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*The Magic of Motown:
The Musical!*

&

*Deciphering Samita
Sinha!*

&

*A Six-Hour Sojourn Into
Sorrow With Ragnar
Kjartansson!*

Feature
story:
The
REAL
Cost Of
Fame!



WELCOME/ CONTENTS **FALL 2014**

Motor City Musical

Broadway cast travels back through Berry Gordy's assembly line of rhythm, blues, soul, and funk in praise of the mighty empire of Motown.

Marrakesh Maestro

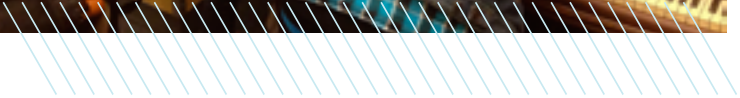
Hassan Makmoun and his international band meld the traditional sounds of his native Morocco with a contemporary groove.

Cipher Complete

Performance artist/ vocalist Samita Sinha creates a new language by weaving rhythms and a pastiche of phonetics on stage.

Sorrow In Repetition

Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson turns the concept of the encore into a six-hour performance piece with the help of the band The National.



We extend our most **sincere** thanks to all the parents, family members, friends, teachers, and **Arts Connection** staff for your unyielding support! Without **you**, none of this would be possible!



SAMITA SINHA'S CIPHER



@ The Kitchen
512 West 19th
Street

October 31, 2014

Beat Boxes, Mumbling Melodies, and Performance Art

The scene first opens with a dark and ominous feel, the setting a dark room that could leave you wondering and scared for quite some time. At this point, I wasn't sure what I had expected, with the introduction very brief and vague, I had thought of this production to be a group of people singing with shallow meanings inscribed right under hooks and curves of letters. After a short while when the lights had been shut,

there's a quiet---and in my opinion---hesitant voice that marks the opening. What I wasn't expecting was a one man show, and until halfway in, I was very sure on the idea that this performance would include at least more than one performer.

And as sound begins to fill the empty space, her voice gradually increasing in volume and intensity throughout the performance, I had begun to grow more accompanied and comfortable with her words though at the same time completely lost. Each vowel and pronunciation made no sense to me, every sentence a mindless jumble, but undeniably, it was still intriguing. And because I was trying so hard to understand, her songs had become something of a puzzle, open to interpretation with only her tone and gestures to help me get anywhere.

New instruments calls for different atmospheres, each drum and tap conveying unique, subtle, amorphous messages that proved to be a challenge for the viewers. Her voice became strong, more loud, powerful, as minutes passed by, and the room was no longer subdued with pitch black. Each movement, expression, and word that came out was powerful, skimming with endless possibilities of what on earth was she saying. Honestly, this performance had left me dumbfounded, amazed, and dazed, surpassing my expectations by a far stretch.

-Joan Sit

On Friday, October 31st we went to a performance held at The Kitchen by Samita Sinha: Cipher. I thought this performance was nothing like I'd ever seen before. I felt that the woman was trying to speak to us through a different language by conveying it through intonation of her voice and nostalgic movements. The stillness of the room made her dance feel palpable. It felt like we could understand what she meant.

At first, I thought the performance was mundane, but then I was dumbfounded when she made cooling sounds while doing split. I didn't know that this form of art existed. The loops of sound she used with various instruments were dynamic in range. As the performance went on, it was staggeringly more and more unpredictable. What were her decisions behind costumes, movements, and lyrics?

Who does she get her inspiration from? How did she know she wanted to pursue this kind of art form? What kind of vocal techniques were used in this performance? I think she intentionally ended her performance with a cliff hanger because no one knew what the message was that she was trying to get across. Everyone had their eyes glued on to her to see if she would conjure any clues or imagery behind her statement.

I liked how she made her performance stand out. I didn't know it was going to be such an intimate and mysterious performance. I felt overwhelmed and curious as the performance went on. How does she come up with ideas and theories that make us all wonder? Also, the use of her instrumentation added a feeling that she was not the only one on that stage. I think in the end, she finally found peace within herself after a long journey, but the longing to find out who she really is, is what she's still searching for.

-Marin Fialla

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The fall of 2014 was quite a mixed bag. It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom; it was the age of foolishness. We witnessed the precocious philosophical and musical evolution of Willow and Jaden Smith. We witnessed the peculiar appointment of a country pop star as New York City's official ambassador. We also witnessed the unfortunate loss of life, with the

resulting widespread social unrest causing us to critically question our status as a "post-race America." And we discussed it all within the paradigm of music. We talked about how music shapes our lives, adds dimension and color, and recycles nostalgia. We also discussed how music forges new ground, forces us to reflect, and inspires social change. Throughout this process, we wrote about

our collective and individual experiences. From Broadway to Brooklyn, we traversed the city in search of the perfect beat. Hunting high and low, we left no stone unturned as we rediscovered Motown and exhausted ourselves at a six-hour concert video screening. We experienced symphonies and Sumita Sinha's melodic mumbles. Through it all, we broadened our horizons and gained a new

perspective on how to interpret and critique the sounds of the city. But most of all, we learned that music is a universal language that simply requires that you first be open and willing to listen and take in the fullness of the splendor and/or discordance that it has to offer.

- Rico Washington

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Iconapop

The Fame Monster by Daniel Barberena

The chanting of your name seeps through the walls of your dressing room. As you walk closer to the stage it gets louder; the energy gets higher. The stage is a step away and the crowd can no longer be tamed. You step out into the light and cheers explode. This particular experience is relatively new and specific to performers of our time, but musicians have had similar experiences since the beginning of history.

Music is one of the oldest inventions of man, and musicians themselves have been respected since its origin. In cultures all around the world, music is a universal quality that is often highly regarded and praised. In modern American culture, music is held in extremely high esteem; fusing into our everyday lives. Music has become so popular in America that musicians are often held to a status akin to kings; reigning over their fans with absolute power, or at least they do at first.

