



Divas a musical medley

3 Mo' Divas provides audiences with live theatre and music, all in one sitting

3 Mo' Divas

Directed by Marion J Caffey
Starring Gretha Boston, DeVonna Lawrence, Jamet Pittman, Yvette Gonzalez-Nacer, Andrea Jones-Sojola and Laurice Lanier
Runs 21 October to 12 November
Citadel Theatre

EDMON ROTEA
Arts & Entertainment Staff

The experience of witnessing *3 Mo' Divas* is akin to listening to a favourite greatest hits CD or compilation, in that there will be many familiar tunes that will never become tiresome. The only difference that sets a theatrically staged concert like *3 Mo' Divas* apart from the average MP3 playlist is, perhaps, the diversity and range of music to be heard.

Three women—Gretha Boston, DeVonna Lawrence, Jamet Pittman—tackle the epic task of singing eight musical styles that encompass over 400 years of music in one evening. The spectrum ranges from classical opera, Broadway, jazz, blues and soul, to spiritual and gospel, with all genres performed by the same three women. The task is so vocally demanding that *3 Mo' Divas* not only features one, but

two casts of Divas, each performing four shows per week.

Accompanying the cast is an ensemble of instrumental musicians, including John Coffey (synthesizer), Brett Liebham (guitar/electric guitar), Siphon Kuene (drums), Mike Lent (bass/electric guitar) and Kent Sangster (reeds). Like the Divas, the accompanying instrumental performances transverse musical styles and decades of popular American music—from classic 1950s Broadway songs such as *Little Shop of Horrors* to contemporary '80s hits like *It's Raining Men*.

While the *3 Mo' Divas* production lacks the narrative or storyline of a typical Citadel Theatre production, *3 Mo' Divas* is more of a concert—a journey of music history that will rekindle memories of youth and past eras for older audiences, while entertaining younger audiences with music that remains popular even today.

The opening act features the three Divas in a musical sing off, with each Diva trying to upstage each other with classical opera hits like "Quando M'en Vo" from *La Bohème* and "Je Veux Vivre" from *Romeo et Juliette's Waltz*.

After changing into 1930s-style

clothing, the Divas then sing a plethora of Broadway and classic American movie melodies, including "Style" from the musical *Queenie Pie* and "Let the Good Times Roll" from the musical *Five Guys Named Moe*. The Divas undergo additional costume changes, with one Diva dressing up as an Afro-wearing, disco-bound, free-loving hippie singing "Let The Sunshine In" from the James Redo and Gerome Ragni musical production of *Hair*. Other popular melodies include "Dreamgirls" and the theme song from the musical *Rent*, "Seasons of Love."

For jazz and blues fans, there's no shortage of music, and each of the Divas give strong solo performances. Diva Jamet Pittman expresses suffering and loneliness of singlehood in the song "Solitude." Moments later, Diva DeVonna Lawrence ridicules love in the song "My Funny Valentine."

3 Mo' Divas is also a celebration of past and present Divas. With their strong vocals, non-stop performances and a vast quantity of familiar and unfamiliar tunes, *3 Mo' Divas* will appeal to a variety of audiences. With over 36 songs sung in a two-hour period, music lovers will certainly get their fix of live concert music—and their money's worth.

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Meetings are usually Fridays at 4pm but not this week, this week the meeting is on Wednesday. 3rd floor SUB.

Got that?

Islands emerge from ruins

ISLANDS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

"I think it's good to figure out each individual in the band, and how they can contribute to the overall sound," Diamond says. "It's good to try and establish what the band is doing, and repetition is a good way to enforce something."

The road is also liberating for Diamond's own songwriting, which he says has been in overdrive the entire time.

"On the last tour in Europe we wrote about three new songs that we're doing on this next tour, that we're going to be tweaking and stuff," he says, clearly excited for the future of his band. The horizon seems bright, indeed.

After this tour, the Islands has plans

to immediately begin recording the follow up to *Return to the Sea*. The band is riding a large wave of success and critical acclaim, and—as Diamonds explains—has no shortage of new songs to record.

"We have about 20 songs," Diamonds says excitedly, "Half of which won't make it on the [next] record. We're just working on fine-tuning those songs off of this tour ... [this tour is] about performing the songs, working the kinks out."

Islands' tour stop in Edmonton happens to be on Halloween, a day that Diamonds plans to make special for everyone in attendance.

"I want to paint eyeballs on my eyelids ... and I think we're going to do a special spooky cover song," he

deadpans. "Maybe we'll kill somebody, resurrect them, that kind of thing."

Such morbid comedic statements helped make the Unicorns darlings in hipster circles during their existence, but those days are behind Diamonds now, and while he has retained his sense of humor from that age, it's now matched with a serious devotion to his craft.

"The next record is really a big focus, and I personally want to make the best record we can make at this time," Diamond says. "A lot of the sounds we've got right now have the potential to make a record that's a classic of the ages. I think if we don't fuck it up, and put it to tape properly, we can make something that's just remarkable."