Proposed

P R O C L A M A T I O N : "THE PROMISE" PRESENTED IN RUSSIA

WHEREAS, "The Promise"...a Live Contemporary Musical Portraying the Life and Ministries of Jesus Christ...normally performed at the Magnificient Texas Ampitheatre in Beautiful Glen Rose, Texas...was performed twenty four times during he month of March 1993, within the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, where godless communism held out for most of the 20th Century; and

WHEREAS, "The Promise" was the first Passion Play to be presented in the Kremlin, not just during the athestic communist reign, but for at least 800 years; and

WHEREAS, a Texas Tourist Attraction, involving at cast of 85 persons and a total support group of over 100, had a positive influence inside the Kremlin in Russia; and

WHEREAS, as the Congress of People's Deputies of Russia voted on the impeachment of President Boris Yeltsin, members of "The Promise" performed the story of Christ before a crowd of 3,000 just 100 yards away; and

WHEREAS, the cast of "The Promise" was given seven curtain calls at one presentation, and members of the audience had tears in their eyes as they left their seats in the Kremlin State Palace theater; and

WHEREAS, numerous obstacles were encountered by the cast and support staff of "The Promise" such as being asked by Russian Leaders to suspend the performances scheduled because they wanted to close the Kremlin and secure it, as well as tickets to the performances disappearing, lack of advanced publicity promised by the Russian leaders, and even advertising posters disappearing; and

WEREAS, the leaders, cast and support staff of "The Promise", an outstanding Texas Tourist Attraction are to be commended for representing the Lone Star State in Russia and by participating in one of the historic moments in Russian history and in sharing Moscow's Kremlin with government in crisis; and

THEREFORE, I hereby proclaim the year 1993 as a Special Year of Recognition for "The Promise" and I urge all citizens to recognize and honor the many noteworthy contributions that the officials, leaders, cast and suport staff of "The Promise" are making to our society and economy.

Cindy
From our
State House in
Austin, TX + from
Governor Ann Richards

Proposed

"THE PROMISE PRESENTED IN RUSSIA"

WHEREAS, only a few short years ago, it would have been unimaginable for a Texas Tourist Attraction to have a positive influence inside the Kremlin in Russia; and

WHEREAS, miracles still happen, the "The Promise" - Live Contemporary Musical Portraying the Life and Ministries of Jesus Christ...being performed twenty four times during the month of March 1993, within the Kremlin, in Moscow, Russia, where godless communism held out for most of the 20th Century; and

WHEREAS, "The Promise" was the first Passion Play to be presented in the Kremlin, not just during the atheistic communist reign, but for at least 800 years; and

WHEREAS, part theatrical roadshow and part evangelistic ministry, "The Promise", the Texas Tourist Attraction that usually performs at the magnificent Texas Amphitheater in Beautiful Glen Rose, Texas, involved over 200 Americans, mostly Texans, and most paying their own way to represent Texas' leadership in Tourism...all the way to Russia; and

WHEREAS, as the Congress of People's Deputies of Russia voted on the impeachment of President Boris Yeltsin, members of "The Promise" performed the story of Christ before a crowd of 3,000 just 100 yards away; and

WHEREAS, the cast of "The Promise" was given seven curtain calls at one presentation, and members of the audience had tears in their eyes as they left their seats in the Kremlin State Palace theater; and

WHEREAS, numerous obstacles were encountered by the cast of 85 persons and additional support staff of "The Promise" such as being asked by Russian leaders to suspend the performances scheduled because they wanted to close the Kremlin and secure it, as well as tickets to the performances disappearing, lack of advanced publicity promised by Russian leaders, and even advertising posters disappearing; and

WHEREAS, commendations are certainly in order for the troupe of Texas actors and support staff, participating in one of the historic moments in the Russian history and in sharing Moscow's Kremlin with government in crisis; and

NOW THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be presented to the admirable officials, leaders, cast and support staff, as well as to the Russian support group of "The Promise", as an expression of deep respect and high regard of the Texas Senate.

Man performs 'The Promise' in Russia

By Bernice Maddux
Special to the Democrat

Cast and crew members of "The Promise", a two and one-half hour musical drama depicting the life of Jesus Christ, performed for packed audiences at the Kremlin Palace Theater in Moscow in March.

