

6-12 JUNE 2014
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

YOUR COMPLETE
GUIDE TO LAS VEGAS
ENTERTAINMENT

Neo

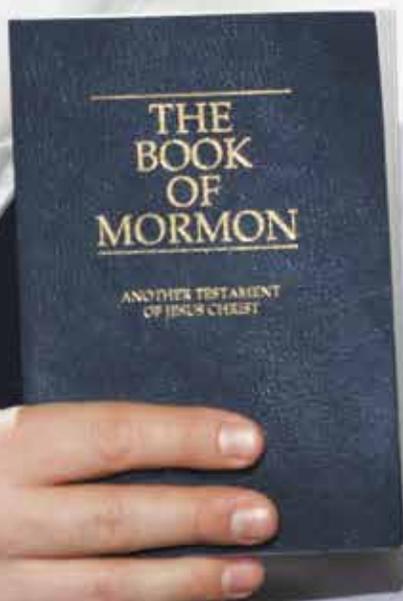
Play Us A Song

Billy Joel's goal
was to write
tunes, not be a
rock star
SOUNDS/10

Saving the Day

Tom Cruise
caught in time
loop in 'Edge of
Tomorrow'
FLICKS/16

ELDER PRICE
THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



Flip the Scripture

WILDLY IRREVERENT 'BOOK OF MORMON'
SET TO BEGIN SMITH CENTER RUN 25

✚ CELEBRATE NATIONAL
DOUGHNUT DAYS WITH
ON THE MENU/31

“Nothing less than delightful – and often
more than that.” – *Las Vegas Review-Journal*

Soul Men & Lady Soul / June 13-15 • Michael Cavanaugh / June 20 & 21 • Clint Holmes / July 4-6

CABARET JAZZ

A CLUB AT THE SMITH CENTER

TheSmithCenter.com | 702.749.2000

TTY: 800.326.6868 or dial 711

Sponsored by LEXUS



JOAN MARCUS/COURTESY

Edgy satire and old-fashioned musical numbers combine to bring all kinds of audiences to the Tony-winning musical "The Book of Mormon," which opens Tuesday at The Smith Center.

Mormon Mania

'BOOK OF MORMON' HEAVY ON SATIRE, GOTTA-SING MUSIC IN MONTHLONG STAY

By Carol Cling
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Ask not for whom the doorbell tolls. It tolls for everyone who's been waiting with anticipatory glee for "The Book of Mormon," which checks into The Smith Center's Reynolds Hall Tuesday for an almost monthlong run.

Winner of nine 2011 Tony Awards, including best musical, "The Book of Mormon" takes a wildly irreverent approach to a seemingly saintly

Arts & Leisure listings Page 46

subject: the adventures of two young missionaries in Uganda.

Then again, "The Book of Mormon" could hardly be anything but irreverent, considering the show's creative team, led by "South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone, who collaborated on the book and score with "Frozen" Oscar-winner Robert Lopez. (Lopez also knows a thing or two about musical satire, considering his roles as co-composer and co-lyricist of another cheeky Tony-winner, the "Sesame Street" spoof

"Avenue Q.")

Along with the religious satire, however, "The Book of Mormon" also boasts tongue-in-cheek numbers that salute classic gotta-sing, gotta-dance Broadway musicals. (Once upon a time, the showbiz bible Variety would have described them as "socko!")

Consider "Turn It Off," which begins as comforting advice on how to deal with inner conflict — "Turn it off like a light switch, just go click, it's a cool little Mormon trick" — and concludes in brassy "big finish!" fashion, complete with missionaries tap-dancing their

Preview

"The Book of Mormon"

7:30 p.m. Tuesday through June 13, 2 and 7:30 p.m. June 14-15, through July 6

Reynolds Hall, The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, 361 Symphony Park Ave.

\$39-\$150 (702-749-2000, www.thesmithcenter.com)

hearts out.

That kicky combination is one secret to the show's success, according to Casey Nicholaw, who shared a Tony with Parker for best direction of a musical and won a second Tony for his choreography.

"What makes the show so successful is, it's contemporary satire put in an old-fashioned package," Nicholaw says

Continued on Page 26

Michael Raynor performs his powerful autobiographical play

By Carol Cling
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Whodunit? In many mysteries, that is not only *the* question, it's the only question. In addition to its title inquiry, however, "Who Is Floyd Stearn?" has an even more important question: "Why?"

Written by and starring veteran actor Michael Raynor (whose credits range from "CSI" and "Criminal Minds" to HBO's "From the Earth to the Moon"), the solo show plays The Smith Center's Troesh Studio Theater Saturday and Sunday, under the auspices of the Jewish Repertory Theatre of Nevada.

