

Ja's top stage artists in South Florida for Scholarship Fundraiser

Two of Jamaica's top stage, television and movie stars, Leonie Forbes and Volier Johnson, will lead a talented cast of actors, singers, musicians and dancers in the staging of "Ol' Time Sinting" a musical in the pantomime tradition scheduled for Saturday, June 4, 7:30 p.m., at the Miramar Cultural Center, 2300 Civic Center Place, (Red Road just north of Miramar Parkway).

Presented by County Line Chiropractic Medical & Rehab Centers, online at www.countylinechiro.com; and the Miramar Cultural Center, the theatrical feast is the annual fundraiser produced by the Louise Bennett-Coverley Scholarship Foundation and the Jamaica Folk Revue in efforts to continue the legacy and work of the lovable "Miss Lou".

"Ol' Time Sinting" promises a bellyful of laughs, colorful costumes, commentary on topical issues as well as aspects of Jamaican culture, folklore and historical references. Seasoned actor, Volier "Maffie" Johnson, will perform alongside Forbes in a story that promises several twists and turns which will take the audience on an enjoyable ride. Additional cast members include notables such as Malachi Smith, Marie Gill, Dr. Sue, Deborah Pinnock, Chris Gilchrist, Carimer Theatre Group, Tallawah Mento Band and the Jamaican Folk Revue. Leonie Forbes has played leading roles in twelve pantomimes and has acted in plays such as "Sea Mama", "Miss Unusual", "The Rope and the Cross", "Old Story Time", "Smile Orange" and "Champagne and Sky Juice". She has also appeared in films such as "Children of Babylon" (1980), "Club Paradise" (1986), "The Orchid House" (1991), "Milk and Honey" (1995), "What My Mother Told Me" (1995) and "Soul Survivor" (1995). Most recently, Leonie Forbes has starred in a Caribbean sitcom called, "Lord Have Mercy" which has been broadcast in Toronto, Canada. For her role in "Lord Have Mercy" she received the 2003 Gemini Award for Best actress in a comedy drama.

Volier Johnson has been performing for over 40 years, entertaining Jamaicans at home and abroad with his keen acting skills and well calculated comedy. Volier has seemingly always been in the theatre, starring in plays during his high school days - St. Andrew Technical High School - and then gaining a role in the Jamaican hit movie The Harder They Come. Johnson appeared in a number of Pantomimes (Tantaloo, Trash and Schoolers among them), several productions for Ginger Knight and Basil Dawkins but did not take acting as a career until the Oliver at Large series took off and they started touring. Volaire is truly one of those great comedians who has successfully crossed many genres of comedy and one simply cannot speak about Jamaican theatre without saying his name.

Miss Lou's work continues to influence many individuals immensely through her volumes of lasting and immeasurable contributions to Jamaica's cultural development. She was one of the pioneers of the Jamaican Pantomime and did much to mould the annual show into a unique creation. The Foundation celebrates her legacy through the presentation of the Louise Bennett Reading Festival in February, Black History month, and the Scholarship Fundraiser in June, Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

Tickets for "Ol' Time Sinting" are available online at www.MiramarCulturalCenter.org, the Center's Box Office which is open Tuesdays to Saturday, noon to 5:00 p.m., or by phone at 954-602-4500. Proceeds will go towards the Louise Bennett-Coverley Scholarship Fund, tenable at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts and awarded annually to students of Drama, Music and Dance.

Recognizing the importance of a cultural icon such as "Miss Lou" to the Caribbean community, County Line Chiropractic & Medical Rehab Centers and the Miramar Cultural Center has played a major role in supporting the staging of the event. Other sponsors include M. Gill & Associates, Western Union, The Jamaica Tourist Board, Ocho-Rios Miami, Jamaica National Building Society and Caricom Freight Consolidators.