "You will be entertained and there is something for everyone."

Nielsen thinks the event will provide a cultural experience for guests.

"Everyone is welcome at this show from children to seniors," she said. "Some people are familiar with the group from Sesame Street, the IBM commercial, or their work with Michael. For others it will be their first encounter, but a memorable one."

## AKA's celebrate 90th year of service

By Lisa Russell  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Las Vegas Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. celebrated their 90th anniversary of their founding with a weekend full of celebration.

Theta Theta Omega members kicked off their weekend of festivities with a Rededication Ceremony held at the Luxor Hotel and Casino last Friday night. The alumni chapters rededication ceremony, which reaffirms each members commitment to "service all mankind" was officiated by the organizations 18th Past National President Mattelia Grays.

The celebration continued on Saturday at the sorority's Founder Day Luncheon held at the Golden Nugget Hotel as more than 60 Alpha Kappa Alpha women and more than 200 guests were stirred by the words of AKA member Clark County Commission Chairwoman Yvonne Atkinson-Gates.

"As African-American women, it is important that we are positive role models for our children, especially our daughters and make every



Clark County Commission Chairwoman Yvonne Atkinson-Gates (left), and her AKA sorority sisters Belisa Brownlee and Denise Williams enjoy the Founders Day luncheon.

effort to ensure their continued education," said Atkinson-Gates, who also helped to bring an undergraduate chapter of the sorority to UNLV more than 20 years ago. "We are being looked upon by others to continue the vision that our Founders began 90 years ago."

Theta Theta Omega member Barbara Kirkland concurred. She recalled the positive impact the Las Vegas Chapter has made on the community since 1965.

"It was a bold venture to establish the AKA chapter in Las Vegas," she said. "We were pioneers because Las Vegas didn't have the knowledge of what a (black) sorority was," said Kirkland, who was instrumental in bringing the first mobile tuberculosis unit to the Nucleus Plaza, formerly the Golden West plaza 35 years ago. "We will continue to bring services to the Las Vegas community."

Grays brought the room to

its feet with her speech urging all to "do more than talk, but walk the walk, not just in Alpha Kappa Alpha but in all our (See AKA, Page 16)

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