But Raynor's involvement is far more than professional.

In the autobiographical drama, Raynor tries to conjure a clear picture of the father who abandoned him during his childhood. (Raynor adopted his stepfather's surname when he turned 18.)

"Who Is Floyd Stearn?" unfolds as "a nonlinear puzzle," he says in a telephone interview, likening it to "a detective story

Preview

"Who Is Floyd Stearn?"

8 p.m. Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday

Troesh Studio Theater, The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, 361 Symphony Park Ave.

\$38-\$42 (702-749-2000, www.thesmithcenter.com)

in style, a 'Rashomon'-style mystery" in which Raynor portrays not only himself (from childhood to adulthood) but his mother and grandparents, who share conflicting views of his father.

Raynor hadn't pursued answers to the play's title question until, playing Apollo astronaut Al Worden in "From the Earth to the Moon," he found himself in Florida — and mustered the courage to knock on the door of his paternal grandmother's condo.

He hadn't seen her for almost three decades; their reunion took place on what turned out to be her 87th birthday.

During the visit, Raynor told his grandmother what he remembered of his parents' divorce, and "she said, 'No, that's not what happened,'" he recalls.

Raynor later shared their encounter with his "From the Earth to the Moon" colleagues (including executive producer Tom Hanks), who told him, "Oh, my God, you have to tell that story."

And so he began developing the play, which had a successful 2004 off-Broadway run directed by Larry Moss.

That production earned praise from, among others, The New York Times — and radio fixture Howard Stern, who wrote to Raynor to praise the performer's "insight, charisma and, most of all, courage" in exploring such a "deeply personal story."

Raynor and Moss reunited to "revisit the story and all the characters" for this weekend's Las Vegas performances, the director notes in a telephone interview.

In the play, "Michael goes from child to teenager to young adult to middle age," Moss says, requiring actor and director to determine "the physicality behind" each stage in his life — and each of the other

characters Raynor brings to life.

In the process, the actor builds "the vocal stamina, the physical stamina" required for the one-man show, Moss says. "It's the most difficult thing anyone can do" onstage. (Moss has directed several solo shows, including the award-winning "The Syringa Tree" and the world premiere of Vegas favorite Clint Holmes' "Jam" at UNLV's Judy Bayley Theatre; he and Holmes are still working toward "bringing Clint to Broadway.")

Raynor, meanwhile, has adapted "Who Is Floyd Stearn?" for the screen and plans to direct it once funding is in place — with someone else in his role.

Before "Who Is Floyd Stearn?" becomes a movie, however, the stage version remains, enabling him — and his audiences — to explore "the power of forgiveness," Raynor says.

And in the process of answering the play's title question, Raynor's also learned a few things about himself.

"I learned," he says, "I had more guts than I ever thought I had."

Contact reporter Carol Cling at ccling@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0272.

+ 'Book of Mormon's' very edgy humor appeals to all types of audience members

Continued from Page 25

during a telephone interview.

The director-choreographer will know Sunday whether he'll have another Tony to add to the trophy case; Nicholaw is nominated this year for "Aladdin," which provides "a bit of a contrast" with "Book of Mormon," he acknowledges with a chuckle. "'Aladdin' has the same buoyant energy, but you won't hear Aladdin and Jasmin swearing too much."

Unlike "The Book of Mormon," where the constant cussing had the show's creators wondering — just a bit — about "what will people think of all the swearing," Nicholaw recalls.

That is, until they stopped wondering, realizing "It's satire — it's making fun of everyone," he observes.

Beyond that, "it ultimately has an uplifting ending," Nicholaw points out, along with "a good message ... that everyone can find a place" provided they have faith.

"People have appropriate fears — initially" about the show's sharp satire, according to actor Cody Jamison Strand, who portrays one of "The Book of Mormon's" main missionaries, the hopelessly hapless Elder Arnold Cunningham.

Those "people" initially included Strand's father, the pastor at an Assembly of God church in Brandon, S.D.

So when Strand landed his dream-come-true first job out of college — in November 2012, as a standby in "Book of Mormon's" first national tour — he called his mother first, suggesting she listen to the original cast album as preparation, Strand says in a telephone interview.

After listening to the "Book of Mormon" score, Strand's mother advised him, "'We'll ease your father into it' with the more politically correct songs," he notes. Now, Strand's clergyman father "loves it — he really does."

So do audiences — in New York and on tour — three years after its debut.

"It doesn't feel dated," Nicholaw says of the show, citing its "timeless" quality.

Not that its creators had any guarantee "The Book of Mormon" would become a Broadway blockbuster in the first place.

