

ENTERTAINMENT & WORLD

SHULER THEATER

Six Appeal thrills audience with singing, dancing, comedy

By **Tim Keller**
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The Chronicle-News

RATON – Raton Arts & Humanities Council’s annual Performing Arts Series at the Shuler Theater scored another success Friday night when Minneapolis vocal band Six Appeal quickly won over a large audience with its big sound, winning personalities, and laugh-out-loud humor.

The a cappella band devotes one voice to “vocal percussion” and another to emulating an electric bass. That leaves three voices to layer harmonies above and below a lead voice, with all six members getting turns in the lead position. They use no instruments beyond the human voice, and no recorded backing tracks.

Six Appeal applied its sound to well-known songs from Michael Bubl , the Doobie Brothers, Van Morrison, Michael Jackson, Queen, and Gloria Gaynor, along with film themes from “The Lion King” and “Despicable Me 2.”

A highlight came when they set down their microphones and stood close together at the front of the stage to sing Billy Joel’s “And So It Goes” like a church hymn performed by a circle of six young men on a New Jersey street corner in the 1950s. At the song’s close, the six-part harmony faded with the final syllable and a woman in the second row was heard saying, “Perfect.” She was right.

The band is used to skepticism, though, for its vocal rhythm section, so good that many assume they’re sneaking recorded tracks into the mix. So, they brought vocal percussionist Andrew “Berko” Berkowitz to center stage where he demonstrated his craft by playing, with only his voice, a bass drum. Then he added a snare drum. One at a time, he added a hi-hat cymbal, then tom toms, then crash cymbals and ride cymbals. Finally, he performed a convincing—and astonishing—drum solo, all from just his mouth and microphone.

Next, Berko demonstrated the difference between that vocal percussion and the skill of beat-boxing, in which the singer emulates a DJ with a turntable. He sounded so real that he even had little scratches in the record he was playing...with his voice. It’s surprising that Minneapolis’s “Prairie Home Companion” radio show hasn’t snagged him into its famed



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Minneapolis vocal group Six Appeal thrilled a Friday-night Shuler Theater audience with its exuberant choreography and high-energy arrangements. The group’s comedy included exaggerated exhaustion from dancing at high altitude. The members of Six Appeal traded solo turns, with each getting enough time up front to build his own relationship with the audience. High tenor Jordan Roll, below, showed off impressive versatility, singing from low to high and filling in on vocal percussion when needed.

sound effects team.

Big dreadlocked bass voice and “bass player” Rueben Hushagen filled out the rhythm section while leader Michael Brookens sang mid-tenor, Jordan Roll sang low tenor, and Nathan Hickey sang baritone. The only member not from the far northern Midwest, Floridian Trey Jones sang low tenor and provided more than his share of the evening’s laughter, often based on a Floridian moving to the relative tundra of Minnesota.

The six members produced a big powerful sound while also dancing around the stage in constantly shifting choreography that sometimes crossed over into humor. Twice, they finished physically demanding dance routines to feign an inability to continue, knocked out by such exertion at 6600 feet of elevation. They milked it for laugh after laugh, but soon they were dancing and singing again.

When the audience realized that the show was over, it rose to a standing ovation and won an encore of “You Are My Sunshine.” The show was a good example of why so many people buy season tickets to RAHC’s dependable Performing Arts Series. The final show this season is “Close to You: The Music of the Carpenters” featuring Lisa Rock and a six-piece band, arriving at the Shuler May 12.



A highlight of the Six Appeal concert came in the second set when the band brought to the stage Esm e Rodr guez Vaandrager, an Albuquerque poet featured earlier in the evening’s annual Poetry Rocks! show. Low tenor Trey Jones sang a Michael Bubl  love song to Vaandrager, leading her to fan herself with her hand to cool down.

NATURAL DISASTER

Aftershocks terrify survivors of quake that killed 2,500

BINAJ GURUBACHARYA and KATY DAIGLE
Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Shell-shocked and sleeping in the streets, tens of thousands of Nepalese braced against terrifying aftershocks Sunday while digging for survivors in the devastation wrought a day earlier by a massive earthquake that ripped across this Himalayan nation and killed more than 2,500 people.

Acrid, white smoke rose above the nation’s most revered Hindu temple, where dozens of bodies were being cremated at any given time.

