

Benny Gandy -- a most unusual BC music student

by Heather Conrad

A whirl of notes and a jazzy run of the 'G' scale ascends from the cafeteria piano. Heads begin to nod with the beat and a smile or two emerge from usually solemn lips.

For a word is uttered, yet Benny Gandy, a music major from Columbia, S.C., has fulfilled his objective.

Not a word is uttered, yet Benny Gandy, Gandy brings to the campus a playing conjured from within with a style that is impeccably honest and heartfelt.

Since age 4, Gandy's drive to master the keyboard has run deep. Gandy emerged from a musical family, where his grandfather first learned the piano. Benny said, "All of my grandfather's sons played the piano, but his youngest son would play with me. He was a year older, and we would sit for hours, playing the 'Boogie Woogie' over and over again." Throughout most of his childhood and teenage years, Gandy and his uncle continued to practice, beating out TV tunes on the keys.

Gandy's sixth grade year opened new doors toward his piano playing. Gandy started clarinet lessons, and continued to play other instruments in the years following.

Through his instrument lessons, Gandy learned to read notes, which helped him to decipher his father's piano books.

Gandy said, "My father bought the books, but could never understand them. Now I could." A milestone reached, Gandy

grew confident in the next steps to follow. He continued to practice. "I'd practice and practice until I could come upon something that sounded right", said Gandy. "I would then look at it, and think if I could get it once, I could get it again and go from there."

The church became another outlet for Gandy's playing. "We grew up in the church," Benny said. "I would practice a hymn I had picked upon. Later, during a service, I'd be able to accompany Dad, who would always play the organ."

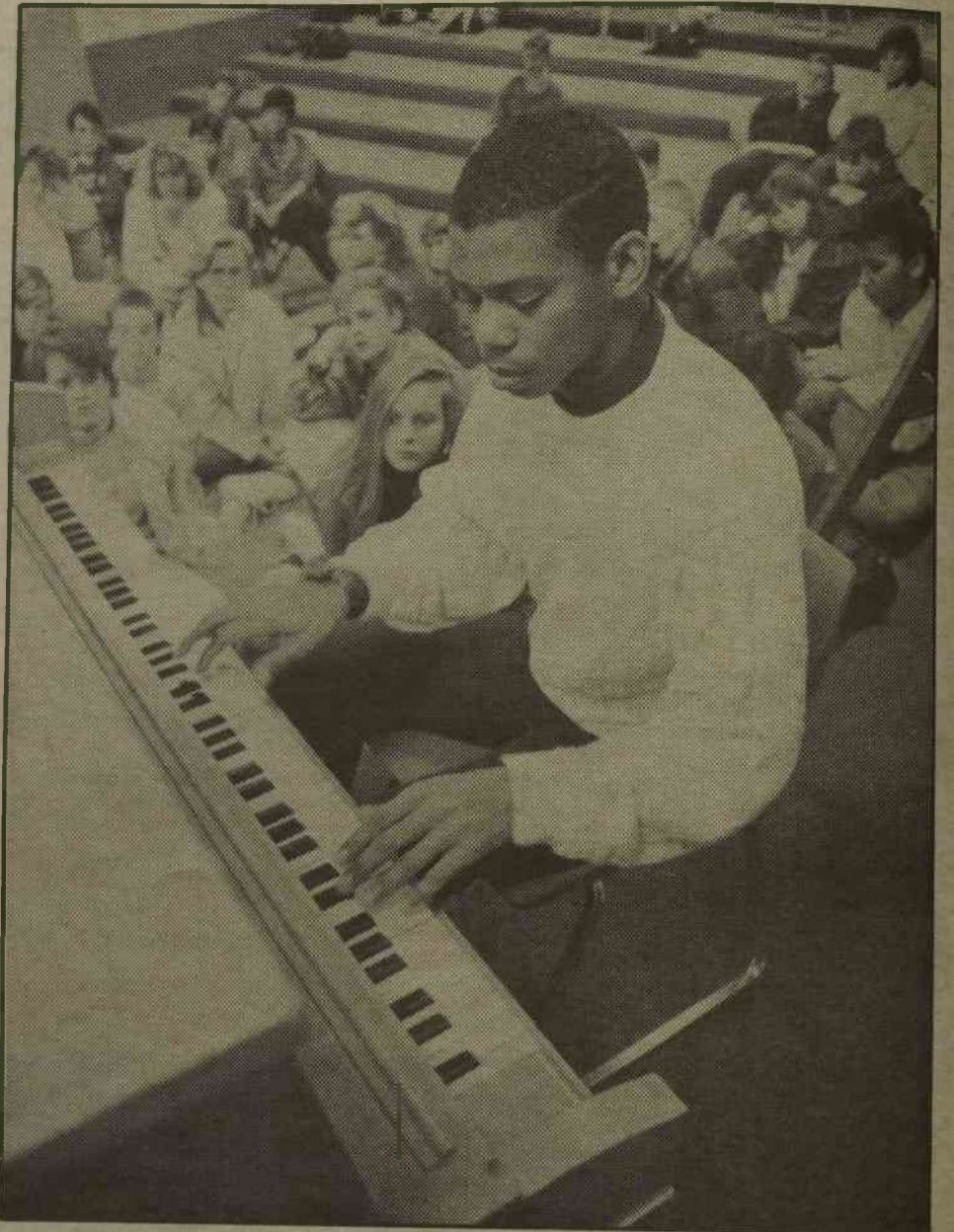
Gandy says it was pretty simple to 'pick up' on a hymn and play in the church because of the gospel style music. There's really no set key to play, so just by playing the hymn, the piano player could successfully accompany the choir's unpredictable range and flow of vocals.

Gandy still struggles with sight reading, and still continues to play mostly by ear.

Here at Brevard, Gandy is as hungry to learn as ever. From drilling scales to hours of sight reading and practice, Gandy is determined to be a "Knight" of the keyboards.

"I've found that my playing makes people happy, and I love to do that," Gandy said. He grins. "I want to tickle their ears, and give to people a gift they can always feel and enjoy," he said.

Gandy hopes to continue his education at Winthrop College, and eventually earn a doctorate degree from the University of Wisconsin.



Sharing his natural gift for jazz, BC pianoman Benny Gandy leads a seminar recently at Brevard Middle School. (BC photo by Jock Lauterer)



Having fun with crayons? Dispelling the February Blah's? Whatever it was, the "Brevard College Farm" mural that appeared in the computer science classroom took a lot of work and represented the "talents" of a bunch of folks, including, left to right, Eric Hansen, Mellinda Hansen and Jill Baldwin. (BC news bureau photo)

BC students win prizes during Phon-a-thon

by Sara Booker

CASH prizes and gifts were awarded to students who volunteered their evening time to participate in the 1988 phone-a-thon for prospective students.

Over the past few weeks, volunteer students were responsible for personally notifying prospective students for the Feb. 13th visitation day as well as providing any additional information regarding questions they may have about the school.

Prizes and gifts were not the only way students benefitted from participating in the phone-a-thon. Since phone-a-thon participation is considered a form of community service, students with disciplinary points were allowed to work off their points through hourly participation, while at the same time enjoying free refreshments.

The 1988 phone-a-thon was held four nights a week from 6:30 to 9:30 in the conference room in the Beam Administration Building.