Unfortunately, as the Internet continues to increase the accessibility of pirate music to potential customers, the power that musicians once held over their fan base seems to be diminishing. Many blame this effect on the music industry, claiming that the commercialization of music by the record labels have caused an increase in wildcat bands and artists that merely produce one-hit wonders. This constant turnout of generic music from any genre

makes it possible for anybody able to discover the elements of the assembly line of the current trend to reach top charts, riches, and fame, but for how long? The Billboard Hot 100, the American music industry standard record chart for singles, has had over 20 number-one singles in the past two years. In the coming years, that number of number-one singles per year is expected to rise due to the demand and nature of listeners, but that's not the only reason.

Music artists today just don't seem to have the knack for maintaining the spotlight. Being a star is a job, just like anything else. If you don't work hard at it, you will be relieved of your position. Musicians like to opt for the easy way out and make excuses about not being able to succeed due to the technological crisis, but that argument is invalid. For over half a century, artists have fallen victim to the "one-hit wonder" phenomenon.

M.C. Hammer is the epitome of this tragic tale of rise and fall from fame. In a time where music pirating was unheard of, Hammer lost his reign because of overzealous spending, lack of creative material, and bad judgement. Once a name synonymous with everything hip-hop, Hammer has become the archetypal celebrity bankruptcy story. Technology has merely accelerated the process.

There are also the few that have managed to maintain their thrones. Titans like Jay-Z, Beyoncé, Eminem, etc. therefore the accomplishment is possible, but these stars are few and far between. However, there is a consistency between these artists. Despite all their glory and fame, they still seem to be as hungry for success as the ambitions of others wane.



Billboard Magazine is one method of measuring a recording artist's success.

“Being a star is a job, just like anything else. If you don't work hard at it, you will be relieved of your position.”



Walking into the venue, little children ran passed me onto a mat. I wondered to myself if I was in the right place so I stepped outside and looked at the sign again. It was definitely the right place. Inside the lights were dimmed with a blue and yellow tint producing a very comfortable and laid back environment. People walked in and out freely as children walked up to stage and danced.

Definitely a family friendly area which made the performance even more enjoyable in my opinion. Looking around, I saw people tapping their feet and swaying to the beat. Some were even brave enough to get up and start dancing, but who could blame them. On stage, the performers stood out in their traditional garments. The detail and vibrant colors were beautiful and added to the mood and music.

The instruments were worn and old making it seem as though we were family and friends that they were playin music for, the opposite of uptight. They interacted with the audience bring them up on stage and teaching them various rhythms and beats to clap or stomp along. As a musician, I was intrigued by the complex rhythms and beats. Everything was entwined together producing a wonderful sound as the music either got faster or slower.

- Mona Dinal

Starting as a very young performer, Hassan Hakmoun is one of the most popular New York City based moroccan musicians. He is now 50 years old. Hakmoun made his debut at Lincoln Center in 1987. In 2002 Hakmoun released an album entitled "The Gift," which featured the song "This Gift," a duet with Grammy winning singer-songwriter, Paula Cole. He recently played an amazing show at the David Rubenstein Atrium at Lincoln Center.

The show very entertaining. Hassan Hakmoun played music that isn't very popular in New York, and everyone seemed to enjoy it. The music was based almost entirely on percussion instruments like djembes. The drums kept a lively beat that had many people getting out of their seats and dancing.

This was a small, short show that many parents attended with their children. It seemed both the children and their parents found it very entertaining. Hassan Hakmoun played music that isn't very popular in New York, and everyone clearly enjoyed it. The music was based almost entirely on the percussion instruments such as djembes. The drums kept a lively beat that had many people getting out of their seats and dancing.

Hakmoun did an exceptional job of interacting with the audience. He even stopped in between two songs and take questions from members of the audience. But he only took one question from someone older than the age of 8. All of the rest were questions from young children. It is very understandable that this was to keep the children interested, because they

tend to have a short attention span. However, it would make sense to take more questions so that some people actually learn something besides what they already know. Overall this was a great performance, and a nice way to spend a rainy Saturday afternoon. The danceable music really caused you to forget about the depressing weather. People of all ages had a great time and were given an opportunity to dance and express themselves freely.

- Elijah Judah

Getting to Lincoln Center was not a problem but finding where the Rubenstein Atrium was like looking for a needle in a haystack. After being confused and lost for 20 minutes, walking around Lincoln Center, I found myself at the Atrium. The warm air was so nice against my freezing face that I hadn't notice the interior. The tall ceiling was adorned with holes that held light bulbs while the wall to my right was occupied by a large real, plant structure. Being in the crowded place with the screaming kids and the exited adults made me groan.

I had expected a quieter environment but got the opposite. The chairs were all full and after walking through the scarce chairs I found myself without a seat, standing. After standing for a couple of minutes a nice French couple asked me if I wanted the seat next to them and I gladly accepted. Finally comfortable I stared at the time and the show was already 30 minutes late. The couple next to me said they had been waiting for a while and the wait was because of technical difficulties.

The lights did not dim, for the show to start but the show began when a middle-aged women began to speak. When Hassan Hakmoun started to perform with the three other people. Their instruments and the sound they made mystified me. The performer that held my attention was not Hassan himself but the man with the strange hat, castanets

and big goofy smile. The music seemed dancy, fun and energetic; the Hassan's voice was melodic and high pitched. I could not understand any of the lyrics but found out that all the music was based on ceremony music. After a brief Q and A the audience and I learned about the music that Hassan makes. He chose to do the music he does today because of a childhood miracle, his sister got burned and miraculously got healed from a ceremony with the type of music he plays. As the concert finished I was a little disappointed because even after trying very hard to distinguish each piece Hassan presented, they still all sounded the same. The music was always fast then ended by getting faster and faster until they all stopped playing or only the guitar remained. Since I could not understand the words it was hard for me to understand what story was behind it. All in all the setting was interesting and so were the instruments but the music held no difference to me and got a bit boring.

- Nastaja Stopovic



@ David
Rubenstein Atrium at
Lincoln Center -
Broadway between
62nd and 63rd
Streets

Dec. 6, 2014

HASSAN HAKMOUN

A CMOM PERFORM 'N' CREATE DATE



@ Lunt Fontanne
Theatre
205 West 46th
Street

Nov. 21, 2014

MOTOWN: THE MUSICAL!

