

The Ballad Of Emmett Till Hits All The Right Notes



By Dennis J. Freeman

Hollywood-By now people are familiar with the story of Emmett Till, the black teenager, whose gruesome death at the hands of white vigilantes jumpstarted the Civil Rights Movement months before Rosa Parks decided not to move to the back of the bus. Most folks know that the Chicago-bred Till, was a 14-year-old, freewheeling spirit who knew no boundaries, even when it came to adhering to racist and segregated Jim Crow laws in the South.

A lot of people know that Till made the mistake of allegedly whistling at a white woman. He was later kidnapped from his uncle's home in Money, Mississippi and brutally murdered with his naked body badly decomposing in the Tallahatchie River. Everybody knows how his mother, Mamie Till Mobley, sparked outrage into the killing by valiantly refusing to close her son's casket during the funeral. She wanted the world to share her pain. The world felt that pain.

But in the telling of the Emmett Till story, the teenager's voice is usually drowned out by other voices. That's not the case with the stage play, "The Ballad OF Emmett Till," now showing at the Fountain Theatre in Hollywood. Writer Ifa Bayeza does a masterful job of telling Till's story through

his own voice. In order to share this unique perspective with audiences, Bayeza went and did her homework, interviewing over two dozen of relatives and friends who knew Till. The consensus of those people told Bayeza that Till loved to talk and tell jokes.

"I done a lot of research and talked with a lot of his relatives," Bayeza said in an interview prior to the showing's opening. "I spoke with some of his friends, cousins and classmates. Everybody said he had a great sense of humor. He liked to tell jokes. I am telling Emmett's story. This project has taught me so much. I am confident that this is something that I am supposed to do. I've chosen to tell the story of the son, not the mother."

Bayeza's superb storytelling of Till's young life allows audience to



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Shutter Island



By Dan Hudak
Is it worth \$10? Yes
www.hudakonhollywood.com

When Martin Scorsese is on, his movies are so awesome we can't wait to see them again. "Shutter Island" leaves us wanting to see it again, but for different reasons.

The film is a psychological thriller, which is new territory for the master director. He handles the subject matter well, but not perfectly; the eerie tone and gloomy atmosphere are more impressive than the complex story, which will leave some scratching their heads.

The year is 1954, and off the coast of Boston is Shutter Island. The only livable area on the island is a hospital for the criminally insane, and that's where Federal Marshals Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio) and new partner Chuck Aule (Mark Ruffalo) go to investigate the disappearance of Rachel (Emily Mortimer), an inmate who murdered her three children. Music Supervisor Robbie Robertson's haunting score as Teddy and Chuck drive from the ferry to the hospital creates an impressive amount of tension while little actually happens.

With a brutal storm on the horizon, Teddy and Chuck meet Dr. Cawley (Ben Kingsley), who runs the asylum, but they soon realize neither he nor his colleague, Dr. Naehring (Max Von Sydow), are interested in helping. Worse, Teddy keeps getting headaches and has visions of his ex-wife (Michelle Williams), who died in a fire.

As Scorsese gradually unfolds layer after layer of the story, which is based on a Dennis Lehane ("Mystic River") novel and was adapted by Laeta Kalogridis, it's clear that this is no ordinary investigation. It's good that we're taken places we don't anticipate, and Scorsese and editor Thelma Schoonmaker pace the film to allow each revelation to sink in before surprising us with a

new twist. However, Teddy's Holocaust flashbacks add unnecessary weight to the story, and other slow moments, such as the scene in which Teddy and Chuck interview patients in the cafeteria, grind the movie to a halt.

A word on DiCaprio. He is one of the finest actors working today, and his consistently solid choices (his next film, "Inception," is directed by Christopher Nolan ("The Dark Knight") and is set for release July 2010) make him an actor with integrity and immense talent. "Shutter Island" is his fourth movie with Scorsese, and his performance here is expectedly superb and convincing.

Some will be surprised to see Scorsese in this genre, but it's interesting to note that the most common theme in all his movies – that of a man who willingly puts himself into a situation he can't get out of – remains prominent in "Shutter Island." Even though the film doesn't rank among Scorsese's greats ("Raging Bull," "Goodfellas," "The Departed"), it is an interesting addition to an already substantial body of work.