Weatherford resident Allen Asbury, who has the role of Simon Peter in the production, said it was the first time they had taken their show on the road. "It probably won't be the last," he said. "We already have an invitation to return to Moscow, as well as invitations from Singapore and South Africa. New doors are opening for us all the time."

The invitation to perform at the Kremlin came as the culmination of efforts by missionaries there who had seen "The Promise" in Glen Rose. Allen said that even though the weather was extremely cold, their reception couldn't have been warmer. "After each performance, we did several curtain calls to shouts of 'Bravo' and 'Spasiba' (Thank you) and received many flowers. We found the people very accepting and responsive to our message."

Even though it was a time of heavy rioting and demonstrating by the Russians, Allen said all fourteen performances were well attended, with audiences of from four to six thousand. Because of circumstances, he said that they had to get signed permission from President Boris Yeltsin to go ahead with performances during the heaviest of the rioting. "He attended the show the last night we were there," Allen said.

Despite the political upheaval during their visit, Allen said they did not feel threatened. "We had gone there for a purpose and had a job to do, so we focused on that." They were, however, concerned that loved ones at home might worry about them after seeing news coverage of the conflict on TV.

According to Allen, approximately 70% of the Russians want a democracy, while 30% want the return of Communism. In addition to proclaiming the story of Jesus Christ to nourish souls, the group of 150 distributed food, clothing and medical supplies to some of the hospitals and convalescent homes to nourish bodies.

Allen reports intermittent sunshine and snow during their stay in Moscow, with temperatures down to two degrees. When they were not performing, their "home" was a boat anchored on the frozen Moskva River.

He reported an unforgettable conversation with a young Russian. "He was asked what his goal was in life. He said 'to go to McDonald's.' Thinking he had misinterpreted our question, we repeated it and got the same answer. Seeing that he was serious, we took him to McDonald's and treated him to a Big Mac, french fries, a Coke (Koka Kora), a milkshake and fried apple pie."

"There's a shortage of fresh fruit and certain vegetables, including lettuce," Allen said. "Russians eat a lot of raw fish, beets and cabbage. We also ate at McDonald's often."

Allen was living in Tennessee when he heard there was an opening in the cast of "The Promise". He called his decision to come to Glen Rose and audition for the role of Simon Peter a "leap of faith." He feels it was God's will that he was chosen for the part.

Except for a course in Theater Arts at Carlsbad High School, he has had no drama courses or other preparation for portraying the impetuous, and not always loyal, apostle of the Lord. His strong belief in what he is doing and fierce determination to do it convincingly have been accountable for his success.

The musical drama depicting the life of Jesus Christ details the events of His birth, life, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. The production is directed by David Sanders and David Humphrey.

"The Promise" can be seen at 8:30 on Friday and Saturday nights at the Glen Rose Amphi-Theater from the last week of May to the last week of October. The number to call for further information is 817-897-4341.

Allen Asbury

According to Heidi Coates, Allen's fiancee, "Words can't do justice to this production. You'll just have to come and see it."

Weatherford Democrat

4-9-93

WESTSIDE

Fort Worth Star-Telegram • Serving the communities of west Fort Worth and the cities of western Tarrant County • Wednesday, April 14, 1993

YOUNG MISSIONARIES BACK FROM RUSSIA

Kimberley, 23, and Jay Roecker, a sophomore at Western Hills High School, have just returned from Russia where they performed in a Christian musical production The Promise. .... STORY ON PAGE 3

Fort Worth Star-Telegram / DALE BLACKWELL

Elizabeth McKinney, left, and Rhealene Stewart at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where they began their musical collaboration in the 1970s. The duo is likely retiring as performers of a little known French piano composer.

STORY ON PAGE 6

RIVER OAKS

Geren honors firefighter who saved girl's life

PAGE 2

BENBROOK

City officials still pondering library offer

PAGE 5

Convent supporters lasso support

MARY ROGERS'
COFFEE SHOP TALK

Something like 500 folks scooted over to the city's newest entertainment complex at Fort Worth Town Center recently to keep an old friend from falling down.

Historic preservationists scrambling to raise $60,000 by June 1 to save the Our Lady of Victory convent got a boot up at Rockin' Rodeo, underwriter for the benefit.