"I don't think anyone's ever convinced that something will be a hit from the get-go," Nicholaw says. "I don't think we said, 'This is going to be a hit.'" But they did know "it was funny. We knew it was entertaining."

Especially with that combination of elements — the edgy humor and old-

fashioned, all-stops-out musical numbers — that "appealed to a huge cross-section of people," he says, from the "die-hard Broadway people" to "South Park" fans "who wouldn't go to the theater otherwise."

The musical begins at a training session in Provo, Utah, where future missionaries sing, "We're marching door to door, 'cause God loves Mormons and he wants some more! A two-year mission is our sacrifice, we are the army of the Church of Jesus Christ ... of Latter-day Saints."

From there, Elder Cunningham departs for Uganda with his ambitious partner, Elder Kevin Price (played by David Larsen), who's determined "to be the Mormon that changed all of mankind." (Nerdy Elder Cunningham assures Price that he'll be content to "stand next to you and watch.")

At least that's the plan as they arrive and confront challenges expected (poverty, famine) and unimaginable (a crazed warlord whose expletive-undeleted name cannot be cited in a family newspaper).

Both missionaries experience the unexpected in up-close-and-personal ways.

One of them leads to Strand's

favorite number: the double entendre-laden "Baptize Me," in which Elder Cunningham and the village chief's daughter, Nabalungi (Denee Benton), sing a rapturous duet about the life-changing moment they're about to share.

"It's so funny, but it's also so cute and heartwarming at the same time," the actor explains. "It's a double entendre, but it's out of complete innocence."

Which is the way "The Book of Mormon" was designed from the very beginning.

"We built the show as we needed it for Broadway," Nicholaw says, and "at this point ... most of the stuff stays the same," with a few tweaks here and there to suit the strengths of "The Book of Mormon's" two touring casts.

Regardless of the version audiences see, however, "it's good quality," Nicholaw says. "We worked really hard — and it's well done."

So well done that even the unlikely audiences (such as Strand's father) have embraced it. Even when, as Strand says, "it takes a little bit getting there."

Starting Tuesday, that's something Las Vegans will have the chance to see for themselves.

Contact reporter Carol Cling at ccling@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0272.

Music OPERA LV STAGES 'BARBER OF SEVILLE'

It's been around for almost 200 years and it's still knocking 'em dead.

That's Rossini's "The Barber of Seville," which Opera Las Vegas brings to UNLV's Judy Bayley Theatre this weekend, with the Metropolitan Opera's Gregory Buchalter, Opera Las Vegas' artistic director, conducting.

Buchalter's bringing some Met colleagues with him for the fully staged production, including rising star Renee Tatum and Met veterans Philip Cokorinos, Peter Strummer and Daniel Elijah Sutin.

"The Barber of Seville" transports audiences to 18th-century Spain, where young Count Almaviva (sung by tenor Victor Ryan Robertson) loves the beautiful Rosina (Tatum, who makes her debut in the role). Alas, Rosina's guardian, an older doctor (bass-baritone Strummer), confines her to the house — and plans to marry her himself.

As for "The Barber of Seville's" title character, Figaro (baritone Sutin), he's the one Rosina and Almaviva choose to help them circumvent the doctor's control, but Figaro's convoluted plans don't always go smoothly, resulting in comic chaos before true love triumphs in the end.

"The Barber of Seville," in Italian with English supertitles, will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Friday and 2 p.m. Sunday in the Judy Bayley Theatre at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 4505 S. Maryland Parkway. For tickets (\$55-\$95), call 702-895-2787.

Movie/music HENDERSON HOSTS CHAPLIN'S 'CIRCUS'

The immortal comic genius of Charlie Chaplin — and live orchestral accompaniment — combine for a night of laughter and music Saturday when the Henderson Symphony Orchestra accompanies Chaplin's "The Circus."

The 1928 comedy — in which Chaplin's Little Tramp inadvertently becomes the title circus' star attraction — boasts a musical score from the movie's 1969 rerelease, which was composed by Chaplin himself.

The Henderson symphony, conducted by Taras Krysa, will accompany "The Circus" at 8:30 p.m. Saturday at the Henderson Pavilion, 200 S. Green Valley Parkway. For tickets (\$10), call 702-267-4849 or visit HendersonLive.com.

Photography SIN CITY EXHIBIT HONORS YEAGER

It wasn't supposed to be a memorial exhibit, but that's the reality at Sin City Gallery, where "Bunny's Bombshells" — which showcases Bunny Yeager's pin-up photography — continues through July 20.

