

Shana's show lets kids clap, dance

BY BRENDA RINDGE
Post and Courier Reviewer

There's an old saying that when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. In the case of "Shana Banana: Bananimagination," when life gives you banana, make a banana shake.

Not all shows are performed under ideal conditions and that was certainly the case Saturday for national children's entertainer, singer and songwriter Shana Banana during her debut show at Piccolo Spoleto.

To begin with, the show was just a couple of blocks away from the annual children's festival, which draws thousands of young festival-goers and their families to sample a smattering of activities. It was a beautiful day outside, and many folks seemed to choose the fresh air and sunshine over the dark coolness of the Physician's Auditorium at the College of Charleston, which was considerably less than half filled for that initial show.

Then came the bigger challenge: At the beginning of the one-woman song-and-dance show, Shana invites youngsters onstage to dance. But at this show, as the little ones cleared the stage at the end of the tune, one little toddler named Gabriel refused to leave. He sat on the stage, he played with the props, he talked to

Shana and followed her around like she was there to entertain him and him alone. He made mothers in the audience hold their breath every time he ventured so close to the front of the stage that we thought he was going to tumble into the seats. When Gabriel's father tried to remove him from the stage, the youngster screamed and protested loudly until Dad gave him his way. What started out as cute quickly became tiresome.

Huge kudos to Shana for being able to perform under those conditions with some improvising but nary a skipped beat.

I took my 7-year-old daughter and 9-year-old son. It soon became apparent that dear son was a little old for the show, especially when a look around the audience revealed more members wearing diapers than not.

My daughter, however, thoroughly enjoyed it. Twice she got to dance onstage, and she loved the upbeat songs and adventures of puppies Hal and Hanson. So while son entertained himself by taking notes about the show on my notepad (effectively doing my job), I was free to use my hands as imaginary dog puppets.

The toddlers in the audience sat mesmerized watching Shana play her guitar and sing and dance her



up-beat tunes about dinosaurs, the library, and more. The show was fun, clean and the "G-est" of the "G-rated."

Shana's husband and baby daughter sat in the audience, and during the parade at the end of the show, she carried the infant onstage, where it almost seemed that she clapped on cue (has she heard these songs once or twice before?). She's a lucky little girl if she's sung to sleep at night by her mother's voice.

Shana is performing all week and she says each show is unique. Your child will enjoy participating with Shana and you'll get a kick out of watching him participate. Even if Gabriel isn't there.

Shana Banana brings her kinetic kids show to Piccolo Spoleto at the Physician's Auditorium at the College of Charleston.