

Nostalgia cuts the rug

BY CARL-JOHN X VERAJA
Florida Weekly Correspondent

Dance lessons were offered after the showing of "Swing!" I attended recently but I was so overwhelmed by the talent of those onstage that I just sat back and watched — not wanting to deliver any toe-crunching to the able pros. Luckily, there was a bit of a dance lesson in the play where the idea of a backbeat was emphasized to the audience. Apparently, moving to the "2" and the "4" is where it all begins. After that I couldn't tell you.

Whether you can dance or not, you can appreciate the beauty of the art form on the stage of the Broadway Palm Dinner Theater. And, although there is not a



COURTESY PHOTO

Swing! is all about dance in an era before Rock and Roll.

"Swing!" pays tribute to the American sounds of the Depression and World War II.

running plot to this play, the mini-dramas offer added entertainment as the powers of dance and music are attested to. Yes, so potent is the healing spell of these forces that even a nasty shot to a prancing janitor's crotch by a broom handle could not stop that performer from being swept away to the throbbing vibrations of the swing era of jazz which at one time was a major threat to the WASP establishment's notion of safety in stilted syncopation.

"Swing!" pays tribute to the American sounds of the Depression and World War II. It was an era where people actually dressed well in the nightclub scenes where the jazzy octet "The Stingers" repeatedly hammered out one great number after the next. That added flair to the romance and excitement of the scenes which often portray variations on the theme dance most associated with: courtship. A series of military dances, cabaret occasions and first dates sung in the universal language of wordless intonation followed. Serious terpsichorean titillation that should not be passed up by the nostalgic or aficionados of the big brassy jazz sound.

These are a limber and wiry bunch and the spread eagles grin from ear to ear while the men work women like Bruce Lee with nunchucks. Appropriately, this partner-manipulating legerdemain occurred to such songs as "Throw That Girl Around." And it was in such phantasmagorical displays of acrobatic physical-

ity that the edge of this play really cuts deeply. The past not only comes alive but is more alive than I'd ever be without throwing my back out in a major way.

Though I was not available to see this play when it was first staged, I was satisfied that my viewing was faithful to the original conception that won this play several Tony award nominations and other kudos. Kenny Shephard and Carol Worcel's choreography delivers. Furthermore, moments of humor delved from the twists and turns in the courtship ritual and some pathos in the form of romantic disappointments give this play added dimension.

It's not difficult to say this play could take a role in boosting a courtship you are pursuing, tune up your musical appreciation or wax your nostalgic fancy. Get into the "Swing!" of things or face the possibility of being perpetually in denial about your two left feet. ■

==== If you go

>>What: "Swing!"
>>Where: Broadway Palm Dinner Theater, 1380 Colonial Blvd.
>>When: Wednesday to Sunday evenings 8 p.m. (dinner starts at 6 p.m.)
>>Admission: \$25 for theater only, \$50 for café/theater
>>Information: Phone (239)-278-4422, www.BroadwayPalm.com

ARTS NEWS

Alliance for the Arts

Upcoming classes or workshops:

Contemporary Silver and Metalpoint Drawing

Instructor: Joseph Weinzettle

When: Saturday May 12, noon - 3 p.m.

Cost: \$45 for members/55 for non-members

This workshop will focus on contemporary metalpoint art and materials. A range of materials including gold, copper, brass, aluminum, and pure silver will be experimented with. Drawing exercises will be indoors and out (weather permitting). One contemporary claycoat ground will be provided but students should bring additional boards or paper. Ask for a materials list.

Contemporary African Art in Florida

Instructor: Joseph Weinzettle

When: Tuesday, May 22, 6-8 p.m.

Cost: \$10 for members/15 for non-members

This slide lecture will introduce six contemporary artists working with African themes and styles in the state of Florida. Some African cloth samples will also be presented and discussed. Presenter

Joseph Weinzettle, MFA, has visited Senegal, Benin, Togo, and Ghana.

Birthday Party

Have your next birthday party at the Alliance for the Arts.

Do you have a budding ballerina or a pint size Picasso? Dance, theatre, or visual arts: The Alliance will customize a party to match your child's most creative wish. Fees include space for the party, a qualified instructor/host, and clean-up. All you provide is the cake and the kids.

\$150/175 for 1.5 hours and up to 10 children (\$5 each additional child).

Naples Art Association

Members of the Naples Art Association will hold its annual membership meeting on Thursday, May 17 at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting will take place in the Frederick O. Watson Gallery at The von Liebig Art Center, 585 Park Street, Naples. Refreshments will be served. RSVPs are not required. The agenda will include the election of new board members, and Board and Directors reports to the Membership.

When Results Matter



At Florida Weekly, your advertising success is not an option, it is our mission. Our qualified marketing professionals can meet your print and online marketing needs.

Call Marybeth Durso Today!
239.333.2135

FORT MYERS
FLORIDA WEEKLY
YOUR NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT SOURCE

www.Florida-Weekly.com

*A piece of old-Florida
frozen in time*



Relax while experiencing the "old world" charm of the 1926 historic Tarpon Lodge

17771 Waterfront Drive
Pineland, FL • 239-283-3999

DINNER TRAIN MURDER MYSTERY

Deadly Swindle Shows: Wed. & Thurs. 6:30PM Sun. 5:30PM \$59 +Tax
Till Murder Do Us Part Shows: Fri. & Sat. 6:30PM Fri. \$59 & Sat. \$69 +Tax

Mother's Day Special Family Dinner on the Train
May 13th at 12:15PM
Adults \$34 +Tax • Children 12 & under \$24 +Tax

www.semgulf.com Seminole Gulf Railway
view photos from trips past Fort Myers 239-275-8487

THE GRAPe

Make your Reservations for Mother's Day!
Champagne Brunch Sunday 11pm - 3pm
Menu Specials, Wine Specials & Complimentary Glass of Champagne for all Moms!

www.yourgrape.com
Call For Reservations
The Grape at Coconut Point • 23161 Village Shops Way, Estero, Florida 33928 • 239.992.5040

LOOK FOR IT AT YOUR LOCAL BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO.

BLOCKBUSTER

