

"Samson And Delilah" Possesses "Special Touch"

Attending a Charlotte Opera is an event you should experience at least once in your life. In addition to finally getting to wear that after five outfit or tuxedo, there are beautiful arrangements, voices and scenery to observe as well.

The most recent opera, "Samson and Delilah," possessed a special touch of familiarity glamour for the black community. It not only starred two of the black talented opera greats Patricia Miller as Delilah and Andrew Smith portraying Delilah's father, but local talent Samuel Stevenson offered the audience a memorable performance. His role was short but sweet realizing that his deep rich voice is destined to become even more popular.

The spotlight however had to gleam on the talents of Miller and Smith. Miller with her graceful air and presence on stage made you feel that she really loved Samson, superbly played by Gary Lakes, a



rare heldenenor.

Even though the audience knew that she was loyal to her country you could not help but wonder.

The voices of Miller, Smith, Lakes and Stevenson were superb. Miller's stage presence was especially superb. Also impressive were the scenic designs and costumes by David Gano.

About half way through the opera most people probably began wondering "How are they going to end this opera? I know Samson is supposed to bring down the building pillars."

Sure enough Lakes did "Bring down the house" in more ways than one. His massive statue standing between two stone-like pillars made one even more curious. And then the stones began to fall as the symphony ended the opera.

The excitement was almost too much to bear.

Before actually attending the opera I had the pleasure of seeing both Ms. Patricia Miller and Andrew Smith in rehearsal. Smith sat down and talked candidly with me about the opportunities for blacks in

the opera.

"It's not easy for blacks to obtain roles. We still have to be super prepared.. much more than our counterparts."

Smith, a baritone, came to national attention as Crown in the Tony Award winning Broadway and touring production of Porgy and Bess. His operatic performances across the country have included La Traviata, Aida, Cavalleria Rusticana and several other operas and engagements. Smith has been blessed in that his superb talents have not been overlooked.

"More Blacks are prepared and its hard to ignore the black talent out there. We still, however, have shackles to get over and the stereotyping and elementary mentality of some companies and directors," Smith continued.

Charlotte's Opera Association, Smith asserted is one of the few companies that does recognize black talent. The company both recognizes and promotes black talent. Other companies which have emerged in featuring black opera talent according to Smith are Michigan, Forth Worth and Houston, among some others.

Perhaps the worse conditions for a young artist starting out in opera, Smith added, is the unsteadiness of the occupation. For Smith the worst part of being an opera star is the lonely hours on the road.

"But I love singing in the opera," Smith continued with a bright smile, "it's rewarding and I'd rather be doing this than anything in the world. It's a joy knowing that I have brought some happiness and joy."

For a young black male growing up in New York, interest in the classics may have seemed strange. But it was not strange for Smith. "I've always wanted to become involved in the opera," he stated.

He received his Masters from Roosevelt University and made his professional debut in 1968.

Grapevine has it that many Charlotteans thought they were and wanted to

hear more of Samuel Stevenson in the opera. Unfortunately, his character was killed by Samson during the first Act.

But what he did sing was enough for me to realize that his talents are superb. I look forward to seeing Stevenson in more Charlotte operas.

The featured singers were magnificent, the scenery and costumes were gorgeous and enchanting. The back-up singers of local talent sounded beautiful and they knew their words and hand motions. (As unimportant as the hand motions may seem their gestures added much to the overall effect); The symphony was profound with talented music director-conductor Charles Rosekrans. Peter Symcox was Stage Director.

The only aspect of the opera I question was the choreography by Katharyn Horne. I was never really sure whether the dancers were supposed to be dancing together or not.

The man that hath no music in himself, Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, Is fit for treason, stratagens and spoils... Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice, V.1

Supremes And Mary Wilson Perform Here Friday Night

The Supremes, led by original member Mary Wilson, will perform current songs and old hits at 7:30 and 10 p.m. on Friday, February 22 in Spirit Square's NCNB Performance Place.

Tickets are \$15 and are available on a first come, first served basis at the Spirit Square Box Office, 318 N. Tryon St., Charlotte, N.C. 28202. Hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Tickets

can be ordered by phone, in person or by mail. All major credit cards are accepted. Tickets will be held for five days without payment. To order tickets, call the Box Office at (704) 376-8883.

Today's Supremes, Mary Wilson, Karen Jackson and Robin Alexander, are backed by a tradition that began in the early 1960s at Motown. Songs like "Stop! In the Name of Love," "Someday We'll Be

Together" and "Where Did Our Love Go" are as popular today as they were when they were recorded by the original Supremes, Mary Wilson, Florence Ballard and Diana Ross.

"It's my legacy," Mary Wilson said of her Supreme days. "We did themes for movies, we met kings and queens. We traveled around the world and played the major venues in every country. I was able to live out all my fantasies as a Supreme," she said.

Grisman Quartet Will Appear Here

The Davis Grisman Quartet, led by mandolin player David Grisman, will perform in Spirit Square's NCNB Performance Place on Saturday, February 23 at 8:15 p.m.

A limited number of tickets are still available. Tickets are \$12 and are available at the Spirit Square Box Office, 318 N. Tryon St., Charlotte, N.C. 28202. Hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Tickets can be ordered by phone, in person or by mail. Tickets will be held for five days without payment. All major credit cards are accepted. To order tickets, call the Box Office at (704) 376-8883.

Born in Hackensack, New Jersey, David Grisman took up the mandolin at age 16 and has

been performing and recording since the mid-1960s. He has created a different acoustic music which captures the excitement of rock-n-roll, the interplay of jazz and the precision of classical pieces. This talented musician has appeared on "The Tonight Show, featuring Johnny Carson," "Entertainment Tonight"

and "Austin City Limits." He has recorded many albums, including a live album with violinist Stephane Grappelli.

Members of the Quartet are David Grisman, mandolin; Rob Wasserman, acoustic bass; Jimmy Buchanan, fiddle and Eric Silver, acoustic guitar.

Have some recipes to share, or know others who might? Let us feature you or them in Who's Who in the Kitchen. Call Audrey 376-0496

Got bad luck, life seems to be treating you bad? Do you have a pain in your body and the doctors say there is nothing wrong with you? Do you want your loved one or sweetheart back? Do you suffer from lack of money? Do you want to win in everything that you do? Do you have drinking problems? Did your husband or wife leave you and you did not know why? One letter will convince you that Sister Margo can help you. She can help in love, marriage, business, health, divorce, lawsuits, luck, happiness, money. No power on earth is greater than her power. God gave her the power to heal and protect. She solemnly swears successes where others fail. YOU'VE RECEIVED HER MESSAGE, AVOID IT NO LONGER! One Visit is All You Need

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Mrs. T.M. writes: Someone has come between me and my boyfriend and we separated. We couldn't get along. I just couldn't hold him, no matter what I did: He was seeing another woman and I didn't think I would ever get him back, but I loved him and that's why I went to Sister Margo. Thanks to her and her prayers, we are married and very happy in our new home!

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