Barney Barnett, general manager for the 35,000-square-foot western entertainment complex, says the fundraiser for the historic Hemphill Street landmark fit perfectly with Rockin' Rodeo's interest in community involvement.

Barnett is the son of the late Tom Barnett, who was long associated with Neiman-Marcus. Young Barney says he came back to town looking for a place to spend his money.

"I wanted to do something for the children's hospital," he said. "Well, I still do. But this came along and OLV is sort of in the neighborhood, so we thought this would be a good cause to back."

Preservationists like Joan Kline be-

(More COFFEE SHOP TALK on Page 7)

E AND EVENTS

ETTLEMENT

ouse for Dear

ite Settlement Area
of Commerce will have an
e for state Rep. **Homer**
4 to 7 p.m. Friday in the
offices, 201 Meadow Park

blic is invited to meet Dear,
White Settlement school
nployee who was elected in
r to the seat previously held
Speaker of House **Gib**

— **Frances Colwell**

AILS

ıp day

as Trails Property Owners
on will have its annual
Day on Saturday.
of the association in far
Worth are urged to
in the effort. For more
on, call chairman **Vince**
246-9716.

— **Marion Bisser**

ETTLEMENT

to cheer

ettlement Pee Wee
ler registration will be have
to 4 p.m. Saturday at the
ncession stand at White
t City Park, 8901 George

certificate showing that the
be 6 to 11 years old by Sept.
ng the sixth grade is
o register. Final
on will be April 24 during a
PLE AND EVENTS, Page 10)

ubmit information

bute to this column, mail to Brian Wilson, *Fort Worth ram,* Westside section, Box Worth 76101-1870, or leave it our 400 W. Seventh St. en- dicate the neighborhood and e location of the event, and our name and a daytime tele- mber. To get your item in an issue, we must have it by e preceding Thursday.

PARK

raptors at the Zoo

Rhino Ridge" opens and Prey" shows begin Saturday; open weekends 10 a.m.-6 p.m., weekdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Fort Worth Zoo, 2727 Zoological Park Drive, phone 871-7050. $5, children and seniors $2.50 ($2.50 and $1.25 ays).

NNEDY'S
TBET

ngtime at the Fort Worth Zoo, big Asian rhinos have a new ove into this weekend. It's also eekend for the predatory birds the "Birds of Prey" shows at 11 n. and 3 p.m. It's all part of the ing Zoofari," showcasing one of th's best bargains for families

BENBROOK & WESTERN HILLS

Acting in faith

Young missionaries take play to Russia

BY MARTHA DELLER
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Jay Roecker knew he wanted to go to Russia from the moment the idea was first broached to the cast of *The Promise,* the Glen Rose passion play in which the Western Hills High School sophomore appeared last summer.

But Roecker's 23-year-old sister, Kimberley, said she never dreamed she would join the cast on its month-long tour this spring until the second time she watched her brother perform.

"I didn't have much interest in going," said Kimberley Roecker, who works at Walker Publications of Fort Worth, which is owned by her parents, Lynda and Don Walker of Benbrook.

"But the second time I saw *The Promise,* and they announced the trip, I heard God telling me to go to Russia," she said.

Even after she successfully auditioned to replace some regular cast members who could not make the trip, Kimberley Roecker said she was apprehensive about how the trip to a country where religious and political freedom had been repressed for generations would affect her life.

"Before we left, I couldn't understand how everyone could be so upbeat and happy," she said. "On one hand, I welcomed the change I knew would happen. On the other hand, I was not too comfortable with it."

Neither she nor her 15-year-old brother said they were prepared for the changes they witnessed, from the political upheaval surrounding the near-impeachment of President Boris Yeltsin to the joyous acceptance of the American performers by the Russian citizens.

Jay Roecker said he was more interested in absorbing the Russian culture and handing out food and other supplies than in the Christian mission work that was a big part of the trip.

But he said he learned a lot about the lives and living conditions of the young Russian technical crew members while visiting their homes as guests.

"The standard of living over there is terrible," he said. "Those people weren't even allowed to ask Jesus into their hearts. There were churches, but the only people in them were preachers. The people weren't allowed to go."

Nevertheless, the Russian people were receptive to the Christian messages spread by the U.S. group, both on and off stage, the Roecker siblings said.

