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**Next black concert hero
Bates' music livens Memorial Hall**

by Smith Turner

Labeled as the "next black concert hero," concert pianist Leon Bates has been making appearances in numerous concert halls extending from Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center to the Philadelphia Academy of Music. Performances with symphonies have included the Philadelphia, Detroit, Atlanta, Denver, Cincinnati, Nashville, Savannah, The National Memorial Hall on UNC's campus.

The concert consisted of works by French composer Maurice Ravel and Russian composer Sergei Rachmanienoff. The first half of the concert was composed of Ravel's "Sonatine" and "Gaspard del la Nuit", which is considered to be one of the most difficult pieces in piano repertoire.

After intermission Bates mesmerized the audience with his rendition of Rachmaninoff's "3 Etudes Tableaux" and Sonata No 2 in B Flat minor". He played these pieces with considerable eloquence, skill, and originality. But what probably most impressed the audience was his finger dexterity most evident in "Non allegro", the second movement of "Sonata No 2 in B flat minor".

As an encore to his already impressive concert Bates performed Brahms' "Intermezzo in B flat minor", which left the audience content that they had witnessed a rising star in the classical music industry.

On the stage Bates exemplifies virtuosity, while off the stage Bates extends his love and knowledge of music to the classroom. He has been on the faculty at Oberlin School of Conservatory and is presently a faculty member at the University of Delaware.

maintaining a plausible academic average. A slide-show and paraphernalia were presented as each Black Greek president recited the history and founders of their perspective fraternities and sororities; and a party, sponsored by the BCG, was held in Great Hall following the convocation. ■

Although classical music is Bates main concentration, the Philadelphia native also has played jazz, gospel, and rock n' roll in high school and college. In fact he listens to just as much jazz as he does classical music. Two of his favorite jazz artist include Chick Corea and John Coltrane.

Bates spends his spare time lifting weights. He finds that it not only helps to building his body, but also aids in the relaxation needed to give a good piano performance.

Bates is unique not only because he is one of the few classical pianists that lifts weights, but also because he is one of the few blacks concert pianist, besides Andre Watts, who has reached plateaus of success. Bates credits his parents; support, his teachers, especially Natalie Henderson of Temple, and his winning of a national competition that provided opportunities for him to play with various orchestras.

Bates attributes the lack of black participation in the area of classical music due to keen competition. Also, economics pose another problems. Musicians need to be able to invest in a person who will help them to "reach the higher level of ability."

Bates says, many aspiring black musicians lacks repertoire. He considers himself lucky that he has been able to enter at least a contest a year from ages 15-25, which greatly aided in his building of a repertoire.

Time also is a factor. Some future musicians are unable to maintain a high skill level. Often times they have to work other jobs to survive, which often means a job not in the field of music. Or in some instances a black starts in the field of classical music, but turns to other elements of music such as jazz, pop, or rock, because money is more accessible there.

Bates stresses the main thing is to "develop skills thoroughly, be able to write in varying idioms" and be not only "proficient on the instrument", but also knowledgeable of all types of music and its background. ■

**BSM Gospel Choir
perserves black culture**

Dawn Reavis

Gospel music is an important part of Black American culture. In the past, gospel music was the slaves' main channel of communication. Secret meetings, messages to runaways, and everyday trails were all related in gospel song. Today, the Black Student Movement Gospel Choir is maintaining this small part of Black culture.



The BSM gospel choir is twelve years old and presently consists of 94 members, who are selected by auditions held each fall. The choir travels and performs both in and out of state. Invitations are voted upon by choir members. "The choir has always toured across North Carolina and has been used by the Admissions office and the University Administration to recruit Black students by presentative of Black culture outlets do exist that are representing of Black culture in this predominately White campus despite its small minority student population," states Zollie Stevenson, Area Director of Morrison.

The choir performs in different dorms during the year and at many

cultural programs sponsored by different campus organizations. The choir also performed in prisons and many public schools. "The BSM gospel choir traditionally sings at Project Uplift, Decision Days and Minority Career Day Programs, which are recruitment and/or development programs sponsored by the University," states Stevenson.

People who join the choir are attracted for various reasons. "My initial reason for joining the choir was for enjoyment," says Lee Cooley, "the choir helps take my mind off of the pressures of studies," states Cooley. Black songs were an outlet for the slaves and the choir serves as a continuation of that.

"I love to sing gospel music and gospel music has become a part of me," states Latonya Simms. "I joined the choir because I enjoy singing and I was brought up singing gospel music in choirs, at schools and in churches."

The gospel song is unique in that it can have several different meanings. The title song to the choirs latest album is "Make it to The City." This song may be a reminder of what the slaves would sing when they were planning an escape, of some may think of "the city" as a certain goal," states Simms. "However, my interpretaion is that "the city" means heaven. Throughout the song the lyrics are 'If My Mother Don't Go I've Got To Make It, If My Father Don't Go I'VE Got To Make It' and I'm gonna try to "make it to the city"! proclaims Simms. ■

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