



Successful vocalist: Junior LaLeza Harris from Charlotte enjoys singing all types of music from classical to gospel. Harris was a finalist in the Arts Expo '86. (photo from Public Relations department)

## "Blues Night"

### Cole's new play to appear here

by Cassandra Henderson

"Blues Night" deals with an actual incident set around something that happened to Bessie Smith," states Charles Johnson, director of the play which premieres here April 25-27.

The play, an original work by UNCG graduate student Carolyn Cole, involves collaboration among all Greensboro Colleges except Guilford and features three Belles in important roles—sophomore Grace Adams and freshmen Sophia Williams and DeJureia Walker.

The musical was inspired by a night upon which the legendary blues singer Smith got into a fight at the Blue Star Casino and never performed.

Cole moves the time forward 30 years when her main character Olgletre Peacock returns home to Four Oaks, N.C.

"Olgletre spent her earlier years in N.Y.C. trying to make it big. She made all those career-women decisions before they were popular to make," she says.

Cole adds that Olgletre's sister Suddie says she's come home to die, but inactivity is killing her. The star gets involved with a church play, and she turns it into a blues and jazz musical. The Reverend Hubbard Wilcox tries to have an affair with Olgletre, but she refuses him. Because of this, he won't let the play go on.

"But I don't want to give it all away, so you'll have to see the play to find out what happens," Cole says.

"I feel real good because so many different people are involved but I'm even more fascinated because we're trying to pull together so much. Collaboration is hard," she stresses.

"But it's really interesting," adds Johnson. "With an original work, we can bring our heads together and make changes."

Johnson says they tend to disagree a lot, but other good things work out.

Good things worked out for sophomore Grace Adams, who landed the part of choir-member Alice Horn.

"Alice is one of those women who likes to gossip. She thinks of herself as the best singer and actress. Her voice is terrible, but she thinks it's beautiful," she jokes.

"Blues Night?" she questions. "I think it's going to be great."

Sophia Williams is Necie, Olgletre's best friend and the minister's wife. DeJureia Walker plays Christine, a young girl who wants to follow in Olgletre's footsteps. Sophomore Alexis Bennett is the stage manager.

Cole hopes to see a university production. Tickets will be sold here and at the UNCG box office in Elliot Center. Non-student tickets are \$4. Student tickets are \$2.

# Singer touches the heart of many

by Carla Bannister

Junior LaLeza Harris has had a hard job lately, both here and at the Arts Expo '86.

Put yourself in her shoes for a minute. Imagine that you are a 18-year-old Japanese mother waiting for a husband that you haven't seen in three years. Your husband is an American and the father of your son. Imagine trying to convince your maid that one fine day your husband is coming to get you. This is what happens in Giacomo Puccini's "Madama Butterfly." Harris, as the waiting wife, sings "Un Bel Di" (one fine day).

Her video-taped performance done in the chapel made her a finalist in Arts Expo '86, a competition for black

institutions.

A small but delighted crowd enjoyed Harris' junior recital on April 6. The soprano sang 11 songs including three in German and one in Italian.

Sophomore Bernice Scott said, "Her performance was astounding. Her articulation was perfect and her poise enviable. She poured her soul into her performance."

Harris loves to perform. "I am more of a stage person," said Harris. "Give me a stage, costumes and I will perform."

The 20-year-old from Charlotte has been singing in a choir since 9th grade when she signed up for the choir, "just for an easy class." Harris hopes to go to grad school and get her doctorate in music.

Sophomore Janice Smith

believes that Harris will go far in her singing career. Smith said, "To put it simply, she belongs at the Metropolitan Opera House."

After junior Vicky Dunn heard Harris, she said, "The performance was quite moving. I was lifted by 'The Lord is my Light' while saddened by 'My Man's Gone Now.' She's quite a passionate singer and I felt involved, almost as if I were on the stage the whole time."

Harris also plays the piano, practicing music three hours a day. She says that in her spare time she likes to read, bowl and dance.

Harris says that her mother is her inspiration. Harris describes her mother as, "strict, outgoing, friendly and independent." Harris says

that she would like to be just like her.

Harris' close friend, junior Josefa Betea, describes Harris as "a lady and a scholar and the epitome of the Bennett ideal." She adds, "As a performer she is self-confident, creative and a perfectionist. I am sure she will equal or surpass the level of such music greats as Marian Anderson, Leontyne Price and the like."

Harris believes that the music department has helped her achieve her goals. She says, "even though there are only 10 music education majors we're all very supportive and close to one another."

About her music education teachers, Harris says, "I get a lot of attention and that has helped my training tremendously."

## Belle attends key D.C. meeting

by Rita Rushing

Sophomore Janice Smith got a first-hand view of the illusion and reality of national politics over spring break.

An essay on Soviet-American relations landed Smith a place as one of 790 students attending the 17th Annual Student Symposium sponsored by the Center for the Study of the Presidency. In Washington, D.C., the representatives discussed national security, ranging from arms control to terrorism.

Smith found the conference both provocative and disillusioning.

The symposium included sev-

eral key guest speakers, including Attorney General Edwin Meese, as well as a visit to a Senate meeting. Smith relished the symposium's numerous opportunities, but she found some of the speakers evasive and the trip to the Capitol less than comforting.

She "sat in on a Senate meeting where only 12 people were present, and someone would leave the room every hour," she says. She "could not believe these people hold our lives in their hands, and no one was there."

The best part of the conference came when students held their own discussions. Smith joined a group which included three Cana-

dians, a Democrat, a Republican, a Socialist and six unaligned students.