Motown the Musical has to be one of the most spectacular Broadway shows of all time. It allowed the audience to learn about everyone's favorite music legends such as Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, and more. Not only did it provide a musical history education, but it allowed a chance for us to dance and sing along to the songs that changed music forever. The cast members blew everyone away. Each one of them was extremely talented and made the acting and singing look fun and easy. Especially Raymond Luke Jr., who played a young Michael Jackson he was an exceptional performer who killed it with his funky dance moves and incredible voice.

The Lunt-Fontanne theater is an enormous theater and was beautifully built. There were multiple chandeliers that did an excellent job of lighting up the entire theater. This helped to set a good mood for the audience before went home unable to explain how they were feeling about this extraordinary work of art. The Audience was extremely diverse. There were many different people of many different ethnicities attending a show that featured music that brought people of different races together. This is always an amazing thing to see, it is also a good way to know just how good the music is.

The performance began with a comical, yet impressive sing-off between the Temptations and the Four Tops. This was an effective way of letting the audience know that they will be amazed. What followed was just as good, if not better. Every part of the musical, both singing and acting was outstanding.

The small acting portions of the show helped to give the audience an idea of the personality of the artists. There were also many little sprinkles of comedy in the play here and there that helped to keep the audience interested. This wasn't necessary, but it did make the show

much better. The way the story was told through music was fascinating. It was visible what the song had to do with what was going on in the world at the time. It shows how much the music industry and music itself has changed since then, and how many of today's most popular artists were influenced by Motown legends.

- Elijah Judah

The show seems to bring back an era of music that just isn't heard anymore; it showcases the soul music of the 1960s and on. Motown The Musical is a show about the rise of Berry Gordy and the Motown music label in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The music featured is some of the real music from that time, including the Jackson Five's "ABC". This show features Josh Tower as Berry Gordy, Krystal Joy Brown as Diana Ross, Bryan Terrell Clark as Marvin Gaye and Nathaniel Cullors as a young Berry Gordy, Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder.

The acting is quite believable, as well as the musical talent of the main parts. Nathaniel Cullors was especially good in his role of a young Michael Jackson. He was a favorite with the audience, who cheered and applauded greatly every song he did. Krystal Joy Brown (Diana Ross) was also phenomenal in both her acting and singing.

In the middle of one of her songs, Krystal Joy Brown stopped and invited people from the audience up to sing. I, for one, thought that they were planted there and were going to be amazing singers as well. However they couldn't sing - at all. This detracted from the show in my opinion, although it was a nice interactive thing for the audience.

Other than that, the music was excellent. They used songs written by those artists, which really brought a lot to the show. Although the main singers were amazing, I thought that the background singers could have been casted better. For example, the other two singers in the Supremes went clearly flat in more than a few places. That was perhaps the only thing that kept me from visualizing that it was actually Diana Ross and the Supremes playing. This also happened with some of the other background singers. Overall, it was an excellent and inspiring performance, and definitely worth seeing.

- Memphis Goodman

You enter the palace like theatre, the lights get dimmed and you are automatically drawn in with the upbeat song that is first sung. 2 groups sang different songs like a battle; but it was a mash-up battle. Motown takes you back in time to 1959, the time of Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder and the Jackson 5. It follows the life of Berry Gordy the founder of Motown records. Motown records was just a dream to Berry until he made it a reality. They start with a little acting on how he told his family that he wanted to open up Motown records.

“Motown, the musical on Broadway, was a toe tapping, hip swinging and soul moving performance.”

Motown, the musical on Broadway, was a toe tapping, hip swinging and soul moving performance. Motown's location may be hard to get to because it is on Broadway but it is a perfect show to see when you want to feel happy. Standing on line to go into the theater with the cold winter for company, is harsh, but does not last long. The interior is filled with red patterned rugs, beautiful chandeliers, golden painted walls and bars ready to serve drinks. Which is the standard Broadway look, classy, elegant and dramatic.

Getting seated was a bit disappointing because I was sitting all the way in the back of the balcony, in the second to last row, having to strain my already poor eyesight. The entire theater was full and the people walking in came in all different shapes and attire. What I found amusing was that the last row behind me held a white family, possibly Irish, with a man in a kilt, the row in front of me held rambunctious African American women, exited about the show while a group of students in uniform took selfies and talked among each other. The diversity in the room was wonderful and refreshing.

When the show started the Motown sign lit up in a flash of rainbow colors as the lights dimmed. The set was very elaborate, as the scenes flashed by with amazing singers and dancers. When a popular song came on everybody would shout out the lyrics, laughing and remembering when he or she first heard it. Motown is the story of the production company Motown and all the drama it went through. It centers on the owner and songwriter of Motown, Berry Gordy, who also produced and wrote a book about the musical.

As the show progresses we see stars like Diana Ross, Steve Wonder, Michael Jackson and many others when they first came in to the music industry, all played by amazing actors and actresses. One of the best moments was when young Michael Jackson came out on stage with his brothers and performed for the audience, people clapped, screamed and crooned over the cute young boy singing and dancing almost exactly as Michael Jackson did. The men and women in the show hit high notes that wowed the audience and left us speechless, as the dancing made me want to get up and join. The songs were perfectly suited for the performers and to me, they were the best live singers I had heard in this time of auto tuning and lip-syncing. When the last scene occurred and everyone was taking there bows cheers erupted from the seats and people gave them all a standing ovation for a truly wonderful show.

- Nastaja Stepec

They jump into song which automatically draws you in more, the movement, the beat of the song, everything. The first recording artist you encounter was Stevie Wonder and you get a little laugh when The Supremes storm off stage cause Gordy had yet to sign them.

The first recording artist that actually sing are The Supremes after they got signed. They then start to follow Gordy and The Supremes around the world and to the shows. While your following The Supremes they bring up the well known group Jackson 5. They go around with The Supremes. As you're taking the journey with The Supremes, they show you how they went from "The Supremes" to "Diana Ross and The Supremes".