"I was talking to one of the crew members, Kirill, and I asked him if he had been saved," he said. "I explained what that meant and a light came over his face. It was a great feeling when he said he had asked Jesus into his life."

Kimberley Roecker, who supervised the 22 teen-agers among the 200-member cast, also got a glimpse of Russian life during her tours of schools and churches, and other mission work.

One young man, Mikhail, demonstrated the giving nature of Russians when he pulled a walnut out of his pocket and gave it to her.

"It meant a lot because I know it was all he had," she said while showing off the walnut. "It makes me ashamed of how I used to be so concerned with things."

The Roeckers said the North Texans saw both sides of the official government response to their visit during daily performances at the Kremlin State Palace Theatre adjoining the buildings where the Russian Parliament was meeting.

On the night Yeltsin was nearly impeached, one of the deputies of the Russian congress came to the theater and got into an argument with some of the cast members, Kimberley Roecker said.

> ***"The love between all of the cast is like nothing I ever felt before. That kind of emotion and love and acceptance washed over us and everyone else."***
>
> — Kimberley Roecker
> cast member of *The Promise*

"He said Yeltsin should be crucified and all Christians should be poisoned," she said.

Later that night, the cast was trapped for a while inside the theater. When the group finally got to the outer gate, "it was like the parting of the Red Sea," said Jay Roecker, describing how the blockade of guards stepped aside to let the troupe return to the cruise ship where they slept.

But the Roeckers said their performance impressed even the hard-core Communists who initially tried to prevent the troupe from going to Russia and continued to try to force them to leave.

"The only reason we were allowed to perform is because Yeltsin and the minister of culture signed our contract," she said. "They tried to make us leave several times. It's because of the grace of God we were allowed to stay."

Two incidents on the last night of their stay convinced the Americans of the impact they had had.

One involved the head of the KGB, who had tried to thwart their trip, Kimberley Roecker said. The night of the last performance, the man came on stage and gave a speech telling the troupe how moved he was and invited them to return, she said.

"The love between all of the cast is like nothing I ever felt before," she said. "That kind of emotion and love and acceptance washed over us and everyone else."

The other incident involved the wife of the captain of the Russian guard. She was saved during the last performance, Kimberley Roecker said. After the last show, the woman came backstage and gave a bouquet of lilies to one of the cast members who was of Ukrainian descent, she said.

"He cried like a baby," she said. "People took off their masks and put down their defenses. We were not allowed to have an altar call at the Palace of Congress, but we did it anyway the last evening.

"A lot of people came up after the show and said thank you."

Jay Roecker, who had to get permission to miss more than two weeks of school for the Russian trip, spent his first week back giving reports to his English, history and theater classes at Western Hills.

Kimberley Roecker has returned to her job putting together publications for Texas chambers of commerce. But she said her life would never again be the same.

"I'm a different person," she said. "I feel triply blessed that Jay and I were able to go together. I'll never look at things the same way again."

TALES OF OLD WESTSIDE

High-flying escape part of reunion lore

BY BILL FAIRLEY
Special to the Star-Telegram

Few of Edwin Holmes' classmates, who are planning to gather for the Arlington Heights High School Class of 1943 Reunion on May 14-15, realize that he was one of a handful of American servicemen captured during World War II by the army of the former Soviet Union.

The Soviets were one of our allies against the Germans when they imprisoned the former U.S. Army Air Forces gunner from the west side, who, along with his wife, Fay Holmes, has owned a floral company at 501 S. Henderson St. for 43 years.

But in February 1945, 19-year-old Eddie Holmes was manning a .50-caliber machine gun on a B-17 Flying Fortress on an air raid over Berlin. The plane was disabled by anti-aircraft fire while over the target; one engine was knocked out and there was other damage to prevent the crew from returning to its air base in England.

The plane flew across Poland and into the Soviet Union when a second engine conked out. The pilot crash-landed the huge aircraft somewhere in Ukraine with only two engines still running.

Soviet soldiers soon surrounded the nine crew members and marched them off to the nearby city of Lvov, just across the border from Poland.

They were treated well (they stayed in a hotel), but they were held until the war's end because of a treaty with Japan, with which the Soviet Union was not then at war. Earlier, the Soviets had captured another B-17 and had parked it on an airfield outside of Lvov. They asked the American bomber crew to rev that plane's engines each day and take care of it while they were "guests" of the Soviets.

