

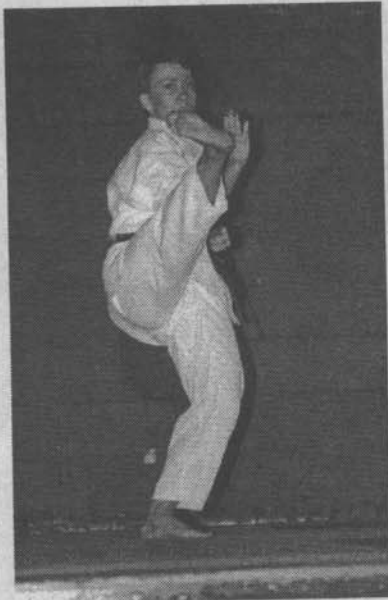


THE BAM'S 4TH ANNUAL MARTHA JOHNSON MEMORIAL MARTIAL ARTS EXTRAVAGANZA

BY TONETTE HARTMANN

TRUE LIFE MARTIAL ARTS SHOWCASE BENEFITS TWO LOCAL CHARITIES

THE BAM'S UMAC KUNG FU ACADEMY PRESENTED THE 4TH ANNUAL MARTHA JOHNSON MARTIAL ARTS EXTRAVAGANZA ON SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 1999 AT 7:00 P.M. AT ST. VINCENT PALOTTI HIGH SCHOOL. THIS EVENT, FEATURED THE BAM'S ALL STARS (BETTER ATTITUDE MAKERS) COMPETITION &



DEMONSTRATION TEAM AND BENEFITED TWO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS: PALOTTI DAY CARE AND THE MCKIM COMMUNITY CENTER.

A THEATRICAL EVENT THAT TRULY TOUCHES AND INSPIRES AUDIENCE MEMBERS IS A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE. WHEN THAT PERFORMANCE IS ALSO ENERGETIC AND ENTERTAINING, IT'S A RARE TREAT. AND WHEN THAT SHOW IS BASED UPON THE TRUE STORY OF A PERSON BORN, RAISED AND LIVING HERE IN OUR LOCAL AREA, THEN IT'S MAGICAL!

THOSE AUDIENCE MEMBERS WHO ATTENDED THE 4TH ANNUAL MARTHA JOHNSON MEMORIAL, PRESENTED BY THE BARDS

UNIVERSAL MARTIAL ARTS CONCEPTS ON JUNE 5, 1999, CERTAINLY WITNESSED A MAGICAL EVENT. HAVING BEEN A PROFESSIONAL ACTRESS FOR TWENTY YEARS, PERFORMING IN COUNTLESS THEATRE PRODUCTIONS AND MOVIES, IN MY OPINION, THIS SHOW IS A PRECIOUS GEM WHICH DESERVES MANY REPEAT PERFORMANCES.

I HAVE PERFORMED AT THE KENNEDY CENTER, THE NATIONAL THEATRE, SHERATON'S GRAND BALLROOM AND ST. MATTHEWS CATHEDRAL. AND YET, IT WAS AT

THE PALLOTTI HIGH SCHOOL GYM IN LAUREL, MARYLAND, WITH FOLDING CHAIRS AND NO AIR-CONDITIONING WHERE TRUE EMOTION, ENERGY AND INSPIRATION WAS FOUND. I HAVE BEEN ON MOVIE SETS WITH GEORGE C. SCOTT, GOLDIE HAWN, KEVIN COSTNER AND JAMES EARL JONES. AS WONDERFUL AS THESE ACTORS ARE, THE CHARISMA,

POSITIVE ENERGY AND SPIRITUALITY THAT EMANATES FROM WILLIE "THE BAM" JOHNSON, THE MAN WHOSE INCREDIBLE STORY WAS DEPICTED, MATCHES ANY OF THEM.

"BAM" (AS HE IS KNOWN IN THE MARTIAL ARTS COMMUNITY) IS NO STRANGER TO PERFORMING. A SIX TIME WORLD CHAMPION, HE STARRED IN THE POPULAR TV SERIES, W.M.A.C. MASTERS, AND WAS FEATURED IN A&E'S SPIRIT OF THE MASTERS AND WESLEY SNIPES' MASTERS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS. THIS TIME HE CHOSE TO BE "BACKSTAGE" AND WAS QUITE SUCCESSFUL HIS FIRST TIME WRITING, PRODUCING, DIRECTING AND CHOREOGRAPHING A SHOW OF THIS CALIBER. THE IDEA ORIGINATED FROM A PERFORMANCE BY THE WEST COAST TAE KWON DO DEMO TEAM. THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE IS THAT, WHILE THEIR STORY WAS FIC-

TIONAL, BAM'S SHOW IS BASED UPON HIS OWN TRUE LIFE EXPERIENCES, PORTRAYED THROUGH DRAMATIC SCENES, MUSIC, AND A STUNNING DISPLAY OF MARTIAL ARTS, PERFORMED BY HIS STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL ENERGY, TALENT AND PROFESSIONALISM. THE SHOW IS TIED TOGETHER BY A NARRATOR, AND WE WERE VERY FORTU-