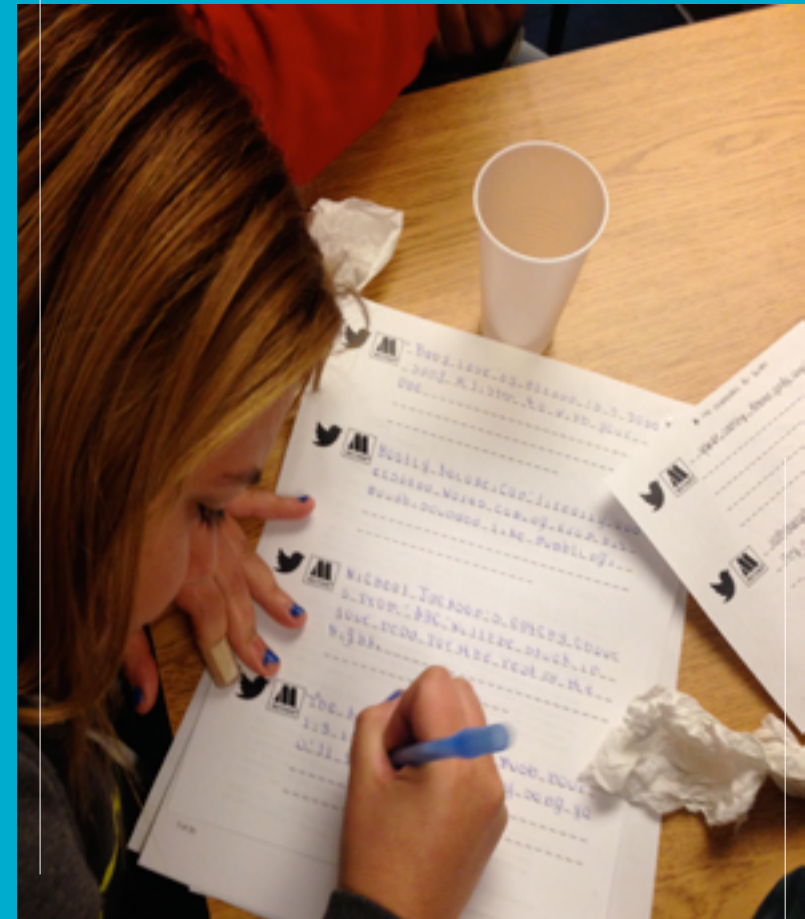
After The Supremes go their separate ways, you see how Berry and Diana's relationship get effected. Berry and Diana remain very close friends, and then you go to Gordy in Motown records as someone breaks the news that Martin Luther King Jr. Had just been killed. They break into a dance arrangement to show how they felt about the situation and how they world was going down in flames. The stage goes black and one spot light shines on Diana Ross (a few years later) she starts singing and gets involved with the audience, picking people to sing with her on stage. I thought that was very creative and kept the audience interested.

The stage goes black one more time and shines as the cast members come out and bow. As they are coming out and bowing they are singing. The lights come on and the wall comes down. Motown the musical is seriously a very eye-catching and keeps the audience interested the whole time. I would most definitely go see it again, and I would recommend you to go to.

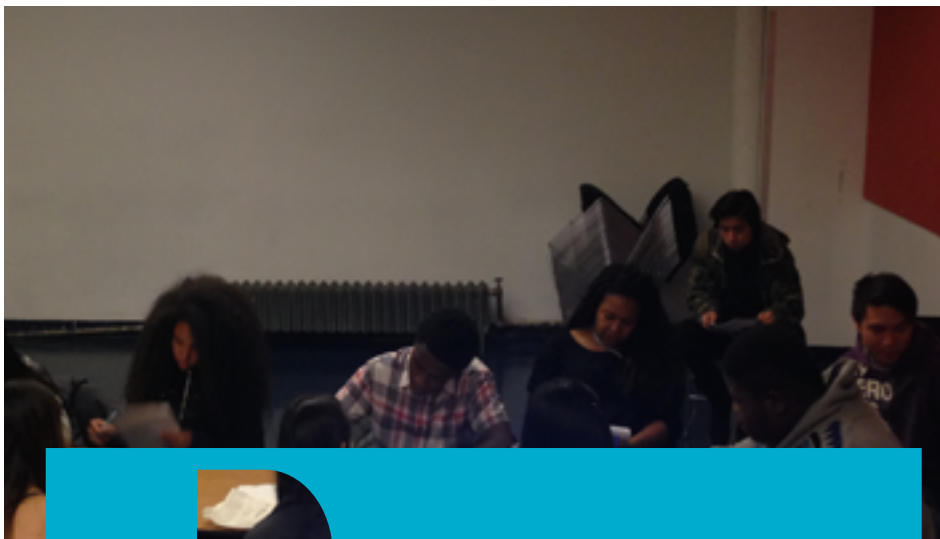
- Amaris Santiago

For starters, I had a pretty good sense of what the show was going to be about as soon as I walked into the lunt-Fontanne Theatre. Our seats were located in the rear mezzanine, all the way in the back, and it was clear how much people were crowded in, especially so on a Friday night. Right after a sing off at the beginning, we are immediately thrown into the plot. Throughout the musical, we follow the life of Brandon Victor Dixon and the creation of Motown. We see Jackson 5, Stevie Wonder, and other hit singers featured with nicely executed interpretations.

The plot is interesting and explicit enough for us to follow along with occasional jokes thrown in for us to loosen up once things are starting to get tense. Motown gives us a pretty good plot of the whole history especially the up and downs. It mixes the times of boring history class with various genres of cynical plots thrown in, probably meant to entertain the audience so they are not just stuck in a boring iteration of a play focused on just history.



Amaris takes
the
Motown Twitter
Challenge!



TRAC MANAGER KEONNA HENDRICK AND TRAC ALUMNI THOMAS CHOI SIT IN ON CLASS AND TEST THEIR SKILLS IN THE MOTOWN TWITTER CHALLENGE!

Despite the upbeat and popular songs that can get the audience chanting and hyped, the plot is somewhat dull, only with small occurrences surprising enough to get us to scoot back to the edge of the seats after sitting back. The play depicts the history of Motown just enough for us to get a good sense of what generally is happening around the company, and half of the play is focused on how Berry actually gets around to making Motown possible. After hiring artists and writing songs for them to perform and hopefully become recognized for, romance is then thrown in hastily.

