

Bob Marley Musical for Kids to Convey a Positive Outlook

Show to open one day after artist's would-be birthday

By Mark Kennedy

NEW YORK—A snowy, frigid New York is about to enjoy a blast of Caribbean warmth courtesy of Jamaica and its most favorite son, Bob Marley.

The New Victory Theater in the heart of Times Square is putting on "Bob Marley's Three Little Birds," a new musical for kids

I want Daddy to speak to children through his music.

Cedella Marley

that features the legendary reggae artist's songs.

"I want Daddy to speak to children through his music," says Cedella Marley, the first-born daughter of Bob Marley and Rita Marley and who helped create the show.

The story centers on Ziggy, a shy Jamaican child who hides from his fears—hurricanes, mongooses, and evil spirits—at

home, watching TV. A bird, his mom and his nagging neighbor coax him out to face his demons and enjoy life. Cedella Marley hopes it can bring "a little bit of Jamaica to kids who probably never heard of it."

The tropically colored musical includes the title song, "Three Little Birds," as well as "Jamming," "Roots Rock Reggae" and "Is This Love," among others. It's even got the melody from "I Shot the Sheriff," a sly note to the adults in the room.

It was inspired by the 2006 picture book written by Cedella Marley and Gerald Hausman about the Bob Marley song of the same name. Michael J. Bobbitt, the producing artistic director of Adventure Theatre MTC in Glen Echo, Md., worked with Marley on turning it into a musical.

"It was sort of fun to put it all together and figure out what songs would weave well with the story," says Bobbitt. "I really think it showcases the gravity of his work and the breadth of his work."

Recommended for anyone 5 or over, the show's message—get over your fears, enjoy your life, things get better—is as all-embracing as Bob Marley's music, which refuses in 2014 to sound out-of-date.

"There's something in the beat that he really fine-tuned that I

think is infectious. It's a beat that can be felt in a universal way," said Bobbitt, who helps run the D.C.-region's longest-running children's theater.

"But beyond that, I think that his songs and his messages and his feelings of good vibe and just enjoying life are also something that's universal and infectious."

The show opens Feb. 7, the day after what would have been Marley's 69th birthday. His daughter, a mother of three boys, finds

the timing bittersweet and hopes the musical will continue her father's legacy.

"We all know the worries of the world are just getting bigger and more heavy, especially for our children. For Dad's birthday, it's crucial for him to remind them that, no matter what, every little thing will be all right."

The show plays at the New Victory until Feb. 23.

From The Associated Press



Brittany Williams (L) and Jobari Parker during a performance of "Bob Marley's Three Little Birds," a new musical for kids that features the legendary reggae artist's songs.



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Inside Manhattan Center's Studios

Inside continued from C1

Despite this rustic-sounding name, this studio is anything but primitive in what it offers. The Log Cabin combines the ease and efficiency of digital technology with a Pro Tools HD Accel system, plus the proven warmth and musicality of a best-of-breed 72-channel analog console, complete with classic outboard gear and the latest plugins.

A self-contained studio complete with a spacious live room, isolated drum booth, lounge, and kitchen, the Log Cabin is a producer's, artist's, and engineer's dream studio. The roster of celebrated composers who have taken advantage of this facility for movie soundtracks includes David Arnold, Danny Elfman, Terrence Blanchard, George Fenton, Carter Burwell, Elliot Goldenthal, John Corigliano, Howard Shore, Stanley Clark, Stephen Trask, and Marcello Zarvos.

By the way, the Log Cabin successfully manages to attract soundtrack production projects off the big screen as well as on. For example, late last year, Goldenthal and Julie Taymor—along with various child actors—could be found busily recording in the Log Cabin for Ms. Taymor's new production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," which recently closed at Polonsky Shakespeare Center in Brooklyn.

Advanced Tools

The second recording studio at Manhattan Center, known as Studio 7, houses a unique custom-modified Neve VR 96-channel console recording to 5.1 surround on a Pro Tools HD Accel system, or to any of a variety of digital or analog multitrack tape formats.

Wired to record or mix sound from the Grand Ballroom or the

Hammerstein Ballroom, Studio 7 has been the go-to studio for the recording of countless one-of-a-kind performances, including film scores, classical recordings, broadcasts, and telethons.

The studios at Manhattan Center continue to attract a wide variety of musical clients. This is due in part to the Center's reputation as the ideal venue to record and mix film soundtracks and other types of productions.

Take Myspace, for example. When the music-oriented social network chose to showcase live performances of today's hottest up-and-coming musical acts, it chose the Log Cabin at Manhattan Center.

To date, Myspace's "Live at the Log Cabin" series has hosted a wide range of acts whose live performances have been posted online, ranging from Manchester, U.K.-based alternative rock band The 1975 to American hip-hop duo Run the Jewels.

Even musical equipment manufacturers love the way Manhattan Center makes their products sound. Last October, when Martin Audio Ltd., a designer of leading-edge live performance systems, wanted to conduct a series of exclusive demonstrations of its award-winning MLA Compact Multi-cellular Loudspeaker Array, it set up shop inside the Grand Ballroom for a two-day special event for members of the concert industry.

George Martin, the Beatles' legendary producer, once titled a memoir "All You Need Is Ears." That phrase perfectly sums up Manhattan Center's appeal to those seeking to record film and music scores. Manhattan Center is located at 311 West 34th Street, New York (www.mcstudios.com).

Sebastian Thaler is a freelance writer based in New York City.

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