Aid groups received the first word from remote mountain villages — reports that suggested many communities perched on mountainsides were devastated or struggling to cope.

Landslides hindered rescue teams that tried to use mountain trails to reach those in need, said Prakash Subedi, chief district official in the Gorkha region, where the quake was centered.

“Villages like this are routinely affected by landslides, and it’s not uncommon for entire villages of 200, 300, up to 1,000 people to be completely buried by rock falls,” said Matt Darvas, a member of the aid group World Vision. “It will likely be helicopter access only.”

Saturday’s magnitude 7.8 earthquake spread horror from Kathmandu to small villages and to the slopes of Mount Everest, triggering an avalanche that buried part of the base camp packed with foreign climbers preparing to make their summit attempts. At least 18 people died there and 61 were injured.

With people fearing more quakes, tens of thousands spent the day crowding in the streets and the night sleeping in parks or on a golf course. Others camped in open squares lined by cracked buildings and piles of rubble. Helicopter blades thudded periodically overhead.

Crows screeched as the ground shook with the worst of the aftershocks — magnitude 6.7. Panicked residents raced outdoors.

“We don’t feel safe at all. There have been so many aftershocks. It doesn’t stop,” said Rajendra Dhungana, 34, who spent the day with his niece’s family for her cremation at the Pashuputi Nath Temple in Katmandu. “I’ve watched hundreds of bodies burn. I never thought I’d see so many ... Nepal should learn a lesson from this. They should realize proper buildings should be built. There should be open spaces people can run to.”

By late Sunday, the aftershocks appeared to be weakening. A magnitude 5.3 quake shook an area about 30 miles east of Kathmandu.

Nepal authorities said Sunday that at least 2,430 people died in that country alone, not including the 18 dead in the avalanche. Another 61 people died from the quake in India and a few in other neighboring countries.

At least 1,152 people died in Kathmandu, and the number of injured nationwide was upward of 5,900. With search-and-rescue efforts far from over, it was unclear how much the death toll would rise. Three policemen died during a rescue effort in Kathmandu, police spokesman Komal Singh Bam said.

The capital city is largely a collection of small, poorly constructed brick apartment buildings. But outside of the oldest neighborhoods, many in Kathmandu were surprised by how few modern structures collapsed in

the quake.

While aid workers cautioned that many buildings could have sustained serious structural damage, it was also clear that the death toll would have been far higher had more buildings caved in.

Aid workers also warned that the situation could be far worse near the epicenter. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake was centered near Lamjung, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Kathmandu.

In the aftermath, United Nations officials were concerned about thunderstorms that could threaten the many people staying outdoors and about a shortage of vaccines that could invite disease.

As planeloads of supplies, doctors and relief workers arrived from neighboring countries, journalists reported on social media that aftershocks forced some aircraft to circle the Kathmandu airport while waiting to land.

Thousands of Indians lined up in hopes of gaining a seat on a plane returning to New Delhi. One of those fleeing, 32-year-old tailor Assad Alam, said he and his wife and daughter were leaving with heavy hearts.

“It was a very difficult decision. I have called this home for seven years. But you have to think about the family, about your child.”

The earthquake was the worst to hit the South Asian nation in more than 80 years. It destroyed swaths of the oldest neighborhoods of Kathmandu and was strong enough

to be felt all across parts of India, Bangladesh, China’s region of Tibet and Pakistan.

Nepal’s worst recorded earthquake in 1934 measured 8.0 and all but destroyed the cities of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan.

Rescuers aided by international teams spent Sunday digging through rubble of buildings — concrete slabs, bricks, iron beams, wood — to look for survivors. Because the air was filled with chalky concrete dust, many people wore breathing masks or held shawls over their faces.

The first nations to respond were Nepal’s neighbors — India, China and Pakistan, all of which have been jockeying for influence over the landlocked nation. Nepal remains closest to India, with which it shares deep political, cultural and religious ties.

India suffered its own losses from the quake, with at least 61 people killed there and dozens injured. Sunday’s aftershock was also widely felt in the country, and local news reports said metro trains in New Delhi and Kolkata were briefly shut down when the shaking started.

Other countries sending support Sunday included the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Germany and France.

An American military plane left Delaware’s Dover Air Force Base for Nepal, carrying 70 people, including a disaster-assistance response team and an urban search-and-rescue team, and 45 tons of cargo, the Pentagon said.

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