We get a good sense of Diana Ross' love for "Berry" and if you haven't caught on, it is made evident as soon as Berry delivers the lines, "Since when did you stop calling me Mr. Dixon?" or something similar to those words. Though there are still their up and downs, each debatable, Motown offers a pretty good show where you can kickback and relax. Often, you'll find yourself immersed into the songs and lively performers, obviously having been rehearsed several times to perfection. There is even a small interactive part in the second half of the play, throwing in a subtle twist of mixing the present and the past, very fitting and cleverly thought out.

- Joan Sit

Walking into the theater, the first thing I noticed were the chandeliers. They were just SO MANY of them; I don't think I've seen so many chandeliers in a theater, not that it was a bad thing, it greatly enhanced the elegance and aesthetic quality of the atmosphere. It also reminded me of 'Chandelier' by Sia. Sitting in the second to last row, near the back, I was able to scan the audience, which I noticed was mostly white and mostly young and middle aged adults. After the voice came on from the speaker, the music started, which surprised me because it was on point.

The musical turned out to be quite different than I pictured it to be, which was also due to my first time seeing this musical, at first, I thought this musical would consist of people just singing, but it turns out, there was actually a story line, setting, and plot as well! I was captivated by the background scenery because it seemed to stand out most from the angle at which I looked down on the stage. The swiftness and ease at which the background changed to suit the plot was so graceful; at the school musicals, the background scenery and props don't change as often. The vocal abilities of the performers were astounding. I was especially in awe by how high the male voices could go, as soprano as the soprano 1 female singers in my music class.

The sounds came out so smoothly and their singing was so rich and velvety. I love how the musical as a whole expressed their commitment to treating everyone as family. At one point, Krystal Joy Brown, who played Diana, motioned for a female and male audience member to join her on stage and sing to the crowd. Although the audience members were hesitant, Brown was so welcoming and persisting that it seemed in that moment, that there was no differentiating between performer and audience member, and it seemed like part of the script.

The musical told of the dangers of getting too into fame, as shown when it interfered with the relationship between Diana, lead singer of the Supremes, and Mr. Gordy, the founder of Motown Records. Mr. Gordy significantly shortened his Bahamas vacation with Diana when he kept getting phone calls requiring his presence. It also cautions those who pursue the "employee and boss relationship", as Diana and Gordy did. Overall, I was extremely overwhelmed and fascinated by my first experience with an outside of school musical, especially with Motown!

The performers and to me, they were the best live singers I had heard in this time of auto tuning and lip-syncing. When the last scene occurred and everyone was taking their bows cheers erupted from the seats and people gave them all a standing ovation for a truly wonderful show.

- Mandy Lee

A phenomenal experience of Motown The Musical was presented under the direction of James M. Nederlander and James L. Nederlander. The "get out of your seat and dance" musical was filled with many talented performers such as Josh Tower who played Berry Gordy, Krystal Joy Brown as Diana Ross, Jevon McFerrin as Smokey Robinson, Nik Walker as Marvin Gaye, and many other talented stars. This production was the opposite of ennui. The music was upbeat, set in a major key, and kicked off with some rock to it. The beginning grabbed your attention with the bright lights and eye catching men dressed in sparkling tuxedos.

The mood was set immediately due to the choice of instrumentation, for example drums, electric guitar, and gospel singing. There was a perpetual vibe of a sense of family, connections, and triumph. Many problems were presented as the musical went on. Berry Gordy was at risk by having Motown go bankrupt, but each musical number brought everyone together and narrowed in on achieving goals, instead of moping about your problems.

Musical numbers such as "ABC", "Happy Birthday", "I Want You Back", "Stop in the Name of Love", and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough", are the select songs that really gave the audience something to remember. If you observed them, they cheered and clapped along as the atmosphere and performers suffused their triple threat abilities to give these songs their all. The carefully choreographed dance moves worked to stomp the upbeats out of each song. Even in the dialogue between the actors, you could feel the connection between them by their intonation. It's crucial to convey what you're saying so the meaning makes sense, and the performers did a fine job getting into their characters.

Historically speaking, the musical matched up accurately with the events. For instance, the shooting of Martin Luther King Jr. impacted the tone of the show, which is to be expected. This is the first musical to surround black people in the music industry. Many people have ignored where the roots of truly original music came from, but Motown has enlightened many by bringing together a cast that portrays history's most innovative movement in music.

The quality of talent throughout the cast couldn't be any better. The age range was unique, because having kids on Broadway isn't the norm usually. The actors who played the Jackson Five were harmonizing and supported the main melody for Nathaniel Cullors who played Michael Jackson. However, some of the singers were a bit off in pitch, which slightly detracted from the number. Another feature that created a "family" feeling during the show, was incorporating part of the audience when Diana Ross invited select individuals to come up and sing with her during "Reach Out and Touch". It made us feel closer to the actors and swooned us with the reoccurring theme, message, and rhythm of the song.

Overall, Motown The Musical was an exquisite production that carried out uniquely written numbers that fit each talented actor, dancer, and singer. The historical aspect of black culture brought together the community that we have and to cherish music from where ever, and wherever it's coming from.

- Marin Fialla

On November 21, 2014, I attended the Broadway musical, Motown. It was a spectacular show. As soon as I entered the grand theater I was amazed by the intricate engraved details that covered the walls. It was absolutely beautiful. As we waited for the show to start I looked around and saw a full house implying that Motown probably got good reviews.

When the show started everyone got really quiet and the announcer made the usual speech to turn off all cellular devices and so on. The music started and everyone started to cheer. Throughout the musical they played all the major hits of the Motown days. The audience reacted to each one and started to sing along with the performers. There was great interaction between the audience and the actors, especially the scene with Diana Ross and select audience members.

It was heartwarming and at that moment there was a great connection between everyone in the room. The musical started off with a sing off between The Temptations and the Four Tops. In terms of singing and dancing, I thought they did a great job portraying the time period. The style imitation was as accurate as can be because

of course no two singers can possibly have the same voice. Although, some of the information was out of chronological order giving the audience an idea that some music was written because of certain events that took place.

