

Theater Review

It Was a Bright Light of Color

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Guardsman Staff Writer

Have you ever been put in a situation where you have experienced or felt the same way as the storyteller?

Yeah, you have.

Anyone coming out of the fourth annual theater performance of American Playwrights of Color can probably relate to it.

With a total of 11 impressive performances, directed by Theatre Arts instructor Ann Fajilan, the highlights of the show were *Plantation Lollipop...Memories of an African Princess*, written and performed by Aisha Stone, *Sakina's Restaurant*, written by Aasif Mandvi performed by Kaushik Roy, and *Mandingo Interrupts*, by L.L. Wong, Ray White, Ashley Murray, and Carlo Del Conte.

The show began with a silent tribute that included the placement of a rose on a stool buy a single candle and US flag by each person involved with the show.

Urban Scenes/Creole Dreams, by David Rousseve and Barsha Fields.

This was an on stage comic performance about a black boy going to a "denigrated" school. The character talks about his first classroom experience. In this scene he performs a humorous description of his teacher and the "white boy" sitting in front of him. He describes how the Caucasian boy's hair is so thin unlike the huge Afros of his day. He finds it amusing to blow on.

Telling Tales, by Migdalia Cruz performed by Christian Aleman and Alex Stephenson.

Aleman's approach was serious. His character is a young boy who recalls his grandparent's stories. This tale gives more of a description than an action performance. He talks about how his

grandmother would give him chocolate as a kid, but instead of chocolate it was soap and the children had to eat it because she would watch them thinking they were eating chocolate.

Plantation Lollipop -- Memoirs of an African Princess.

This performance gets a standing ovation. Combining dance, singing, and props, a little black girl tells her story of what it feels like living in a white society.

The first is a spoken word poem in referring to the models in Vogue magazine, "even though we hate that white bitch we can't stop looking at her." She talks about the TV shows she used to watch, and how they all portrayed this wonderful American pie but the black characters were either slaves or maids. She portrayed Shirley temple as a spoiled little child.

Novell-AAH!, by Eugenie Chan, S. Diamond Lee, Jaruan Fuentes, Gwendolyn Peake (V.O. Senor Aleman). Although very comical I found this part of the show the most confusing.

Although very comical, I didn't understand the story line, and the audience around me was in the same boat. The sexual movements played by the possessive mother and daughter Isabella was comical.

In his scene Isabella dresses up as a male and waits for her husband who never arrives on her wedding day. At the end the mother and daughter get married to each other.

This portrays a child who never leaves her parent's house and is cradled by them all their life.

Big Red and Little Tiger.

A mystery theme, set in a park had a big bang at the end. Christian Aleman played Ming did a better performance than in *Telling Tales*. With his character playing a Chinese undercover agent. Carlo Del Conte, played Bruce and was a great synchronized act.

Sakina's Restaurant this a one-man performance about a Muslim man living in America engaged to a woman named Sakina. While taking a break from studying he meets a prosti-

tute. This nervous wreck tries to talk him out of sleeping with her with her, but since he has already paid her, she isn't willing to go back.

Mandingo Interrupts A black woman on rollerblades, a white man dressed in drag and a black man are attracted to white women and the transvestite at the

bar. A court scene puts him into jail for perjury. And get psychological help during his ten years.

Anything mixed up, as that has to be funny. Need I say more? For the second performance of this show, it was well done.

I can't wait till the American Playwrights of Color Number 5.

Theater Review

"Cats" was the Purrrrrrrrrrfect Kitty

By Carol Hudson

Guardsman Staff Writer

Cats was a smashing success at the Golden Gate Theatre from its subtle beginning to its frolicking, high-spirited ending

The captivating, lively music made you want to join in the singing. The voices of every singer were poetry in its finest, but (Grizabella) Gretchen Goldsworthy's solo, "Memories," stole the show. She has a voice like velvet and the singing dynamics to carry out each high note, putting the audience in awestruck breathless mode.

John Napier deserves high marks for his artistic and humorous costume designs. He matched each costume to suit the characters' personalities, and used every imaginable type of material to give the dancers the freedom and flexibility to move freely.

The dances were artfully choreographed, allowing the dancers to resemble real cats.

The original, funky sets contained a scattered assortment of junk that looked just like the things angry people fling out of their windows in the middle of the night at howling, hissing, prowling cats. There were articles like tennis rackets, a paintbrush, old shoes, books and even a stove, among each one made

in super large sizes.

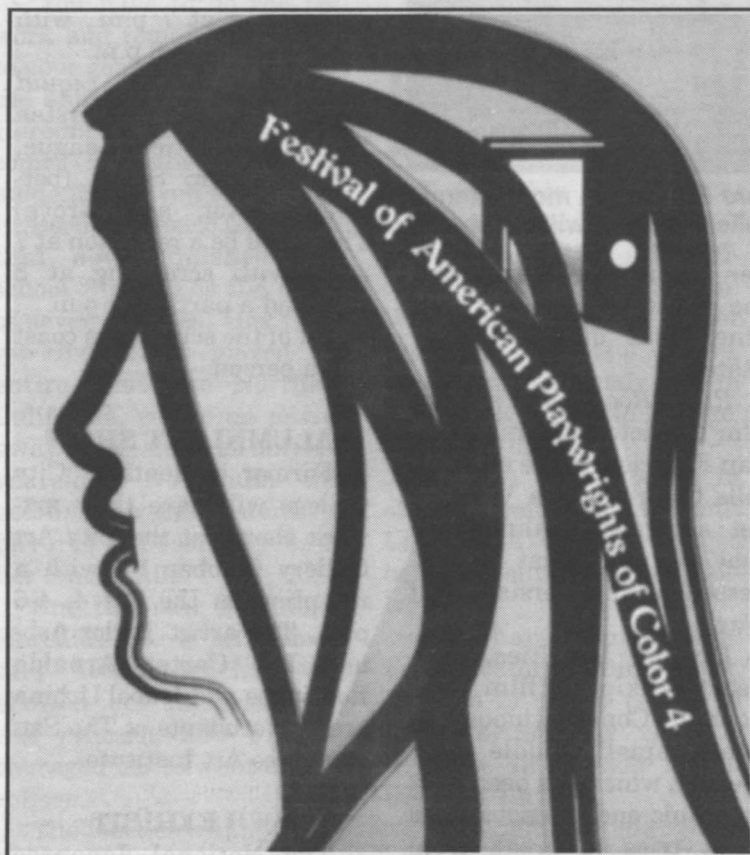
From the very start of the show, the cats came across almost like common everyday people. It was hard not to compare them to people you know. For example, Jennyanydots, someone who sleeps and lazily lies around all day, has a personality most of us are familiar with. Then there was Rum Tum Tugger, popular with the female felines, a happy playful sort who likes making mischief to get attention.

Grizabella the cat, who left the tribe to prow around but is now ready to return, brings you to tears. You could feel her longing and need to be back with her friends.

Laughter erupted when Bustopher Jones (William Hartner) made his appearance all decked out in his finest black-and-white formal attire and his signature spats, stealing the show. What a dapper cat he is, and he may remind you of a well-known politician, a lawyer or maybe even a popular columnist who is familiar to San Franciscans. One has to admit he did steal the show.

It would be hard to choose a favorite cat character, when each gave their finest performance throughout the show.

Even though all good things must end, I longed for more -- an Act III.



A poster for the American Playwrights of Color that played at the Diego Rivera theater at the end of September.