

THEATER REVIEW

There's a certain spirit, and ambitious themes

By James Hebert
THEATER CRITIC

A spirit guide in tribal dress shadows the characters of "Since Africa" — unseen and unspeaking, dancing and prowling and smiling inscrutable spirit-guide smiles.

What she means to each of these people is not always clear, but what she means to the play — now onstage at the Old Globe Theatre — is something it could use more of: a sense of the kinetic, an energy and impact to match the work's thematic ambitions.

It's not a problem of performances; the Globe production of Mia McCullough's drama benefits from strong acting all around, led by Warner Miller's quietly piercing portrayal of a young Sudanese refugee struggling to find his place in America.

In more than the usual sense, this play revolves around his character, Ater (pronounced ah-TEHR); "Since Africa" sometimes feels like a rotating, half-formed storm system, a bulging but inchoate cloud of ideas endlessly circling some firm conviction.

At least they're worthy ideas: McCullough uses the characters' relationships with Ater to explore such big themes as cultural imperialism, the persistence of ritual and the human cost of both social isolation and the need to belong.

Seema Sueko, founding artistic director of Mo'olelo Performing Arts Co., mounted the play's local premiere for her company at Diverstationary Theatre nearly three years ago.

Ater is one of the "lost boys" of Sudan — wrenched from his family as a young child during that country's civil war and left to live (or die) on his own. Now 21, he has landed a world away from his shattered home, as a refugee in Chicago.

The wealthy, widowed and determinedly neurotic Diane (Linda Gehringer) has signed on through the local Catholic church as a volunteer aide to

DETAILS

"Since Africa"

The Old Globe Theatre

When: Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 7 p.m.; Thursdays-Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 and 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 and 7 p.m.; through March 8.

Where: Arena Stage at the San Diego Museum of Art's Copley Auditorium.

Tickets: \$29-\$59

Phone: (619) 234-5623

Online: TheOldGlobe.org

Atel; she has a Western dilettante's romanticized love for Africa, made bittersweet by the fact it's where her husband died. She also has a reflex disdain for the church, fed by her notions about the scourge of Christian missionaries.

Her college-age daughter, Eve (Ashley Clements), is much more open to the risks and possibilities of the world outside what she snarkily calls "Diane's Den of Denial." Also in the picture is Reggie Hudson (Willie C. Carpenter), the easy-going church deacon who's tending to Ater and other refugees, and who finds himself clashing with the prickly Linda.

On the periphery of all this — sometimes dancing or striking ritualized poses, other times reacting to characters or sitting in rapt attention — is the Nameless One (Kristin D. Carpenter), the Dinka spirit guide in tribal garb and white face paint.

The people she watches over all have been changed in some way by Africa — even the deacon, who's never been to the continent but is grappling with whether to get a genetic test that might give insight on his own tribal identity.

And though the show has raw, volcanic moments and gentle humor, some choices (the way a drumbeat rings out like a rimshot to represent the voice of Diane's therapist, for example) don't quite work. "Since Africa" has atmosphere and ideas to spare, but its rough spots might keep a spirit guide working overtime.

Director expands on 'Africa' vision

PAM KRAGEN
STAFF WRITER

In 2006, San Diego director Seema Sueko brought the "Lost Boys of Sudan" story to life onstage in a small-scale but dramatically potent production of Mia McCullough's play "Since Africa."

Sueko produced the show's West Coast premiere through her Mo'olelo Performing Arts company, and she returns to the play again this month, directing a new production for the Old Globe.

Sueko's '06 production was an intimate and moving, if minimalist, experience. Given a larger budget, the Globe's impressive production resources, an Equity cast and a larger canvas on which to set her play (the Copley in-the-round auditorium), Sueko is able to expand her vision, but still retain the magic that marked her earlier effort.

The most notable change is the recasting of the play's central role. "Since Africa" is the story of "Ater," a Sudanese refugee's efforts to assimilate into American culture. Sueko

cast an actual former "Lost Boy," Alepho Deng, as Ater and though his acting skills were limited, he lent an authenticity to the role. Warner Miller stars as Ater in the Globe production and while he may not look the part, he has the acting chops and complexity to make his character's journey more dramatically affecting.

In "Since Africa," 21-year-old Ater interacts with three well-meaning but equally lost Chicagoans who try to ease his transition to the States. The play covers a wealth of issues, including the search for belonging; the value of traditions and ritual; and the meaning of home and family.

Helping Ater adjust are Diane, a sheltered CEO's wife, newly widowed and nearly as helpless as he is.

Looking on with annoyed bemusement is Diane's acid-tongued college-age daughter, Eve, and Reggie, a black minister who bristles at Diane's casual prejudice and her disdain for Christianity and the missionary movement.

Each character in "Since Africa" is searching for identi-

ty. Ater flounders in the gang- and crime-ridden city, feels no kinship with the African-Americans he meets in the U.S., and longs for the simple, honest life back home in his Dinka village.

Diane is emotionally adrift in her grief and looking for a new direction and career. Eve is breaking free of her comfortable childhood to forge a new life for herself. And Reggie is wrestling with questions about his own African heritage.

What makes the play interesting is how these characters'

REVIEW
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Where: The Old Globe at Copley Auditorium, San Diego Museum of Art, Balboa Park, San Diego
Tickets: \$29-\$66
Phone: (619) 234-6823
Web: www.theoldglobe.org

quests frequently connect in clashes of misunderstanding, ignorance and prejudice. The fragile bridge between the characters is a spirit character known as The Nameless One — balletically danced by Kristin D. Carpenter, South Coast Rep veteran

Linda Gehringer gives a mercurial, steel-spined performance as the controlling Diane. Willie C. Carpenter is grace and fire together as the dignified pastor Reggie. And Ashley Clements is a natural as Eve.

Sueko's direction has a seamless, mystical quality, where scenes melt effortlessly into one another and a strong sense for pacing (which is fortunate because the play is long at 2 hours, 30 minutes).

Nick Fouch's set design is compact but versatile and there's a haunting quality to Jason Bieber's lighting. Paul Peterson's sound is booming but effective.



PHOTO COURTESY OF
CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Linda Gehringer, left, Kristin Carpenter, rear, and Warner Miller in the Old Globe's "Since Africa" at the Copley Auditorium in San Diego.

Help Too Much

"The past is never dead; it isn't even past."

Diane lost her husband, a "brilliant" CEO, in Africa. Now the socialite wants to sell the house, land a job (her first), and sever all connections with her past.

Diane's in such deep denial, her daughter says, she can't decide where to put her husband's ashes.

Ater Dahl's also in denial. But his is a protective shield. Without it, a therapist says, he's so traumatized he might cease to function. Ater is one of the Lost Boys of Sudan. Beginning in 1983, the Sudan People's Liberation Army began a war with the Sudanese government. An estimated two million people have lost their lives, and five million have been displaced.

Barking dogs awake Ater one morning. His village was under attack. He heard screams, then watched members of his family murdered. Like an estimated 4000 boys from 3 to 17, he fled, becoming one of the "lost boys" who ran hundreds of miles, barefoot, across the Sudan, many of them back and forth twice (there are no "lost" women or girls; they were made slaves). Ater saw more havoc by the time he was eight years old than most soldiers see in multiple tours of duty.

In Mia McCullough's *Since Africa*, currently at the Old Globe's second stage, Diane and Deacon Reggie Hudson attempt to "resettle" Ater in Chicago. Both mean well, but their motives become suspect. She supplies financial, the Deacon spiritual, perks. They attempt to Americanize Ater and help him forget his horrors. But neither sees him. Instead each is a Pygmalion; they see who they want him to become. Are they aiding or trying to colonize, Ater?

Since Africa plays like an extended commen-

tary on John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation*, also at the Old Globe. Amid small-world nearness stand walls of separation, both personal and cultural. Breakthroughs are possible,

though attempts to change a person often result in confirming differences — and awakened self-awareness. Diane and the Deacon learn they must let go, decontrol, as do Paul and Ouisa,

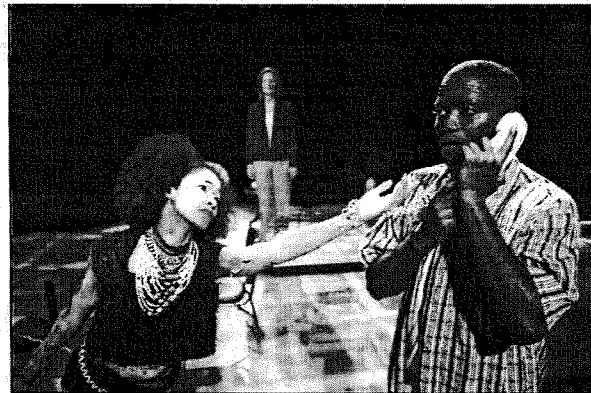
sadly, in *Six Degrees*.

The play's also a commentary on William Faulkner's famous line, "The past is never dead; it isn't even past." Attempts to lop off one's backstory reforge the connection.

Until mid-act 2, *Since Africa* is low on drama. The playwright tends to wade into a scene, for ten or so lines, then paddles hard. The best scenes, like young Eve's monologue about how she got her scar, would be much stronger if McCullough tightened the first third.