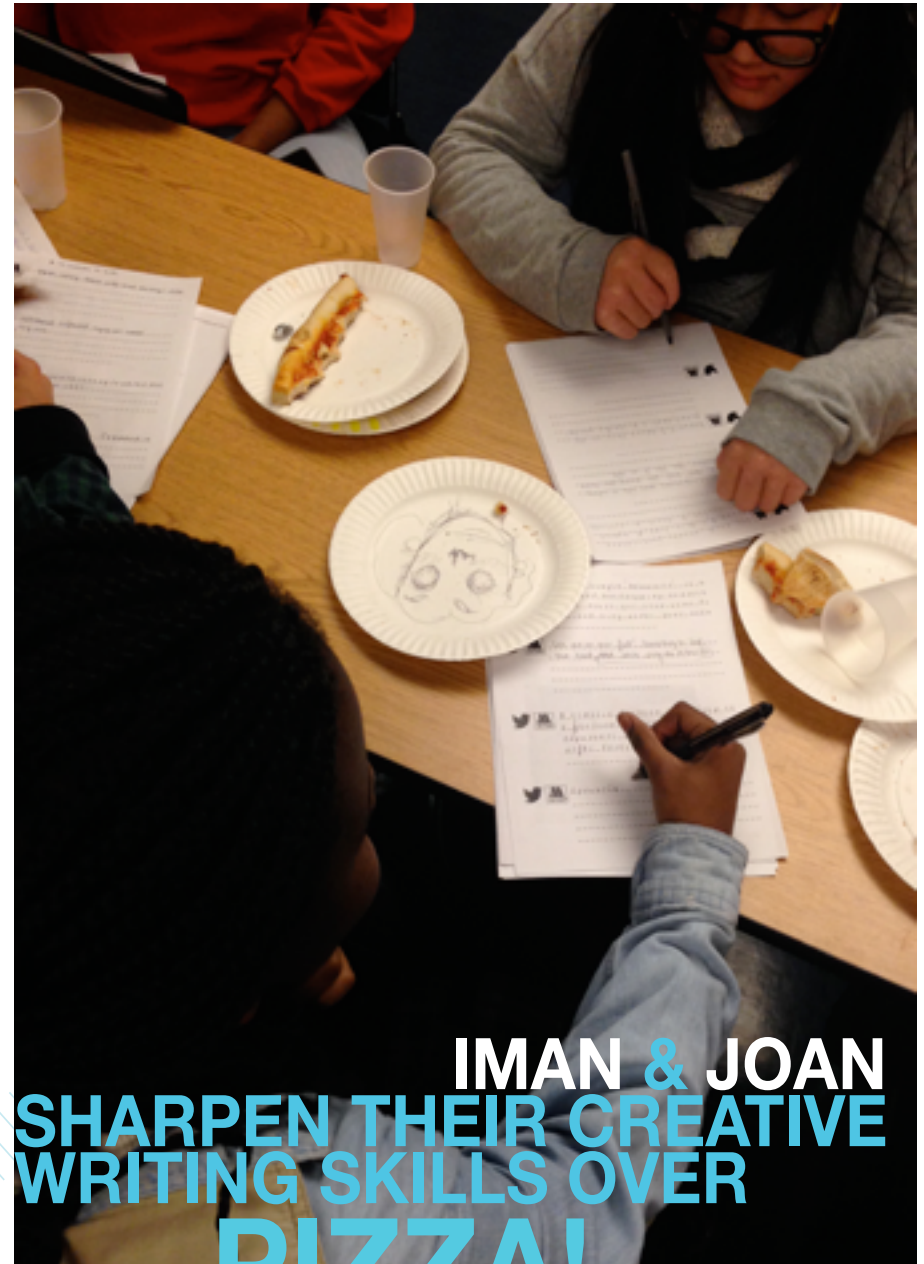
Despite the few incorrect historical scenes, the audience was still rapt by the dazzling costumes and scenery. It started at the end. We were introduced to Berry Gordy when he was near the end of his career. It did not occur to me that we were going to watch a musical called Motown with the storyline revolving around one person, who wasn't a performer but a creator. His life was very hectic but his perseverance gave me hope and proved that hard work dedication and loyalty will get you far.

I would have liked to see more of the characters. I felt like they skimmed past and I didn't always know who was who. They were a jumbled mess in terms of clarity, because everything moved so quickly and the audience didn't have time to digest the information projected to them. The storyline was also a bit hard to follow. A few characters really did an outstanding job in terms of presentation and becoming the actual character. The young boy who played Michael Jackson did an outstanding job and Diana Ross was absolutely fabulous. Overall Motown the Musical was exceptional and I would recommend it to anyone.

- Mona Dinal



"The historical aspect of black culture brought together the community that we have and to cherish music from where ever, and whoever it's coming from. "



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RAGNAR KJARTANSSON AND THE NATIONAL A LOT OF SORROW



@ Luhring
Augustine Gallery:
Bushwick -
25 Knickerbocker
Ave

Nov. 15, 2014

A Lot of Sorrow by Ragnar Kjartansson and The National was an exceptional piece of visual/electronic/musical artwork. What made this experience so absolutely outstanding was the fact that this band was so incommensurable to other types of music. You had to judge the display more from the perspective of art than music because the song was three minutes long but was repeated multiple times for six hours.

The display was on a very large screen and was in a dark room where there were only two benches, which forced some people to sit or lie down on the ground. This causes the audience to focus on what is going on on the screen and reduces distractions.

One of the most interesting members of the band was the drummer. Every member of the band was wearing a suit, besides the him. He really expressed himself and at the same time did a great job musically. He wore jeans, a bandana and was barefoot. This was very similar to how the music legend, former Beatle, Paul McCartney dressed on the cover of the album, "Abbey Road." What was very impressive was how drummer was playing the same beat for a 6 hour song, yet still kept the same tempo, and did a good job. He never sped up or slowed down.

The presence of the brass instruments was very enjoyable. They added a sense of harmony to such a dark and intense song. This entire band was very creative and passionate about the music that they made. They were all talented and each did their own thing, but the music fit together really well.

