

# UNC Blacks Need To Improve

by Marjorie Roach  
Staff Writer

This Fall has seen a significant drop in black enrollment at UNC. Figures show that out of the 3,300 freshmen enrolled at the University this year, only 350 of them are black down from 427 in 1983. One University official attributes the decline to the enhanced recruiting efforts by predominantly black schools. Also, the rising cost of college in the face of decreasing financial aid is a cause.

Hayden B. Renwick, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences says academic success at this University is what helps recruiting. "When students go home after flunking out, they paint a dim picture of Carolina," he says. In the following interview, Dean Renwick expresses his concerns over the state many black students are in at the University.

**BLACK INK:** What is your main concern regarding blacks at this University?

**RENWICK:** Blacks apparently don't consider academics a main concern based on numerous reports of missed classes. We've designed an Academic Monitoring System which reports all D's and F's. Over 59 percent of last



years freshmen were reported as having D's and F's. They were notified by mail, yet we could not get the vast majority to attend tutorials designed to help them.

**BLACK INK:** How have blacks done in previous years academically?

**RENWICK:** When you look at the last 4 years, it is getting worse. 48% of the blacks on this campus have below a C average. Out of 1300 blacks, less than 100 have a B average or above—this leads me to believe academics is not top priority.

**BLACK INK:** You once said in a previous interview; "It's not recruitment that's the problem, but retention." With that in mind, why has enrollment at black colleges increased whereas black enrollment has declined at the University?

**RENWICK:** I think Carolina has a lot to do with that. The University has not provided adequate support systems—combined with the lack of priorities, the black student then flunks out. And that same student hurts the community because he does not admit he flunked out, instead he berates the University. The high school senior believes what he hears from those peers and changes his views about coming to UNC. Combine this with the stepped up recruiting of black schools and the decision is not hard.

**BLACK INK:** What can be done about the situation?

**RENWICK:** Design supportive programs that will ensure the success for the black student.

**NOTE:** There will be a follow-up on statistics and trends about Black enrollment and academic progress. Look for this information in upcoming issues of Black Ink.

## Black Cloud Over "Purple Rain"

By Winfred Cross

"1999" was certainly good to Prince Rodgers Nelson. Although released during the "Michael Jackson era," the album firmly established him as one of the most celebrated musician/singer/songwriters. With the release of his fifth album, the incredible soundtrack to the not-so-incredible movie "Purple Rain," Prince produces his most consistent and satisfying work.

The album, as does the movie, opens with "Let's Go Crazy." The song opens with Prince sounding like a television evangelist, pipe organ and all in the background. "Dearly beloved/We are gathered here today/To get through this thing called life..." he says. "And if de-elevation tries to break you down/Go crazy!" He then cuts loose with one of those high-pitched screams and rips into the album's most wicked beat. Its high energy guitar work and bombastic drum beat make it the album's most spirited song. The pace quickly changes with the second song, "Take Me With U," a duet with Appollonia Kotero. Prince and the film's leading lady are no Roberta Elack and Peabo Bryson, but they handle this sweet, mid-tempo love song fairly well. Staying with the same mood Prince slows the pace even further with "The Beautiful Ones," a torrid ballad which showcases his royal badness's incredible vocal range. "What's it gonna be," he screams. "Do you want him/Or do you want me?/Cause I want you!" He sort of over does it a bit with the screeching falsetto but, none the less, it's a very lovely song.

Unfortunately the rest of side one isn't so lovely. The side's last two songs are by far the album's worst.

"Computer Blue" is pretty bland, but musically and lyrically. And "Darling Nikki" sounds like it was dug up from a box of discarded Jimmi Hendrix demo tapes. What it lacks in melody it makes up in filthy lyrics: "I knew a girl named Nikki/Some say she was a sex fiend/I met her in a hotel lobby/Masturbating with a magazine." That's pretty raunchy stuff.

Fortunately, those songs are the album's only faults. The rest is magnificent. The second side opens with the killer, "When Doves Cry." I don't have the slightest idea what the song means or even what does sound like when they cry, but I do know it is one of the best songs to come from a movie this year. (Well, considering other movie songs like "Ghost Busters" and "I Can Dream About You," that's not much of a compliment.) The album's last three songs are the album's best. "I Would Die 4 U," "Baby I'm A Star," and the beautifully touching ballad "Purple Rain," are all performed live with his band Th Revolution. Each song has a wide open sonic quality that is enhanced by the use of strings, something that Prince has avoided in the past. On these songs he is a man possessed. He sings each as if he'll never sing again, especially on "Baby I'm A Star." Sure, he may sound arrogant when he says "Take a picture sweetie/I ain't got time to waste/Cause baby I'm a star," but he's singing the pure truth; he is a star.

Without question "Purple Rain" is the best movie soundtrack of this decade. With this album Prince shows that he has finally learned that it is the quality of the songs and not the quan-

tity of sex that makes a great album. Truly, he has made a great album.

But he hasn't made a great movie. Without question the soundtrack to this film is helping to draw millions of people into the theaters to see it. In its first few months of release the movie has already grossed over \$40 million. It paid for itself in its first weekend of release. (It cost \$7 million to make.) It is a sight to see. Visually, it is a satisfying film, especially in the music scenes. But take away the pretty stage lights and the music and you have an awful film.

To say the least, the acting is pitiful. That is to be expected. The movie only uses one real actor, Clarence Williams III. But he never really gets the chance to act because he doesn't get much screen time. Prince is awkward as the kid, even though he's supposed to be playing himself. But what he lacks in talent he makes up in stage presence. Whenever he enters a scene, he steals it. His curious blend of saint/sinner magnetism draws all attention toward him. Too bad he has to open his mouth.

The same goes for Appollonia. Her looks carry her through most of her scenes but not even they are enough to help her when she sings "Sex Shooter," the movie's weakest song.

The only real acting is done by Morris Day and his zany sidekick Jerome Benton. These two seem the most at home in front of the camera. As a comic pair, they add needed relief to the poorly written script. They even manage to do a fresh version of Abbot and Costello's "Who's on First" routine. The sad thing about their performances, however, is that they are

stock black character types. Day's womanizing, sharp dressing slickster character is nothing more than the thousands of other "coon" characters that have come before him. He pops and rolls his eyes and sends out high pitched cackles at the snap of a finger. His buddy Benton could easily be mistaken for Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, the first to perfect the comic valet role. Anderson was usually shown as being smarter than his employer (Jack Benny) but usually in a way so that he would look as foolish as his employer. The same goes for Benton. The two represent the sad attitude that the movie industry has toward black movie roles.

The movie's most offensive quality is the way it treats and projects women. In one scene a woman angrily approaches Day to show her resentment of being stood up, the woman is dumped into a large dempsy dumpster. In another, Appollonia is slapped into a chest-of-drawers after she has given Prince an expensive guitar. When the group Appollonia 6 performs they are gyrating in front of the camera like street hussies. In the rehearsal scenes Day tells his "girls" that he wants to see "some asses wiggling." And the only song written about a girl in the movie, "Darling Nikki," is about a whore.

If I had only paid attention to the music scenes of "Purple Rain," I would have felt the movie was decent. But I can get music videos from MTV. When I go to the movies I expect to be entertained by action or drama. "Purple Rain" has neither. □