

Stages reviews Weimar Berlin

by Eric Lawson

In reviewing Sandy Moore and Paul Ledoux's "Back to Berlin" it's hard to know where to begin. So, I guess it would be appropriate to say a few words about the Stages cabaret in the Holiday Inn, where the revue is being produced.

Stages is a small, intimate lounge with a diminutive stage, apparently devoted to the promotion of local talent, largely through the Halifax-based Pop Productions. It has featured Sharon Timmins of CBC's "Carousel" fame in "Judy", and she will be returning in the next production, "Pogie", which will also feature Miller's Jug and a score partially composed by Al Macdonald. The service is good, the prices reasonable, and the atmosphere friendly. Stages offers a student discount (\$3.50 admission) on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

"Back to Berlin" is a musical revue based on Berlin of the twenties, thirties and forties. It stars Sandy Moore as the piano player, simply called "Piano", and Helen Goodwin as Lola-Lola, "the naughtiest girl in town". It's about cabarets, soaring inflation, the war, exile in

England, and Bertolt Brecht and the greatest German literary renaissance since Goethe.

The plot is slender at best. "Back to Berlin" is not a play, it is a period piece, and the music and interspersed short skits work almost entirely toward creating a mood, not a plot. Indeed, the music does all the work in a piece like this. Moore's score successfully forwards what plot exists, creates the mood, and entertains as well.

The score is largely unoriginal (only four original songs), made up of period pieces re-arranged by Moore. These range from "In the Quarter-master's Store" and "Kiss me Good-night, Sergeant Major" to "Moon of Alabama", a song I'm sure Goodwin learned from Bette Midler's live album, to "Mares Eat Oats".

The show is by no means all straight-forward re-creation of a period, though. As Moore and Ledoux point out in the programme, the cabaret artist specialized in satire, and "Back to Berlin" has its fair share of that, too. Notably, the film "Cabaret", sometimes closely paralleled and sometimes lampooned, and Marlene Dietrich, representative of the period, take their

share of good-natured parody. In fact, Dietrich material isn't even a parody of Dietrich, but rather of the American stereotype of her, and is all the more effective for it.

The show is lively and fun, but despite its energy it has problems. The "gay life" of the cabaret is sometimes not even vaguely conjured up, as

Moore and Goodwin just can't fill a stage by themselves. Goodwin has a great voice, but she's a bit awkward on stage; her motions are somewhat mechanical, and you can see her thinking about every movement as she makes it, rather than just concentrating on her character. Indeed, the whole show has

just a vague, but nevertheless present amateur quality to it. It's not distracting, it just lacks that final bit of polish.

In short, a fine score, a female lead with a great voice, and a lot of polite applause from a quiet Monday evening audience do not make a hit. But they do make an enjoyable evening of entertainment.

Atlantic Festival features Seeger and Guthrie

The 1980 Atlantic Folk Festival will be the scene of some of the most exciting entertainment ever to appear on a Maritime stage. Organizers have just announced the signing of two American folk legends as this year's special guest headliners. ARLO GUTHRIE and PETE SEEGER will be appearing in a two-hour concert during Sunday afternoon's program at the Moxsom Farm. The dates of this year's Festival are August 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Coordinators Brookes Diamond and Fiona Perina are elated by the recent confirmation of their headliners, but they are just as enthusiastic about the proposed line-up of regional talent.

"This year, being our sixth, will mark some real developments for the Festival," says Diamond. "We're scheduling a lot of new faces on both our stages, and hope to broaden the variety of music even further than we have before."

Diamond notes that they are particularly working on developing the second stage or "session" stage, as it is

sometimes called, into a focal point of the Festival. Originally conceived as a small, very loosely organized jam session area, the second stage will become an integral part of the Festivities. Set in a more intimate, comfortable location, it will present featured performers from the main stage, as well as lower profile artists who demonstrate particular specialties. The program will be scheduled according to various themes, and so far sessions include a mandolin set; a blues jam led by local blues artist Ted Jordan; sea shanties; and a guitarist/vocalist session. A number of Acadian musicians are also expected to be featured, along with a session demonstrating the fiddle styles of P.E.I., Cape Breton and Newfoundland. The second stage is basically designed as a quieter alternative to the squeeze and excitement of the main stage.

The 1980 Folk Festival will also present many of the features that have been so popular in the past. You can bet there'll be an abundance of fiddlers and pipers. Friday

night's "wandering minstrels" will again lead informal campfire entertainment; barbecues and homecoming will be offered in a newly-organized food concession area; and regional handicrafts will also be available.

Improvements are being effected in the area of traffic and gate control, with a much enlarged staff to increase efficiency and decrease line-ups and lengthy waits at the entrance. "We don't claim it'll be perfect," says Diamond, "but last year's Friday night bogged-down gate situation gave us a lot of ideas on how to speed things up."

There's no doubt that the 1980 Atlantic Folk Festival has much to offer. With the two stages going simultaneously, music will be pouring out all over, and, hopefully, a grand and glorious time will be had by all.

The event will begin on Friday at noon on August 1, and entertainment, as in past years will begin around noon on Saturday. Tickets for the Festival will go on sale in outlets all over the Atlantic Provinces on June 1.

African Night in the SUB

by Margaret Little

Over three hundred people enjoyed an African Night, held Saturday, March 15, in the McInnis Room. President of the African Students Association (ASA), J.B. Sirobi contributes the great success to the dedicated members and professors.

"I was overwhelmed, by the extreme sense of cooperation shown by the members," said Sirobi.

The members of the ASA organized the buffet, displays and ticket selling. "It was very touching to see that all the members were determined to make it a successful evening," said Sirobi.

And a grand success it was—from the buffet to the entertainment, everything was coloured with an African enthusiasm and love for life.

The ASA members under the direction of Dora Carbonu from Antigonish cooked up a variety of specialities from the

different regions of Africa. Jollof rice from Sierra, fried plantain or "krako" from Ghana, akara beans from Nigeria, boiled mashed bananas from Kenya and other specialties were served. "People have been ringing me up for recipes," said Sirobi.

The setting and entertainment also had the same African flair. "A display of African artifacts was generously supplied by Professor J.B. Webster," said Sirobi. Paintings, costumes, a picture show and a lighted map of Africa also added African atmosphere.

The evening's entertainment began with the President of the association calling the spirits of the ancestors to the occasion. Sirobi explained this is a ritual most common to West Africa although it is practised in the other three areas. "It is etiquette that our ancestors should also be called upon to enjoy the evening," said Sirobi.

A narrative film about **Festac 1977**, the second festival of black people held in Nigeria followed the ritual spirit calling. The film emphasized the necessity of all blacks maintaining pride in their common heritage.

The band, **Hands of Thyme**, from Preston also represented a black group that was not directly from Africa. Sirobi explained that the ASA encourage blacks from countries other than Africa. The audience definitely enjoyed the band's strong rhythmic beat.

All in all, it was a tremendous success and the organizers are to be congratulated. Although The African Night is intended to be an annual event, the last one was held in 1977. The success of African Night 1980 will probably revive the annual event said Sirobi. The enthusiasm of the students, professors, and guests proved that the association will continue for a long time, predicts Sirobi.



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