

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

Wesleyan To Stage Award-Winning Broadway Musical

By Joyce Collins

Decree Campus Life Editor

"The music is so infectious. When you see football players singing music from a play, then it is a good musical," said Melvin Tunstall, who is the choreographer and director for Wesleyan's upcoming production of the musical "Once on This Island."

According to promotional literature from the Theatre Department, this "highly original and theatrical Caribbean adaptation of the popular fairy tale 'The Little Mermaid' sings and dances the story of Ti Moune, the black peasant girl who rescues, nurses and falls in love with Daniel, a mulatto from a wealthy family. When Daniel is returned to his people, the gods who rule the island guide Ti Moune on a quest to test the strength of her love against the powerful forces of prejudice, hatred and death."

Wesleyan sophomore Brittany Richardson is playing the lead role of Ti Moune. "The music is upbeat, has a Caribbean feel, and is over the top," she said. "It's a fairy tale, and who doesn't like fairy tales?"

Tunstall is pleased with the level the cast is performing on. "They sound like the Broadway Cast," he said. "I can't believe I have little super divas. Their voices make your jaw drop and every day they continue to prove me right."

Some cast members have faced

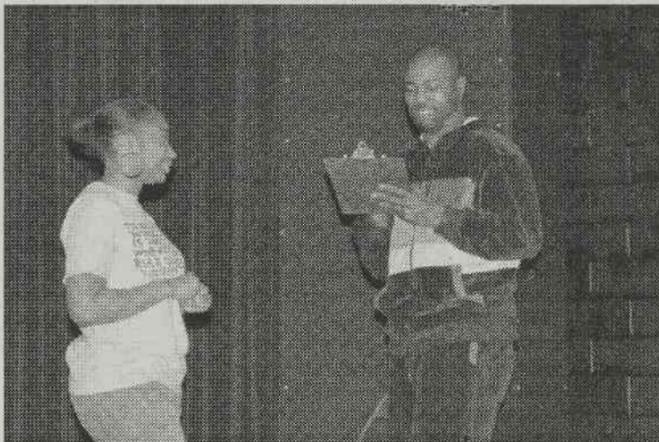
challenges with this play. "I've had a hard time with dancing and singing at the same time," said Richardson.

Sophomore Moise Tabon had to step outside of himself to perform his role. "This play takes the actors out of character," he said.

Freshman Antonio Rowland said that he had a hard time working with the different actors. "My struggles have been trying to get along with everybody," he said. "In order for the play to be successful, actors gotta have chemistry with each other."

Tunstall acknowledged that the choreography has been most challenging. "More so for the boys, the dancing has been a battle, because of the whole stigma that comes along with it," he said, pointing out that "a lot of the cast does not have dance training."

The cast includes: Ti Moune, played by Brittany Richardson; Daniel/Beauxhomme, Stuart Briscar; Asaka, Nicole Louisius; Agwe, Malcolm Armwood; Papa Ge, Antonio Rowland; Erzulie, Chalinin Cooke; Mama Erualie, Dionne Luckett; Tonton Julian, Gregory Spence; Andrea/Madame Armand, Bradley Mullins; Daniel's Father, Doug Roenker, Jr.; Gatekeeper, Cainaen Hannah; the Chief Storyteller, Moise Tabon. The children are: Gavin McNeil, Lau-



Brittany Richardson chats with director Melvin Tunstall Photo by Penrod

ren Medlin, and Mya Rogers. Other characters are: Moses Kargna,

Michael Stengel, Hassan Adams, Tommy Thompson, Joshua Rogers,

Jennifer Cox, Shakena Spellman, Amyelle Clark, Maria Walston, Lauren Johnson, Rozelia Louisius, Brittany Marshall, Melaine James, Cecelia Thorpe, Ashley Smith, and Cassandra Mangum.

A Burlington native, Tunstall graduated from the elite Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, where he obtained his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre. He has performed in "42nd Street," "Jesus Christ Superstar," and "Joe's Café," to name a few. Tunstall is an adjunct faculty member working alongside Roger Drake, associate professor of theatre. "Once on this Island" is scheduled for 8 p.m. on February 21, 22, and 23 at the Dunn Center.

Tunstall urged students to attend one of the performances. "I hope students support their peers and come on out."

Obama, Democrats Shine in Informal Survey on Candidates

By Chris Ochoa

Decree Editor

Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton led in a recent Thursday morning opinion poll by The Decree to find the most favored presidential candidates.

The Decree staff scattered around campus to identify the candidates that most interested members of the Wesleyan community. The results indicate that Democratic presidential candidates were favored by a wide margin over the Republicans.

Sen. Obama (D-Ill.) was the most favored candidate among Wesleyan's students and faculty and staff. Steve Bahnaman, reference librarian, believes that Obama has a chance of winning because he is well-liked. "Hillary is divisive," he said. "You either love her or hate her. Most people like Obama, which will cause him to get votes. People will vote for him even if they don't agree with what he says because they like him."

After seeing Obama on BET (Black Entertainment Television), sophomore Anthony Tyrus said, "I'm interested in Obama because he states issues that affect minorities as well as all Americans. The commercial on BET helped to convince me to vote for him. I like how he approaches situations and backs his claims up with supporting evidence."

Freshman David Krasnowick and junior Nya Wright feel drawn by Obama's charisma. "I like the way he handles himself and the way he speaks," said Krasnowick.

