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Photo: Hilary Hosia



Lady Tuptim (Deborah Lajar) faces the King's wrath.

## A royal production

JACK NIEDENTHAL

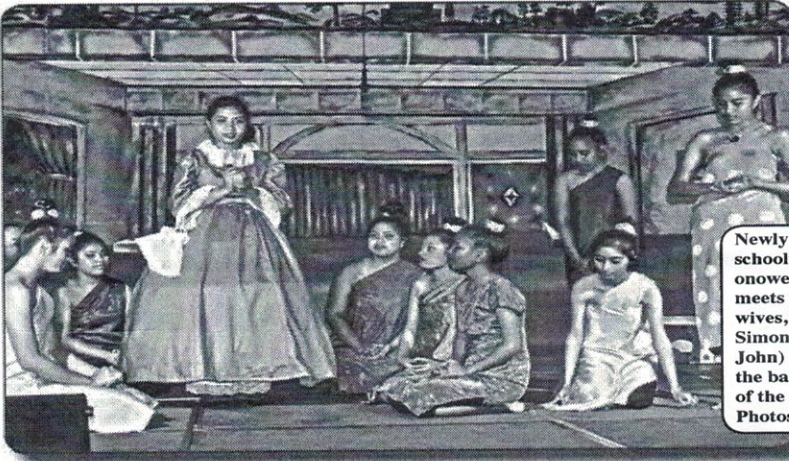
Extraordinary. Magical. Riveting. These are just some of the words that can be used to describe opening night of Dr. Andrew Garrod's latest Youth Bridge Global production of the King and I, the 12th theatrical stage production he has brought to

the Marshall Islands.

As usual, we all marveled at the magnificent quality of the intricate show that Dr. Garrod only started putting together in January. When I first heard that this year's play was going to be The King and I, my first reaction was that the sets, the choreography and the costumes

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Newly hired English schoolteacher Anna Leonowens (Kelyna Glanry) meets the King's many wives, left; slave owner Simon of Legree (Helton John) and his dogs in the ballet sequence part of the play at the ICC. Photos: Hilary Hosia



# Play is a must-see for all

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would have to be really well done or the story would lose some of its magic.

So it was with no small amount of joy when we quickly realized that the producers had created quite an amazing series of backdrops depicting ancient Siam. These spectacular sets, when combined with Bonny Taggart and crew's beautiful costumes and Ilona Hito's astounding choreography and Justine Goggin's remarkable musical direction, transformed us into a new world of absolute delight, especially when our youth stepped onto the stage to perform.

Bryant Zebedy as the King and Kelyna Glanry as Anna were both fabulous. Their skill as actors has really grown to such a high level that we have begun to expect the best from them, and that is exactly what we got, their relationship on the stage felt genuine and real. The acting in this play had a lot of depth, the stars were supported wonderfully by Atmi Kaios as Anna's son Louis and Jimmy Jamos as the Prince. I also really enjoyed the singing and acting of both Teeri Komwenga and Deborah Lajar. Save Filolita as the dancer was enchanting, as was the entire mystical theater scene, one of the highlights of the entire performance.

I would add that Helton John exudes so much confidence on stage he makes you think he has performed his role as Kralahome dozens of times — the audience loved his wry humor.

'We really appreciate these plays coming to the Marshall Islands, it is nice ... to see our young people perform and entertain with such remarkable skill.'

With this production we had something new: numerous children cast as the offspring of the king. The audience enjoyed this aspect of the play. The more diverse the ages of the characters in the story, the better the play is at drawing in the entire audience.

I was sitting with two first graders and a second grader and they rarely looked away from the stage. The dancing and the singing and the great delivery of the dialogue had the entire audience, a very big crowd for an opening night, at the edges of their seats.

We really appreciate these plays coming to the Marshall Islands, it is nice to snap out of our rugged world to see our young people perform and entertain with such remarkable skill.

And, of course, I could go on and on about Professor Garrod and the inspiration that he provides for us all, but I'll just say it this way: etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Go see the play!

The play continues at ICC nightly through Saturday, 8pm.

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