

CSUEB Celebrates Mahalia Jackson's Life and Legacy

BY DANNETTE SMITH
Staff Writer

This upcoming summer quarter, Cal State East Bay will introduce a musical theatre piece based on the life and legacy of Mahalia Jackson, the proclaimed "Queen of Gospel."

Mahalia Jackson, nicknamed Halie, was one of the most influential gospel singers in the world.

Born on October 27, 1911, Jackson grew up in the Uptown New Orleans, La.

Jackson's father was a Baptist minister, so church is where she began singing, and it quickly became known that she had a special talent.

No sooner than when she turned 16, Jackson moved from the South to Chicago, during The Great Migration.

After a few impromptu performances at many local churches, Jackson found herself traveling to different cities performing with one of the earliest professional gospel groups, The Johnson Singers.

Soon after her traveling days she met Thomas A. Dorsey, the "Father of Gospel Music," who would influence her career.

Dorsey gave her musical advice and they began their 14-year association with one another.

Jackson would eventually be recognized for her signature song, "Take My Hand, Precious

Lord," which Dorsey wrote.

In 1950, Jackson became the first gospel singer to ever perform at New York City's Carnegie Hall.

As her career took off during the 1950s through the 1970s, Jackson was offered numerous times to sing secular music.

However, she refused and pledged to sing only gospel throughout her professional life.

As her career continued to rise, Jackson fell under attack by people who felt that her music was becoming watered down for a more popular audience.

However, Jackson did not let the discouragement affect her true calling to fame.

In 1963, Jackson sang "How I Got Over" and "I've been Bused and I've been Scorned," at The March on Washington, where Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech in front of 250,000 people.

A couple of years later, she would sing her famous "Take My Hand, Precious Lord," at his funeral.

After Mahalia Jackson's death in 1972 from heart failure, her legacy still remains.

The numerous awards and honors she received during her career were merely a sign of just how much an impact she had on the music industry.

Jackson helped pave the way



Gospel's Goddess: Legendary gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, nicknamed Halie, is commemorated in on this U.S. Postal Stamp. Cal State East Bay will also laud the vocalist in its newest play titled "Halie! A Celebration," directed by Daryl V. Jones.

Photo/Courtesy of U.S. Postal Service

for other artists, including the "Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin.

The play, titled "Halie! A Celebration," is under the direction of Daryl V. Jones, associate professor of the theatre and dance department.

So for those who believe they have what it takes or would like to take on a challenge of tackling the role of Ms. Mahalia Jackson, auditions will begin May 1 from 2 to 4 p.m. in the University Theatre.

James Logan High to Unveil New Performing Arts Center

BY BEATRIZ OROZCO
Staff writer

While James Logan High School will officially inaugurate its new center for the performing arts May 22 with "The Show of Shows," the first performance in the venue will be "El Ballet Folklorico" by James Logan's own dance company May 15.

James Logan Dance director and student counselor, Jaime Huertas, started the group 20 years ago after a group of students discovered he was a dancer himself. "I was asked to teach a few dances, I didn't expect to start a dance group," Huertas said. "Every year we had returning and new students and eventually we became a recognized dance company."

Twenty years later El Ballet Folklorico prepares for one of

the most monumental shows they have ever hosted.

Twenty five dancers are set to take part in the program that will include 18 traditional dances from six different Mexican regions.

"Preparing for a show of this magnitude is a production in itself," said assistant director Lisa Moreno. "We are looking at six costume changes which is equivalent to about 50 individual costumes, along with shoes, hair pieces and accessories. For this particular show we will begin preparation six hours before."

The newly built Performing Arts Center has a seating capacity of 599 people. Jaime Huertas expects a sold out show. Former dancer and radio personality Silvia Chacon will serve as master of ceremonies

Senior and fourth year dancer Stephanie Reyes is looking forward to perform, "We are working so hard to put on a great show, it will all pay off when we get on that stage and people stand up to applaud us," she said.

Two prestigious dance companies from the Bay Area will join James Logan's dance company for the performance: Ballet Folklorico de Carlos Moreno based out of Oakland and Compania Mexico Danza from Union City.

"Both of these companies were instrumental in helping me build this group, it is an honor to have them on our stage," said Huerta. "There will be many surprises. We are practicing up to 15 hours a week to ensure we give a good performance."

Spring Blooms at SF Cherry Blossom Festival

BY TRI NGUYEN
Staff Writer

The Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival took place earlier this month in San Francisco. The event was held at Japan Center in San Francisco.

For the past 43 years, the event has been one of the Bay Area's most prominent celebrations of Asian tradition. The festival typically draws over 150,000 people to see the showcase of the Japanese culture and diversity.

The first Cherry Blossom event was held in 1967.

A brief look at the crowd makes it clear that the Cherry

Blossom Festival is not just an Asian parade. People of every ethnicity are drawn to the festival. At the food stands, people tasted exotic dishes and traditional fare.

The festival's colorful decorations were vibrant. People walked around carrying banners, some dressed in costumes. Martial Artists performed while can traditional Japanese music could be heard in the distance. Women wearing traditional Japanese make-up and costumes entertained the crowd.

"It's very different to what I'm accustomed to and I like the diversity. The food and people are great," said Christy O'Brien,

a first-time attendee.

"Every year we can see that the crowd is growing," said Tomoo Ohyama, a vendor at the festival. "The turnout this year was a little better than last. The weather was great."

The event is one of several Cherry Festivals held throughout the United States. The most prominent one is the National Cherry Blossom Festival held in Washington D.C. It is in commemoration for the gift of Japanese cherry trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo to the city of Washington. The donation was an effort to strengthen friendship between the United States and Japan.

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