‘Phantom’ chills, thrills audiences in Memphis

Review by Stephanie Lim
Features Editor

Andrew Lloyd Webber’s “The Phantom of the Opera” made its Memphis debut Nov. 12 at the newly renovated Orpheum Theatre.

With all the hype surrounding the theater’s renovation and “Phantom’s” first appearance in Memphis, locals scrambled to buy tickets as early as last winter. The response was so huge that the touring company and the Orpheum agreed to add another week of performance to accommodate those who still wished to purchase tickets but had been turned away because of sell outs.

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, the Orpheum enjoyed a full house at the Saturday night performance. Having seen “The Phantom of the Opera” at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Nashville, the musical was not unfamiliar to me, but since the Orpheum is considerably smaller than TPAC, even the cheapest seats in the theater were terrific. The performances were moving, and the music, of course, was wonderful.

The musical tells the haunting story of “Le Fantome de L’Opera,” by Gaston Leroux. The Phantom, a mysterious social outcast with musical talent, haunts the Paris Opera House, and he finds himself falling in love with a young opera singer, Christine Daae. The plot chronicles the relationship between the Phantom, who acts as a muse to Christine, and the singer. She, however, falls in love with a young man from her past, Raoul. So begins the tragic love triangle.

Brad Little portrayed the Phantom, creating a true sense of the agony and torment that the character experiences. A Broadway actor, Little added just the right touch to the lead role. Though the Phantom is seen as a monster by most of the other characters, the audience saw the vulnerable, human side to the character through Little’s performance.

His voice was incredible, ranging from an angry baritone to a soft, subtle falsetto during more serene moments. The audience felt the Phantom seethe with envy and cry out in pain - such empathy from spectators, of course, is a goal of the actors. I believe Little’s performance did move the audience deeply.

Kimilee Bryant’s performance as Christine was stunning. Once again, her vocal talent amazed me. Webber’s well-known duet, “All I Ask of You,” blended her voice and the strong tenor of Jason Pebworth (Raoul) in a beautiful harmony. Her acting brought vitality and talent to the role.

Aside from the main roles in Webber’s smash hit, the rest of the cast provided tremendous support for the leads, with both singing and acting skills. Many of the supporting characters were also responsible for the humor in the play - something for which I was grateful, since much of the musical is so intense.

The changes made to the Orpheum to accommodate this touring production of “The Phantom of the Opera” impressed me.

Many complicated scene changes occur during the show. A few scenes involve a chandelier being lifted from the stage, and one takes place with the Phantom actually on the light fixture. Several other scenes took place in the Phantom’s labyrinth, where technicians created the illusion that characters were floating down an underground river. The Phantom also spent time above the Orpheum stage on a visible catwalk. I found the visual effects very well done overall. I’m still trying to figure some of them out.

I recommend attending a performance of the musical, even if theater is not your favorite form of entertainment. It is still a production well-worth seeing. “The Phantom of the Opera” runs through Saturday.

Above and Beyond

By Jay Watson
Staff Writer

If you have ever been to a Union University Lady Bulldogs basketball game, then you have heard the announcers shout, “Roooooossse for two!” “Rose Agnoung from Cameroon” is another popular phrase of the sportscasters of West Tennessee. The 6 foot 1 sophomore from Central Africa has been playing basketball ever since she can remember, and some people say that it is her leaping ability that makes her go above and beyond, but Agnoung has other ideas about that.

“I did not come to Union for the sole purpose of basketball, but to learn as much as I possibly can, and better myself as a person,” says the Communication Arts major.

Agnoung is more interested in what she can learn from her experiences in America than how many rebounds she pulls down. She played for the International Cameroon basketball team at the age of 15 and got the chance to travel all over Africa and some parts of France. Her home city, Douala, is the business capital of Cameroon. Agnoung estimates Douala to be slightly larger than Jackson.

Last year was the first time that Agnoung had been to America, and she was surprised to see how open everyone was.

“In Cameroon, we have a French culture, and no one really cares who their neighbor is, let alone what they do for a living; and here there is definitely less privacy,” Agnoung noted. She has adapted quickly to her environment and thinks it is funny when people at the grocery store ask her if she is player number 50 for Union.

Agnoung not only excels on the basketball court, but in the classroom too. Annie Laurie Crane is one of her classmates and thinks very highly of her.

“Rose is one of the most intelligent people I know. I am completely amazed at the fact she can leave her family and comfort zone and enter into a foreign land for the one purpose of furthering her education,” Crane said.

Agnoung has accomplished a great deal in life because of her athletic abilities, but what truly lifts her above the competition is her mind.

“I am very thankful for the skills I have learned, and I think the thing I value the most in other people is their intelligence,” she said.

