

REBA McENTIRE

Singer dazzles fans with songs, fashion

By JULIE POLSTON
Reviewer of THE BATTALION

With a video screen, backdrop changes every three or four songs and a laser show to boot, the Reba McEntire concert was no ordinary country affair.

McEntire appeared on stage Sunday night in her "modern" country outfit—a concept thought to be a contradiction in terms until recently. Wearing a glittering white coat with black and silver sequin designs, black pants, and of course, black boots, she opened the main event with "So Good, So Long."

McEntire greeted the fans humbly.

"My name is Reba McEntire," she said as the crowd went wild. "Really, it is!"

On upbeat songs like "Walk On" and "Somebody Up There Likes Me," her personality and energy shone through as bright as the blue and green lasers that danced across the stage.

McEntire performed several love songs poised in a long white gown in front of a white drapery backdrop.

Her current album, "For My Broken Heart," consists of a collection of "healing" songs dealing with failed marriages, neglect and abandonment, and even mercy killing.

"When I was looking for songs for the album, I needed songs that I could relate to, and they were healing songs," she told the audience.

McEntire introduced "The Greatest Man," a song about a father/daughter relationship, by saying, "One song touched my



DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

Reba McEntire performed at G. Rollie White Coliseum Sunday night. Brooks and Dunn opened the show.

heart from the very first time I ever heard it."

McEntire entertained the crowd with a personal side story about her own relationship with her father, saying she was fortunate to still have her "daddy" around.

Several times, the overhead screen showed clips of McEntire's film appearances to give her time to change into her next

outfit.

After a scene from "The Gambler IV," McEntire sauntered out on stage wearing black leather duds with a gun belt around her waist singing "Climb that Mountain High."

McEntire appeared in a gold and black glitter turquoise top to sing her rendition of Aretha Franklin's "Respect."

McEntire paused partway



though the show to introduce her band.

"If you want your dreams to come true, you've got to have a great support team," she said. "You've got to surround yourself with people with the same dreams."

After Mike Rojas jammed on the keyboards, McEntire rhetorically asked the crowd, "I'm supposed to follow that?" as she began to sing "Sunday Kind of Love."

Saxophonist Joe McGlohon did not receive the applause he deserved after his outstanding jazz solo. Unfortunately, this country crowd was not up for some good ol' fashioned jazz tunes.

McEntire began to wrap up her performance about 10:30, but her energy only intensified.

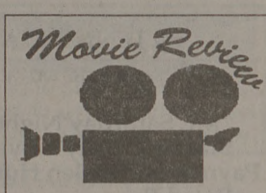
Wearing a fur coat and hat, McEntire stepped through the doorway of a shack set up on stage and sang "Fancy," a song about a young girl who made her way out of poverty with the help of her mother.

In the middle of the song, McEntire threw off the coat and hat and stunned the crowd with a low-cut sparkling red gown. The fans went wild, and with good reason. The 35-year-old country legend was a picture of sophistication and grace.

The stage props and varied costumes distinguished the performance from the stereotypical country concert.

However, it was the talent, energy and personality McEntire radiated throughout the event that made the show.

'Sarafina!' shows complex problems of South African life



By ANAS BEN-MUSA

Reviewer of THE BATTALION

"Sarafina!"
Starring Whoopi Goldberg, Leleti Khumalo, John Kani, Mbongeni Ngema
Directed by Darrell James Roodt
Rated PG-13
playing at Manor East III

The sounds of freedom in "Sarafina!" should have been the blues, not joyful, boisterous music and dancing. But the acting was wonderful and inspirational to see.

"Sarafina!" summarizes the events in the mid-70's uprising of many junior high students in Soweto.

The students protest the arrest of their beloved teacher, Mary Masembuko (Whoopi Goldberg), and several students are killed by South African police.

Director Darrell James Roodt stuffs songs and dancing into the plot to liven up the film. Although the music and dancing are a part of "Sarafina!," the transitions between drama and music are never smooth.

