

'Love Song' crosses cultural barriers

Trio of companies come together for production

From staff reports

WISE, Va. — Three theaters from three cultures have united to form a rich tapestry of love stories in "Promise of a Love Song," which will have its regional premiere, Sept. 22 at the University of Virginia's College at Wise theater.

Roadside Theater and the college is presenting the musical, which is performed by six actors and a six-piece band. Curtain is at 8 p.m.

The stories and music for "Promise of a Love Song" come from the three cultures of its creators — Roadside Theater, based in Whitesburg, Ky.; Teatro Pregones, a Puerto Rican theater based in the Bronx, N.Y.; and Junebug Productions, an African American theater based in New Orleans.

Powerful vocals combine with banjo, guitar, fiddle, congas, bass, keyboard, flute, saxophone, trumpet and drums for some rousing musical selections that draw from genres ranging from Appalachian mountain music to jazz, boleros and salsa.

Veteran Roadside Theater member Ron Short of Big Stone Gap, Va., Ricardo Pons of New York and Donald Harrison of New Orleans wrote the music and lyrics for the musical.

Short also wrote one of the play's stories, "Charming Billy." Short and fellow Roadside member Kim Neal Cole, also of Big Stone Gap, portray the characters in "Charming Billy," which looks at a relationship between a mother and a son and their struggle to survive in a world growing apart from them.

"Promise" also includes Junebug Production's "Star Crossed Lovers," written by John O'Neal and performed by O'Neal, Adella Gauthier and Andrew Baham, all of New Orleans.



Courtesy of Roadside Theatre

Three theater companies and six actors from different cultures combined their creative efforts to produce "Promise of a Love Song," which will make its regional premiere, Sept. 22 at UVA at Wise theater.

'Promise of a Love Song'

Presented by Roadside Theater, Teatro Pregones and Junebug Productions, 8 p.m., Sept. 22, University of Virginia's College at Wise theater. \$10. Call (606) 633-0108 or 1-800-545-7467.

Completing the trilogy is Pregones Theater's "Silent Dancing," adapted from the book by Judith Ortiz Cofer and performed by Jorge Merced and Soldanela Rivera.

After the performance, Appalshop will offer an installment of a project called "Voices from Home," an event that marks the celebration of Appalshop's 30th anniversary. During "Voices from Home," the theater audience will have the opportunity to discuss issues of Appalachian heritage and cultural diversity with the cast of "Promise of a Love Song."

For more information, call (606) 633-0108 or 1-800-545-7467.