The audience seemed to be really enjoying the show. It took them a lot more time to get tired than it did for the people viewing it from the screen. This is because at a live performance, there is a lot more going on,

and it is much more interesting than when watching a video. The audience did seem to get bored after a while, however. But this is obviously because it was a six hour song.

This piece of artwork definitely exposes a whole new perspective to the art of music and the way it is presented. It is definitely not something you would want to watch for a full 6 hours but watching it for about 1 hour is perfectly fine. Just the experience in itself is the reason this was absolutely incredible.

- Elijah Judah

Songs sometimes are pretty repetitive themselves. But imagine six hours of the same song, performed live with only minor and subtle changes to the rhythm. That's what the National did, an American indie rock band formed in Cincinnati, Ohio back in May of 2013. In Luhring Augustine Bushwick, a six hour video gallery is on display, continuously streaming the concert. It is presented on a big screen nearly as wide as the wall behind it in a dark room whose light is only from the illumination of the video.

The show itself is recorded from different angles, giving the viewers multiple perspectives of both the audience and it's members as the show goes on. The three minute and twenty five second song was put on repeat as an endurance experiment, and aside from minor changes, the singers did their best to keep their delivered lines of 'Sorrow' consistent. Of course, I can't imagine how painful it could've been by the end of the six hours, but singers similarly go through long hours of practice so in some way, this might not be as excruciatingly annoying as non- musicians would think of it to be.

Of course, I haven't stayed for the full 6 hours presented, but it was easy to find myself sitting longer than expected, mesmerized by the performance. After the song ends and starts again, it would always be the same words, repeated with grave and dull voices but something always seemed to be different. Whether it was the drums starting the song off or not, each version--tweaked with different notes or instruments--was all similarly successful in it's attempt to convey emotion. The

members themselves already seemed pretty tired and exhausted even when I walked into the room at first; it was easy to catch the fatigue settling on their expressions. Out of a corner, you can see some of the crowd leaving through the door but the majority remained. A woman remained enthusiastic in the front of the crowd, ecstatic when the song ends and even when it begins again for the umpteenth time. I imagine staying for the whole performance would be difficult, but not entirely impossible.

- Joan Sit

I walked into a pitch black room whose entrance was black curtains. It was impossible to find my way out because it was so dark. Luckily, there was a flashing red EXIT sign "god bless or I'd never find my way out. The room felt like a big empty vacuum; there were only 2 wooden benches centered in the barren room. The ceiling was defined by wood panels.

Projected on the screen was a band, The National, playing in a dome like area. The band members, 7 of them, wore black and white. They were all white and middle aged (lead singer was married; I noticed his gold wedding band) and all wore suits; at least one of them wore a bowtie. All of the band members either wore glasses or sunglasses. The background was gray and foggy.

There was a cameraman in back of the drummer and a man, Kjartansson, who gave the band members water and food. The performance seemed casual because the band members ate and drank while performing. At one point, the screen turned blue and a lady walked in and ushered us out due to technical difficulties. When we stepped outside, it was so bright, which was a HUGE contrast to the dark room that it actually hurt to blink. Luckily, we got let back in a few minutes later.

The music was mellow which made sense because they were singing about sorrow and not wanting to get over someone. It ranged in volume and when one of the instruments dropped out, the volume lowered. The music went from upbeat to mellow, but the lead singer's voice stayed constant and monotonous. When the cameraman positioned his camera towards the audience, I noticed that there were occasional instances of people leaving and entering, which showed that there was no agreement that the audience had to stay for the entire 6 hours, which is the duration the band would replay their song. Some of the audience members were sitting, others were standing.

Audience consisted of middle aged and elderly. I noticed an elderly woman with fluffy gray hair in the first row, wearing a red sweater and bobbing her head to the rhythm of the music. As the song started to fade out, a shriek, piercing, echoing noise was produced, and at first I thought it came from one of the instruments, which consisted of electric guitars, a drum, a horn or saxophone, and an electric keyboard, but later on I realized that the noise was actually coming from one of the band members, which was surprising because the sound was serene and opera like, and I didn't expect this sound to come from a man.

What I found odd was that one of the guitarist strummed whole squatting on the floor, which didn't look comfortable. Also, at one point one of the crew members duct taped a white paper with black lettering on down stage right. As time passed, I noticed that the band members didn't look fatigued. In fact, at one point, one of the guitarists really got into the music and started bobbing his head and thrusting his body wildly. It kind of looked like he was having a seizure.

But later on as I read the lyrics, I noticed the connection between the movement of the guitarist and this verse: "Sorrow's my body on the waves." His movements were and accurate depiction of that. This is similar to Jay Z's performance of Picasso Baby at Pace Gallery, which also lasted for 6 hours. Another similarity I noticed is that both Jay Z and The National performed in plain venues. Jay Z performed in an all-white room, while The Nationals performed in a gray room.

Also, in Jay Z's performance venue, there was one wooden bench.

In the room where we saw the replay of The Nationals' performance, there were 2 wooden benches. What do wooden benches signify?? Also, the performance space that The National and Jay Z performed in was in small spaces. "If you're in a smaller venue, it's a bit more intimate. You get to feel the energy of the people", which is the reasoning Jay Z gives for performing in smaller spaces.

- Mandy Lee

The Ragnar Kjartansson and The National had their first showing at Luhring Augustine Bushwick. They sang their three minute and twenty-five second song called A Lot of Sorrow, for six hours. The lead singer, Ragnar Kjartansson has performed in solo exhibitions including New York, Milan, and Vienna. Aaron and Bryce Dessner are two guitarists who are brothers. Other members include Scott on bass and guitar, Bryan Devendorf on drums, and Matt Berninger as a vocalist; all from America.

The performance had a lot of minimalism and was surfeit, yet they expanded our emotions and new poignant view on the song. The camera angles shifted to show a close up of Kjartansson, the guitarists hitting the bottom of their guitar, and the drummer's calm face while he played during the quick breaks. The vocalist mundanely sang very closely to the microphone because he felt nostalgic about someone he had lost. He was hunched over the mic, as if you were leaning over to hear a secret. The band kept a lot of eye contact throughout the performance to keep up the beat and keep the flow going with a soft background tune.

