

ENTERTAINMENT

Review: Draggy Broadway return for Goldberg

NEW YORK (AP) — Twenty years after an unknown performer named Whoopi Goldberg made a splash on Broadway in her one-woman show, she is back where she started. Not only at the same theater (the Lyceum), but doing much of the same material, comic and otherwise, that first attracted audiences in 1984.

By now, though, Goldberg has become a household name, an Oscar winner, a "Hollywood Squares" regular and a nemesis for the Bush administration.

So it's disappointing to report that despite its fair share of laughs, her new-old show, which opened Wednesday, seems diffuse and draggy. It's something a di-



Actress Whoopi Goldberg is making her return to Broadway.

rector presumably could have helped to eliminate. None is listed in the Playbill, although Mike Nichols, who produced and "supervised" the original, has returned as producer. He should have done some-

thing to move things along.

But then, Goldberg always has been a free spirit and that randomness infuses her current show. Each performance apparently varies slightly, depending on her mood and

which characters in her gallery of unusual folks she wants to present.

Let's hope all future performances include Fontaine, the hip, high and sharply observant drug addict who is as free with his opinions as he is with four-letter words. Fontaine is the toughest — and funniest — social critic around. And the recently re-elected president as well as the war in Iraq give him plenty of ammunition. This is blue-state comedy at its best.

In mid-monologue, the character takes a turn toward the important as he describes a visit to Amsterdam and, more specifically, a trip to Anne Frank's house, now a museum. It's a strange ending for a story that turns out to the show's high point of hilarity.

That same shift in tone occurs in the tale of a pregnant Valley Girl, which has Goldberg reveling in the young lady's inarticulateness before launching into a graphic description of her coat-hanger abortion.

One of the most concise and successful monologues involved a handicapped woman who finds romance. It's sweet and, more importantly, just about the right length.

That can't be said for story of Lurleen, a menopausal woman obsessed with growing old and what the aging process has done to her sagging body. At times, the char-

acter sounds as if she could join the cast of "The Good Body," Eve Ensler's one-woman show playing on the other side of Times Square.

Lurleen overstays her welcome, particularly with her descriptions of feminine hygiene products and the urination techniques of men and women.

Goldberg is still blessed

with a wide, people-friendly grin and a fine sense of how and when to tweak an audience. Latecomers beware, especially those who sit down front. Yet for those who saw the show two decades ago on Broadway or the HBO television special which was made later, Goldberg's return seems more of a ramble than ever.

Author: Ex-felons litter NBA

Out of Bounds: Inside the NBA's Culture of Rape, Violence and Crime
By Jeff Benedict; Harper Collins;
272 pp.; illus.; Hardcover; \$24.95
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By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

"Most people probably view the NBA simply as a professional sports league featuring the world's most talented basketball players. But there is a dark, sinister side to the NBA, where criminal laws and social norms don't exist, a world where athletes are given license to be socially irresponsible. Nowhere are these conditions more apparent than in the relationships between NBA players and women." — Excerpted from the Preface

Journalist/attorney Jeff Benedict made waves several years ago when he initiated the first study of the rap sheets of the nation's pro football players. He admits that he was surprised to find that over 20% of the men then in the league had been arrested for a serious felony. So, he published his alarming proof in *Pros and Cons, the Criminals Who Play in the NFL*.

This go-round, the enterprising, investigative reporter put the Freedom of Information Act to work to do a background check on NBA stars. After culling through over 12,000 pages of documents and conducting some 400 interviews with police officers and victims, he arrived at a shocking conclusion: the percentage of basketball players running afoul of the law is twice as high he had uncovered for football.

All the unseemly details, including names, dates and blow-by-blow descriptions are contained in "Out of Bounds: Inside the NBA's

Culture of Rape, Violence and Crime." The author chronicles over 300 complaints, including 22 rapes, 33 cases of spousal abuse, and plenty of over-the-line, improper behavior with nannies, groupies and topless dancers.

While everyone has heard of the Kobe case, many other accusations uncovered here have been quietly covered-up, even some involving marquee talent. We learn about incidents involving such high-profile names as Shaq, Allen Iverson, Paul Pierce and Patrick Ewing. Perennial all-star Glenn Robinson and slam dunk champ Jason Richardson were both found guilty of domestic violence in jury trials, while attempted rapist Ruben Patterson is a registered sex offender who has to report his whereabouts to the authorities regularly.

The book traces the roots of this phenomenon back to adolescence where, as promising prodigies, the players are repeatedly given a free ride for any anti-social, off-the-court behavior solely because of their athletic talent. And by the time they reach the NBA, so many legal transgressions have been overlooked that these pampered pros have a warped sense of absolute entitlement.

In summation, Benedict argues that the league finds itself sitting at a crossroad where it must choose "whether it wants to be perceived as a league of selfish, shameless thugs, or return to the highly respected team sport it once was." While an admirable goal, that would likely entail turning back the clock to the days before these steroid-sodden, chest-thumping egotists stopped playing for the team name on the front of their jerseys and started playing primarily for the name on the back, i.e., their own.

Studdard hospitalized with fatigue

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Former "American Idol" champ Ruben Studdard has been hospitalized just as his new album hits the stores.

Studdard, 26, was in his Alabama hometown Monday night when he fell ill and was taken to the hospital, said Liz Morentin of J Records.

Exhaustion was to blame,

although more tests were due to be performed, Morentin said Tuesday.

She said Studdard "will likely remain in the hospital through the end of the week. All promotion for his new album this week has been canceled." Studdard went to the hospital on his own and had been feeling sick over

the last two weeks, Morentin said. "I Need an Angel," released Tuesday, is Studdard's follow-up to last year's "Soulful," which sold over 1 million copies.

Studdard was the second champion of "American Idol," the Fox television reality show that seeks to find the nation's next pop superstar.

Quivers signs deal for daytime show

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Robin Quivers, shock jock Howard Stern's longtime sidekick, is making a solo move into television.

Quivers has signed a deal with Sony Pictures Television to develop a syndicated talk show for daytime TV, the company announced Monday.

The potential series could debut by fall 2005. Quivers will continue her work on Stern's radio show while developing the TV show, Sony said.

There was no indication of whether she planned to remain with Stern if her show gets a green light. A call to her manager in New York was not immediately returned Monday.

Quivers, a former nurse in the U.S. Air Force who achieved the rank of captain, began her radio career in Washington in 1980 and teamed with Stern the next year.

In October, Stern announced a deal with Sirius Satellite Radio to move his program in January 2006 from traditional broadcasting to satellite distribution — and away from regulation.

Stern's raunchy radio show has brought repeated fines over the years. The FCC cracked down harder on indecent broadcasting following Janet Jackson's racy Super Bowl display last February.



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