

**Washington**

from page A1

Festival graced the stage in Muscat, the capital city, in four productions of the acclaimed production of "The Music Man."

"That experience was really just so wild," declared Washington, the younger of two children in his family. "I'd never flown across seas, and the Middle East is so different from America."

Though the official language in Oman is Arabic, many of the citizens speak English, and between that and the supertitles that were available to translate the script into other languages, performing for the Middle Eastern crowd wasn't much different from performing before crowds in the U.S., Washington said. The Omani culture displayed a strong appreciation for the arts, he added.

"I felt that Oman was just such a welcoming community ...the culture was so open," he related. "Even with it being such a dictatorship, the sultan, I feel, is just so open and accepting of all the arts."

Washington and the other performers spent most of their nearly two-week stay in rehearsals, but the group did have a few opportunities to break away to tour Oman, which is home to just over 2.7 million citizens. The group visited the coast, which is bordered by a vast gravel desert that covers much of the country, shopped in local markets and toured the lavish Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque.

"It was very moving for a lot of people in the cast," he said of seeing the mosque. "It was just very cool to see how religion can just be so unifying and so beautiful. It would be hard not to feel something in there. It even strengthened my faith in Christianity being in that



Allan Washington (second row, left) poses with fellow members of the "Oklahoma!" cast.

temple. It made me feel very privileged and lucky."

Washington also addressed drama and music students at the American-British Academy. The Oman trip was a source of inspiration for him, Washington said.

"We're taught here (at School of the Arts) that everything starts from ourselves," he explained. "So any new experience that I have or anything that I feel that I've never felt before or seen before is an inspiration for me."

Washington, who played "Tommy Djas," a boy from the wrong side of the tracks in the 1957 Broadway hit, has spent the past three summers working for the Festival, which employs student apprentices in a variety of musicals and opera ensembles during the summer months.

"It's very renown, especially in the opera world," Washington, a baritone, said of Glimmerglass. "I was able to be around and have conversations with (professional performers) and talk about art, and also I had the opportunity to use what I'd learned at School of the Arts in major productions with major artists."

Washington credits Broadway Music Supervisor/Director Kevin Stites - who served as a faculty-in-residence at UNCOSA's School of Drama two years ago - with helping him get his



Allan Washington poses on the set of "Hoodoo Love," which opened last week.

first big break as a professional performer before he even finished school.

"He was actually one of my teachers at the school my sophomore year... He was really adamant about my talent and just got me the job," Washington said of Stites, who recommended Washington to Glimmerglass talent scouts.

Stites, who has worked in the entertainment industry for 33 years and has 13 Broadway shows to his credit, said that even as an inexperienced student, Washington's talent and flare for performing - from singing to dancing to acting - was obvious.

"He's just fantastic. Allan is mature beyond his years in talent, mature beyond his years in the way he approaches his art and the business of art," Stites declared. "He is

extraordinarily talented. Multifaceted too. He is a real triple threat."

Stites, who will return to the UNCOSA campus in February to serve as music director and conductor of Sondheim's "Into the Woods," said it won't be long before Washington is gracing the Broadway stage. He believes the sky is the limit for the young artist.

"I just think he has a positive, good energy. He has yet to become jaded for someone of his skills, and that's somewhat of a fine line," he remarked. "People just enjoy working with him and want to work with him again."

Though the School of the Arts has played an integral role in launching his career, it wasn't Washington's first choice. He enrolled at UNCOSA almost on a whim, having never even visited the

campus.

"I had heard of the school, but didn't really know anything about it," admitted Washington, who won \$10,000 by taking first-place in a music theater competition staged by the National Society of Arts and Letters earlier this year. "I was set on going to SUNY Purchase, but something told me this was where I was supposed to be. I just had a gut feeling that this was where I was supposed to be."

Washington, who has appeared in a variety of productions at the School, from the 2011 all school production of "Oklahoma!" to "Hoodoo Love," which opened last Thursday, says he was initially concentrating on acting and singing, but he's keeping his options open these days. Wherever he chooses to take his career, Washington says his work will be ever-enriched by the lessons he learned in Oman.

"As a person and as an artist, it made me see a much wider picture," he remarked. "I just became more globally aware of how art can affect people not just in New York or Los Angeles, but around the world."

**National honor for Harris**

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Andrea Harris, president of the NC Institute of Minority Economic Development, will receive the Abe Venable Award for Lifetime Achievement from the U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA).

The honor will be presented on Dec. 6 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Appointed by President Nixon, Venable was the first person to head the Office of Minority Business Enterprise. This national award is given to an individual who has played an integral role in the creative, technical or professional progress of the minority business community over the course of his or her life.

For 25 years, Harris has served at the helm of the Institute, a statewide economic development non-profit organization. The Institute aims to reduce the disparities that persist for minority and women owned businesses in procurement opportunities, access to capital, and strategic management capacity.



Harris

The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636 Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636

dip 'em, dunk 'em, share 'em.



**20-Piece**

Chicken McNuggets

**\$4.99**



i'm lovin' it®

Tender, juicy Chicken McNuggets made with white meat, wrapped up in a crisp tempura batter. Made for sharing.

Houston Market. Price and participation may vary. Limited time only. ©2012 McDonald's