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"—wisened and unspeaking, dancing and prowling and smiling intractable spirt guide smiles.

What she means to each of these people is not always clear, but what she means to the play — raw 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 performance: the Globe production of Nina McCallum’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.

Still, more than the usual sense, this play revolves around his character, Ater (pronounced ah/TIR). “Since Africa” sometimes feels like a round, half-formed concept, a fleeting but effective device endlessly circling some firm conviction.

At least they’re worthy ideas. McCallum 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 Moebeo Performing Arts Co., mounted the play’s local premiere for her company at Diversionary 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 31, he has landed a world away from his shattered home, as a refugee in Chicago.

The wealthy, widowed and determinedly serene Diane (Linda Stirling) 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: Kwota Stage at the San Diego Museum of Art, Copsey Auditorium.
Tickets: $39-$59
Phone: (619) 234-5623
Online: TheOldGlobe.org

And, she has a Western dilettante’s romanticized love for Africa, made bitter sweet 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 dearly calls "Diane’s Den of Denial." Also in the mix is Reggie Hudson (Willie C. Carpenter), the evangelizing church deacon who’s tending to Ater and other refugees, and who finds himself casing with the prickly Linda.

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

The people she watches over have all 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 rhythm 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
North County Times

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

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

Suelo'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 Cupola in-the-round auditorium), Suelo is able to expand her vision, but still retain the magic that marked her earlier effort.

The most notable change is the recurring of the play's central role. "Since Africa" is the story of Ater, a Sudanese refugee's efforts to assimilate into American culture. Suelo cast an actual former "Lost Boy" Alepho Deng, as Ater and though his acting skills were limited, he lent an authenticity to the role. Werner 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 rituals, and the meaning of home and family.

Helping Ater adjust are Diane, a sheltered CO'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 customary prejudice and her disdain for Christianity and the missionary movement.

Each character in "Since Africa" is searching for identity, 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 in 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' quests frequently connect in clashes of misunderstanding, ignorance and prejudice. The fragile bridge between the characters is a spirit character known as The Natives One — ballistically danced by Kristin D. Carpenter.

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

Suelo'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 two hours and 30 minutes).

Nick Fouche'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.
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 feet), and sever all connections with her past. Diane is in such deep denial, her daughter says, she can't decide whether to pack her husband's ashes.

After that's also in denial. But his is a protective shield. Without it, a therapist says, he's so traumatized he might cease to function. After 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.

Bucking dogs awake: Ater is not mourning. His village was under attack. He heard screams, then watched members of his family murdered. Like an estimated 600 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 stone). Ater saw more horror by the time he was eight years old than most soldiers see in multiple tours of duty.

In Mira McClungh's Sense Africa, currently at the Old Globe's second stage, Diane and Donovan (Reggie Hinds) attempt to "rebuild" Ater in Chicago. Both mean well, but their motives become suspect. She supplies financial, the Don-con spiritual, perks. They attempt to Americanize Ater and help him forget his horrors. But neither sees him. Instead each is a Pygmalion: they see what they want him to become. Are they aiding or trying to colonize, Ater?

Sense Africa plays like an extended monologue on John Gunther'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, decolonize, as do Paul and Otho, 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 lay off one's backcountry refuge the connection.

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

The Old Globe made a smart choice in having Sense Africa direct Sense Africa. She's staged the play before, for her McCloud company, and knows its quirks. Aided by Jason Bieber, whose lighting shifts from blue to blue and orange Sudanese patterns on gold Chicago interior to a flash, and Paul Peterson's excellent sounds (Dinka chants, drummers that interview people), Naake weaves an arresting mystery throughout.

Linda Gehringer's unflinched to push Diane a few clicks past likability (she really wants to help Ater), which gives her performance, and Diane's metamorphosis, an aesthetic ring. Willie C. Carpenter (an memorable in the Globe's Two Trains Running as the homeless man who wanted his "baa"/"baa") does a noble turn. His Deacon gains unexpected wisdom as he speculates about his roots. Werner Miller's Ater and Ashley Clements's young Sue add dimension to slender roles and become perplexed by what others take for granted.

