

WLVAC



West Las Vegas Arts Center Director Marcia Robinson.

(Continued from Page 1) Stephan Reynolds are experienced dancers with decades of choreography, contemporary and modern dance experience. Reynolds is a cast member of "O," a Cirque de Soleil presentation at the Bellagio Hotel and Casino.

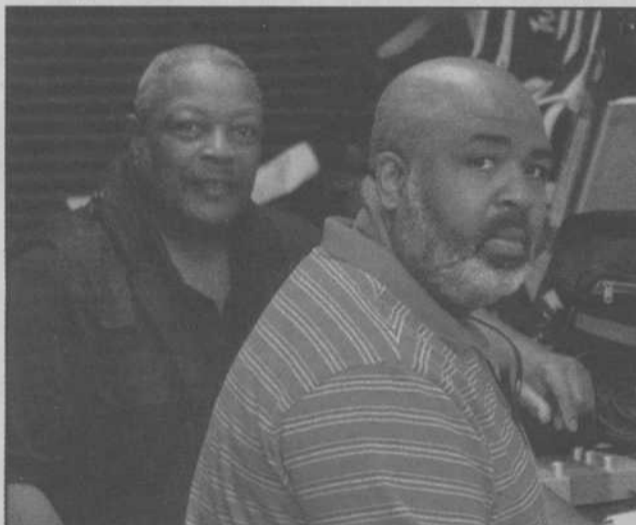
One of the most revered and experienced instructors is Walter Mason, the program's artistic director for six of the program's 11 years. He directs the children's talents and utilizes the other instructors' expertise to shape the annual shows. Not only is he a renown director, but he teaches, motivates and, at times, verbally disciplines the students, as well.

"Here, students learn better communication and social skills, problem-solving techniques and even improve their speech. We hope to filter out negative behaviors," said Mason.

"We hope to focus those negative behaviors on more

positive and productive talents, which are often untapped when they join the program," he said, never taking his eyes off students rehearsing.

"We work with several disciplines, including music, drama and dance. There are even students who join the camp for set design, which we also value here. We have a few gentlemen that build



Program techs Lou Ragland, left, and Robert Connor.

sets for us, and they teach those students interested in electronics, set building, and designing how to do so."

While many of the students are new to the camp, there are a few faces who have called the center their second home for many years, and all hope to someday do professionally what they love.

Primrose Martin, a seven-year member of the camp, loves the program.

"My passions are singing and acting. But during the camp, I have to dance and use instruments. The instructors are always trying to make us better, so that we don't simply settle for what we are already good at. We are always trying to better ourselves, improve on our talents. And the instructors are good at making sure we get that done," the young performer said.

"This program has taught me so much, and I'm proud



Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy

Guest dancer and choreographer Dr. Jacqueline Sawyer displays her free spirit.

unacceptable. So, I had no choice but to get myself together because I love music. And there was no way that I was going to allow my attitude to interfere with my passion."

Each of the students appears to enjoy the camp thoroughly and all it has to offer.

tured in the show.

The show will also feature students performing a Maya Angelou poem, "On the Pulse of Morning," and selections from a Kirk Franklin CD, "Hero."

African, tap and hip-hop dance routines will convey subtle and bold messages of

ethnic pride, self-respect, race relations and childhood concerns surrounding drug abuse, poverty, molestation, rape and the war in Iraq.

The promising talent being showcased at the center is symbolically overseen by a marvelous gallery, as the pictures of encouraging and legendary entertainers — Lena Horne, Cab Calloway, Sarah Vaughn and Nat King Cole — line the hallways leading into the theater. Those are large shoes to fill for such young entertainers, but the talents they already possess are far bigger than their bodies or feet could ever grow to be.

The showcase finale is on Sat., Aug. 4 at 2 p.m. in the adjacent West Las Vegas Library Theatre at 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd. Call the arts center at 229-4800 for program information.

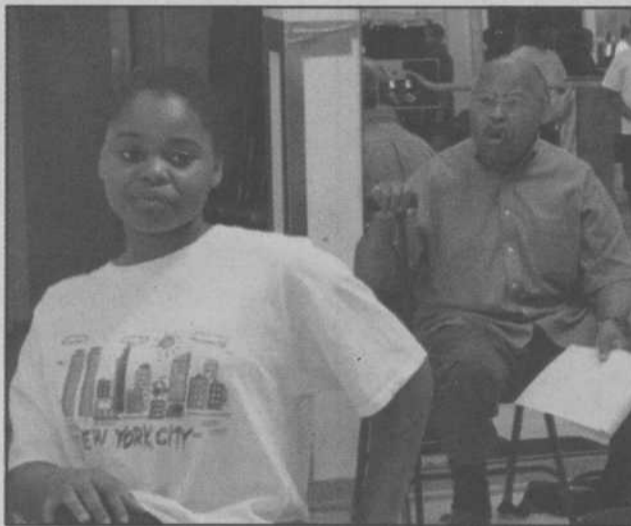


Percussionist instructor Arthur Moore.

to have been given an opportunity to experience this."

Averee Walker, a ten-year program member who plays African drums and specializes in theater, said, "Every year, the instructors raise the caliber of our performances higher and higher. Every summer, they incorporate more dancing and more music. But I see it to be a positive thing. If the performances didn't get harder, we wouldn't get better. We are, by no means, perfect at what we do. But the instructors teach us skills that we can use to get better. As a group, we know that they are here to better us personally and professionally."

Gregory Hall, a camp student who Moore considers "an extremely talented percussionist," said, "I love coming here. I had to overcome a few personality issues before I felt comfortable here. I had an attitude problem and a bad temper, too. But the instructors let me know that my behavior was

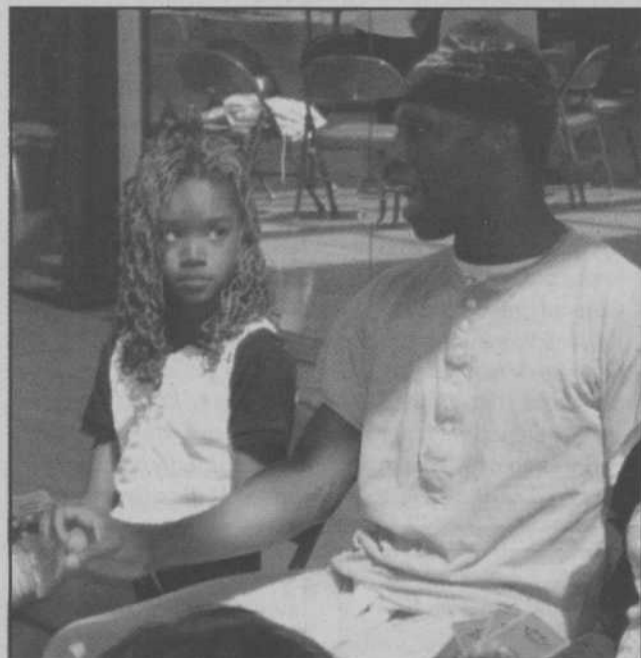


Melane Miller listens to artistic director Walter Mason.

There was a consensus among them that what they do takes much discipline. But, of course, the director never allows them to forget that.

"There must be desire in your spirits," Mason said aloud as students rehearsed, "and that desire must shine through during your performance. That is the only way to ensure your success. You must want it, know it, understand it, and become it. Make them hear you," he said with a roar, "and you will be heard!"

One young lady who will definitely be heard is Kionna King-Jackson, a singer-songwriter who wrote "I Believe," one of the songs fea-



Dance choreographer Stephan Reynolds gives instructions to camper Cheyenne Jefferson.