The Old Globe made a smart choice in having Seema Sucko direct *Since Africa*. She's staged the play before, for her Mo'olelo company, and knows its quirks. Aided by Jason Bieber, whose fighting shifts from hot blue and orange Sudanese patterns to cold Chicago interiors in a flash, and Paul Peterson's excellent sounds (Dinka chants, drumbeats that interview people), Sucko weaves an arresting mysticism throughout.

Linda Gehringer's unafraid to push Diane a few clicks past likability (she really wants to help Ater), which gives her performance, and Diane's metamorphosis, an authentic ring. Willie C. Carpenter (so memorable in the Globe's *Two Trains Running* as the homeless man who wanted his "ham") does a subtle turn. His Deacon gains unexpected wisdom as he



Kristin D. Carpenter, Linda Gehringer, Warner Miller in *Since Africa*

Since Africa, by Mia McCullough
Old Globe Theatre, Simon Edison Centre for the Performing Arts, Balboa Park
Directed by Seema Sucko; cast, Kristin D. Carpenter, Linda Gehringer, Ashley Clements, Warner Miller, Willie C. Carpenter; scenic design, Nick Fouch; costumes, Charlotte Devaux; lighting, Jason Bieber; sound, Paul Peterson
Playing through March 8; Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Matinee Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. 619-234-5623.

speculates about his roots. Warner Miller's Ater and Ashley Clements's young Eve add dimension to slender roles and become perplexed by what others take for granted.

Since Africa plods, at times, but also offers payoffs, especially in its critique of intentions. Kristin D. Carpenter constitutes an ongoing payoff. She plays the Nameless One, a statue come to life, who dances with vigor and joy. She could be Ater's anima (the Jungian "shadow self") or a sprightly protector watching over the Lost Boys. She helps Ater sustain a link between his past and present and, in the end, helps the others to build that bridge as well.

Field Notes

1. Two excellent books on the Lost Boys:

Benson Deng, et al., *They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky* (Public Affairs); Mark Bixler, *The Lost Boys of the Sudan* (University of Georgia Press).

2. The San Diego Theater Critics Circle recently gave actor Jonathan McMurtry a Lifetime Achievement Award. McMurtry, who has performed for 48 years at the Old Globe, is doing some of his finest work — ever — in *The Dresser* at the North Coast Rep. Teaming with the excellent Sean Sullivan in the title role, McMurtry plays "Sir," an old trouper readying himself for his 227th performance as King Lear during the London Blitz. Much as they'd like to, the North Coast Rep can't extend this terrific production, which must close Sunday. ■

THEATER

Of love, home and hypocrisy

by Jean Lowlerison

'Love Song'

Have you ever felt like the walls were closing in? Beane (Francis Gercke) seems to have that feeling often. Tonight, for example, as he hunches over, then curls up in a worn easy chair in his dingy, half-lit apartment, the walls seem to actually begin to move in closer.

The West Coast premiere of John Kolvenbach's charming and quirky *Love Song* plays to the strains of a muted, bluesy trumpet through Sunday, Feb. 22, at Cygnet's Rolando Theatre, directed by Sean Murray.

Beane is a painfully shy, socially maladjusted toll collector, quite the opposite of his larger-than-life sister Joan (Jessa Watson), who storms around, terrorizing (or firing) hapless interns and worrying about Beane. Jo's husband Harry (Daren Scott) seems to have his hands full just trying to keep up with Jo's quicksilver mood changes.

One night Beane has a mystical encounter with Molly (Jessica John), a self-described "liberator" who seems to have entered his dingy digs in search of something worth stealing. Failing that (Beane has two outfits; his dinnerware consists of one spoon and one mug), she steals his heart.

The next time he sees Jo, the near-catatonic Beane is a changed man, burbling like a kid who has newly discovered language, tossing out long words and complex sentences Jo's never heard from him. He's suddenly aware of smells and tastes, understands what love songs are about and has discovered "the secret ingredient that makes things possible."

His giddiness and wonder spread to Harry, who confesses to an interesting physiological response when passing a fruit stand. Even the hard-driving, no-nonsense Jo falls under Beane's spell; she and Harry share a hilarious "playing hooky" set piece that is one of the evening's highlights.

Gercke and John are perfect foils: his gawky angularity seems to let energy escape, while the concentrated dynamo of Molly's frame seems always ready to spring into action—or out the door.

Love can expand horizons, free the



Francis Gercke and Jessica John in the West Coast premiere of John Kolvenbach's charming and quirky *Love Song* playing through Sunday, Feb. 22, at Cygnet's Rolando Theatre

Imagination, allow the soul to take flight, or just lead to a delightful evening in the theater. That last will be available in this delightful 90-minute play through Feb. 22.

Love Song plays through Sunday, Feb. 22, at Cygnet Rolando Theatre. Shows Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 and 7 p.m. For tickets, call 619-337-1525 or visit www.cygnettheatre.com.

'Since Africa'

Recently widowed socialite Diane MacIntyre (Linda Gehringer), casting about for a way to get through her grief, has volunteered to help with the resettlement of Ater Dahl (Warner Miller), one of the Lost Boys of Sudan, recently arrived in Chicago.

"You know, teach basic survival skills," she explains to daughter Eve (Ashley Clements), who hoots derisively at the thought that her mother could teach anything about survival to Ater, who as a young child walked thousands of miles to escape death.

Such willful misunderstanding is typical of the characters in Mia McCullough's *Since Africa*, which challenges their attitudes and assumptions about identity, family, home and belonging. *Since Africa* plays through March 8 at the San Diego Museum of Art's James S. Copley Auditorium. Seema Sueko, who directed the piece a few years ago, helms this production as well.

Pastor Reggie Hudson (Willie C. Carpenter), for example, is as defen-

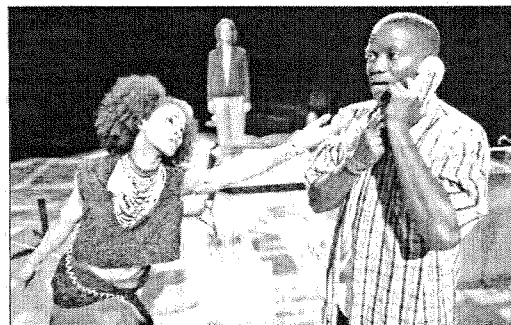
sive about the good he is sure American missionaries have done in Africa as Diane is adamant in her conviction that Africans have lost more than they have gained in the association. (Hudson's church has taken on the job of sponsoring some of the lost boys.) Neither Hudson nor Diane is willing to see the other side.

Meanwhile, Ater is genuinely puzzled by the American penchant for souvenir collecting. Seeing African masks in Diane's house, he notes, "The Americans' idea of art is to take something that is not part of your history and hang it on a wall."

More expansive staging allows Sueko to give *The Nameless One*

(Kristin D. Carpenter), a sort of African avatar, freer rein to express her African-inspired presence. She hovers, dances, plays statue and lends visual interest to what is otherwise a tightly controlled verbal piece.

Since Africa has much to recommend it, though it sometimes seems as though Ater serves more as a plot point, a catalyst for the philosophical and political points McCullough wants to make than as a central figure in his own right. This is especially noticeable because the play is being marketed as a piece about him. Still, the questions raised about identity, home and belonging are worth considering.



Kristin Carpenter as "The Nameless One," Warner Miller as "Ater Dahl," with Linda Gehringer as "Diane MacIntyre" (behind) in The Old Globe's production of *Since Africa* by Mia McCullough, directed by Seema Sueko, playing in the Globe's Arena Theatre at the San Diego Museum of Art's James S. Copley Auditorium through March 8

Since Africa plays through Sunday, March 8, at the Old Globe's arena stage at San Diego Museum of Art's James S. Copley Auditorium. Shows Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; matinee Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. For tickets, call 619-23-GLOBE or visit www.theoldglobe.org.

Losses mended, hope renewed in 'Since Africa'

BY DIANA SAENGER
Contributor

In 1983, 25,000 young boys began a five-year march of more than 1,000 miles to flee their war-torn country of Sudan. Only 12,000 survived the journey. In 2001, 3,800 survivors, labeled as the Lost Boys of Sudan, came to America to build a new life. At one time 90 Lost Boys lived and worked in San Diego.

The subject of these boys' settlements has appeared in books, films and plays. One of the more recent productions is Mia McCullough's "Since Africa," the story of how a recent widow, her daughter, a priest and a Lost Boy come together to mend losses and renew hope.

The Old Globe's "Since Africa" runs now through March 8 at James S. Copley Auditorium in the San Diego Museum of Art.

Reggie Hudson's (Willie C. Carpenter) church has relocated Ater Dahl from Sudan into a small apartment and summoned volunteer Diane MacIntyre (Linda Gehring) to help orient Ater into America. Diane, a recent widow, is still grieving. Her constant battles with teenage daughter Eve (Ashley Clements) over what to do with the house or Mr. MacIntyre's ashes become stumbling blocks for them both. Hoping her new job will help move her on, Diane jumps in wholeheartedly.

