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Mahalia: The Life and Music of Mahalia Jackson

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Mahalia
The Life and Music of Mahalia Jackson

March 8, 1996
8 p.m.

THE CENTER
FOR ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY
AT GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY
The Center
for Arts and Technology
Governors State University
Richard S. Kordos, Executive Director
presents
A PROMISED LAND PRODUCTION OF

Mahalia
The Life and Music of Mahalia Jackson

by
TOM STOLZ
Directed by
DON STOLZ

Starring
VALENCIA C. LACY
FRED STEELE
and
GWENN WOODFORD

Musical Direction by
FRED STEELE

Set Design by
JON C. STOLZ

Costume Design by
WAYNE E. MURPHY

Light Design by
SCOTT HERBST

Featuring Eugene L. Gibson Jr.'s "Joyful Noise"

Produced by special arrangement with
Promised Land Productions, Inc., Excelsior, MN
Tour Management by Troupe America, Inc. Minneapolis, MN

Exclusive Tour Direction by
Mainstage Management International, Inc.
Cast Of Characters

Mahalia Jackson .................................. Valencia C. Lacy
Various People in Mahalia’s Life ............. Fred Steele
Various People in Mahalia’s Life .......... Gwenn Woodford

Understudies: For Valencia Lacy, Sandra L. Robinson; for Fred Steele, Roland Wilson; for Gwenn Woodford, Gloria Taylor-James.

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a special announcement is made prior to the performance.

Tour Staff for Troupe America, Inc.

Company Manager ................................ Blake Hambrick
Production Manager/Technical Director ...... Robert Kerwath
Stage Manager/Master Electrician .......... Theresa Burnell
Sound Engineer .................................. Jamey Anderson
Cast Transportation ............................. Camelot Tours
Scenic Transportation ........................... Lakeland Ford

Administrative Staff for Troupe America, Inc.

Executive Director ............................. Curt Wollan
Business Manager ............................... John Tsofoyannis
Office Manager .................................. Carol Martin
Production Manager ........................... Scott Herbst
Shop Supervisor/Technical Director ......... Tom Hailey
Concession Manager ............................ Jane Wollan
Accountant ...................................... Denny Varnes, CPA
Legal Services ................................... Faegre & Benson, Mpls.
Insurance Services ............................... Garry Insurance Center
Insurance Services ............................... Paczolt Insurance

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

“Careless Love” ....................... (W.C. Handy) Handy Brothers Music, INC. and Columbia Records recording of Bessie Smith with Louis Armstrong on Coronet.

“Hand Me Down Yo’ Silver Trumpet, Gabriel” .......... Negro Spiritual

“Let Us Go Down to Jordan” .................... Negro Spiritual

“You Must Be Born Again” ...... (Stuart Hamblen) Hamblen Music Co., ASCAP


“Yes, God is Real” ......................... (Kenneth Morris) Morris Music CO., Inc., BMI

“Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho” ............ Negro Spiritual

“Walking Up the King’s Highway” ............ (T.A. Dorsey) Unichappell Music, Inc., BMI

“It Don’t Cost Very Much” .... (T.A. Dorsey) Unichappell Music, Inc., BMI

“Didn’t It Rain” ............................... Negro Spiritual

“I’m Going To Live The Life”

I Sing About in My Songs” .... (T.A. Dorsey) Unichappell Music, Inc., BMI

“City Called Heaven” ........................ Negro Spiritual

“How I Got Over” .............................. (W.H. Brewster)

THERE WILL BE AN INTERMISSION BETWEEN ACTS

ACT TWO

“We Shall Overcome” ........................ Adapted from “I’ll Overcome Someday” by Charles Tindley

“Keep Your Hand On The Plow” .................. Negro Spiritual

“I’ve Been Buked” .............................. Negro Spiritual

“Deep River” .................................. Negro Spiritual

“Dig a Little Deeper” ....... (Kenneth Morris) Morris Music Co., Inc., BMI

“Walk In Jerusalem” ............................ Negro Spiritual

“Elijah Rock” .................................. Negro Spiritual

“I’m On My Way” ............................... Negro Spiritual

“Take My Hand, Precious Lord” .... (T.A. Dorsey) Unichappell Music, Inc., BMI


All scripture quoted are from The Authorized King James Version of the Bible. “I Have a Dream” used by arrangement with The Heirs to the Estate of Martin Luther King, Jr., c/o Joan Daves Agency