Holmes and his crew did this daily until one day in May 1945, when their guards purposely left their area unlocked. They got out of the hotel and made their way undetected to where the B-17 was parked.

The pilot cranked it up and off they flew. They first landed at Tehran, Iran, where the United States had an air base. They refueled and flew back to their home base in England.

Holmes will be able to swap stories like this one with dozens of his classmates when they reunite at 6 p.m. May 14 at the Green Oaks Inn. The festivities will conclude with a dinner and dance at 7 p.m. May 15 at Shady Oaks Country Club.

The 1943 class also invited the classes from 1941 through 1946 to help celebrate its Golden Anniversary reunion. Frank Sherwood is chairman of the event.

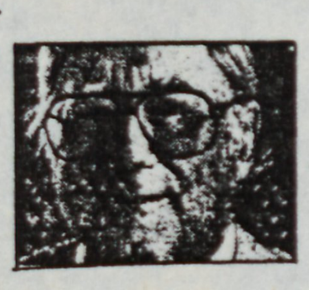
Sherwood, an architectural engineer, has worked for some of the largest businesses in the country, including American Airlines and Champlin Petroleum Corp.

But I best remember him as a tear 'em up, go-for-broke, beat-the-skins-to-pieces drummer. Back then, Sherwood, classmate Jack Washburn and others formed a hot little dance band that played for jitterbuggers all over Fort Worth-Dallas.

The band broke up because of the war, college, marriages and professional careers. But maybe at the reunion dance, Sherwood will trade his T square and calculator for a pair of drumsticks and hit a few licks on the snares for his old friends.

For more information on the reunion, call Sherwood at 731-2247.

Bill Fairley has been a west side resident for nearly six decades. He grew up in Arlington Heights. These are his memories.



Two local residents help deliver "The Promise" in Russia

by **Jenny Cockerham,** Editor

Two Mineral Wells residents were among about 200 Texans who recently returned from a trip to Russia, where they delivered, kept, and brought back The Promise.

Ted Oliver and JoNell Mitchell traveled with a mission group to Moscow, where they spent 24 days giving 22 performances of "The Promise," a live contemporary musical drama of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

The drama was performed inside the Kremlin Wall at The Palace of Congresses, each Friday, Saturday and Sunday during the weeks of March 9-30. The Palace is the largest theater in Moscow with a seating capacity of 6,500. "The Promise" is said to be the first such production done in Russia in modern times, and also marks the first time a performance depicting the life of Christ has been presented inside the Kremlin Wall.

Oliver is a local resident who went on the mission as sales manager and missions coordinator. He has been a resident of Mineral Wells for 17 years, and pastors a local church, the Mineral Wells Christian Fellowship.

Mitchell is an employee of Philips Components.

The two joined other Texans in the evangelistic and benevolence mission to Moscow, which included lay witnessing, counseling and Bible distribution, and the distribution of food, clothing and medical supplies to the people who needed them most.

During the three-week run, nine Russian teens, five Russian children and the Baby Jesus, also Russian, were integrated into the cast with the Texans. Oliver described the experience as "a historical event as former enemies united together in a common purpose to produce one of the most spectacular theatre events in Russian history."

Interpreters assisted Russian and Americans working together to operate the lights, sound and staging, to compensate for the language barrier.

Oliver said he talked with one of the interpreters, a lady of about 25, concerning her life in Russia with the new reforms. The interpreter asked Oliver what motivated the group to come to Russia. She said she was raised to believe that Americans were her enemy.

Oliver responded that his entire life he had been taught to believe Russians were his enemy, but since the Berlin Wall came down, "it seems as if a wall between Russians and Americans came down as well, and instead of being enemies we suddenly had a desire to become friends."

On Sunday, March 28, as the American cast did two performances of their drama inside the Kremlin, the Russian government was involved in a drama of its own. The Congress Deputies were meeting less than 100 yards away, taking a roll call vote on whether to impeach Boris Yeltsin, while the evening performance was taking place.