Ater, who learned English in the refugee camps, has a problem the first day Diane arrives at his apartment. He's eaten too many



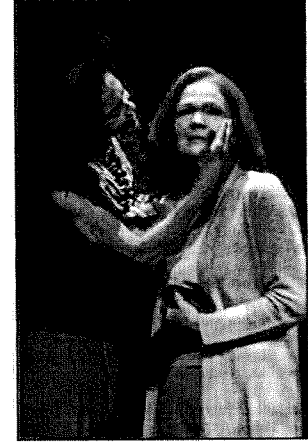
Left: Troubled Lost Boy Ater Dahl (Warner Miller) gets some strength from The Nameless One (Kristin Carpenter), an African spirit, in The Old Globe's 'Since Africa.' Right: Kristin Carpenter as The Nameless One soothes a troubled Linda Gehring, played by Diane MacIntyre. PHOTOS BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ

unfamiliar things and must make quick trips to the bathroom. Diane leaves but returns to teach Ater how to open cans, chop celery, shop and open a bank account. When Reggie notices Ater's fading appreciation about

his new home, he butts heads with Diane over her excessive mothering. Meanwhile, Eve forms a friendship with Ater more on his level. They compare her new tattoo, which infuriated her mother, to the Dinka ritual scarification lines that mark his forehead.

Playwright McCullough has stated that her desire for the play was to show the African and American culture side by side. To create a spiritual African presence, McCullough created the character of The Nameless One, played exceptionally well by Kristin Carpenter. She's a free spirit who, unseen by the characters, dances vigorously around them one minute while posing as a statue near the MacIntyre home another.

"Since Africa" attempts to blend topics that include separation, alienation and readjustment. Although the play is a tad too long and the character's interactions often feel disjointed, the themes mostly play out. With the aid of wonderful African music and beating drums, the three lead characters exhibit their losses well; for Eve, the loss of her father, Di-



'Since Africa'

- Through March 8
- Copley Auditorium
- San Diego Museum of Art
- 1450 El Prado
- (619) 234-5623
- www.oldglobe.org

ane, life as she knew it and, for Ater, his homeland and moreover his mother whom he has not seen for years.

Ater's readjustment is not easy. He gets acclimated on good things about America, like electricity and having a job, but he experiences some negative aspects around him. At heart he's a warrior trained to kill in order to survive so when he's threatened by a co-worker and gets stabbed, he fights back. This is only one of the things that drives him to tell Diane and Reggie: "I miss my country. I want to go back."

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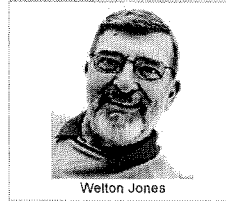
"Since Africa" at the Old Globe Theatre

Lost Boy Meets Chicago

By Welton Jones

Posted on Fri, Jan 30th, 2009

Last updated Fri, Jan 30th, 2009



Welton Jones

If Mia McCullough's play "Since Africa" is meant to be a metaphor for the journey toward a homogenized world culture, then the Old Globe production is reassuring. Despite bumps and shivers, all is proceeding fairly well.

But if McCullough is interested in these particular people, then she hasn't persuaded me that they're worth the attention.

Well, Ater Dahl is. A 20-year-old warrior of the Dinka Tribe in Sudan, he and a few thousand mates, some as young as 6, walked away from bloody civil war all the way to Ethiopia, about 600 miles, before they were bundled off to refugee camps in Kenya, then imported by Christian missionaries to England, France and the USA.

Labeled (uncomfortably) "the Lost Boys of Sudan" by aid organizations, these were the traumatized male survivors of epic, perilous journeys, years in length, and they were no longer "boys." (There were no "Lost Girls." The boys' female contemporaries were mostly raped and killed or enslaved.)

The fictional Ater Dahl, now 21, is right off the airplane, dropped into a seedy Chicago neighborhood to room with three other "boys" and find a job. His support system is a local Catholic parish more compassionate than capable.

The particular volunteer assigned to help Ater adjust to a new world is herself a bit of a mess, a newly-widowed white lady, well-meaning and well-heeled but strictly non-religious, who is haunted by a vision of Africa formed during life-changing visits there and groping for some meaning to her leftover life.

He is sick from the unfamiliar food and cold in the ill-fitting castaway clothing. She is appalled at everything from the rusty donated can-opener to his tribal scars. With a bland black deacon and a petulant college daughter added to the mix, there's plenty of opportunity for crashing cultures.

Among the questions touched upon are the nature of street gangs, the purloining of cultural artifacts, the impact of missionaries, the legacy of slavery, the romance of the Noble Savage, the loss of ritual and all kinds of identity issues.

The play's going along fairly well until everybody's neuroses began to strangle it. By the time Ater hits his catharsis, through, there's some understanding beginning to build. Ultimately, he seems to surrender at last and fall helplessly into the mix with all his other rootless fellow citizens.

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- Rudy Ramos** commented on *Lyric Opera San Diego Premieres "Rumpelstiltskin"*.
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Seema Sueko wisely ignores the meandering angst and concentrates on expanding the playwright's most interesting device, a wordless dancing sprite representing... well, perhaps what Sholem Aleichem's fiddler on the roof meant to the ghetto Jews – the undying thread of tradition.

As performed by Kristin D. Carpenter, weaving with vivid invisibility through every scene, this vision is the glue that makes the play stick in place and finally find an acceptable, resigned peace. Sueko warms the rest of the play at this hearth.

Warner Miller is terrific as Ater, a role that offers plenty of pathos pitfalls. Linda Gehringer is less successful with the more flabby writing for the rich lady. Willie C. Carpenter brings dignity to the small-spirited deacon and Ashley Clements is neatly attuned to the role of the daughter.

Nick Fouch's set is useful though necessarily drab. Some modest shadow boxes are a nice touch along the upper walls of the temporary Globe stage in the San Diego Museum of Art. The Charlotte Devaux costumes all work and, after some too-literal pooling early on, Jason Bieber's lighting design makes good sense, especially the projections. Paul Peterson's sound design leaves no authentic ethnic stone unturned.

There are many issues of current fascination touched upon in this play – it's even set in Chicago, remember – but don't expect nicely molded answers to anything, just plenty more questions.

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Dates : 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through March 8, 2009.

Organization : Old Globe Theatre

Phone : 619 234-5623

Production Type : Play

Region : Balboa Park

URL : www.oldglobe.org

Venue : San Diego Museum of Art, Balboa Park, San Diego

About the author: Welton Jones has been reviewing shows for 50 years as of October 2007, 35 of those years at the UNION-TRIBUNE and, now, six for SANDIEGO.COM where he wrote the first reviews to appear on the site. More by this author.

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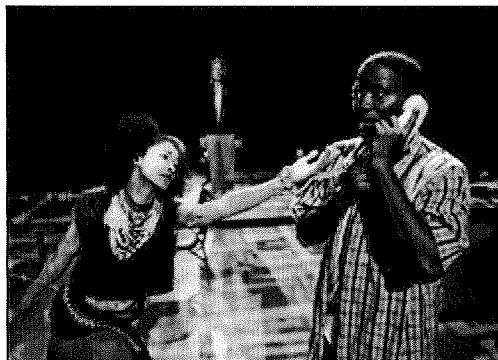
SAN DIEGO

Regional Reviews by Bill Eadie

Since Africa

The Old Globe

To write that Mia McCullough's play, *Since Africa*, means well feels like a statement that damns with faint praise. And yet, this tale of finding oneself in America, while clearly laudable in concept, plods in its execution. The production at San Diego's Old Globe also means well but can't overcome the difficulty of trying to tell a story that ends not all that far from where it began.



Kristin Carpenter, Warner Miller and Linda Gehringer (behind)

Diane MacIntyre (Linda Gehringer), a recently widowed Chicago North Shore socialite, volunteers to assist with helping Ater Dahl (Warner Miller), one of the "Lost Boys of Sudan," to re-settle. In doing so, the non-religious Diane has a series of run-ins with Reggie Hudson (Willie C. Carpenter), a Deacon of St. Bartholomew's Catholic Church, which has provided an apartment for a group of Sudanese young men. Diane also has a daughter, Eve (Ashley Clements), who grieves the loss of her father and plots to find a way of removing herself from her mother's influence. Meanwhile, The Nameless One (Kristin D. Carpenter) hovers around the scene, providing a spiritual connection to Ater's African roots, a connection that both Diane and Deacon Hudson each yearn to make, for their own reasons.

Things develop slowly, slowly. In act one, Ater arrives knowing nothing of American culture, and both Diane and Deacon Hudson make missteps in adapting to his culture while helping him to adapt to theirs (though Diane and Deacon Hudson come from very different worlds within that culture). Eve starts to connect with Ater, but the connection always seems tenuous and never really goes anywhere. In act two, Ater becomes more acclimated and gets himself into some difficulties as he becomes more confident in exploring and reacting to his surroundings. Eve reveals why she has a scar on one arm, and Diane and Deacon Hudson come to a détente in their relationship after an honest discussion about each other's values. Ater and Deacon Hudson receive letters that provide connections to Africa, and each one handles those connections differently. Eve, too, receives a letter, one that will take her off in a different direction. Diane realizes that the connection she thought she had with Africa might be different from what she imagined, and each of the characters move into new phases of their lives by the play's end. The characters have all affected each other, and they have all changed, but the changes seem more individual and internal, and the characters relationships with each other end in the same well-meaning state as in the play's beginning.