The Original Cast Recording of Mahalia, starring Jearlyn Steele Battle, Fred Steele, and Gloria Taylor-James is available of CD or cassette and may be purchased in the lobby or by calling Promised Land Productions at (612)474-9296.
About The Author

Tom Stolz is an actor and veteran member of the Old Log Theater Company in Excelsior, Minnesota, America's oldest continuously running professional theater. One of the Twin Cities most popular actors, Tom began his acting career as a child and throughout the years has appeared in over 150 productions at this Equity theater his father, Don Stolz, founded in 1941. Since 1984, Tom has also performed his moving recitation “The Gospel According to St. Mark” in churches, colleges, prisons, art centers and theaters throughout the U.S., Canada, and Switzerland.

Inspired by his love for Gospel music (especially the music of Mahalia Jackson), and confident in the subject matter and simplicity of “The Gospel According to St. Mark”, Tom wrote Mahalia in response to the Los Angeles riots in 1992. He believes the inspiring life of Mahalia Jackson is timely and celebratory and the life-affirming quality of gospel music is a welcome balm to a society starved for good news. Tom hopes Mahalia will bring a message of love and hope to a society that has moved too far away from its own conscience.

Notes from the Playwright about Mahalia

When writing a musical play such as Mahalia, it is very easy to become so involved with the research of historical facts, and so carried away by the arts and beauty of Mahalia Jackson’s music, and so distracted by all the dynamic characters, that the author can easily forget “what the play is about.” To make sure I would avoid this pitfall, I scrawled a note to myself on a small paper and tacked it on the wall on front of me for a reminder as I wrote. The note simply said, “This play is about Salvation!”

It’s true that this play is also about the legendary Mahalia Jackson, “the World’s Greatest Gospel Singer.” It’s true that this play is also about Mahalia’s pianist, the loyal Mildred Falls and Mahalia’s organist, Blind Frances (who saw better than most sighted people) and Moses, the Old Testament servant of God and Martin Luther King, The Black Moses. It’s true this play is also about Bessie Smith and Elvis and Mitch Miller and Jim Crow and Ralph Abernathy and Jazz and Blues and Rock ‘n Roll and New Orleans and Louis Armstrong and The Great Depression and Chicago and Columbia Records and Carnegie Hall and money and New York and politics and Presidents and Washington and Europe and Montgomery and Bull Connor and segregation and marches and Civil Rights and American History. But this play really about…Salvation!

Because of the “Culture War” being waged in America today, there is a danger that any mention of God might offend. “Political Correctness” demands that we avoid any “religious quality.” But how can I separate God from this play? God is the main character!

And how can I avoid any “religious quality” when talking about Mahalia Jackson? How can I separate her from God? It’s true that some thought it possible. Many people encouraged her to “branch out” into secular music to make her songs “more popular”. But her answer was, “Baby, there ain’t nothin’ more popular than God. . . God is the most popular person in the world!” Others offered her thousands of dollars to sing the blues. But Mahalia, whose faith could never let her heart sing the blues, simply said, “Honey, I got somethin’ give me by God and I ain’t messin’ with it.” It’s impossible to separate Mahalia Jackson from God. God was the center of her being . . . her all and all. God was her gospel . . . her “good news” song. God was her salvation!

“Political Correctness” has also tried to secularize Dr. King. But no matter how hard the world tries, you cannot separate the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from God. He was a preacher. A child of God who, like Mahalia, believed that every human life was a reflection of divinity, molded in the image of an all loving God. The same God who forever works throughout history for the establishment of righteousness. Dr. King saw himself as a co-worker with God in a spiritual movement, a Civil Rights movement that employed Mahalia’s heartfelt love songs as a counterpoint to God’s urgent message that America was in danger of losing her soul. The Black Moses, together with Mahalia’s Christian song of deliverance, would lead America’s children out of the Egypt of slavery and hate, and into the mind of God. A vision of “The Beloved Community” in which all men and women of all races and creeds live together as brothers and sisters in peace and love.