In fact, the dance and music numbers distract from the movie's powerful message.

For example, the English subtitles in some of the musical scenes distracted my attention from the tone and emotion of the music.

A soundtrack would have created a better atmosphere than actually having the characters stop and sing the songs.

Yet, it was a courageous effort to recreate "Sarafina!" on film. Mirimax Films and Hollywood

Pictures hired the original writer and composer of "Sarafina!," Mbongeni Ngema, to collaborate in the screenplay edition.

Ngema collaborated with Michael Peters to choreograph the film.

It is a rare treat to see the film companies sticking with the original cast and playwright. The audience is allowed to see the subtleties of South Africa's plight shown by South African actors.

Goldberg's role in the film is minor. However, the few scenes with Goldberg are exceptional. It is obvious the studio hired her to attract American audiences.

The true star of "Sarafina!" is Leleti Khumalo, who re-creates her stage role for the film. She brings a sweet innocence to the main character, Sarafina.

The audience gets to know Sarafina through her thoughts, which are narrated by her "inner voice."

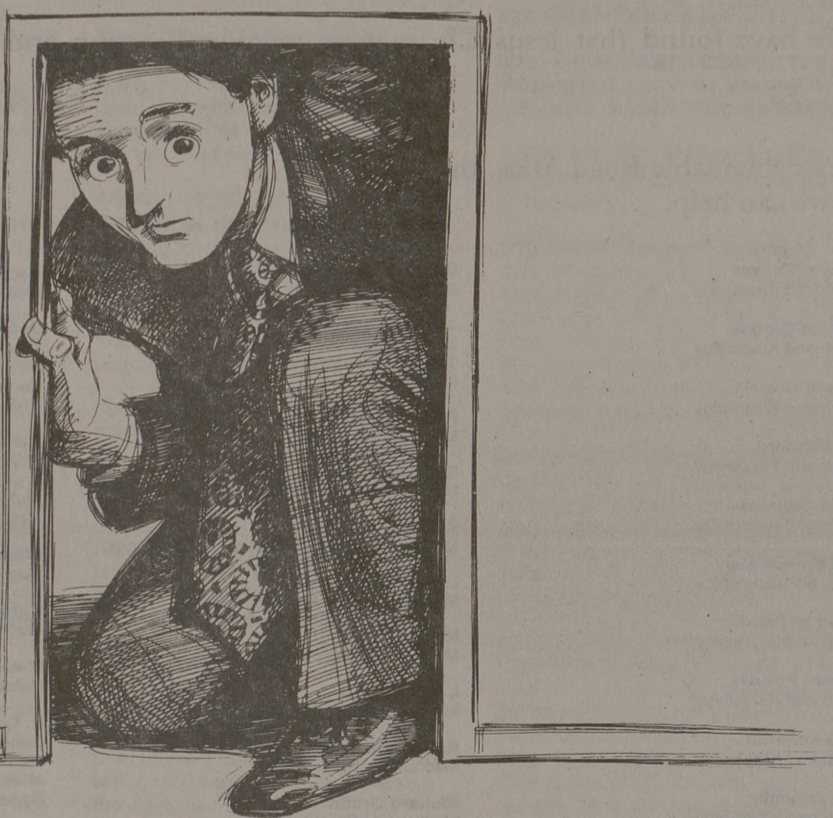
She addresses her inner thoughts to Nelson Mandela, her hero. To her, he represents the hope for a free South Africa, and she confides her problems and aspirations to him.

I loved being able to hear and understand Sarafina's turmoil. It gave a personal touch to the complexity of South Africa's plight.

Sarafina exemplifies the problems of South Africa, which cannot be explained as simple racism— not just black versus white but tribe versus tribe.

"Sarafina!" shows a glimpse of the diversity of South African people and their attitudes.

Ignore the subtitles and see the real South Africa in "Sarafina!" You might be shocked.



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