San Diego's Old Globe Theatre has invited the Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company's Co-Founder and Artistic Director Seem Sueko to direct this production. Ms. Sueko directed a Mo'olelo version of *Since Africa* in 2006, and in this version she keeps the pace of the play

moving to no avail; the flat writing and slow-moving plot bogs the cast down. She is not helped much by Nick Fouch's overly-busy set, though Charlotte Devaux has designed realistic but clever costumes that sum up each character's circumstances in a glance. The actors mostly succeed in playing what Ms. McCullough has given them with a good deal of expertise. The exception is Ms. Carpenter's movement-based Nameless One. Ms. Carpenter tries to bring life to the proceedings with her movements, but they feel too big for such a small-scale show.

San Diego has a large (more than 3,500-person) Sudanese refugee community, and the Old Globe plans to reach out to that community through this production. Like the play itself, the plan is an admirable one, and my hope would be that these audiences will find the production to be more than just faintly praiseworthy. I doubt that the same will be true for the Globe's regular patrons, however.

The Old Globe presents *Since Africa*. Performances through March 8 at the James S. Copley Auditorium of the San Diego Museum of Art, in Balboa Park adjacent to the Old Globe campus. Tickets available through the Old Globe Box Office at (619) 23-GLOBE, or online at [the Globe's website](#).

Since Africa, by Mia McCullough. Directed by Seema Sueko, with Scenic Design by Nick Fouch, Costume Design by Charlotte Devaux, Lighting Design by Jason Bieber, and Sound Design by Paul Peterson. Claudia Hill-Sparks provided voice and dialect coaching, and Moira Gleason is the stage manager.

With Kristin D. Carpenter as The Nameless One, Linda Gehringer as Diane MacIntyre, Ashley Clements as Eve MacIntyre, Warner Miller as Ater Dahl, and Willie C. Carpenter as Reggie Hudson.

Photo: Craig Schwartz

See the [current theatre season schedule for the San Diego area](#).

- [Bill Eadie](#)

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PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Warner Miller as Ater Dahl in The Old Globe's production of "Since Africa," directed by Seema Sueko, playing in the Globe's Arena Theatre at the San Diego Museum of Art's James S. Copley Auditorium through March 8.

Lost in Chicago: from Africa to the surreal

By CHARLENE BALDRIDGE | Village News

Seema Sueko, whose Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company is currently in residence at La Jolla Playhouse, makes her Old Globe Theatre directorial debut with Mia McCullough's "Since Africa." Sueko staged and Mo'olelo produced the San Diego premiere of "Since Africa" in 2006 at Diversionary Theatre. The Old Globe production, which continues through March 8 at the Globe's arena stage in Balboa Park, is touching and magical, beautifully cast and directed.

In the 1980s, more than 20,000 youths, some as young as 6, fled their villages in Southern Sudan.

Their families had been slaughtered. "How do you do this [walk away from your village when your father lies dying on the ground urging you to run]?" asks the play's Lost Boy Ater Dahl (thoroughly convincing Warner Miller). "In a way it is its own kind of dying."

Eventually, the wanderers wound up in refugee camps in Kenya, from whence they were settled in other countries, including the United Kingdom and France. In 2001, the U.S. government agreed to take in 3,600 Boys who were no longer boys.

Two seasoned stage and film actors, both seen at the Globe previously, head the cast of "Since Africa." Willie C. Carpenter ("Two Trains Running") portrays Reggie Hudson, an African-American lay deacon in the Catholic Church. His parish is involved in housing and acculturating a number of Lost Boys to their new life in America. Linda Gehringer ("The Women") plays Diane MacIntyre, a wealthy, still-grieving Chicago widow who volunteers to help. The two butt heads over everything from religion to missionaries and how best to help Ater, whose naiveté gets him into numerous scrapes at work and on the streets of Chicago.

There is conflict as well between the controlling Diane and her collegio-age daughter, Eve (excellent USD/Old Globe MFA student Ashley Clements). Each thinks the other is not grieving correctly, and they differ as to disposition of their husband/father's ashes.

Each character in the play is in some way lost and homeless, looking for his/her place in society and in the larger context of a changed existence. They are looked after by a benevolent Nameless One (Kristin D. Carpenter, a veteran of Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, Dance Theatre of Harlem and Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance). This spirit and Paul Peterson's sound design, heavy on drums and African choral singing, effectively move us from Chicago to Africa to the surreal.

The Globe's space, larger than Diversionary, allows the play to breathe more deeply than before. Nick Fouch is scenic designer; Charlotte Devaux, costume designer; Jason Bieber, lighting designer; and Claudia Hill-Sparks, voice and dialect coach.

Though affecting, the script still seems a bit too long, but the viewpoints, difficult confrontations and avoidance of grief ring true. So does the bewilderment of each lost one. McCullough provides a lovely denouement, poetically staged by Sueko, who is remembered for her leading role in the Globe's "The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow."

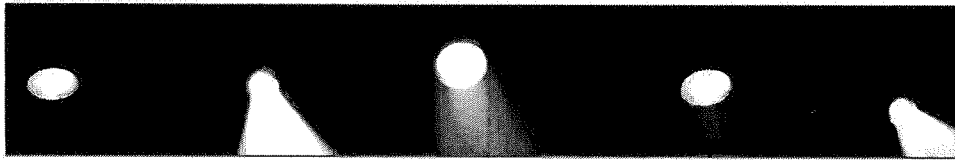
"Since Africa" continues at 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, and 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through March 8 at the Globe's arena stage, Copley Auditorium, San Diego Museum of Art, Balboa Park. For tickets (\$29-\$59) and info, visit www.theoldglobe.org or call (619) 23-GLOBE. ☞

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

February 19, 2009 NIGHT & DAY



THE LOST BOY Kristian Carpenter (left) is The Nameless One, Warner Miller is Ater Dahl and (in background) Linda Gehringer is Diane MacIntyre in the Old Globe's production of "Since Africa," a play written by Mia McCullough and directed by Seema Sueko about a Sudanese "lost boy" refugee. *Craig Schwartz*



SDJJ | what's goin' on

by eileen sondak

a lovely month for entertainment

February is the shortest month of the year, but it's jam packed with entertainment. This year's mix is a potpourri of everything from theater and opera to music, art and dance.

The San Diego Symphony has a varied slate of musical offerings, including a kids-oriented Family Festival Feb. 8 featuring "My Many Colored Days" by the legendary Dr. Seuss. The story is about a child and a pet dog, and it will come alive with musical accompaniment. As usual, the Dr. Seuss program (conducted by Philip Mann) will feature pre-concert activities, such as the popular musical "petting zoo."

Take your Valentine to hear Matthew Garbutt conduct Valentine's Day at the Pops Feb. 14. The program of romantic music should hit a high note with your favorite date. Another highlight this month is Winter Pops' Silent Film Night (Feb. 6-7). The 1925 film "Phantom of the Opera" will be screened.

The Jacobs' Masterworks Series will continue Feb. 27-March 1 with Jahja Ling conducting a program of Mendelssohn, Dvorak and Brahms. Guest pianist Yefim Bronfman will perform Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2. On Feb. 26, Nuvi Mehta will host a Symphony Exposed performance of Dvorak's Serenade for Strings, conducted by Maestro Ling.

The San Diego Opera's season opening production of "Tosca," a thrilling drama dealing with sex, politics, corruption and violence, will remain at the Civic Theatre through Feb. 4. Following it on Feb. 14 is "Don Quixote" (not seen here since 1969), with Karen Keltner on the podium. This new production of the opera (starring Ferruccio Furlanetto as the eccentric knight and Denyce Graves as his idealized Dulcinea) will stay put until Feb. 22.

Music lovers have another option this month. Trumpet virtuoso Doc Severinsen will be joined by classical guitarist Gil Gutierrez, violinist Pedro Cartas and percussionist Luis Conte at the California Center for the Arts in Escondido Feb. 6 for a one-night performance of their new show, "El Ritmo de la Vida."

Valentine's Day doesn't get much more romantic than attending the Ballet Theater of Russia's lavish production of "Cinderella." The enchanting story will be danced to a full orchestra by this distinguished Russian ballet company Feb. 14.

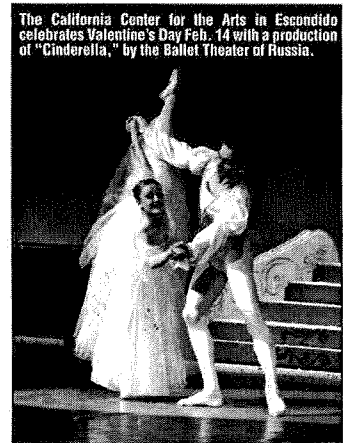
Mainly Mozart's 13th Annual Spotlight Series

continues in three different venues, with programs that include works by Schubert, Dohnanyi and Mozart, of course. Performances run Feb. 13-15 and include two concerts at the Neurosciences Institute.