"On leaving the grounds that night, just outside the gate, the cast saw for the first time the seriousness of the day," Oliver said. "Busses with armed soldiers totally encircled the gate bumper to bumper, just like wagon trains of the old in the Wild West. We could hear the crowd in Red Square two blocks away, as Yeltsin addressed the crowd after his victory."

The Kremlin was totally closed off to the public during this demonstration, but some 3000 Russians braved the protest lines in Red Square to attend a noon presentation of "The Promise," and the Kremlin guards allowed another 3500 through for the evening performance.

Oliver said that members of the audience had tears in their eyes as they left their seats in the theater. "A woman said to me, 'You are giving peace to a troubled people,'" Oliver said.

The cast practically spent the weekend inside the Kremlin that fateful weekend. Because of the crush of demonstrators outside, the company was unable to return between performances to its quarters aboard a cruise ship on the Moscow River miles away.

Oliver said "The Promise" was received with great acclaim in Russia, although the audience turnouts in the beginning were smaller than expected, apparently the result of poor promotion at the Russian end.

Working with the Russian government was not the easiest task involved, but as time went on the crowds grew.

The grand finale was played to about 5000 people, followed by seven curtain calls and the showering on the performers of flowers and "bravos."

"The Promise" engages the audience in a deeply real and personal experience through the life of Jesus Christ. The two-hour drama combines a modern day Texas grandfather and his two small grandchildren with the colorful and exciting historical figures of Jesus' time some 2000 years ago. It portrays the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

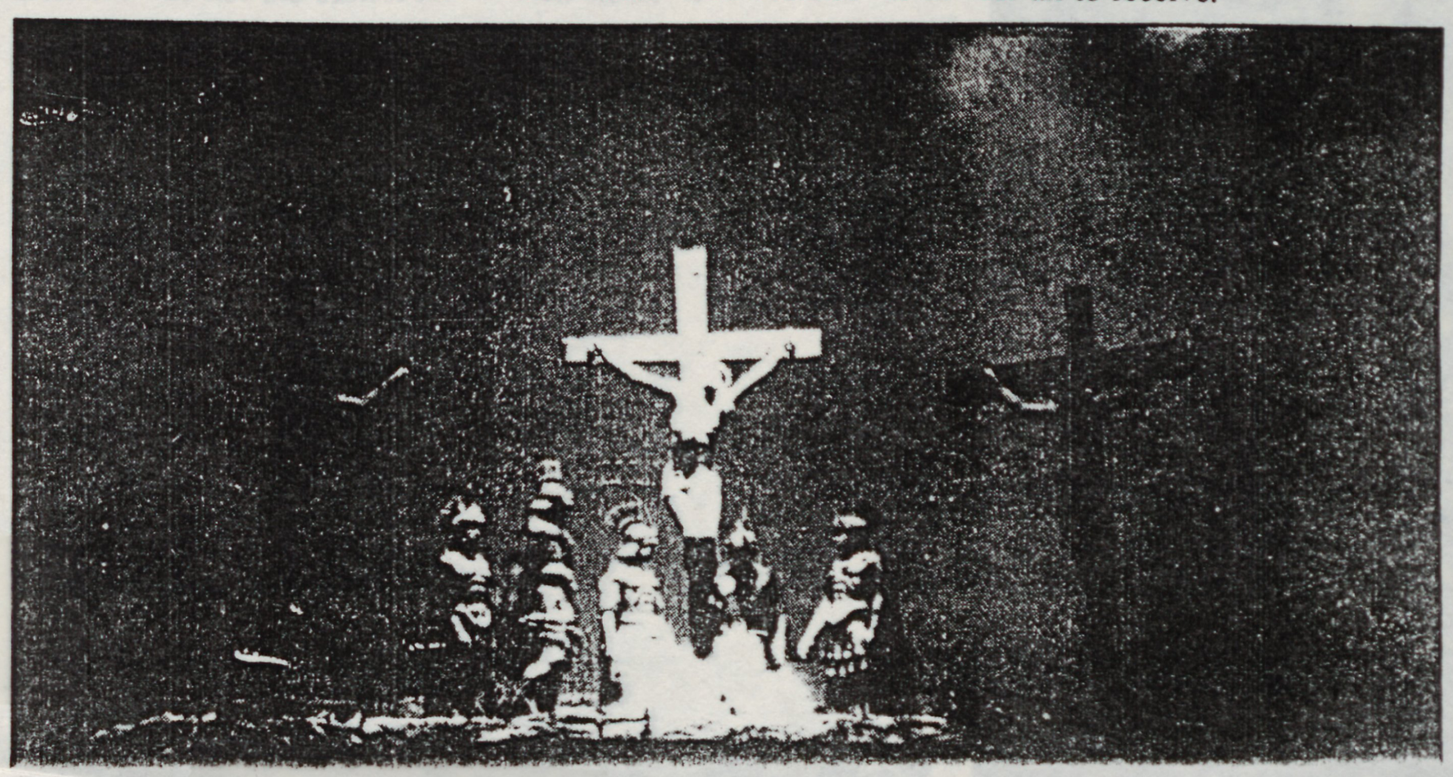
The drama is performed every Friday and Saturday night from June through October at the $4 million Texas Amphitheater in Glen Rose. "The Promise" is in its fourth season, having premiered in November, 1989.