Sense Africa pleads, at times, but also offers payoffs, especially in its critique of intentions. Kristen D. Carpenter contributes an ongoing payoff. She plays the Nameless One, a man comes to life, who dances with vigor and joy. She could be Ater's animus (the Jungian "shadow self") or a springy protector watching over the Lost Boys. She helps Ater attain a link between past and present and, in the end, helps the others to build that bridge as well.

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Field Notes
1. Two excellent books on the Lost Boys: Bebe Dong, et al., They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky (Public Affairs); Mark Bitner, The Last Boys of the Sudan (University of Georgia Press).

2. The San Diego Theater Critics Circle recently gave actor Jonathan McMurtry a Lifetime Achievement Award. McMurray, 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. Training with the excellent Sean Sullivan in the title role, McMurray plays "Sir," an old trooper 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.
Of love, home and hypocrisy

by Ann Laxierin

"Love Song"

Have you ever felt the walls were closing in? Beana (Francis Gardelo) seems to have that feeling often. Tonight, for example, as he hunches over, then crouches up in a worn easy chair in his dingy, half-furnished apartment, the walls seem to suddenly 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 throughout Sunday, Feb. 22, at Cygnet's Rolando Theatre, directed by Sean Murray.

Beana is a painfully shy, socially maladjusted total collector, quite the opposite of his larger-than-life sister Joan (Jessa Welton), who storms around, terrifying (or irritating) helpless interns and worrying about Beana. Joan's husband Henry (Daron Scott) seems to have his hands full just trying to keep up with Joan's quickening mood changes.

One night Beana has a mystical encounter with Molly (Jewel John), a self-described "bioterrorist" who seems to have erased his dingy days in search of something worth saving. Feeling that Beana has two outfits, his dimwitted consists of one spoon and one mug, she steals his heart.

Whatever he sees in the glassy, watercolored Beana is a changed man, building like a fist that had nearly discovered language, tossing out long words and complex sentences he'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.

Her goddess and wonder spread to Henry, who confesses to an interesting physiological response when peering at a fruit stand. Even the hard-drinking, non-ovarian Jo falls under Beana's spell, and Henry shares a hilarious "playing hidey" set piece that is one of the evening's highlights.

Moody and John are perfect hosts, their quietly amorous seems to let energy escape, while the concentrated dynamics of Moyle's frame seems always ready to spring into action—or out of the door.

Love can expand horizons, free the

"Stacee Africa"

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

"You know, teach basic survival skills," she explains to daughter Eva (Alythia Clemons), who hosts dramatically at the thought that her mother could teach anything about survival to Alaa, who as a young child witnessed thousands of relatives to escape death.

Such willful misunderstanding is typical of the characters in Miss McCullough's Stacee Africa, which challenges their attitudes and assumptions about identity, family, home and belonging. Stacee Africa plays through March 8 at the San Diego Museum of Art, directed by James S. Copley Auditorium. Sereena Sulkin, who directed the show a few years ago, heads this production as well.

Pastor Reggie Hudson (Willie C. Carpenter), for example, is so defensive 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. (His 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, Alaa is genuinely puzzled by the American penchant for souvenirs collecting. Seeing African maps in Diane's house, he notes, "The American's idea of art is to take something that is not part of your history and hang it on your wall."

More expansive stagings allow Sueko to give The Nameless One (Kristin D. Carpenter), a sort of African avatar, freer rein to express her African-inspired presence. She hoves, 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 Alaa 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 D. Carpenter as "The Nameless One," Warner Miller as "War Child," with Linda Gehringer as "Diane MacKye" set in The Old Globe's production of "Stacee Africa," directed by James S. Copley Auditorium. Shows Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. For tickets, call 619-23-GLOBE or visit www.oldglobe.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 10,000 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 heal old wounds and renew hope.

The Old Globe’s “Since Africa” runs now through March 8 at the Copley Auditorium in the San Diego Museum of Art.

Reggie Hudson’s (Willie C. Carpenter) church has relocated Ater Dhal from Sudan into a small apartment and surrounded volunteer Diane Machtyne (Linda Gehringer) to help protect 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 and Ms. Machtyne’s desire to become stumbling blocks for the boys. 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 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 Reg- gie notices Ater’s failing appreciation about his new home, he butts heads with Diane over her excessive meddling. Meanwhile, Eve forms a friendship with Ater more on his level. They compare her new tattoo, which infuses 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, casting evil to the Mac- thyne home another.