Did you know?

During production, Scorsese screened classic films that echoed the themes found in "Shutter Island." One such film was "Titicut Follies," Frederick Wiseman's controversial 1967 documentary about the treatment of inmates at a Massachusetts hospital for the criminally insane in the 1950s and '60s. ■

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black Republicans at the Oasis Prime Rib and Seafood Restaurant in Inglewood.

"Your history is our history," Fiorina said. "What we're doing today is celebrating leadership. People get confused about leadership is... Leadership is about making a positive difference. We must still strive to build a more perfect union. The American dream is precious."

It wasn't too long before Fiorina went into full-fledge political mode, blasting Boxer for being an inept and failed government leader. In a clearly crafted event in which members of the African American media were invited to attend by the African American Coalition, Fiorina let loose on a barrage of issues she believes is affecting the people in California. And she pretty much drew a line in the political sand with her stingy criticism of Boxer and

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the young man than his tragic demise. The "Ballad of Emmett Till" is not a play you can forget. The play takes you on such an emotional roller coaster, once it ends, you're not sure if you want to cry, laugh or applaud at the same time. Everything about the "Ballad of Emmett Till" flows with such synchronicity that the razor-sharp acting skills of Lorenz Arnell (Till), is somewhat understated by the strong ensemble (Karen Malina White, Rico Anderson, Adenrele Ojo and Bernard Addison) around him on stage.

However, Arnell flexes some theatrical muscle and excellently captures the essence of a charming, fast-talking and an unblinking Till, whose bravado is only matched by his quick wit. Arnell makes you believe he is Till. White, known for her quirky roles on television and in film (Lean on Me, A Different World) gives a strong theatrical performance as Till's protective mother. Anderson, Ojo and Addison don't miss a beat in their supporting roles, ushering in a sense of believability to each character.

Bayeza was three-years-old at the time of Till's death. Growing up during the era of segregation, Bayeza knows

the federal government.

"The American dream does not come from the American government," Fiorina said. "We don't need more government; we need less. Barbara Boxer is a failed U. S. senator. She has taken all of us for granted. People are tired of professional politicians. Barbara Boxer is a professional politician."

The Tuskegee Airmen became the country's first black military airmen and have a secured place in America's history. Already the subjects of countless books and documentaries, the Tuskegee Airmen are also the subject of the George Lucas-pushed movie "Red Tails" due out sometime this year. Madison Roberts entered the state Assembly as a Republican in 1918 and served there until 1934. He was formally recognized by the California State Senate for his contributions in 2002. ■

all too well the story of a black person having to justify their existence. She recalls going from a segregated all-black school to an interracial classroom and what that felt like.

"I literally felt that anxiety of being different," Bayeza said. "I went through that transition of going from segregation to integration."

Bayeza said resurrecting the Emmett Till story is an American story that should be told to the masses. Till's story is an American story that should not be forgotten, she said.

"He became that story your parents talked about and what we were battling against," Bayeza said. "What happened to Emmett (Till) was a precursor to the Civil Rights Movement. [Right now] There's not an appreciation of what our people went through." ■

Karate

DATE: Feb 28, 2010
TIME: 5:30PM To 7:30PM
Shito-Karate-Do exercise & technique. Develop coordination, focus, balance, discipline.
Fee: \$20
Target Age: 6 and Up
Location: Hollenbeck Recreation Center 415 South St. Louis Street
Contact: Christina Conyers (323) 261-0113 ■

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of injuries during a recent patch of games, Bryant isn't just buying himself time to get well, he's also helping his teammates gain momentum and confidence as the stretch run to the postseason approaches. Much like last season's title run in which he captured his first NBA Finals MVP award, Bryant's unselfish moves is certain to pay off in the playoffs when teams come looking to shut him down.

And when they do, Odom will burn them with his triple-threat play. Gasol will toast them with his underrated inside-the-paint presence. Center Andrew Bynum can look strong at times. And old head Derek Fisher can still shoot the lights out with his potent high-arching shot.

