

ARTS

Soul Train

A night to remember

When necessity and imagination get together, they can breed some serious off-spring.

A case in point is the spectrum of Black entertainment on campus. When it became clear at the outset that the UNC establishment was not going to bend over backward or frontward, or even slightly stoop to provide cultural activities for Black students, we did our own.

The BSM's Opeyo Dancers, Gospel Choir, Ebony Readers and Onyx Theatre were spawned by this benign neglect. So were Black fraternities and sororities and social organizations. And so was Productions 84, a classroom project which became bigger and bigger until it

Entertainment

By
Allen H. Johnson III

enveloped half the campus as performers or spectators.

One of the most noteworthy children of neglect, however, was mothered not only by negligence but also by those green, rectangular little slips of paper that have made grown men cry and brave undergraduates major in accounting or pharmacy or some other foolishness — Money.

The Black Student Movement found itself mired in \$3,000 debt last fall and had to come up with imaginative, entertaining programming that the UNC populace would pay to see.

There were several options:

— The Almighty Turn-Out-the-Lights-Turn-Up-the-Bass Disco Jam. Unfortunately, not too many folks are going to shell out more than a couple of quarters for a night of rhythm and sweat in Upendo.

— The talent show, which always goes over big in Chapel Hill because of the tremendous wealth of talent in the Black community. Problem was, so many talent shows had been held recently that yet still another one might not draw anybody but the performers and their boyfriends and girlfriends.

— The concert with a big-name band. It can be effective, but a concert got the BSM into \$3,000 debt in the first place.

Then one day, while munching on chili dogs in the BSM office, Central Committee members Sheila Peters and Greg Pennington came up with a solution.

The plan was put into action immediately and on a chilly, rainy evening last November, when Black folk traditionally

stay inside, Great Hall was packed wall to wall to greet the first edition of the "Soul Train Disco." Charles Davis, a graduate student in psychology, played the role of emcee "John" Cornelius and sounded remarkably like the guy on TV as he prefaced each act with a deep-voiced introduction. One of the more memorable acts of the night was "Chaka Can's" convincing lip-synch of "I'm Every Woman." Can, alias sophomore Roxanne Stanard, enjoyed every minute of it.

"I did it because I'm in love with the woman (Chaka Kahan)," says Stanard. "I like her positiveness about being Black and being a woman."

Stanard, a drama major, says she would like to portray Minnie Riperton or Deniece Williams because they would offer her a new challenge.

Also gracing the Great Hall stage was "Teddy Pendergraff," who elicited oohs, aahs and a mob of eager females at his feet as he lip-synched "Close the Door."

"I don't know what made the women behave like that tonight," said Roscoe, "Teddy McClain, a senior who had been a little shy about doing the whole thing, but I ain't even gonna complain."

If Teddy and Chaka didn't suit your fancy, Beverly Wells portrayed "Diane Ross," James Alexander, now a Blank Ink co-editor, led "Parlerment" and Rosalind McGhee, Lelo Hester, Carla Whitlock, and Janis Watlington brought us the "Brides of Frankenstein."

Besides the lip-synchs, there was serious talent as well. Sophomore Karen Cuthrell, who now reigns as Miss Black North Carolina, sang a tune from "Purlie" and Gary Griggs, a poor man's local version of Isaac Hayes, added the mellow "Don't Go Changin'!"

"Soul Train also enjoyed a broader audience than most Black-oriented campus events. Co-sponsored with campus radio station WXYC-FM, which provided music and lights, the affair even drew white patrons. This was most clearly evidenced when flashily a tired white couple walked off with first place in the dance contest.

Indeed, the first gig was so successful that "Soul Train II" was done in the spring with the return of some old acts and the addition of such luminaries as "Evelyn Martini King" and the "Madhattans."

It was only one of several BSM fundraisers that forced the organization to come up with fresh, innovative concepts.

"Soul Train" had something for everybody," says Sheila Peters. "Even though we had performers, the audience participated, too."

"It fulfilled a lot of things that needed to



Clinton's cuties on the hill?

Well not quite, but they might well have been. Janis Watlington, Lela Hester, Rosalind McGhee and Karla Whitlock parody the Brides of Funkenstein in the Soul Train Disco, the most unique and successful fundraiser in BSM history. Yackety-Yack photo by Keith Worrell.

be fulfilled," says Roxanne Stanard. "It helped the BSM pay off the loan and it brought people together."

Phil Woods, a junior who sang in the second "Soul Train," would like to see a third edition with more campus talent involved. "There's so much talent on this campus that hasn't been exposed," he says.

Thank goodness the BSM is not in debt

this year. And let us hope that it won't take another \$3,000 debt to get us some unique, well-conceived programming.

In my next two columns, I'll continue to highlight significant developments in campus social and cultural activities. Next issue (if you decide to tolerate my writing again) we'll look at the hows and whys of the biggest consistent attraction on campus — the block show.

AREA HAPPENINGS



Concerts

The Emotions, Greensboro Coliseum, Nov. 2
The Jacksons, Fayetteville Cumberland County Arena, Nov. (tentative).

The O'Jays, Greensboro Coliseum, Nov. 10.

Campus Events

BSM Homecoming featuring All-Campus Block Show, Nov. 10.

Faculty Council Meeting discussing Long Committee Recommendations, Oct. 19

Variety

Anthology Langston Hughes, 103 Bingham, Dec. 5, 6, 8 p.m.

Watch for any BSM gospel choir concerts, performances by Opeyo dancers, and Ebony Readers.

Anyone with any information concerning Arts on campus or any events, writing you would like to see published, please contact Karen L. Smith, 313 James, or call 933-4586.