“Since Africa” attempts to blend topics that include separation, alienation and rejudgment. Although the play is not too long and the character’s interactions often feel disjointed, the themes mostly play out. With the aid of wonderful African music and haunting drums, the three lead characters exhibit their losses well, for Eve, the loss of her father, Di-...
San Diego Arts

"Since Africa" at the Old Globe Theatre

Lost Boys Meets Chicago

By Welton Jones

Posted on Fri, Jan 30th, 2009
Last updated Fri, Jan 30th, 2009

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 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.
Since Sueko wisely ignores the出场 excerpt of the play’s most intriguing 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 visibility through every scene, this vision is the glue that makes the play stick in place and finally find an acceptable, resigned peace. Sueko warns the rest of the play at this hearth.

Warner Miller is terrific as Ater, a role that offers plenty of pathos pitfalls. Linda Gelbringer 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 untouched.

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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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: 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.

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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.

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
Lost in Chicago: from Africa to the surreal

Each character in the play is in some way lost and homeless, looking for a better place in society and in larger context of a changed existence. They are looked after by a benevolent Nunzio Nos (Kristin D. Carpenter), a veteran of Alon Aloey American Dance Center, Dance Theatre of Harlem and Martha Grahame School of Contemporary Dance. This music and Paul Peterson's sound design, heavy on drums and African choral singing, efficiently move us from Chicago to Africa to the surreal.

The Globe's space, larger than Evergreen, allows the play to breathe more deeply than before. Nick Foucy is scenic designer; Charlotte Duvall, costume designer; Jason Kiefer, lighting designer; and Claudia Hill-Young, voice and dialect coach.

Though affecting, the script still seems a bit too long, but the viewpoints, difficult confrontations and avoidance of guilt ring true. So does the bewildenment of each lost one. McCollough provides a lovely denouement, poetically staged by Susko, 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 5 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, and 4:30 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 ($25-$50) and more information, call (619) 23-GLOBE.
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
February is the shortest month of the year, but its jam-packed with entertainment. This year’s slate is a proposal of everything from theatre 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. 6 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 “potting zoo.”

Take your Valentine to hear Matthew Garbar 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 Opera’s Silent Piano 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 Ivaldo Jang conducting a program of Mozart’s Don Giovanni, Dvořák and Mahler. Guest pianist Yellen Neufeldman will perform Brahms’ Piano Concerto No. 2. On Feb. 26, Nyla Hemphill will host a symphony-inspired performance of Dvorak’s Serenade for Strings, conducted by Maestro Ling.

The San Diego Opera’s season opening production of “Fidelio,” a thrilling drama dealing with sex, politics, corruption and violence, will resume at the Civic Theater through Feb. 4. Following it on Feb. 14 is “Don Quichote” (not seen here since 1995), with Eunice Bellower on the podium. This new production of the opera starring Francisco Furfirasso as the eponymous knight and Denyce Graves as his idealized Dulcinea will stay put until Feb. 22.

Music lovers have totorial option this month. Trumpet virtuoso Dave Silverman will be joined by classical guitarist Gill Gutierrez, violist Pedro Casti and percussionist Lisa Conte at the California Center for the Arts in Escondido Feb. 5. For a one-night performance of their new show, “El Rocio 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. Moderately Montana’s 13th Annual Spotlight Series continues in three different venues, with programs that include works by Schubert, Debussy and Beethoven, of course. Performances run Feb. 13-15 and include two concerts at the Neucossister Institute.

The Old Globe has two shows on the boards this month. “Six Degrees of Separation,” John Guare’s intriguing contemporary masterpiece about the insane people play, as well as one asinine with celebrities, 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 advice and terms that should fascinate unsure audiences. The Globe’s temporary second stage at the Museum of Art will feature “Since Axiom” 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 Westerner’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 “Kingsman” for a brief run at the theater (Feb. 19-22). “Kingsman” will also be running at the California Center for the Arts in Escondido Feb. 27-March 2.