Smith, who remained neutral, was especially interested in the Canadian view of America.

"Many of the students believed the Canadians were communists. The Canadians told the other students how Canada has a socialist economy and how everyone was middle-class. They viewed America as a country with a big stick, poking it where it does not belong. They said that America feels Canada will go along with them no matter what they do," recounts Smith.

She agreed with one of the

socialist speakers. "He had no prejudice at all, and he wanted to see all people with the same things. No one should have more or be unequal. He taught us about equality for all," she says.

Smith described the others' views this way: "The Republican felt people had to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps while the Socialist felt the government had to give you a pair of boots. The Democrat, who was black, felt blacks faced more obstacles than whites. He stated that segregation had not ended in the South. Blacks have never pulled themselves up because too many people are standing on their hands and the opportunities are not equal"

## Dancers overcome audience

by Dee Little

Anticipation filled the air. The excited crowd talked about the long-awaited program. The stage lights dimmed, and the audience responded with a thunderous applause. The Bennett College Dance Company was ready to give its final performance of the 1985-86 tour season.

The company consists of five members—senior Allyson Berry, from Leesburg, Fla.; freshman, Lenore Brathwaite from Amityville, N.Y.; senior Deirtra Evans, from Durham; freshman Julie Hatchett, from Oakland, Calif.; and senior, Khadija Ward, from Fayetteville.

The company had already danced in Lumberton and participated in the Black College Dance Exchange in Baltimore.

The performance of the company was good. The dancers picked and choreographed their own music. Company director Susan King stated, "the dancers picked the music that they wanted to work on. I prefer to let them do their own choreography so they can feel more comfortable with their work."

Two of the dances were choreographed by members of the Chuck Davis Dance Company. "Chuck Davis choreographed the dance

entitled 'Celebration,' when he and his company performed at Bennett last semester and another member of his company choreographed 'Double Bad,'" King said.

"Psalm 8" was a dedication to Dr. Ronald McNair. "Everything pertaining to that dance was so coincidental. I choreographed that dance because I liked the words and the music. It was finished when I heard about Dr. McNair's death. While watching the memorial service on television, I heard Jesse Jackson recite the words of the psalm and we decided to dedicate it to Dr. McNair's memory. When we performed in Lumberton, Dr. McNair's sister was at the performance. She was touched by the dedication and thanked us for it," King said.

As a whole, King felt the dancers did their best. Her only disappointment was in the conduct of the audience.

"They were so unfair towards the dancers. Basically, they were very rowdy and inconsiderate. While they were performing, the audience shouted things at them. Some were even barking like dogs. The dancers didn't even have a chance to take their final bows because the audience left. It was terrible," she said.

Three of King's physical education classes performed with the

company. Their contribution substituted for a final project.

"My classes decided to perform on their own. They were very nervous and I gave them a lot of credit for getting on stage and dancing, but the audience was so rude and unfair. It made me very angry," King commented.

King compared the Bennett response to the audience in Lumberton. "The audience there was very appreciative. They were an older group and some brought their children whereas here at Bennett, the students knew the people on stage and that made a big difference," she said.

Allyson Berry, a member of the company since her freshman year, said: "People always complain about how they want us to perform on campus. When we so perform, we get a negative reaction."

Gayle Allen, a senior from Silver Springs, Md., commented from the audience point of view. "I really liked the show, but I felt the audience didn't understand the culture the dancers presented," Allen said.

King felt that the program's being an ACS requirement had something to do with the negative response. "Last year I didn't put the show on the ACS calendar and no one came to the program.

This year I did and the response we received was rudeness. Next year I'm going to put it on the calendar because I think the dancers felt worse when no one came to the performance. The whole idea behind ACS is for student participation and we need an audience," she said.

King believes that student participation in activities has declined across the campus.

"I'm worried about the students and the future of the campus. We (the dance company) are victims of the overall attitude of the campus. Students just aren't participating in anything. The numbers dwindle down, and it's hard for me to put on a production with so few people. That's why my classes performed in the show. Without them, the concert would have been very short," she said.

King admitted that there have been better years. This year was especially hard because of the few people involved in the company.

"The dancers did their best even though they were overworked. I don't know what's going to happen next year. The three seniors are graduating, and one freshman is returning home. That leaves me with one dancer. I'm going to hold auditions next year," she said.

## New T.V. series about Africa

"The Africans," a major series on Africa co-produced by WETA/Washington, D.C. and the British Broadcasting Corporation, will premiere over PBS and BBC-1 late in 1986.

In production in Africa since 1983, the \$3.5 million series will be "a view of black Africa from the inside looking out," according to executive producers Charles Hobson of WETA and David Harrison of the BBC. Host for the

nine one-hour programs will be the noted African scholar Professor Ali Mazrui, author of more than a dozen books on the continent.

The series will be offered for credit at some colleges, and Dr. Mazrui will write the accompanying book, to be published by Little Brown.

For many Westerners, the history of Africa begins only with

the coming of the white man. "The Africans" will debunk that myth and explore the "real history" of the vast continent," Mr. Harrison said. "It will look at the past as a way of understanding Africa's future."

"The Africans" will explore what Dr. Mazrui has called Africa's "triple heritage": what is indigenous, what was contributed by Islam, and what has been imposed or acquired from the West.

The series will recall the Africa that existed before outsiders came; chronicle the arrival of Islam; and tell the story of the slave trade and the "scramble for Africa" among the European powers. It will trace these powerful currents into the 20th century, as the tide of African nationalism unleashes a flood of independent states. Finally it will analyze some of Africa's present problems and proposed solutions.