

ENTERTAINMENT

Tambourines' show falls just short of glory

Tammy D. McMahan
Sentinel-Voice

"Tambourines to Glory," a comedy-drama penned by noted playwright, poet and novelist Langston Hughes was performed at the West Las Vegas Library Theater on April 28, 29 and 30.

The community theater production was both blessing and bane to the stage. One of the "blessings" came in the choice of a thought-provoking work. Another blessing was the occasionally captivating performances by some cast members.

The banes of this play included the garbled lines, off-timing, overacting, interminably long scene changes and overall length.

"Tambourine's" story begins with a feisty monologue by none other than the Devil himself in the guise of "Big Time" Buddy Lomax (Galaxy Glenn). Lomax informs the audience that he's up to no good in Harlem and he's loving every minute of it.

The play then shifts to Essie Belle Johnson (Makeeba Ricks) who is sitting on a suitcase placed



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice by Dana Scott

KCEP Power 88.1 FM personality "Galaxy" Glenn Runnells and Patrice Ashley perform during the community theater production of Tambourines to Glory.

on a Harlem street. The perennially down-on-her-luck Christian has just been evicted from her apartment.

A drunken lady hanging on the arm of a lecherous, equally besotted man almost passes by Essie when the woman stops. The lady is Essie's old friend Laura Reed (Patrice Ashley). The strong-minded Laura decides that it's time to change their sorry

states and encourages the devout, passive Essie that the two should start a church on the very corner upon which Essie has landed.

Essie agrees to the proposition with visions of a grand church that will empower the Harlem community in her head. However, Essie's hopes are dashed as Laura's greed and vanity grows, corrupting the

church. Laura's vices are further "nurtured" by the manipulations of Buddy.

However, in the midst of the decadence, reformed sinners, now upstanding church members, try to make peace with God about their pasts. Eventually, Laura's deeds, Buddy's womanizing and Essie's conscience bring matters to a dramatic climax with life-changing

consequences for all of them and the church.

Regarding the play's strong points, "Tambourines" is a thoughtful satire on morality. It illustrates the wayward path that a well-intentioned Christian could take, the battle between the spirit and the flesh and the deceptive, seductive manipulations carried out by evil in whatever form.

Furthermore, the play's cast members had their moments. Galaxy Glenn, a KCEP radio personality, captured the essence of this romanticized version of the devil. Glenn is the charismatic, elegant, confident and sensually sinister demon in designer threads.

Glenn is wonderfully smooth as his Lomax engineers more and more diabolical schemes to make money and break womens' hearts. Also, Glenn expertly evoked passionate emotional responses from the audience with his brutal observations of Laura, Essie and Marietta (Jenell Dent).

Although Patrice Ashley gives a spotty performance,

she sometimes compellingly conveyed the toughness and vulnerability that constitutes the Laura character. She's at her most riveting delivering a soliloquy about her mother.

Although Makeeba Ricks often stumbled with her lines, she nicely paced Essie Johnson's transformation from an overly submissive, world-weary woman to an assertive servant of God and community.

Honorable mentions also go to secondary leads Billy "T" Thompson, Vera Lee, Grant Harrison and Sherida Devine who were at their best when they cleverly combined humor and their individual characters' quirks.

Regarding the production's weak points, "Tambourine" suffered mightily from the far-too-often garbling of lines and off-timing. Worse yet, these incidents occurred during some of the most essential scenes of the play.

At times, the secondary leads indulged in excessive, distracting mugging that detracted from the primary leads' roles.

(See Tambourines, Page 9)

UNLV student to tone chords in Europe

Sentinel-Voice

Lillian Roberts, a UNLV senior who's receiving her bachelor's degree in vocal performance, will display her singing talents in Europe.

Roberts will master her skills in Chiari, Italy alongside some of the best talent in the classical music genre.

The Georgia-born 23-year-old has sung leading roles in "The Impresario" and "Elixir of Love" and was a soprano singer for a professional recording of Daren Hagen's "Bandanna."

With an Army father, she spent a good portion of her



LILLIAN ROBERTS

growing up in Germany.

"My first solo I ever sang was in an Alabama church," Roberts said. "My teacher turned me on to classical

music when I was 11."

She kept with classical music because of the challenge in mastering it. It offers a way to express herself and touch people.

Roberts has been singing opera and classical music for three and a half years and in several languages — Italian, French, German, and Spanish languages.

"I'm very fond of jazz — it's my second favorite (style of music)," Roberts said. "I'm going to pursue classical music first. I'd like a chance to sing in the Houston Grand Opera and the Metropolitan Opera."

Free jazz concert series returns for summer

Sentinel-Voice

The Clark County Parks and Recreation Department's free summer jazz concert series begins this month.

The concerts are at the Clark County Government Amphitheater, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway and will take place every other Saturday. Jazz in the Park is co-sponsored by KNPR 89.5 FM Public Radio.

KVBC-TV Channel 3 weatherman Nathan Tannenbaum will host pre-show activities. There will also be nightly drawings and giveaways. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Music starts at 8 p.m.

Vocalist Marlena Shaw and her trio will

be performing "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" and "Go Away Little Boy" May 27. Shaw has worked with legendary jazz great Count Basie and his orchestra.

On June 10, the Michael Wolff Trio takes the stage after his 1998 release, "Portraiture: The Blues Period" the pianist is best known for his five-year stint as the leader of the Arsenio Hall Show band.

The Ernie Watts Quartet perform June 24. Watts, a tenor saxophonist, played 20 years with the Tonight Show Band and received Grammy Awards for "Chariots of Fire" and "Musician."

Those interested can call 455-8200.

Fire damages James Brown office

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Fire damaged soul music legend James Brown's office building. Firefighters arrived at about 9:45 p.m. Friday and found smoke billowing from the roof.

The building houses James Brown Enterprises and more than a dozen

employees who coordinate concerts and tours for the Godfather of Soul.

The office space also contained some memorabilia. Gifts from fans were on display throughout the building, and the upstairs corridor featured mementos from Brown's career.

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