The Old Globe has two shows on the boards this month. "Six Degrees of Separation," John Gore's intriguing contemporary masterpiece about the games people play, as well as our fascination with celebrity, continues on the Globe's Main Stage through Feb. 15 with Tony Award-winner Karen Ziemba heading the cast. The plot of this three-character play is full of disconcerting twists and turns that should fascinate mature audiences. The Globe's temporary second stage at the Museum of Art will feature "Since Africa" until March 8. This drama revolves around a newly widowed socialite, her daughter and their efforts to help a lost boy from Sudan. It's a touching story about how the women's commitment to helping African refugees transforms their own sense of loss and grief.

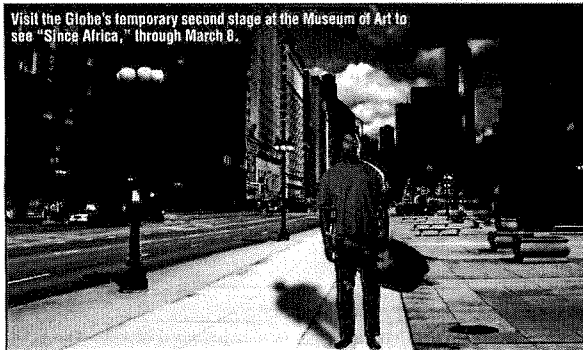
The Globe is also producing a new hip-hop/rock musical titled "Kingdom" for a brief run at the theater (Feb. 19-22). "Kingdom" will also be

■ Valentine's Day doesn't get much more romantic than attending the Ballet Theater of Russia's lavish production of "Cinderella."





SDJJ | what's goin' on



Visit the Globe's temporary second stage at the Museum of Art to see "Since Africa," through March 8.

performed at the Lincoln High School Center for the Arts.

The San Diego Rep's local premiere of the recent Broadway hit, "Doubt," will end its San Diego run Feb. 8. The Rep's own Todd Salovey staged "Doubt" for the intimate Lyceum Space. Audiences are left to give their own verdicts in this drama of uncertainty, but there's no doubt that Rosina Reynolds and Monique Gaffney will make the show a sure-fire success.

The San Diego Rep will unveil its production of "The Threepenny Opera" Feb. 28 for a month-long run. With music by Kurt Weill and book by Bertolt Brecht, this one-of-a-kind musical revolutionized traditional opera and is considered a 20th-century masterpiece. Sam Woodhouse is directing the show, which runs through March 29.

North Coast Repertory Theatre's "The Dresser" (in production through Feb. 8) offers audiences a behind-the-scenes look at life in the theater. David Ellenstein directed this double portrait of an old actor-manager touring the provinces of England. On Feb. 18, the troupe will launch the San Diego premiere of "Shipwrecked!" an adventure story by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Donald Margulies. The wild tale of hijinks and adventure explores the nature of truth, and you can see it at NCR's Solana Beach Theatre until March 15.

The Lamb's Players is reviving "Room Service," a comic gem from the 1930s. The zany piece is best known as a film starring the Marx Brothers, but it actually began with a smash run on Broadway. Now, "Room Service" is ready for a Feb. 6 opening (directed by Robert Smyth). The high-octane comedy will remain at the Lamb's Coronado home through March 22.

Moonlight Theater's winter home at the Avo Playhouse continues its delightful revue, "Tump Boys and Dinettes," a peppy mix of Grand Ole Opry country music and down home comedy. You can chuckle at this snapshot of small-town life through Feb. 22.

Lyric Opera is back with a pair of operettas Feb. 13-22. Gilbert & Sullivan's "Trial By Jury" will be teamed with "Rumpelstiltskin," a recent work by J. Sherwood Montgomery, featuring music by Nicolas Reveles. This double bill will cap off the troupe's 30th-anniversary season.

Cygnar's Rolando Stage is presenting the Southern California premiere of John Kolvenbach's "Love Song" (until Feb. 22). The show focuses on an alienated man (Beane), his well-meaning sister and brother-in-law, and a newfound happiness that enters Beane's life. "Love Song" is an offbeat and deeply touching comedy about the power of love — in all its forms.

Cygnar's Old Town Stage is readying the

San Diego premiere of "History Boys," a Tony Award-winning comedy about the senior year of eight history students in England, as they try to gain admission to Oxford and Cambridge. The show (directed by Sean Murray) explores the anarchy of adolescence, the nature of history and the aim of education. It will begin previews on Feb. 19 and remain in Old Town through March 29.

Balletomanes can check out the San Diego Ballet's production of "Romeo and Juliet" at the Lyceum Theatre Feb. 13-15 to put a touch of romance in your Valentine's Day weekend.

The California Ballet will bring "Coppelia" back to the San Diego Civic Theatre for a brief run Feb. 28-March 1. This full-length ballet about a young girl, an old toymaker and a workshop full of dancing dolls is the perfect choice for audiences of all ages.

The San Diego Museum of Art is showcasing "Emerging Elites: Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition," a new exhibition that focuses on the artistic transitions that took place in Indo-Muslim culture centers in the 18th and 19th centuries. Also on display is "Visible Places: Works by Women on Paper," a new show culled from the museum's own collection, many of which are exhibited for the first time. An intimate exhibition showcasing Louise Nevelson's remarkable artistic range and an ongoing exhibit of new acquisitions and long-held strengths of the art museum are on tap as well. "Tastes in Asian Art" will be showcased in the Asian Court through Feb. 22.

The San Diego Natural History Museum's "Tibet: Imagery by Kenneth Parker" (slated to remain at the museum through March 1) showcases Parker's fine-art photographs of the culture and landscape of Tibet.

Mingei International is more than just an outstanding folk art, craft and design museum. It also offers lectures and programs in both of its locations. On Feb. 14, the Escondido branch will present "Sights and Sounds of the Silk Road," a blend of exotic music and dance, while the Balboa Park museum will featuring Mimi Levinson in a demonstration of textile art (Feb. 28) using shibori, a Japanese textile embellishment technique. ☐

SAN DIEGO MAGAZINE

February 2009

AGENDA EDITED BY PHYLLIS DEBLANCHE

Calendar

THEATER

Before Wendy: *Peter and the Starcatchers* tells the story that precedes *Peter Pan*, at La Jolla Playhouse Feb 13-Mar. 8: Wed. & Thur. at 7:30, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 & 8, Sun. at 2 & 7:30. UCSD campus, 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla, 858-550-1010; lajollaplayhouse.org.

Room Service dishes up laughter on the Lamb's Players Theatre main stage (1142 Orange Ave., Coronado) Feb. 6-Mar. 22: Tues.-Thur. at 7:30, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 4 & 8, Sun. at 2. *Boomers* continues at downtown San Diego's Horton Grand Theatre (444 Fourth Ave.), thru Feb. 22: Thur. at 7:30, Fri. & Sat. at 4 & 8, Sun. at 2. 619-437-0600; lambsplayers.org.

The Dresser unravels an actor, thru Feb. 8; *Shipwrecked! An Entertainment* recounts adventures of a storyteller, Feb. 18-Mar. 15: Wed. at 7, Thur. & Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 & 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987-D Lomas Santa Fe Dr., Solana Beach, 858-481-1055; northcoastrep.org.

On the Old Globe Theatre's main stage, *Six Degrees of Separation* revolves around the New York art scene, thru Feb. 15. *Kingdom* combines hip-hop, rock and Latin music to set the tone for the journey of two young men, Feb. 14, 15 & 19-22. On the San Diego Museum of Art's Copley Auditorium arena stage, *Since Africa* tells the story of a lost boy of Sudan, thru Mar. 8. Shows are Tues. & Wed. at 7, Thur. & Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 & 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, 619-234-5623; theoldglobe.org.

San Diego Repertory Theatre lets the audience discern truth in *Doubt: A Parable*, thru Feb. 8; *The Threepenny Opera* follows lawbreaking Mack the Knife on a quest to save his marriage, Feb. 28-Mar. 29: Wed. at 7, Thur. & Fri. at 8, Sat. at 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. Lyceum Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza, downtown, 619-544-1000; sdrep.org.

At Welk Resort Theatre, *Music and Memories* embodies showman pianist Liberace, thru Feb. 8. *The Scarlet Pimpernel* is set during the French Revolution, Feb. 12-Apr. 26. Shows are Tues., Thur. & Sat. at 1:45 & 8, Wed. & Sun. at 1:45. 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido, 760-749-3448; welktheatre.com.

California Center for the Arts, Escondido hosts *The Mortified Guide to ... Epic Romance*, Feb. 20 & 21 at 8. 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido, 800-988-4253; artcenter.org.

At Cygnet Theatre's Rolando stage (6663 El Cajon Blvd., Ste. N), the quirky *Love Song* plays thru Feb. 22: Wed. at 7:30, Thur.-Sat. at 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. At the Old Town venue (4040 Twigg's St.), the purpose of education is questioned in *The History Boys*, Feb. 28-Mar. 29: Wed. at 7:30, Thur.-Sat. at 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. 619-337-1525; cygnettheatre.com.

Always-provocative Moxie Theatre digs into *The Sugar Syndrome* Feb. 14-Mar. 8: Thur.-Sat. at 8, Sun. at 2. Diversionary Theatre, 4545 Park Blvd., University Heights, 858-598-7620; moxietheatre.com.

