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DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER ON TOUR

Presents its 2008-2009 National Touring Production

John Steptoe's

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters

Adapted for the stage by Karen Abbott

When a great African king desires a wife, the most perfect maidens in the land are invited to meet him. Dallas Children's Theater proudly presents John Steptoe's, MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS, a gorgeous Caldecott Award winning Cinderella tale touring throughout the United States from September 2008 through May 2009.

DCT's Executive Artistic Director and director of the play, Robyn Flatt, states, "This wonderful folktale celebrates virtue and kindness of the heart. Its ethical lesson is simple yet powerful: 'as you sow so shall you reap', or as a hungry beggar in the play says, 'pretty is as pretty does'."

A favorite among children and adults, this African story from Zimbabwe was inspired by a folktale collected by G.M. Theal, and published in 1895 in his book, "Kaffir Folktales". Award winning children's author/illustrator John Steptoe had always focused on the African American experience in his work, but MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS required him to research African history and culture for the first time. It was published in 1987, and was acknowledged by reviewers and critics as a breakthrough because it inspires African American children to respect their ancestral origins. Mr. Steptoe hoped that his books would help all young people to take pride in who they are.

Every culture has its rendition of the Cinderella story, but this one's notion of "beauty" is more than skin deep. Mufaro's pride and joy, two daughters named Nyasha and Manyara, have very different dispositions. The names of the characters are from the Shona language: Mufaro (moo-FAR-oh) means "happy man", Nyasha (nee-AH-sha) means "mercy" and Manyara (mahn-YAR-ah) means "ashamed". Nyasha, the Cinderella character, is beautiful on the inside and out. With energy and color the story is told through clear narration, African dance, drumming and song, as well as a splash of audience participation. Playwright Karen Abbot has carefully drawn out each important moral point, and children will easily follow along.

MORE

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Mufaro, a dignified and caring African villager, has two beautiful daughters. When he leaves for the hunt and the sisters are alone, Manyara is always angry, while Nyasha is positive and kind. Chenzira, a messenger, brings word that the Great King is inviting all of the “Most Worthy and Beautiful Daughters in the Land to appear before him” so that he might choose his Queen. Mufaro is very pleased that both of his daughters should be selected and agrees to accompany them at sunrise. That night, Manyara, believing herself better and prettier than her sister, sets out alone so that she can be presented to the king first. What will happen to each girl as she responds to hooting owls, enchanted trees laughing and the other strange beings she encounters along the way?

Don’t miss the colorful flora and fauna of the stunning Zimbabwe region. With traditional chanting and African song, come celebrate a rich and colorful culture along with goodness, generosity and love!

Most enjoyed by ages six through twelve or grades one through seven.

DALLAS CHILDREN’S THEATER, ROSEWOOD CENTER FOR FAMILY ARTS
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