But it is still on the muscular and driven shoulders of Bryant in which the Lakers' championship hopes depend on. ■

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time in a 2-2 tie. The Oilers eventually matched Simmonds' goal, and eventually went on to win the game, 3-2. Despite the defeat, Simmonds get receive some consolation after the game as he was honored with certificates and awards handed out to him by local officials and other dignitaries. Representatives for Congresswoman Laura Richardson and Assemblyman Curren Price were among the handful of elected officials that doled out platitudes for Simmonds. ■

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ment Project will include 190,300 square-feet and house 16 new, fully-equipped surgery rooms. It will also include an outpatient surgery staging area, a post-anesthesia care unit, a surgery waiting area, and emergency and trauma services, including adult and pediatric triage, observation, diagnostics and critical care.

WHO: Los Angeles County Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Zev Yaroslavsky; elected officials from the City of Carson and representatives of the Carson Chamber of Commerce.

WHEN: Friday, February 26, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

LOCATION: Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, (former Helistop site) located at 1000 W. Carson Street, Torrance, CA 90509 ■

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By Dennis J. Freeman

Hollywood-The celebration of Black History Month doesn't stop with revering iconic figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson or Ida B. Wells. The celebration of Black History Month is now honoring current heroes who make a difference in their local communities.

KCET recognizes this fact. The public media and television station, which represents Southern and Central California, partnered with Union Bank to pay homage to Black History Month by recently honoring unheralded African Americans for the work they do.

"KCET is excited again to partner with Union Bank to celebrate this year's local heroes," said Al Jerome, president and CEO of KCET. "These heroes embody a strong ongoing commitment to community service, and we are pleased to introduce them to our viewers through video profiles airing on KCET throughout Black History Month. We want million of others to have an opportunity to learn more about these community leaders and their extraordinary contributions."

In a ceremony held at the television station's studio, four individuals were selected to receive honors from KCET's 13th Annual Local Heroes Awards. Shonte Henderson, a four-time breast cancer survivor, was

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University and Master's of Science degree in Business Management from the Naval Postgraduate School.

Commander Jacobs started his naval career and as an aviation structural mechanic recruit. He quickly picked up rank and by his ninth year in the Navy he was selected to Chief Petty Officer (E-7). Two years later he was selected as a commissioned officer (Ensign) under the Limited Duty Officer program. This prestigious program is designed to promote the finest enlisted Sailors to the officer's ranks.

Commander Jacobs has been a strong proponent of Black History Month during his 31 years of naval service. He continues to promote the

honored for her dedication and efforts to increase more awareness about the disease. A judicial assistant for Los Angeles County Superior Court, Henderson has raised thousands of dollars to help women learn how to combat breast cancer through an array of ideas and proposals.

As each honoree was saluted, a short video of the local heroes was shown to the audience to give them an idea who these people are and why they are to be celebrated. Billy Mitchell, executive director of the Scholarship Audition Performance Preparatory Academy, was given kudos for his work with young musicians. Millicent Hill founded Mama's Hill Help, an after-school program geared to assist students in Los Angeles. A former educator for the Los Angeles Unified School District, Hill looks at ways to empower, encourage and educate at-risk students.

Areva Martin is a powerful woman with the law on her side. A managing partner with Martin & Martin, LLP, Martin was saluted for reaching out and making a difference with special needs children through Special Needs Network, a non-profit organization she founded.

"These outstanding individuals have contributed so much and exemplify our core values of diversity and community involvement," said George Ramirez, executive vice president at Union Bank. ■

past and present achievements of African Americans in the U.S. Navy. As he is frequently asked to speak at Navy functions to relay his message.

Commander Jacobs is currently assigned to Commander Strike Fighter Wing Atlantic at NAS Oceana, Virginia as Wing Maintenance Officer he is responsible to the maintenance departments of 19 aviation squadrons for their manning, training, and equipment for 303 active duties Navy east coast F-18 aircraft.

Commander Jacobs is married to the former Tracy Anderson of Los Angeles, CA. They reside in Chesapeake, VA and have two adult children. ■