“That’s The Kingdom of God Martin’s preachin’ about!”, Mahalia would say, “Yes, sir. The Kingdom of God, Hallelujah! And babies, we better listen. ‘Cause if we don’t learn to love, we gonna perish together as fools! Don’t you see darlin’s? It’s the Gospel! The Good News that Love is our Salvation!”

Tom Stolz
谁是演员

瓦伦西亚·莱西（玛利亚·杰克逊）是芝加哥南部人。莱西女士是一位歌手和女高音，她的声音和歌舞技能被广泛赞誉。她在音乐方面的才华和努力使她成为美国黑人音乐的标志性人物。她的表演和歌曲深受观众的喜爱，她的音乐生涯可以追溯到1941年。莱西女士是芝加哥南部教堂音乐的创始人，她在那里开始了她的音乐事业。她的音乐作品包括“我在主的手中”和“我不会让你失望”。

谁是制作

乔恩·斯托尔兹（导演）是旧木屋剧院的制作人/导演。该公司成立于1940年，是明尼苏达州埃克塞利奥尔的一家专业剧院。该剧院位于明尼阿波利斯的哈里特·特布曼。它是一家位于密歇根州的非营利组织。乔恩·斯托尔兹是旧木屋剧院的制作人/导演。他为公司和剧院的演出作出了重要贡献。作品包括：《外乡人》、《怀疑》、《欢乐时光》和《宅配男》。
THERESA BURNELL (Stage Manager/Master Electrician) is happy to be on the road again. A native of Indianapolis, Indiana, Ms. Burnell completed her bachelor degree in theatre in 1991. Between touring with Troupe America’s 1994 and 1995 productions of Babes in Toyland, Theresa also toured with Circa 21’s first national tour of A Closer Walk with Patsy Cline. She took a rest this past summer by returning to Lincoln Amphitheater to remount her lighting design of Young Abe Lincoln and Big River. Theresa has designed for such companies as the Phoenix theatre, Indianapolis Ballet Theatre, Dance Kaleidoscope, Young Abe Lincoln Musical Outdoor Drama, Butler Opera, Jean Ann Ryan Productions. She has also toured the east coast with Nebraska Theatre Caravan and the Caribbean with Norwegian Cruise Lines.

CURT WOLLAN (Executive Producer--Troupe America, Inc.) is the President and founder of Troupe America, Inc. He has produced and directed most of Troupe America’s touring productions since 1987. Besides Troupe America, Curt has directed for the Lamb’s Theatre of New York and their national tour of The Gifts of the Magi, for Big League Theatricals and their national tours of Big River, Pump Boys and Dinettes, Oil City Symphony, Steel Magnolias, and Driving Miss Daisy, and in the Twin Cities area for the Plymouth Playhouse, the Venetian Playhouse, Theatre-in-the-Round, and the Chimera Theatre Company. Curt is the recipient of the Twin Cities Drama Critic’s Circle “Kudos Award” for his direction of the musical, Diamond Studs. He is also the director and co-author of the hilarious, large and lovely singing trio--The Lovely Liebowitz Sisters, who are now performing coast to coast.

PROMISED LAND PRODUCTIONS, INC. was founded by Tom Stolz and is dedicated to spreading the gospel message through the theatre arts.

TROUPE AMERICA, INC. (Management Company) has been touring theatrical productions from coast to coast and in Canada since 1987. Past Troupe America tours include: six seasons of Pickwick’s Stories for a Christmas Evening, two seasons of Dylan Thomas’ A Child’s Christmas in Wales, 3 tours of Pump Boys and Dinettes, 2 tours of Stephen King’s Ghost Stories, a co-production of The Gifts of the Magi with the Lamb’s Theatre Company of New York and tours of On Golden Pond as well as Driving Miss Daisy, Steel Magnolias, and Forbidden Broadway with Big League Theatrical of New York. Troupe America also operates the popular Plymouth and Venetian Playhouses in the Twin Cities area, having produced a 5-year run of Nunsense, an 5-year run of Pump Boys and Dinettes and critically acclaimed productions of Diamond Studs, A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine, Little Shop of Horrors, The Lovely Liebowitz Sisters, and A closer Walk with Patsy Cline.