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Local Production Company Infusing Life into Community Theater

By

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I carved time out of my hectic schedule recently to support two local children who were performing in a play at Palm Beach State College's Eissey Campus Theatre in Palm Beach Gardens.

And after leaving the two-hour production, I was convinced that while Broadway may be the pinnacle of great American theatre, Delray Beach is not far behind.

Politics (Right)

The cast of the gospel stage play, "He is Still More Than Enough", was no comparison to the talents in New York City. However, this cadre of talented actors and actresses has the potential to be just as relevant as Broadway ever will be.

In most communities, the community theater is part of the social makeup, and may be the only local live, performing arts possibility that exists in small venues. Community theater is usually affordable although other entertainment exists.

For many students and even some of the adults, the local production was their first introduction to theater unless they performed in church or in their schools.

There was a time when one could always count on the now-defunct Caldwell Theatre in Boca Raton and the Delray Playhouse to provide a good dosage of local laughter or even hone their theatrical skills.

Somehow, community productions have waned over time.

Boca Raton Community

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of plays written by local residents and featuring local talent.

Thanks to Delray Beach residents Mark and Sylvia Woods, community productions still have relevance and are playing a huge role in our local people's lives.

The Woods created ChiChiMa Productions and have been using their gifts, talents and their 30-year marriage as a backdrop to minister to the hearts of people for many years.

Their most recent production, He is Still More Than Enough!, depicts the story of an unemployed, recently widowed mother of three whose mother, Mrs. Moore, (Rhonda Miller) was diagnosed with a possible illness. To further compound her

dilemma, Patrice, played by Theresa L. McCray, has to contend with a mean, inconsiderate and relentless landlady, Ms. Dion, played by Toccoa Lenair.

Patrice's only solace to her crisis – God is More Than Enough!

The quality of the performance was equal to or greater than anything one would get at the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County or even Broward Performing Arts Center. The staging was excellent, the costumes fantastic, and the singing was outstanding.

Sylvia Woods is a published author, poet, and playwright.

Mark Woods is an accomplished musician, vocalist, and songwriter, who has performed with several renowned artists including Grammy-award-winning gospel singer Darius Brooks and the late Gospel legend Albertina Walker.

As I watched the production from the last row in the theatre, I saw natural talent and hope.

As a reporter who has covered several plays and performances over my more than three decades in this community, it was not until then that I had a true appreciation for the value of community theatre.

I was reminded that many successful actors, directors, writers, and choreographers have launched their careers in humble, small-town productions and playhouses.

Some members of the cast were making their debut appearance and I could just imagine the joy in their hearts as they performed in front of their loved ones and friends. This was also a great outlet for the many who always thought – and even knew – they had it but because they never got a chance to leave the area, their dreams never materialized before now.

Thanks to the Woods, the value of community theater remains. It entertains. It educates. And it creates community.

I was also impressed to see the many residents, or rather churchgoers, who were gathered in one place and in one accord. I cannot recall another time, where so many were in one place – certainly not on a Sunday morning. While not surprised, I was very proud to see the caliber of talent that we have in our community.

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