Wright said, "I'm interested in Obama. He is educated, black, strong and a great leader. I'm going to vote for him. Besides, you don't see other candidates promoting themselves like you see him; Obama is everywhere."

Also interested in Obama, senior Cedric Townsend said, "I agree with his political views; it seems that he has some amazing ideas and great plans for America. Also, I would love to see history made in the White House."

If elected, Obama would be the first U.S. minority president, but he is not the only candidate who would make history.

Sen. Clinton (D-N.Y.) would become the first woman president. Clinton had the second largest fan base, according to the Decree's informal poll.

Clinton is well known from her commercials and the national exposure she's gotten on her plans for health care, jobs, and other important issues.

"I want Hillary to win," said sophomore Brittanee Smithson. "I saw her commercial and she is for equal healthcare for Americans and she wants to bring the troops home." Smithson, who has a brother in the war, said, "that's music to my ears."

Also intrigued by Clinton's stands on the issues, sophomore Dave Reco Peterson said, "She makes a lot of great points about health care, jobs, taxes and other important issues that need correcting that have to do with the well being of Americans."

Clinton was also a popular candidate because she has experience in the White House.

"She seems to have the most experience of all the candidates because she is a former first lady," said Cassandra Silver of Student Affairs. "Behind every good man there is a good woman."

Clinton has generated negative feelings as well. Junior Ashley Ball decided that she was not voting for Clinton. "A lot of her ideals seem Republican," she said, "and I don't think she would be able to out-shine her husband."

Other candidates among the Democrats were selected as favorites besides the popular Obama and Clinton.

Initially, Dr. Jeffrey Kuglitsch, professor in earth sciences, favored Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), but Kucinich dropped out of the race. Now, Dr. Kuglitsch is determined to vote for another Democratic candidate who will keep the welfare of Americans at heart. "My gut feeling is that both Obama and Edwards

are closer to being traditional Democrats than Clinton and therefore are more likely to have the economic concerns of most of the American public closer to their hearts than either Hillary Clinton or any of the Republican candidates."

In the Wesleyan community, many were undecided, though leaning toward a Democrat. Academic Support Coordinator Stephanie Battle said, "I am undecided, between the Democratic candidates. I feel that they all speak on issues that are important to me."

William Boyd, a junior, said he was undecided because the candidates are missing a leadership quality. "I feel that all the candidates have some leadership qualities, but they're missing one thing that would make them a great leader," said Boyd.

The Democratic presidential candidates were the most popular and by a large margin, according to the survey. Republicans Mike Huckabee, former governor of Arkansas, and Rudolph Giuliani, former mayor of New York, were favored most out of the Republican party.

Other survey respondents said they had not paid much attention to the campaign or declined to state a favorite.

Hall Sets Record as Bishops Cruise Past CNU Captains

By Jarad Brown

Decree Sports Writer

In front of 500 fired up fans and to the tune of the Rocky Mount high school marching band the Battling Bishops, riding on the back of record setting Lenny Hall and a barrage of three pointers from Jarmel Arrington, cruised past the Christopher Newport University Captains, 123-88. The win raised the Bishops record to 8-6.

Coming into the game Head Coach John Thompson seemed to have a reserved optimism as he stated "We've been great at times, but I really expected more consistency than we've had." That's exactly what he got on January 22 as his team had five scorers in double figures, led by the sharp-shooting Arrington who had 30 points after going 6-9 from beyond the arc, as well as Lenny Hall's record-setting 21 points.

It was these 21 that led Hall to his spot as NCWC's new all-time career leading scorer with 7,777 points. When asked if he was thinking of the record at all, Hall responded by saying "I didn't even know I was close to it."

Coach Thompson had this to say about his player and the new record: "Lenny spent a year as a red shirt and I really think that helped him develop as a player, which is exactly what he has done his whole career. He's more than just a scorer, and as the leader of this team he deserves the record."

Against CNU, the Bishops leapt out to a 7-0 run and led by as many as 18 in the first half before carrying a 56-41 lead into the half. Coach Thompson had no half-time comment, but obviously didn't need one as his team exploded in the second half, leading by 20 or more points on five occasions and by as many as 36 before finishing the blowout, 123-88.

The CNU victory was a high point for the Bishops following an up-and-down first half to the season. After a season-opening win against Rutgers-Newark the Bishops stumbled with back-to-back 20-point losses to Virginia Wesleyan and Division I East Carolina. Even with the stumble the Bishops managed a 4-4 record after their first eight games, thanks to the

help of a three-game winning streak, including a win over Piedmont that captured the Roger Taylor invitational crown, where the Bishops won by an average of 54 points per game.

When asked to identify a key upcoming game, Coach Thompson replied with "In my eyes they are all big." And he wasn't exaggerating as the Bishops prepare for a stretch that includes four out of five games being in conference, with three of those on the road.

Expectations are high amongst players and coaches for the rest of their season as Arrington was quoted as saying "With the shooting and the defensive intensity we had against CNU, a conference title isn't out of the question." The coaches seem to agree as Coach Thompson said: "We're certainly capable of winning the conference tournament; that is, we have the talent. I just hope we're playing our best basketball at a consistent level come tournament time."

It'll be interesting to see if the Bishops can make their players and coaches out to be fortune tellers, throughout the upcoming tough streak and later into the season.



Lenny Hall

Sports Information Photo