Don’t miss the March festival of the world’s most celebrated dance company, the Paris Opera Ballet, Feb. 28-March 2.
performing at the Lincoln High School Center for the Arts.
The San Diego Rep’s local premiere of the recent Broadway hit, “Don’t,” will end in San Diego on Feb. 8. The Rep’s own Yuki Sakurai staged “Don’t” for the intimate Lyceum Space. Audiences are left to give their own verdicts in this ethos of excessive, but there’s no doubt that Sheridan Reynolds and Monique Gelburk will make the show a surefire success.
The San Diego Rep will unveil its production of “The Threepenny Opera” Feb. 28 for a month-long run. With music by Bertolt Brecht and lyrics by Bertolt Brecht, this one-of-a-kind musical revolstionary tradition opera and is considered a 50th-century masterpiece. Sam Woldhouse is directing the show, which runs through March 29.
North Coast Repertory Theatre’s “The Dinner” (in production through Feb. 13) offers audiences a behind-the-scenes look at life in the Boston. David Stassen directed this double portrait of an old college buddy touring the provinces of England. On Feb. 13, the troupe will launch the San Diego premiere of “Shipwrecked!” an adventure story by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Donald Margulies. The wild ride of injuries and adventures explores the nature of men and you can see it at NCR’s Solana Beach Theatre until March 16.

SDJJ | what’s goin’ on

Visit the Eickholt’s temporary second stop at the Museum of Art in La Jolla this month.

The Lamb’s Players is moving “Room Service,” a comic gem from the 1930s. The story piece is best known as a film starring the Marx Brothers, but it actually begins with a smash run on Broadway. Now, “Room Service” is ready for a Feb. 6 opening (directed by Robert Sfort). The high-crooks comedy will remain at the Lamb’s Coronado home through March 22.
Moonlight Theatre’s winter home at the Avo Playhouse continues its delightful revival, “Pump Boys and Dinettes,” a peppy mix of Great Ole Opry country tunes and down home comedy. You can catch it at this snapshot of small-town life through Feb. 22.
Lyric Opera is back with a pair of operettas Feb. 15-22. Gilbert & Sullivan’s “Trial By Jury” will be performed with “Il Turco in Italia,” a recent work by J. Sherwood Montgomery. Featuring music by Wicks Evered. This double bill will cap off the troupe’s 50th-anniversary season.
Coppert’s Rubinstein Stage is presenting the Southern California premiere of John Kander’s “Love Song” Feb. 14. The show focuses on an unremarkable man (Eisen), his well-meaning sister and brother-in-law, and a newfound happiness that makes Eisen’s life. “Love Song” is an offbeat and deeply touching comedy about the power of love — in all its forms.
Cygnet’s Old Town Stage is readying the San Diego premiere of “History Boys,” a Tony Award-winning comedy about the senior year of eight high school students in England, as they try to gain admission to Oxford and Cambridge. The show (directed by Sean Murray) explores the anxiety of adolescence, the nature of history and the aim of education. It will begin previews on Feb. 20 and remain in Old Town through March 29.
Balboa Park can catch out the San Diego Ballet’s production of “Roméo et Juliette” at the Lyceum Theatre Feb. 15-17 to put a spring of romance in your Valentine’s Day weekend.
The California Ballet will bring “Coppélia” back to the San Diego Civic Theatre for a brief run Feb. 26-March 1. This full-length ballet about a young girl, her old toymaker and a workaholic full of dancing skills is the perfect choice for audiences of all ages.
The San Diego Museum of Art is showcasing “Emerging Islamic-Iro-Misacul Culture in Transition,” a new exhibit that focuses on the artistic traditions that took place in Islamic-Misacul culture centers in the 10th and 11th centuries. Also on display is “Visible Places: Works by Women on Paper,” a new show called 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 its ongoing exhibition of new acquisitions and long-held strengths of the art museum are on tap as well. “Faces in Asian Art” will be showcased in the Asian Coastal through Feb. 22.
The San Diego Natural History Museum’s “Whim: Imagery by Kenneth Parker” (dated to remain at the oceans through March) showcases Parker’s fine-art photographs of the culture and landscapes of Tibet.
Museums 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 Encinitas branch will present “Signs and Sounds of the Silk Road,” a blend of oriental music and dance, while the Balboa Park museum will feature Mimi Levinson in a demonstration of textile art (Feb. 20) using shibori, a Japanese textile embellishment technique.

“Among the”...
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.


