

Theatergoers, Crossroads is where it's at

I love New York. I was born in New York City and every time I get a chance to go to New York I get a special feeling as soon as I cross the Hudson River.

I am especially fond of the theaters in New York and the opportunity to enjoy dramatic, orchestral and operatic presentations. I will never forget a class trip to the Metropolitan Opera where I experienced a world class performance. I think every American ought to visit New York.

I have tried to take at least one trip into New York to see a play every year since I have been married. My wife and I usually identify a Broadway show that we would both like to see and make plans well in advance to enjoy the excursion.

THE LAST SUCH TRIP THAT WE TOOK WAS two years ago. We purchased our tickets through a ticket service a few weeks in advance and we invited another couple to accompany us for the evening. Although the evening was quite enjoyable and New York was its unique and exciting self, I was distracted (to say the least) by the substantial amount of money that had to be spent in order to participate in this very basic New York outing.

The tickets to the play cost \$35 each, which meant a total of \$70. The parking cost \$30 and the cost for gas and tolls totaled \$18. We really did not have to eat in New York but we did have to eat. Even if we had eaten in New Jersey near New York, the dinner would have cost at least \$25. (I don't have the nerve to tell you how much it did cost.)

Forget the cost of other incidentals. What we ended up spending for a night out in New York was a minimum of \$143! That is a lot of money for a basic night of theater and food.



**BUSTER
SOARIES**

Perhaps that is why I appreciated my visit to the Crossroads Theater last Sunday night in New Brunswick. Not only are the ticket prices at Crossroads reasonable, but the productions are completely worthy of the enthusiastic support of critical theater patrons and theater lovers.

The current play running at this new state-of-the-art theater, "Flyin' West," is superbly produced, profoundly written and professionally performed.

The story displays the persuasive power of late 19th century black women who attempt to carve out for themselves a place in the western region of the United States — a homestead that lends itself to free living.

This production addresses the penetrating pain of racism without preaching to white people and the stinging sin of domestic violence without wholesale condemnation of all makes. It is a work of art.

And I did not spend \$143! As a matter of fact, dinner can accompany a night at Crossroads without doing serious damage to one's budget. A visit to Crossroads could make a person never want to visit Broadway again.

This year Crossroads is celebrating its 15th anniversary. This nationally renowned theater has survived the difficult startup stages of a fledgling community theater and has risen to creative and institutional heights heretofore attained by only a handful of groups across the country.

Rarely has a combination of community spirit, thespian genius and architectural splendor combined to consistently offer presentations of inspiration and information.

Crossroads is not simply a showplace. Rather, it is a gathering place for the reclamation of genuine community.

AT A TIME WHEN FRAGMENTATION seems to characterize human relationships and tensions seem to sustain racial division, Crossroads emerges through the confusion and frustration with clear messages that foster understanding and hope.

Crossroads' co-founder and artistic director, Ricardo Khan, says that he believes in the "magic of theater's ability to change the world and renew the spirit. So at this Crossroads, the magic is respected and celebrated."

There is magic at Crossroads, from the young energetic and hospitable staff to the superior facilities in the heart of downtown New Brunswick. Anyone who would rather spend too much money on an inferior experience in New York City needs his or her head examined. Crossroads is the place to be.

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