Yeager died May 25 at 85, but kept working into her 80s, recently photographing "Pin-Up" headliner Claire St. Claire — which seems fitting, because "not many people know that Bunny started her career in Las Vegas," gallery owner Laura



COURTESY

Charlie Chaplin stars in and composed the score for "The Circus," which the Henderson Symphony Orchestra will accompany on Saturday.



COURTESY

Contemporary Indian dancer and choreographer Sruti Das leads a free dance concert Sunday at UNLV's Student Union.

Henkel says.

Beginning as a model herself in the 1950s, Yeager initially picked up a camera to take her own portfolio shots, but wound up on the other side of the camera, bringing a unique viewpoint to a previously male-dominated pursuit.

In addition to discovering '50s pin-up icon Bettie Page, Yeager also shot bikini-clad Bond girl Ursula Andress emerging from the surf in "Dr. No" and became the first woman to shoot photographs for Playboy.

Sin City Gallery, located in the Arts Factory at 107 E. Charleston Blvd., is open from 1 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays; for more information, call 702-608-2461 or visit www.sincitygallery.com.

Family fun DUCK AND COVER AT MUSEUM

Baby boomers can revisit the past — and introduce their kids and grandkids to the "duck and cover" era — Saturday at the National Atomic Testing Museum's annual Family Fun Day, which this year is devoted to "Civil Defense and Emergency Safety."

Inspired by Civil Defense programs of the 1950s and '60s, the museum event's activities will include fallout shelter construction and stocking areas, a Geiger counter station, face painting, raffles and Civil Defense films, along with a Duck and Cover game designed to show schoolkids how to stay safe, under their desks, in the event of a nuclear attack.

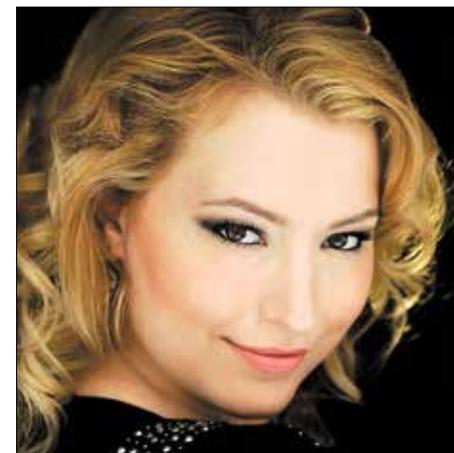
Family Fun Day will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at the Atomic Testing Museum, 755 E. Flamingo Road. Admission is \$10 for two family members and \$5 for each additional person. For more information, call 702-794-5151.

Art FLUTIST BLUEFLINT INSPIRES EXHIBIT

Boulder City's Tim Blueflint is most definitely an artist. But his medium isn't the conventional paint on canvas, as demonstrated by "Toubat: A Canvas of Wind and Wood."

The Nevada Humanities Program Gallery exhibit showcases Blueflint's work as a Native American flute maker, performer and educator.

A registered member of the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa and the Comanche Tribe, Blueflint's interest in the flute began when he would "watch my grandfather play his flute and my grandmother would be transformed into another realm," he recalls. After his grandfather's death, Blueflint decided "I



COURTESY

Mezzo-soprano Renee Tatum makes her debut in the role of Rosina this weekend in Opera Las Vegas' production of Rossini's "The Barber of Seville."

couldn't let my grandmother go through the rest of her life not hearing that sound again, so I learned how to play."

"Toubat: A Canvas of Wind and Wood" continues through July 25 at the Nevada Humanities Program Gallery, in downtown's Art Square Garden Courtyard at 1017 S. First St. Regular hours are 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday; the gallery is open until 9 p.m. First Friday. For more information, visit nevadahumanities.org.

Music BENOIT HEADLINES JAZZ IN THE PARK

Multiple Grammy nominee David Benoit is the latest jazz fixture to headline the free Jazz in the Park concert series at the Clark County Government Center Amphitheater, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway.

Benoit will perform at 7 p.m. Saturday, drawing from a repertoire that ranges over more than three decades and 25 solo recordings.

Seating for those with picnic baskets, blankets and low-back chairs begins an hour before the performance; food vendors will be available on site. For more information, visit www.clarkcountynv.gov/Depts/parks/Pages/jazz-in-the-park.aspx.

Dance INDIAN DANCERS PERFORM AT UNLV

Contemporary Indian dancer and choreographer Sruti Das leads a free dance concert at 4 p.m. Sunday in the UNLV Student Union theater.

Trained in Bharatnattam, a classical dance format from South India, Das also has experimented with modern dance, mixing classical and contemporary forms while adding elements of yoga and the ancient Indian martial art Kalarippayattu.

For more information, email Das at sruti2000@hotmail.com.

— By CAROL CLING