

Desert Stages Theatre ready for 'Ragtime'

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Staff report

Scottsdale Desert Stages Theatre presents "Ragtime," Oct. 9-Nov. 1, the turn-of-the-century tale of three families from different worlds who collide during an age of industrial enterprise and societal shifts.

The musical brings the year 1906 to life through a prosperous family, an immigrant father and daughter and a black musician.

"Ragtime" comes fresh off DST's critically acclaimed "Jekyll & Hyde."

In addition, a special "Ragtime" performance Nov. 6, benefits Scottsdale Desert Stages Theatre and the American Diabetes Association in "A Night of American Hope." Tickets are \$150 through DST box office, 480-483-1664. A fine wine and food reception sponsored by Optima CamelView Village precedes the 8 p.m. show at Optima CamelView. Other sponsors include Posh Improvisational Cuisine restaurant, Prestige Wines and Desert Parking. A dessert reception follows the show in the DST lobby.

Among "Ragtime" cast highlights is Goodyear resident, actor Miguel Jackson, who plays the pivotal role of Coalhouse Walker Jr. and makes his Phoenix theater debut since moving here from Canada. Elizabeth Reeves stars as Mother. Mesa veteran performer Reeves has starred in "Smokey Joe's Café" and "The Taffetas," with other credits as diverse as a recent musical performance during High Mass at the Vatican for Pope Benedict XVI at St. Peter's Basilica, among others.

Tickets for "Ragtime" are \$22 in advance by phone, 480-483-1664; or \$25 day of performance at Desert Stages box office, 4720 N. Scottsdale Road, north side of Scottsdale Fashion Square, next to Coco's restaurant. "Ragtime" performances are 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sundays. In anticipation of another blockbuster, DST has added Saturday matinees for the show, which will be 2 p.m. Oct. 17, 24 and 31.

Scottsdale Desert Stages Theatre is a nonprofit organization that produces live, innovative theatrical entertainment, led by co-founder and executive director Laurie Cullity; business manager and cofounder Joan Thompson; and artistic director Terry Helland. Included in each DST season are children's productions of original scripts, musical scores and lyrics by co-founder Gerry Cullity, whose work is still relished five years after his death. Upcoming for the Children's Theatre in Cullity Hall is Cullity's original adaptation of "The Snow Queen," Nov. 20-Dec. 20. And in DST's intimate Actor's Café is "Arsenic and Old Lace" Nov. 6-Jan. 10.

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Miguel Jackson, top left, who plays Coalhouse Walker Jr. in Scottsdale Desert Stages' production of "Ragtime," is pictured with Myles Vann (part of the Ragtime ensemble) Mitchell Vantrease (Matthew Henson) and Matrivus Avent (Booker T. Washington).

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