Poway Center for the Performing Arts presents *Burning in China*, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests, Feb. 21 & 28 at 8. 15498 Espola Rd., Poway, 858-748-0505; powayarts.org.

SOLANA BEACH SUN

January 23, 2009

THEATER

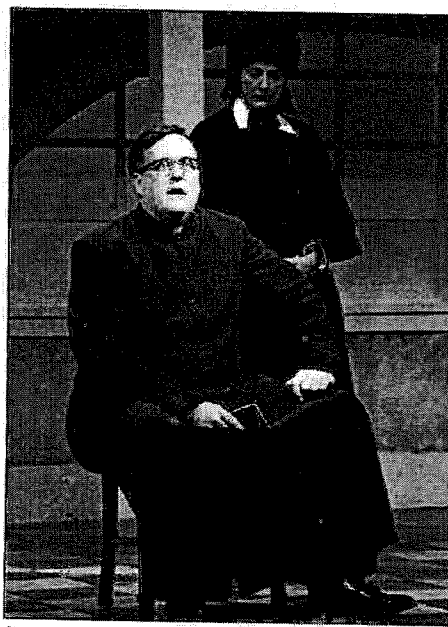
"Doubt: A Parable" The San Diego REPeratory Theatre presents "Doubt: A Parable," a drama with a powerful story. The production features Rosina Reynolds, Monique Gaffney, Amanda Siton, and Doug Roberts. Closes Feb. 18. Lyceum Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza. \$29-\$47. (619) 544-1000, www.sdrep.org.

"The Dresser" A double portrait of an old actor/manager touring England during World War II and the dresser who serves him. Closes Feb. 8. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Suite D, Solana Beach. (858) 481-1055, www.northcoastrep.org.

"Since Africa" A widowed socialite and her daughter help a "Lost Boy of the Sudan" relocate to a major American city. Opens Jan. 24, closes March 8. Arena Stage at James S. Copley Auditorium at San Diego Museum of Art, 1450 El Prado. (619) 234-5623, www.theoldglobe.org.

"Six Degrees of Separation" Everything in the Kittredges' lives revolves around the New York art scene, where the appearance of success matters most. A stranger causes them to question their identities. Closes Feb. 15. The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way. (619) 234-5623, www.theoldglobe.org.

"Tosca" San Diego Opera's 2009 season begins with this story about a woman who risks everything to save her lover in an oppressive police state. Opens Jan. 24, closes Feb. 4. Civic Theatre, 1100 Third Ave. (619) 533-7000, www.sdogera.com.



'DOUBT' Doug Roberts and Rosina Reynolds star in San Diego Repertory Theatre's production of 'Doubt.' KEN JACQUES

THE CALIFORNIAN

February 26, 2009

"Since Africa" — The Old Globe presents Mia McCullough's drama about a Sudanese refugee adjusting to life in urban America; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; through March 8; Old Globe at the Copley Auditorium, San Diego Museum of Art, Balboa Park; \$29-\$66; (619) 234-5623.

WHERE MAGAZINE

Winter 2009

Center Stage

ANNIE! Jan. 9-11. The theater's most lovable orphan takes to the San Diego stage in this touring production. Broadway/San Diego, Civic Theatre, Third Ave. and B St., downtown, 619.570.1100. **Map Q16**

BOOMERS Ongoing. Poised to take over for the long-running Triple Espresso, this musical focuses on the baby-boomer generation. Horton Grand Theatre, 444 Fourth Ave., Gaslamp, 619.437.0600. **Map O17**

BULRUSHER Feb.7-March 1. At the dawn of the Civil Rights movement in small-town California, a young African-American woman voyages toward self-discovery with the help of a stranger from Alabama. New Village Arts Theatre, 2787-B State St., Carlsbad, 760.433.3245. **Map T22**

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Dec. 5-27. This retelling of Dickens' holiday classic features Ron Choullarton as Ebenezer Scrooge. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Solana Beach, 858.481.1055. **Map X23**

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Through Dec. 28. A ghostly, Victorian adaptation of the holiday classic appropriately staged in historic Old Town. Cygnet Theatre, Old Town Theatre, 4040 Twigg's St., Old Town, 619.337.1525. **Map E3**

THE COLOR PURPLE Dec. 2-7. Oprah Winfrey presents this touring production of the Broadway hit based on Alice Walker's novel. Broadway/San Diego, San Diego Civic Theatre, Third Ave. and B St., downtown, 619.570.1100. **Map Q16**

DOUBT: A PARABLE Jan. 10-Feb. 8. John Patrick Shanley's Pulitzer-winning play (adapted into a Meryl Streep film) tackles the controversial subject of sexual malfeasance in the Catholic church, San Diego Repertory Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza, Gaslamp, 619.544.1000. **Map Q16**

THE DRESSER Jan. 17-Feb. 8 (previews Jan. 14-16). Set during World War II, Ronald Harwood's play centers on an actor touring the English provinces and his loyal assistant, the dresser. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Solana Beach, 858.481.1055. **Map X23**

DR. SEUSS' HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS! Through Dec. 28. Dr. Seuss book returns to the Old Globe stage in this holiday fable favorite. Old Globe Theatre, Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, 619.23.GLOBE. **Map Q16**

FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS: ANGEL'S ARMS Dec. 2-28. A 19th-century novelist overcomes writer's block thanks to an eccentric innkeeper at the deserted Angel's Arms Inn. Lamb's Players Theatre, 1142 Orange Ave., Coronado, 619.437.0600. **Map L10**

THE HISTORY BOYS Feb. 19-March 29. The S.D. premiere of this dramedy about British boarding-schoolboys in pursuit of sex, sport and university acceptance. Cygnet Theatre, 6663 El Cajon Blvd., College Area, 619.337.1525. **Map E3**

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO

PLAY Through Dec. 28. Holiday play re-imagines Capra's classic film using radio sound effects. Cygnet Theatre, 6663 El Cajon Blvd., College Area, 619.337.1525. **Map E3**

LOVE SONG Jan. 15-Feb. 22. Oddball Beane finds unexpected bliss after his apartment is burglarized in this offbeat comedy from John Kolvenbach. Cygnet Theatre, 6663 El Cajon Blvd., College Area, 619.337.1525. **Map E3**

PETER AND THE STARCATCHERS Feb. 13-March 8. A young Peter Pan first meets his mates in this prequel to J. M. Barrie's classic story. Potiker Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, 858.550.1010. **Map T20**

ROOM SERVICE Feb. 6-March 22. Screwball comedy later adapted into a classic Marx Brothers film. Lamb's Players Theatre, 1142 Orange Ave., Coronado, 619.437.0600. **Map L10**

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION Jan. 10-Feb. 15. The NYC art scene is the backdrop for John Guare's Broadway hit about the dark side of celebrity (adapted into a Will Smith film). Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, 619.23.GLOBE. **Map O17**

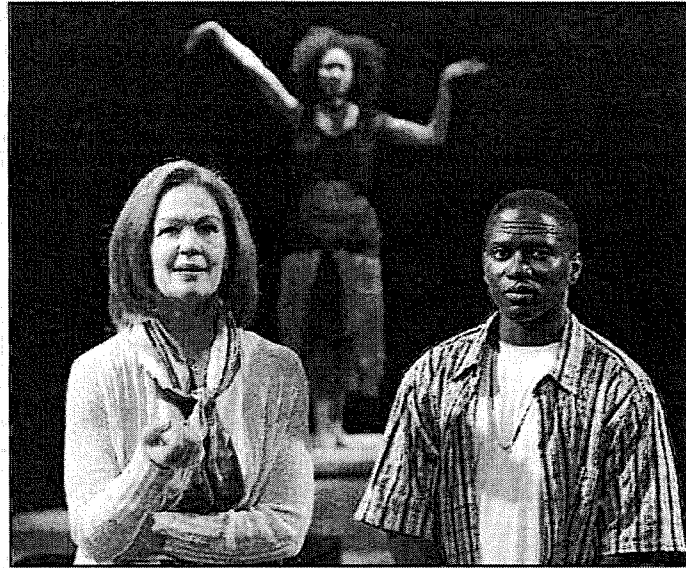
SINCE AFRICA Jan. 24-March 8. A widow's life is changed when she tries to help a Sudanese "Lost Boy." Arena Stage at Copley Auditorium, Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, 619.23.GLOBE. **Map Q17**

XANADU Through Dec. 31. A magical musical of a Greek muse, a struggling artist and a roller disco. Mandell Weiss Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, 858.550.1010. **Map T20**

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

February 5, 2009

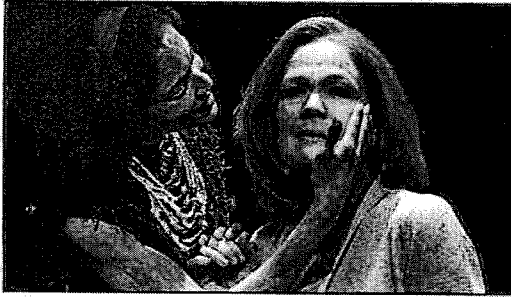
NIGHT & DAY



'SINCE AFRICA' Linda Gehringer and Warner Miller star in the Old Globe's production of Mia McCullough's drama about the Sudanese "lost boy" refugees. The play runs through March 8 at the Balboa Park theater's Copley Auditorium space. Tickets are \$29-\$59. *Craig Schwartz*