The Glen Rose production features a cast of 90 actors, actresses, singers, and dancers, and a variety of animals including camels and horses.

In season at the Texas Amphitheater, Grandpa, Billy and Lisa are on a camping trip when Billy spots dinosaur tracks. Thus the story begins, "Once upon a time, long, long ago ..." in the amphitheatre which features a Greco-Roman design with 42 foot arches and walls and a six story archway towering over a 65x100 square foot tri-level stage.

Come April of 1994, the production will make its way back to Russia.

The Promise, truly a gift meant for all to receive.



"The Promise"

A scene from "The Promise," a drama presented at the Texas Amphitheater in Glen Rose every Fridya and Saturday night from June through October. A cast of about 200 Texans recently took the religious presentation for a 24-day run at the Kremlin in Russia.

Religious play's cast welcomed home from Russia

By Monica Stavish
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

D/FW AIRPORT — Glancing at two watches on his left wrist, Brent Ferren looked anxious.

"I'm not taking these off till he steps off that jet," Ferren said as he steadied a video camera. He was waiting for his 11-year-old son, Caleb, to return from Russia, where he had left him two weeks ago with other actors in *The Promise,* a play about the life of Jesus.

About 50 other relatives and friends turned out yesterday at D/FW Airport to greet the weary but exhilarated cast. The wait seemed even longer as political tensions unfolded daily in Russia between President Boris Yeltsin and the legislature.

"There hasn't been an hour that I haven't checked that watch," Ferren said, explaining that it was nine hours ahead to correspond to Moscow time.

The cast, which usually presents *The Promise* in Glen Rose, spent a month in Russia. They performed the religious play, complete with an array of animals, at the Kremlin Theater, just across the street from political protesters.

Audiences apparently wanted to hear the message. During one performance, 3,500 people braved frigid temperatures to see the performance.

Ferren, who played the dual role of a disciple and a centurion, returned to Texas with the first group. Although he saw a few pro-Yeltsin demonstrations, he said he didn't spot a great deal of unrest. Spreading a religious message to Russians who had never heard one, he said, was worth the trip.

His son agreed. After hugging his family, Caleb Ferren said that he saw marchers but was never scared.

Randy Brooks, who portrays Jesus in the play, was solemn about the trip.

"I had a vision of this two years ago, of us going to Russia," Brooks

(More on RETURN on Page 23)

Return

From Page 21

said. "The best thing about Russia is the people. The problem is the government. But the people are just like us. They want to touch and hug. But they don't know how to."

The audiences seemed to grow in size at each performance, Brooks said. They gratefully presented bunches of flowers to the cast as thanks, he said.

The trip also had a special significance for Michael Smith and Tammy Pearson, but in a different way. Smith proposed to Pearson on the flight home.

"I figure you really get to know a guy on a mission," Pearson said with a laugh.

Fort Worth Star-Telegram / Ian McVea

Brent and Jeanne Ferrin greet their son Caleb, 11, at Dallas/Fort Worth Airport upon his return from Russia. He helped present *The Promise,* a play about the life of Jesus Christ.

Associated Press

knowledges the cheers of supporters outside the Kremlin.

, the key element in his strategy ppealing directly to the people the heads of the Congress bers.

