



ENTERTAINMENT



The Spinners still shines

DIRECTLINE By Boy Abunda (The Philippine Star) Updated March 10, 2010 12:00 AM



The group, hailed for its classic sound, has performed pop and R&B hits

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Gone were those days when wise men would warn about the Ides of March because today March is a hot, merry month when students mark the culmination of years of hard work. March is "graduation" month. And even if it's a happy occasion, Graduation Day almost always comes with tears or at the very least, a sigh. Students get emotional because as a new chapter in their life begins, they leave behind a lot of memories.

One of the things that brings on the nostalgia is music. It is true that many of us have a soundtrack to both happy and sad moments in our lives. And whether or not it's been a "century" since we marched onstage to claim that hard-earned diploma, once we hear the music, were suddenly transported to our student days and the fun and foibles that went with it.

No wonder then that people look forward to The Spinners music. Although it's likely that people who can relate to the group's music have long moved on from their days in school, it's always a pleasure to revisit

not only yesterday but the music as well. The Spinners, after all, has a vast discography spanning two decades.

Throughout the years (beginning 1972), The Spinners has charted no less than 18 times in the US alone, putting hits on the pop and R&B charts such as *Rubberband Man*, *Could It Be I'm Falling In Love*, *It's A Shame*, *Working My Way Back To You*, *I Just Want To Be With You*, and many more.

The Spinners was so successful during its prime, the group was nominated six times at the Grammys. Eventually, the group was given its own star on the Hollywood "Walk of Fame."

One of its most popular songs is a collaboration with Dionne Warwick, *Then Came You*. It became Warwick and The Spinners' first ever single to reach No. 1 on the *Billboard Hot 100* and became her highest-charting R&B record reaching No. 2 on that chart.

The Spinners is one of few groups that can boast of four lead singers. Nowadays, the group tours with original members Bobbie Smith and Henry Farmbrough, along with lead singer Charlton Washington, Jessie Peck, Marvin Taylor and a soul-infused five-piece band.

The group may have been around but the freshness of their performance still shines. Music critics all over the world hail the band's classic sound and their songs' universal appeal. They say those who have watched The Spinners' shows swear that dancing and singing along to the group's biggest hits during the performance is inevitable.

Other songs The Spinners is known for are *One Of A Kind (Love Affair)*, *I'll Be Around*, *It's A Shame*, *Ghetto Child*, *Mighty Love*, *I Don't Want To Lose You*, *Sadie*, *I'll Always Love You*, *So Far Away*, *I Love The Music*, *Games People Play* and *Cupid*.

The Spinners received a Black Gold Award from Dick Clark for their many achievements in the music industry.

Comedic alliance of humans and puppets

Atlantis Productions brings back Broadway's hit Tony Award-winning musical *Avenue Q* to Manila from March 12 to 27 at Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati.

It premiered in Manila in 2007 and has had three sold-out runs since then plus a hit run in Singapore's Esplanade Theatre in 2008.

Avenue Q is the hilarious and heartfelt story of a bright-eyed college grad who comes to New York with big dreams and little money. He can only afford to live on Avenue Q but — good news! — his neighbors turn out to be a remarkably funny bunch of characters (and monsters!).

Described as a cross between *Sesame Street* and *Rent* and performed by an unholy comedic alliance of humans and puppets, *Avenue Q* was the winner of the 2004 Tony award for Best New Musical, Best Book of a Musical and Best Original Score. Featured in the cast are Rachel Alejandro, Felix Rivera, Aiza Seguerra, Frenchie Dy, Thea Tadiar and Joel Trinidad. Joining them for the first time is Calvin Millado.

Avenue Q, with music and lyrics by Jeff Marx and Robert Lopez and a book by Jeff Whitty, is directed by Bobby Garcia and Chari Arespacochaga and has set design by Mio Infante, lighting design by Jonsy Reyes and puppet design by Samuel Fuentes based on the original Broadway designs of Rick Lyons. Due to full puppet nudity, parental discretion is advised.

Tickets are on sale now. For details, call Atlantis Productions at 892-7078 or 840-1187.

Russian filmfest at CCP

A festival of Russian films will be held at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) on March 16 to 20. The event is a presentation of Mosfilm Studios, Russia's biggest filmmaker, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Russian Federation, Film Development Council of the Philippines, CCP and Philippines-Russia Friendship Society. Five classical and contemporary films will be screened like *Ward No. 6*, *Vanished Empire*, *The Star*, *Mirror* and *Agony*.

The Russian Film Festival will begin on March 16 with the special invitational screening at the CCP Little Theater of *Ward No. 6* based on the story by Anton Chekhov. The film is Russia's official entry for The Best Foreign Language Film of The American Academy Oscar Awards. Karen Shakhnazarov, director general and chairman of the Board of Mosfilm Studios, has won the Best Film Director award at the National Golden Eagle Award 2010 (Moscow). Vladimir Ilyin (Dr. Ragin) won the Best Male Actor award for this movie at the 31st Moscow International Film Festival. *Ward No. 6* has won several awards in international film festivals around the world.

Free regular film screenings will be held at CCP Dream Theater on March 17 to 20. The filmfest will also be brought to Cebu at a later date. For details, call CCP Film Division at tel. no. 832-1125 loc. 1705.

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