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

February 2, 2009



THEATER

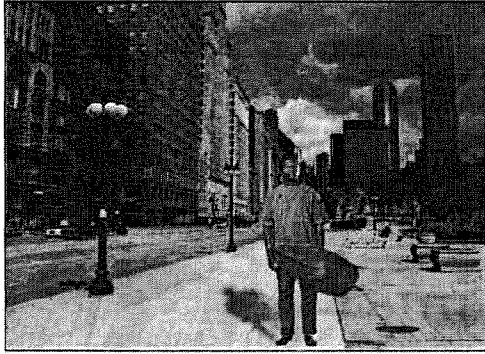
Culture clash

Despite strong performances, the Old Globe's production of Mia McCullough's "Since Africa," about a "lost boy" of the Sudan, needs more energy and impact to match the work's thematic ambitions. **Page E7**

NORTH COUNTY TIMES

January 29, 2009

PREVIEW SECTION



'Since Africa' at Old Globe

The Old Globe presents Mia McCullough's "Since Africa," a drama about a Sudanese refugee adjusting to life in urban America, at 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays and 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, through March 8. The play is being presented in the Old Globe's temporary in-the-round space at the San Diego Museum of Art's Copley Auditorium in Balboa Park. Tickets are \$29 to \$66. Call (619) 234-5623.

SAN DIEGO READER

January 29, 2009

CALENDAR

Since Africa

The Old Globe Theatre presents Mia McCullough's drama about Ater, a "Lost Boy of Sudan," and the volunteers who help acclimate him to life in America.

Seema Sueko directed.

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK, 619-234-8623.

THURSDAYS, 8 P.M. FRIDAYS, 8 P.M.
SATURDAYS, 2 AND 8 P.M. SUNDAYS, 2
AND 7 P.M. TUESDAYS, 7 P.M. WEDNES-
DAYS, 7 P.M. THROUGH MARCH 8.

SAN DIEGO MAGAZINE

February 2009

AGENDA EDITED BY PHYLLIS DEBLANCHE

Calendar

THEATER

Before Wendy: *Peter and the Starcatchers* tells the story that precedes *Peter Pan*, at La Jolla Playhouse Feb 13–Mar. 8: Wed. & Thur. at 7:30, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 & 8, Sun. at 2 & 7:30. UCSD campus, 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla, 858-550-1010; lajollaplayhouse.org.

Room Service dishes up laughter on the Lamb's Players Theatre main stage (1142 Orange Ave., Coronado) Feb. 6–Mar. 22: Tues.–Thur. at 7:30, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 4 & 8, Sun. at 2. *Boomers* continues at downtown San Diego's Horton Grand Theatre (444 Fourth Ave.), thru Feb. 22: Thur. at 7:30, Fri. & Sat. at 4 & 8, Sun. at 2. 619-437-0600; lambsplayers.org.

The Dresser unravels an actor, thru Feb. 8; *Shipwrecked! An Entertainment* recounts adventures of a storyteller, Feb. 18–Mar. 15: Wed. at 7, Thur. & Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 & 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987-D Lomas Santa Fe Dr., Solana Beach, 858-481-1055; northcoastrep.org.

On the Old Globe Theatre's main stage, *Six Degrees of Separation* revolves around the New York art scene, thru Feb. 15. *Kingdom* combines hip-hop, rock and Latin music to set the tone for the journey of two young men, Feb. 14, 15 & 19–22. On the San Diego Museum of Art's Copley Auditorium arena stage, *Since Africa* tells the story of a lost boy of Sudan, thru Mar. 8. Shows are Tues. & Wed. at 7, Thur. & Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 & 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, 619-234-5623; theoldglobe.org.

San Diego Repertory Theatre lets the audience discern truth in *Doubt: A Parable*, thru Feb. 8; *The Threepenny Opera* follows lawbreaking Mack the Knife on a quest to save his marriage, Feb. 28–Mar. 29: Wed. at 7, Thur. & Fri. at 8, Sat. at 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. Lyceum Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza, downtown, 619-544-1000; sdrep.org.

At Welk Resort Theatre, *Music and Memories* embodies showman pianist Liberace, thru Feb. 8. *The Scarlet Pimpernel* is set during the French Revolution, Feb. 12–Apr. 26. Shows are Tues., Thur. & Sat. at 1:45 & 8, Wed. & Sun. at 1:45. 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido, 760-749-3448; welktheatre.com.

California Center for the Arts, Escondido hosts *The Mortified Guide to... Epic Romance*, Feb. 20 & 21 at 8. 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido, 800-988-4253; artcenter.org.

At Cygnet Theatre's Rolando stage (6663 El Cajon Blvd., Ste. N), the quirky *Love Song* plays thru Feb. 22: Wed. at 7:30, Thur.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. At the Old Town venue (4040 Twiggs St.), the purpose of education is questioned in *The History Boys*, Feb. 28–Mar. 29: Wed. at 7:30, Thur.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 2 & 7. 619-337-1525; cygnettheatre.com.

Always-provocative Moxie Theatre digs into *The Sugar Syndrome* Feb. 14–Mar. 8: Thur.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 2. Diversionary Theatre, 4545 Park Blvd., University Heights, 858-598-7620; moxietheatre.com.

Poway Center for the Performing Arts presents *Burning in China*, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests, Feb. 21 & 28 at 8. 15498 Espola Rd., Poway, 858-748-0505; powayarts.org.

STAGE BY DON BRAUNAGEL

San Diego Shows Go On

THEATER FOLKS, FOR THE MOST PART, do their work more for love than money. Even so, an ebbing economy generally brings fewer shows and darkened stages. Broadway, for example, suffered an unusual slump in late 2008, with closings of hit shows that normally would have been kept open to benefit from the holiday tourist season.



Joe Bithorn and Steve Landea in *Rain: A Tribute to the Beatles*.

Locally, however, our organizations seem to be hanging tough, nourished by new groups like the downtown Theatre Inc., which is in its second season of presenting classic works. Established companies are building on their success with presentations in second venues, like Cygnet with the Old Town Theatre, Lamb's Players with the Horton Grand and Broadway/San Diego with the Balboa.

All this activity means that, typically, our new theater year looks to be brighter than ever. Although all full-year schedules haven't been announced, highlights are already evident—including, as usual, a debut musical heading for Broadway. It's *The First Wives Club*, coming to the Old Globe. The revenge-on-exes story, familiar from the popular film, is adapted by Rupert Holmes and complemented by music by the famed Motown team of Holland, Dozier and Holland.

The Globe also presents *Working*, an update of Stephen Schwartz' musicalization of Studs Terkel's paean to ordinary occupations, with additional songs by James Taylor and Tony winner Lin-Manuel Miranda. Other dis-

tinctive tuners around town include Cygnet's *Assassins*, the controversial Stephen Sondheim-John Weidman revue about presidential killers; Broadway/San Diego's offering of *Rain: A Tribute to the Beatles*; and the San Diego Rep staging of Brecht's masterpiece *The Threepenny Opera*.

In the not-exactly-a-musical category, Lamb's re-stages *Joyful Noise*, Tim Slover's drama concerning the creation of Handel's *Messiah*. The play premiered at Lamb's in 1999 and went on to acclaimed productions off-Broadway and around the nation.

We also have a wealth of provocative dramas upcoming, particularly from smaller companies. Coincidentally or not, three concern families coping with the loss of children. North Coast Rep does *Rabbit Hole*, David Lindsay-Abaire's 2007 Pulitzer Prize winner about the accidental death of a young boy; Diversionsary Theatre offers Carol Lynn Pearson's *Facing East*, in which a Mormon couple deals with the suicide of their gay son; and Mo'olelo Theatre stages Jane Martin's *Good Boys*, focusing on fathers of sons, one black and one white, who died in a school shooting.

Less wrenching is the Globe's premiere of Mark Olsen's *Cornelia*, spotlighting the beauty queen who married George Wallace and became the powerful first lady of Alabama, and North Coast Rep's *Bulrushers*, Elsa Davis' poetic 2007 Pulitzer finalist about a young African-American woman coming of age as the civil rights movement begins.

Lighter brews are on tap as well. Broadway/San Diego brings in *Tuna Does Vegas*, the first new show in a decade by the comic team of Jaston Williams and Joe Sears, taking their Tuna, Texas, characters to Sin City. Lamb's has again slated the local debut of *Leaving Iowa*, a Tim Clue-Spike Manton comedy about a man's flashbacks to family car trips, which got pulled last summer because of a rights conflict. And La Jolla Playhouse concludes its 2008-09 schedule with Rick Ellice's *Peter and the Starcatchers*, an adventurous prequel to J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

One trend likely to continue in the economic squeeze: coproducing. Moxie Theatre, still homeless but always fearless, is doing typically offbeat works: Marisa Wegrzyn's *The Butcher of Baraboo* with Diversionsary, and Caridad Svich's *The Labyrinth of Desire* with Ion Theatre. Diversionsary teamed with the Black Ensemble Theatre on Paul Oakley Stovall's *As Much as You Can*, a dysfunctional-family comedy centering on a black gay man who brings home his white lover.