'eltsin changes his mind all the . He says one thing one day and te different thing the next. It is ossible to believe him," said or Gulashko, an opposition leg- or from central Russia.

eltsin aides attributed his sud- shifts to the enormous psycho- al strain posed by the struggle the Congress, the death of his her and a desire to show the ntry that he sincerely wants a promise with his political op- ents.

though the parliamentary op- tion of nationalists and Com- ists was unable to oust Yeltsin, cceeded in further whittling his er.

he Congress voted 537-263 to ordinate state-run TV and radio ices to the parliament, a move would give Yeltsin's opponents tal propaganda weapon in the ing struggle for public opinion.

roadcasting chiefs immediately ged an appeal against that vote with the Constitutional Court, saying that it represented a major blow to freedom of the press. Information Minister Mikhail Fedotov told journalists that the decision returned Russia to the pre-*glasnost* era of Leonid Brezhnev.

Since the political crisis erupted with Yeltsin's announcement March 20 that he was assuming special powers, television and radio have veered between impartial reporting of the political battles in the Kremlin to open support for the president.

Although Yeltsin has survived the impeachment motion in the Congress, he still faces daunting political challenges in the coming weeks and months. He maintains that the political standoff can be broken only through the adoption of a new constitution to replace the much-amended Soviet-era holdover that names the Congress of People's Deputies as the supreme body of state authority in Russia.

The present Congress was elected in 1990, when the country was still in the hands of the Communist Party.

As Yeltsin fights for his job, Texans go on with show

BY JERRY COFFEY
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

One of the historic moments in Russian history was a time of triumph for a troupe of Texas actors coincidentally sharing Moscow's Kremlin with a government in crisis.

As the Congress of People's Deputies voted on the impeachment of President Boris Yeltsin last night, members of *The Promise* company performed the story of Christ before a crowd of 3,000 just 100 yards away.

"There were seven curtain calls, and children brought flowers to Randy Brooks," the Bedford actor who plays Jesus, said Ted Oliver, business manager of the Glen Rose-based Passion play troupe. Oliver telephoned a *Star-Telegram* reporter from inside the Kremlin after the performance.

"In view of what's been going on over here, we wanted to let our folks in Texas know that we're all OK and doing well," Oliver said.

He said that members of the audience had tears in their eyes as they left their seats in the Kremlin State Palace theater. "A woman said to me, 'You are giving peace to a troubled people,' " Oliver said.

Last night's performance was the day's second. Some 3,500 Russians braved the protest lines in Red Square to attend a noon presentation of *The Promise*, Oliver said. There also were two performances on Saturday.

"We've practically spent the weekend in the Kremlin," Oliver said, noting that because of the crush of demonstrators outside yesterday, the company was unable to return between performances to its quarters aboard a cruise ship on the Moscow River miles away.

Oliver said that growing audiences and what he termed "a really good interchange with the Russian people" had lifted the spirits of the troupe, which has three more performances scheduled before returning home Friday.

In an earlier phone call from the shipboard headquarters, David Sanders, president of The Promise Productions Inc., had noted some anxiety over the uncertain political situation. He also mentioned frustration over bureaucratic hang-ups and disappointment at the small size of the early audiences, apparently the result of poor promotion at the Russian end.

Sanders said it appeared that the political crisis would kill *The Promise* in mid-run.

"They actually asked us to suspend the performance schedule because they wanted to close the Kremlin and secure it, but we told them we didn't want to do that," he said.

"There clearly are folks within the government who don't want us over here doing this show at this time," Sanders said. "I can't prove it, and I wouldn't exactly call it sabotage, but strange things have been happening. Tickets disappear from certain kiosks; posters disappear after they're put up or just never get posted.

"Dealing with the bureaucracy has been an ordeal. We had a terrible time trying to get food and medical supplies through customs," Sanders said.

THE

PROMISE

A PRODUCTION OF

PROMISE PRODUCTIONS, INC.

Michael V. Smith
Sales

114 N.E. Barnard Street ▪ P.O. Box 927 ▪ Glen Rose, Texas 76043
817-897-4341 ▪ FAX 817-897-3388

1. Set design Peter Wolf
2. Set fab Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow
3. Laser written transcription of dialogue.
4. Russian/American technical crew
5. Lighting design by Kremlin State Palace
6. 22 shows, total attendance 50,000