The audience felt a sense of empathy, because the singer reached out through his words. They could connect to everyone, because they all have felt a sense of loss, regret, and morose. Everytime the band restarted their song, the audience cheered them on with eager applause and cheering. The band feeded off their energy and continued the flow. The band was dressed in comfort casual clothes that fit with their smooth vibe.

The place was packed with people capturing the performance. Each member popped out because of the white dome backdrop. Their personalities also drew you in with their small walks in place. The drummer wore sunglasses and kept the tempo steady when it was only his solo between the intermittent breaks. The length of the performance showed each band members' dedication, determination, and discipline. Although the song was short, the lyrics provide underlying possibilities of what the band may or may not have experienced the kind of sorrow they sang about.

- Marin Fialla

The same song plays on repeat... over and over ... for six hours. This is Ragnar Kjartansson and The National exhibition, first performed at MoMA in May 2013. This is a typical exhibition by Kjartansson, who is known for repetitive performances that last a while. The song Kjartansson uses in this exhibit is Sorrow - makes sense that it's called A Lot of Sorrow - by the National. The band includes singer Matt Berninger, brothers Aaron and Bryce Dessner on guitar, bass and piano, as well as brothers Scott and Bryan Devendorf on bass and drums, respectively.

Going in to this concert, not many people would be excited by the prospect of listening to the same song over and over for six hours; I know I certainly wasn't. However, the continuous music draws you in. Something is a little different every time, but you can't always pinpoint it and it's definitely the same song. There is no immediate clear point to this performance and I would imagine that everyone gets something a little different out of it. As the music played on and on, I kind of zoned out, but I found myself concentrating on the music more than ever.

It's not something I can describe in words really, but the experience is mentally and sensually stimulating in a way not many things are. Now with a performance of this length and magnitude, one would expect the song itself to be an epic. That is not the case. The song "Sorrow," in of itself is relatively plain. The parts aren't overly exciting and the music itself cannot be classified as life changing.

Sure, the lyrics and the music blend together well, and it certainly is professionally done, but it is not epic in the way that say, for example, "Freebird" was. There's just something about the music, maybe it's the continuity, maybe it's the repetition, that strikes a chord - no pun intended - deep down. Whatever makes this performance great, it is definitely

worth seeing and reflecting on. It can invoke something in all of us.

- Memphis Goodman

The Luhring Augustine show was not a performance I would personally watch and not something I had previously ever seen before. The indie concert that I watched was not live but was recorded for its entire period. The concert and movie were 6 hours long and was recorded at the VW Dome at MOMA PS1 in May 2013. The song being played was "Sorrow" which was a 3 hour and 30 minute song but lengthened to 6 hours in total.

The location was in Brooklyn, in a run down and a bit desolate area. The surrounding buildings were tagged with graffiti and from the outside the entire neighborhood was the epitome of what someone would assume was "a bad neighborhood". Even during daylight, which was when I saw it, there were no people walking the streets, the only thing that made the place less desolate was the sound of the cars rushing past. The surrounding buildings were terrible but the spotless white building with the small glass door looked misplaced and stood out a lot. The inside was chic with its polished wood floor, white walls, sleek office desk and mac.

A curtain divided the only other room, from the main entrance I could hear the music playing from the inside. When I pulled the curtain back a deep darkness illuminated by a giant projection screen was the first thing I saw. Once my eyes adjusted to the darkness around the screen I made my way the two lone benches in the room. The music was loud enough that I couldn't whisper anything to my friend but was not overbearing. The singer's deep melodious voice flows perfectly with the band and the lyrics complimented the music very well.

Unlike concerts in our day there were no special effects or costume changes. The band stayed in one place and played their music while wearing the same outfit for the entirety of the performance. As the some of the instruments faded out for a short period of time, they would take breaks, drink water and stretch their legs. At one point ne of the stage crew taped the lyrics in front of the singer as he was starting to forget them. The one song "Sorrow" played over and over again never stopping, no breaks or silence.

The only time I felt the song completely changed, was when the singer smiled when the lyrics were placed in front of him. The song brightened instantly and the crowd cheered. The guitarist was the most interesting because he used different ways to play his guitar and change the sound. He once used a violin bow to play his strings like an electric violin and another time where he dropped it and created some weird screeching sound.

The crowd wasn't like a regular crowd ether; they weren't jumping up and down screaming the lyrics. They were calmly listening, bopping their heads and at times yelling something like "I love you". A lot of the crowd was taking a video or countless pictures at the front of the stage, but in the end the concert was anticlimactic. Nothing special happened, no glowing lights or crazy fans, only a calm concert with sweaty performers and a never-ending song.

- Nastaja Stepec

Held in a modern looking gallery on nondescript Knickerbocker Ave, Ragnar Kjartansson's "A Lot of Sorrow" was more of a screening of a live performance, if anything. You walk through dark, heavy velvet curtains only to find yourself in an expansive empty space. There are only two benches so you end up sitting on the floor. People come and go but you make yourself comfortable for what you heard what a 6 hour repetition of the same song. You wonder, is this performance art?

"Sorrow found me when I was young." "Sorrow, they put me on the pill." The lyrics of the near mantra turn into comfortable background static. "I don't want to get over you" "Sorrow's my body on the waves." One starts to pick out the negligible details of the performance. "Sorrow's a girl inside my cage/cake." "Don't leave my hyper heart alone, on the water." How many people are on stage? Those are cool glasses Ragnar has on. What's that written on the tape on his mic? Is there a message he's trying to convey through all of this? Am I missing it? He's laughing! That's cute.

They taped rows of paper with "Sorrow" written over and over again on the ground - is that the set list? That's funny. That's a cool violin thing. Who's the dude playing the cool violin thing? Drummer stopped wearing shoes. Crowd seemed pretty hyped. Crowd in the video came and went.

Performers can't actually leave.

Ragnar Kjartansson is an Icelandic performance artist. He started performing pretty early on in his life with performances such as Death and the Children where he led kids around with a scythe. He currently lives in Iceland. The show being held at the Luhring Augustine Gallery is open until December 21, 2014. Go check it out if you're into sitting on the floor in the dark, staring at a huge screen watching Icelandic performance art. It's cool though, trust me.

- Iman Messado

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