

'Beehive' brings back performers of 60s with vivid impersonations

By Richard Tijerina

Reviewer

As the lights went down in Rudder Auditorium, one decade was ushered out as another one was revived.

Review

For the night, contemporary women stars such as Madonna, Stevie Nicks and Whitney Houston gave way to the likes of Tina Turner, Aretha Franklin and Janis Joplin. For the night, the MSC Opera and Performing Arts Society's production of "Beehive" took center stage.

"Beehive" centers around the girl group sound of the 60s, consisting of six performers who can act as well as sing, thus creating some incredible impersonations of stars such as Diana Ross, Turner and Joplin.

The cast, which included Lori Fulton, Debbie Lyons, Magda Nova, Ann Peck, Letha Walker and Cookie Watkins, put on two solid hours of pure, get down rock and roll.

At the forefront of these performers were Walker and Nova. Walker, whose past performances include roles in the film "Little Shop of Horrors" and the Broadway play "The Wiz" served as the thread by which the entire production flowed along. Nova, a leggy redhead with an incredibly powerful voice, was memorable for her portrayals of Dusty Springfield and Joplin.

The evening got off to a fast start as the women opened with "The Name Game." Special kudos go to Ricky and Carol from the audience, who played their parts of the song perfectly.

Other memorable songs include "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow," "Where Did Our Love Go," "Proud Mary" and "Piece Of My Heart."

The production could be seen in three different phases: Innocence, confusion, rebellion. The early days of the decade were brought back by pseudo-performances by the Chiffons, Shirelles, Supremes, Connie Stevens and Annette Funicello. Then came Sonny Bono's "The Beat Goes On," a moving performance by

Walker where the eyes could be closed and a vast myriad of images could be seen. JFK. The assassination. LBJ. The Beatles. More popular than Jesus. The Twist. Vietnam. Woodstock.

As the first act came to a close, everyone knew that the second was bringing psychedelic rebellion, through the likes of Tina Turner at Shabu Club, Aretha Franklin at Joplin.

"Beehive," which gets its name from the wild, beehive-shaped buildings of the period, began off Broadway in 1985 in a Manhattan nightclub. After moving to the Village Gate Theater in Greenwich Village, it began to gain popularity and went on the road with productions around the nation. The performance Rudder last night was put on by actor and director Larry Galland and musical director Skip Brown.

Teens. Teenyboppers. Teenagers. Adolescents. And being hit by the love bug was, as Walker put it, what the decade was all about. The message was certainly conveyed through the show. Judging from the crowd's approval at the end of the performance, the message was definitely a success. While the crowd's age varied from teen to elderly, most were of the older age group that had lived through the times that the actresses were singing about. They carried a piece of nostalgia of their past that they will never forget. Society as a whole had never seen a decade like and probably never will again. Hippies of yesterday have become the yuppies of today.

"Come take a trip in time. Hear the sixties play. Come, let's turn the clock back with the sounds of that changing decade."

"Let's rock," Walker said in opening of the show.

Appropriately on the eve of Martin Luther King and Janis Joplin's birthdays, the crowd last night was just that. Many of the symbols of the sixties are now dead, including JFK, Kennedy, Lennon, Warhol and Joplin, but for one more night, they lived once again.



Three Beehive members perform 'Let's Rock.' Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

'Big brother' program helps youth

By Todd Riemenschneider
Staff Writer

Expanding horizons is what the Brazos County Juvenile Services Department calls its program to help with children who have made some bad judgments in their lives.

The program, which was started last February, matches a volunteer with a probationer who is 10 to 17 years old. The person who is assigned to the child is referred to as their big brother/sister.

Kelvin Shepherd, a senior biology major at Texas A&M, is involved in the big brother program and has been assigned a little brother since November.

"I like working with kids and I would like to make a contribution to society," Shepherd said. "With my little brother, it gives him an opportunity to see there are other options available to blacks."

A big brother must be over age 21 and be able to spend two to four hours a week with their little brother and stay in the program for a minimum of six months.

Joy Sneed, the coordinator for volunteer programs, likes to have students from all disciplines.

"The kind of kids we get are a cross section of everybody," Sneed said. "It is not easy, it is much like being a parent with these kids, there are times you have to say no."

Besides the big brother program, there is also a detention visitation

program which gives support to juveniles in custody.

Jerry Gribble, a senior sociology major, is a volunteer in the detention program. He believes he gives the juvenile a person to talk to who is not an authority figure.

"When you get a volunteer in with the kids, the volunteer is someone they can talk to, but not be afraid of," Gribble said.

The main goal of the detention program is to allow the kids to talk and let the volunteer act as somewhat of a counselor, he said.

"The best thing about it is the kids see there is someone who cares and at times, the kids do not understand why someone is volunteering," Gribble said, "but it sinks in and it makes the kids feel as if they are worth something."

Gribble said the children often do not have a very positive outlook on what life has in store for them.

"A lot of these kids think prison is where they are going to end up, but by being around college kids they see people who have career goals and it helps them to realize there are more chances in life," Gribble said.

He is a believer in the strength of the program.

"If there is any one method to keep the kids from becoming delinquents, it is the big brother program," Gribble said. "It gives them someone to look up to, a guidance, it is very effective."

The feeling of the volunteers is



Joy Sneed discusses the 'Big Brother, Big Sister' program with seniors Kevin Shepherd and Jerry Gribble. Photo by Shelly Schirmer

that if something is done for a person they cannot ignore it.

"Many of these kids have never had anyone care, but by giving them a big brother, there is someone who cares," Gribble said. "In my opinion, having a big brother has a lot more impact on the kids than having the police throw on the handcuffs and

being taken to jail, it is a scary experience."

Joy Sneed said the big brother program has been a tremendous success and she hopes it will continue to be so in the future.

"Out of the 12 people who've assigned big brothers, not one of them has been a repeat offender," Sneed said.

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