Agnoung’s mild manner and politeness has made her a favorite with all of her teammates and classmates, who classify her as someone who goes above and beyond. With such support from friends she has here, family doesn’t quite feel so far away anymore.
Art sale molds students

By Teresa Capshaw
Staff Writer

Union University Art students got a taste of the real world at the second annual Potter’s Guild and Art Christmas Sale, held Dec. 4-5 in the Student Union Building. This yearly sale permits students to practice and maintain a standard of quality and professionalism in dealing with art.

“This (sale) allows the students to get firsthand experience on dealing with art,” said Lee Benson, assistant professor of art, said. One goal of the sale, according to Benson, is to ultimately involve not just students and staff, but the Jackson community as well.

Students displayed their work and allowed the public to purchase the individual pieces. Seventy percent of the profits made from sales will go to the students, and 30 percent will benefit the Potter’s Guild.

“The sale has been a great learning experience as far as learning what items are popular among buyers. It will definitely benefit me in future sales, and a percentage of the proceeds go to the Art Department, which is great,” Ray Gregory, Art student said. The first sale was held last year, and the Art Department experienced success, with Benson selling $1,000 worth of his works. It is hoped this success will be repeated in upcoming years.

The Art Department added six potters and a few painters to its list of artists who sold their pieces at the event. An estimated $3,000 was to be raised during the two-day sale. Brooke Worrell and Megan Shagena eye a piece of sculpture at the second annual Potter’s Guild and Art Christmas Sale.

Students Speak Out

There are but two dreaded words on campus: “finals” and “stress.” For many students, the three weeks before Christmas are tortuous as they sweat to finish papers and cram to pass finals. The Cardinal & Cream asked members of the senior class about how they handle stress. Here are their words of advice for the underclassmen:

Anetta Story, senior, Accounting
“I eat junk food, especially chocolate.”

Sharon Kinstler, senior, Marketing
“I take breaks by going down to the Commons, or I call somebody just to talk.”

Steve Moses, senior, Psychology
“To relax, I take long bubble baths and listen to the soothing sounds of New Kids on the Block.”

Curt True, senior, Communication Arts
“A little poetry by Robert Frost and a cup of hot tea always seems to take the stress away from me.”

Megan Shagena, senior, Religion/Greek
“I go to my room and work out with Cindy Crawford, then I take a long bath with candles and some music. It really works!”

Landon Mills, senior, Marketing
“I play Nintendo.”

Greeks jump into new year with new leaders taking reins

By Amy Balthrop
Staff Writer

As the fall semester comes to a close, the Greeks are preparing for new beginnings by electing new officers. These new officers will lead them through the spring and fall semesters.

New Chi Omega officers will take control in February. They include: Lori Lynn Davis, president; Carie Teague, vice president; Miriam Miller, secretary; Holly Tignor, treasurer; Beth Chapman, panhellenic; Lindsay Crain, pledge educator; and Sara Beth Taylor, rush chairman.

Kappa Delta will start out the spring semester with Christa Henning, president; Janna Hays, vice president pledge education; Kelli Ross, vice president public relations; Nicki Lane, treasurer; Andrea Graves, assistant treasurer; Becky Sams, membership; Davina Harms, panhellenic; and Allison Knoebel, secretary. Zeta Tau Alpha elected new officers with Rachel Smothers, president; Elaine Cherry, first vice president; Tonya Steinman, second vice president; Angie Duncan, membership; Carrie Barger, secretary; Jamie Harris, treasurer; Rachel Evans, panhellenic; and Cathie Scarborough, ritual.

The fraternities are also looking forward to continued leadership from their new officers. Alpha Tau Omega officers include Jay Bush, president; David Chisolm, treasurer. Their other officers will remain a secret until their formal on Dec. 13. The men of Sigma Alpha Epsilon elect new officers each semester. They include Jonathan Bobbit, president; Damien Nethery, vice president; Matt West, recorder; Russell Rocket, warden; Justin Green; Kyle Wiltshire; and Sara Beth Taylor, rush chairman.

Cameron’s attention to detail led him down to the wreckage of the Titanic, two miles beneath the ocean, capturing some of the film’s most breathtaking shots. Although the epic lasts approximately three hours, the entire film stock consisted of over 12 days of footage.

Also opening on Dec. 19 is the new installment of the James Bond saga, “Tomorrow Never Dies.” Even though details of the production and plot lines have been kept secret for months, the film is sure to give its opponent a run for its money. Starring Pierce Brosnan in his second go-round as the British secret agent, “Tomorrow Never Dies” includes a brand new Bond girl - Teri Hatcher, from television’s “Lois and Clark.” It also contains a “Mission Impossible”-esque version of the famous “007” theme by techno king Moby.

Also in theaters over the holiday season are films such as “Flubber,” “Mortal Kombat Annihilation,” and John Grisham’s “The Rainmaker.” These movies, along with smaller budgets and less talked about features, are sure to make this Christmas a memorable season at the movies.

RATINGS (on a 4.0 scale):
• “Mortal Kombat Annihilation”: 3.570
• “The Rainmaker”: 3.765
• “Flubber”: 3.111

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