Ion, by itself, also burnishes its growing reputation with Martin McDonagh's applauded dark comedy *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. ■



For more about local theater companies, go to sandiegomagazine.com/Stage.

SAN DIEGO HOME & GARDEN

February 2009

THEATER

The Scarlet Pimpernel, Feb. 12-Apr. 26: With its moving ballads, hilarious dialogue, daring rescues and a thrilling sword-fight, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* promises to be a feast for the masses. Times/prices vary. Welk Resort Theatre, 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido. 888/802-7469. www.welktheatre.com.

Peter and the Starcatchers, Feb. 13-Mar. 8: Reveals the wonderful story that precedes J. M. Barrie's beloved *Peter Pan*. Times/prices vary. La Jolla Playhouse, UCSD Campus, La Jolla. 858/550-1010. www.lajollaplayhouse.org.

The Sugar Syndrome, Feb. 14-Mar. 8: Seventeen-year-old Dani surfs internet chat rooms, searching for someone who is honest and direct. What she finds is Tim, a man twice her age who thinks she is an eleven-year-old boy. For mature

audiences. Times/prices vary. Diversionary Theatre. 858/598-7620. www.moxiethatre.com.

Shipwrecked! Feb. 21-Mar. 15: Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Donald Margulies' entertaining new play explores the seductive power of the tall tale and the desperate need that drives the storyteller. Times/prices vary. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987 Lomas Santa Fe Dr., Solana Beach. 858/481-1055. www.northcoastrep.org.

3 Redneck Tenors: A New Musical Adventure, Feb. 22: Musical comedy featuring classically trained veteran artists from Broadway and world opera stages John Wilkerson, Alex Bumpas, Matthew Lord and Dinny McGuire. 6 p.m. \$25, \$40,

\$50. Balboa Theatre, 868 Fourth Ave., downtown. 619/570-1100. www.sandiegotheatres.org.

The Threepenny Opera, Feb. 28-Mar. 29: Experience the one-of-a-kind musical that revolutionized traditional opera. Times vary. \$25-\$53. Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza. 619/544-1000. www.sandiegorep.com.

Doubt: A Parable, through Feb. 8: This critically acclaimed deeply moving drama is a quiet indictment of the reverence for righteousness in American culture — a gripping mystery, rooted in suspicion. Times vary. \$25-\$53. Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza. 619/544-1000. www.sandiegorep.com.

The Dresser, through Feb. 8: Magnificent double portrait of an old actor-manager touring the provinces of England during the Second World War and the loyal dresser, who so devotedly serves him. Times/prices vary. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987 Lomas Santa Fe Dr., Solana Beach. 858/481-1055. www.northcoastrep.org.

Music and Memories, through Feb. 8: The "King of Bling" is back! Starring Wayland Pickard as Liberace. Times/prices vary. Welk Resort Theatre, 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido. 888/802-7469. www.welktheatre.com.

Six Degrees of Separation, through Feb. 15: A fascinating and compassionate play probes the allure of celebrity and the games we play to elevate our own significance. For mature audiences. Times/prices vary. Old Globe Theatre. 619/23-GLOBE. www.theoldglobe.org.

Love Song, through Feb. 22: Funny, enchanting and wonderfully touching offbeat comedy. Times vary. \$22-\$38. The Rolando Theatre, 6663 El Cajon Blvd., Ste. N. 619/337-1525. <http://cygnettheatre.com>.

Since Africa, through Mar. 8: The story of a "Lost Boy" of the Sudan and the two volunteers who try to help him acclimate to life in urban America. Times/prices vary. The Globe's Arena Stage at San Diego Museum of Art's James S. Copley Auditorium. 619/23-GLOBE. www.theoldglobe.org.

WHERE MAGAZINE

Winter 2009

Center Stage

- ANNIE!** Jan. 9-11. The theater's most lovable orphan takes to the San Diego stage in this touring production. Broadway/San Diego, Civic Theatre, Third Ave. and B St., downtown, 619.570.1100. **Map Q16**
- BOOMERS** Ongoing. Poised to take over for the long-running Triple Espresso, this musical focuses on the baby-boomer generation. Horton Grand Theatre, 444 Fourth Ave., Gaslamp, 619.437.0600. **Map O17**
- BULRUSHER** Feb.7-March 1. At the dawn of the Civil Rights movement in small-town California, a young African-American woman voyages toward self-discovery with the help of a stranger from Alabama. New Village Arts Theatre, 2787-B State St., Carlsbad, 760.433.3245. **Map T22**
- A CHRISTMAS CAROL** Dec. 5-27. This retelling of Dickens' holiday classic features Ron Choularton as Ebenezer Scrooge. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Solana Beach, 858.481.1055. **Map X23**
- A CHRISTMAS CAROL** Through Dec. 28. A ghostly, Victorian adaptation of the holiday classic appropriately staged in historic Old Town. Cygnet Theatre, Old Town Theatre, 4040 Twigg's St., Old Town, 619.337.1525. **Map E3**
- THE COLOR PURPLE** Dec. 2-7. Oprah Winfrey presents this touring production of the Broadway hit based on Alice Walker's novel. Broadway/San Diego, San Diego Civic Theatre, Third Ave. and B St., downtown, 619.570.1100. **Map Q16**
- DOUBT: A PARABLE** Jan. 10-Feb. 8. John Patrick Shanley's Pulitzer-winning play (adapted into a Meryl Streep film) tackles the controversial subject of sexual malfeasance in the Catholic church, San Diego Repertory Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza, Gaslamp, 619.544.1000. **Map Q16**
- THE DRESSER** Jan. 17-Feb. 8 (previews Jan. 14-16). Set during World War II, Ronald Harwood's play centers on an actor touring the English provinces and his loyal assistant, the dresser. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Solana Beach, 858.481.1055. **Map X23**
- DR. SEUSS' HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS!** Through Dec. 28. Dr. Seuss book returns to the Old Globe stage in this holiday fable favorite. Old Globe Theatre, Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, 619.23.GLOBE. **Map Q16**
- FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS: ANGEL'S ARMS** Dec. 2-28. A 19th-century novelist overcomes writer's block thanks to an eccentric innkeeper at the deserted Angel's Arms Inn. Lamb's Players Theatre, 1142 Orange Ave., Coronado, 619.437.0600. **Map L10**
- THE HISTORY BOYS** Feb. 19-March 29. The S.D. premiere of this dramedy about British boarding-schoolboys in pursuit of sex, sport and university acceptance. Cygnet Theatre, 6663 El Cajon Blvd., College Area, 619.337.1525. **Map E3**
- IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO PLAY** Through Dec. 28. Holiday play re-imagines Capra's classic film using radio sound effects. Cygnet Theatre, 6663 El Cajon Blvd., College Area, 619.337.1525. **Map E3**
- LOVE SONG** Jan. 15-Feb. 22. Oddball Beane finds unexpected bliss after his apartment is burglarized in this offbeat comedy from John Kolvenbach. Cygnet Theatre, 6663 El Cajon Blvd., College Area, 619.337.1525. **Map E3**
- PETER AND THE STARCATCHERS** Feb. 13-March 8. A young Peter Pan first meets his mates in this prequel to J. M. Barrie's classic story. Potiker Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, 858.550.1010. **Map T20**
- ROOM SERVICE** Feb. 6-March 22. Screwball comedy later adapted into a classic Marx Brothers film. Lamb's Players Theatre, 1142 Orange Ave., Coronado, 619.437.0600. **Map L10**
- SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION** Jan. 10-Feb. 15. The NYC art scene is the backdrop for John Guare's Broadway hit about the dark side of celebrity (adapted into a Will Smith film). Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, 619.23.GLOBE. **Map O17**
- SINCE AFRICA** Jan. 24-March 8. A widow's life is changed when she tries to help a Sudanese "Lost Boy." Arena Stage at Copley Auditorium, Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, 619.23.GLOBE. **Map Q17**
- XANADU** Through Dec. 31. A magical musical of a Greek muse, a struggling artist and a roller disco. Mandell Weiss Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, 858.550.1010. **Map T20**

SAN DIEGO INTERNATIONAL TIMES

January 16, 2009 YU YU

"Since Africa" 「シンス アフリカ」

スーダンからの移民青年と裕福なアメリカ人母娘の交流



Since Africa /
The Globe Theatres

⑤&⑥ シカゴ在住の脚本家ミア・マッカローによる戯曲。1980年代からのスーダンの内乱で、殺戮と飢餓を逃れた避難民を救済するプログラム「Lost Boys of Sudan」が推進され、多くの子供たちが渡米した。本作品は「ロスト・ボーイ」の視点から、現代アメリカの文化、人種対立、宗教観などを捕らえ、愛する家族を失った母娘の交流を描く。

① THE GLOBE THEATRES (Old Globe Theatre), 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park / 619-239-2255 (T)。期間—1/24(土)~3/8(日)。上演—火・水曜：7pm、木・金曜：8pm、土曜：2pm & 8pm、日曜：2pm & 7pm。チケット—\$48 ~ \$59。http://www.oldglobe.org

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