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, 615-544-1000; sdrep.org.


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, 655-749-0505; powayarts.org.
THEATER


"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-$68; (619) 234-5623.
Center Stage

ANNE! 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 Chasing. Paced 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 Cholerton as Ebenezer Scrooge. North Coast Repertory Theatre, 987 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Solana Beach, 858.481.0535. Map X23


LOVE SONG Jan. 15-Feb. 22. Oddball Beane finds unexpected bliss after her apartment is burglarized in this offbeat comedy from John Kolvenbach. Cygnet Theatre, 6663 El Cajon Blvd., College Area, 619.373.5525. 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, Peter Pan. 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, 1563 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, 619.23.GLOBE. Map Q17

SINCE AFRICA Jan. 24-March 8. A widow's life is changed when she tries to help a Sudanese "Lost Boy." Arena Stage at Copely Auditorium, Old Globe, 1563 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
'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
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
‘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 $68. Call (619) 234-5623.
Since Africa
The Old Globe Theatre presents Mia McCallough'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, 619-234-5623.
THURSDAYS, 8 P.M. FRIDAYS, 8 P.M.
SATURDAYS, 2 AND 8 P.M. SUNDAYS, 2 AND 7 P.M. TUESDAYS, 7 P.M. WEDNESDAYS, 7 P.M. THROUGH MARCH 8.
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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, 800-988-4235; artcenter.org.


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.
San Diego Shows Go On

THEATER AS USUALLY, 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.

Locally, however, our organizations seem to be hanging tough, nourished by new groups like the downtown Theatre 900, which is in its second season of presenting classic works. Established companies are building on their success with preperations 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 Kiss Club, coming to the Old Globe. The revenge-on-axes 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 a world premiere of Stephen Schwartz's musicalization of Sholom Aleichem's novel Tevye's Primates, to ordinary occupations, with additional songs by James Taylor and Tony winner Lin-Manuel Miranda. Other distinctive tuners around town include Cygnet's A Kiss, the controversial Stephen Sondheim-John Weidman revue about presidential killers; Broadway/San Diego's offering of A Tribute to the Ladies; and the San Diego Rep staging of Brecht's masterpiece The Threepenny Opera.

In the not-exactly-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 drama upcoming, particularly from smaller companies. Coincidentally or not, three concerns families coping with the losses of children. North Coast Rep does Rabbit Hole, David Lindsay-Abaire's Pulitzer Prize winner about the accidental death of a young boy; Diversionary Theatre offers Carol Lynn Walck's Facing East, in which a Mormon couple deals with the suicide of their gay son; and McEuen Theatre stages Jane Martin's Good Boys, focusing on father of sons, one black and one white, who die in a school shooting.

Laas wrenching is the Globe's premiere of Mark O'ien's Cordelia, spotlighting the beauty queen who married George Wallace and became the powerful first lady of Alabama, and North Coast Rep's Bullets Over Divisadero, Lisa Rose's post-911 Pulitzer finalist about a young African-American woman coming of age as the civil rights movement begins.

Lighter hours are on tap as well. Broadway/San Diego brings in The Drowsy Chaperone, the first new show in a decade by the comedic team of Jason Williams and Joe Sears, taking their Tulsa, Texas, characters to San Diego. Lamb's has again slated the local outing of Leavin' Iowa, a Tim O'ub-Spike Mantone 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 Elice's Peter and the Starcatchers, an adventurous prequel to J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan.

One trend likely to continue in the economic equestrian: coproductions. Musical Theatre, still without a home but always fearless, is doing typically offbeat works: Marisa Yajaga's The Butcher of Babou with Diversionary, and Cardell Hoff's The Labyrinth of Desire with Ion Theatre. Diversionary teamed with the Black Ensemble Theatre on Paul Oakley White's As Much as You Can, a dysfunctional-family comedy centering on a black gay man who brings home his white lover.

In, by Weid, also burlesques its growing reputation with Martin McDonagh's acclaimed dark comedy The Cripple of Inishmaan.
THEATER


Peter and the Stark catchers, Feb. 12-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.


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 Denny McGuire. 6 p.m. $25, $40.


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"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

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、多くの子供たちが遅来した。

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、宗教観などを描き、愛する家族を失った母娘の交流を描く。

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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