

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

Musical 'Children of Eden' Showcases Wesleyan Talent

by Bristy Parker
Decree Staff Writer

"What's that glowing on top of the tree hill?" was the question that Eve asked in the play "Children of Eden," Wesleyan's spring musical.

Directed by Melvin Tunstall III, the two-hour play gave us a version of the book of Genesis in the Bible. It ran March 8-10 in Minges Auditorium and drew an estimated audience of 150 to each performance.

Eve's curiosity was the theme of act one of the play. In act one, the Wesleyan Players portrayed the story of Adam and Eve. In the beginning, a chorus of talented storytellers describes the beginning of the world. Father (God), played by Tunstall, then comes on stage and declares, "Let there be..." as he builds the world based on his dream. He creates Adam and Eve and the perfect Garden of Eden for them.

Eve (Sara Bergland) is like any curious child who inquires about many things. When she asks "What's that glowing tree on top of the hill?", Father explains to them about the tree of knowledge and that they must never eat the fruit. As Adam and Eve persist on asking why not, Father redirects their attention by asking them to name the animals.

The next day, Eve discovers the tree of knowledge, which becomes illuminated. She sings, "The Spark of Creation," which was a contemporary song about the spark of creativity and exploration. By the applause, it was clear the audience loved her performance. For the following number, "In Pursuit of Excellence," Brittany Richardson plays a conniving snake and tells Eve to go ahead and eat the fruit to obtain knowledge that

she says God is trying to keep from her and Adam. The forbidden "apples," played by Rozelius Lousius and Hilary Daniel, shared a sassy performance along with Richardson. Their "Vegas" style costumes complemented the act.

When Father finds out that Eve has disobeyed him by eating the fruit, she is exiled. Adam (BJ Collins) must choose between staying in the garden and leaving with Eve. His "A World Without You" was a beautiful, emotional song, which received a lot of applause and gave the audience a sense of warmth.

A while after they are kicked out of the garden, the storytellers sing about Adam and Eve's barren new environment in "The Wasteland." Eve gives birth to two sons, Cain and Abel, played by Benjamin Kruk and Anthony Battle. As the boys grow older, they shadow their parents' actions and become curious about their own lives. Cain wants to prove that they are not the only people in the world and indicates that he wants to be a part of a larger family. Abel tries to get him to stay and be obedient, but Cain kills him with a rock during their brawl—an outstanding scene between Battle and Kruk. Cain runs away as Father appears before him, and curses him in the song, "The Mark of Cain." In this act, Dionne Luckett and Greg Spence belted out awesome solo performances.

During the song, "Children of Eden," Eve talks with Father, and sings of coming back to the garden. She asks her family "not to blame us, we were just human," referring to her being exiled from the garden with Adam and the impact of one generation's experience on their descendants.

Act two, the story of Noah and the flood, begins with the storytellers sing-

ing about who begat who thousands of years later, in the song, "Generations." They follow the line of Adam to Noah and his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Cainen Hannah and Crystal Marable accompany this scene with great solo acts.

Father wants Noah (Matthew De Abrew), to quickly finish building the ark, so he can flood the world and destroy the race of Cain. As the flood is coming, youngest son Japheth (Battle) is on a deadline to find a wife to bring on the ark to be saved.

Japheth tries to bring his true love, Yonah the servant girl (Rachel Radford) to the table. But she has the mark of Cain and this causes an uproar. Japheth becomes angry and storms off while the animals are being boarded on the ark.

Noah apologizes to Yonah for not being able to take her with them. In the song, "Stranger in the Rain," Yonah expresses how she is used to being an outcast. Radford's emotional performance was so natural and she really put her heart into the song. Japheth comes alongside her and reassures her they will be together and plans on hiding her in the ark. This dramatic scene was complemented by the song, "In Whatever Time," because they did not know how long they were going to live.

As the rain comes and floods the land for forty days and forty nights, the downpour still continues, which created a food shortage and a life-threatening situation. Yonah wonders if she is the reason the rains have not ceased and sends a dove to find land during the song, "Sailor of the Skies." When Shem (Andrew Herring) and Ham (Kruk) find Yonah, an altercation breaks out between Japheth and Ham, imitating the Adam and Cain struggle of act one. But this time, the murder is stopped by Yonah standing in the way.

Mama Noah (Nicole Lousius) tells Noah that Father no longer speaks to him. She advises him to be the father now and make his own choices, which is reflected in the song, "The Hardest Part of Love."

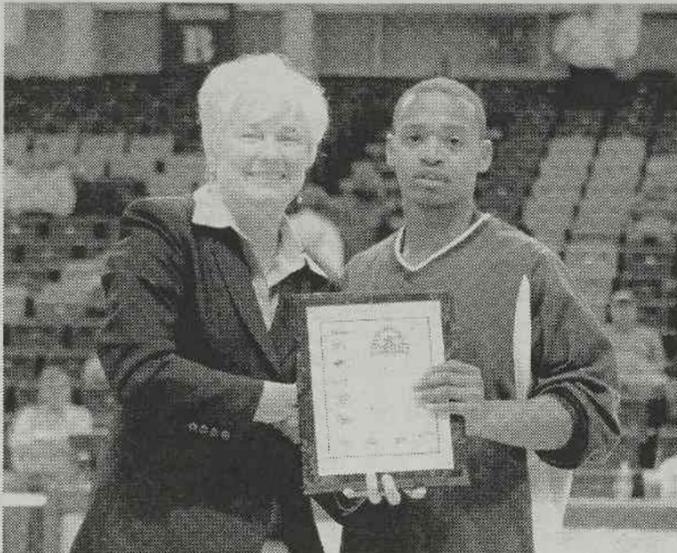
Noah calls everyone together to perform a ceremony. He makes the choice of marrying Yonah and Japheth. The dove returns with an olive branch and in the upbeat song, "Ain't It Good," Mama Noah, joined by the others, celebrates their hope for dry land and new life. The scene was outstanding, highlighted by the soulful voice of Lousius. The audience was so involved, clapping to the beat.

Tunstall did a remarkable job with the choreography, costumes, stage and musical direction. Roger Drake, associate professor of theatre, was in charge of the creative production design. The lighting, done by Kimla Brandt, and sound, done by Jamie Anderson and Melinda Batchelor, were excellent.



The Wesleyan community gathered to remember senior Adam Larue, following his unexpected death in Rocky Mount during spring break. See story page 4.

Decree file photo



Trey Drake earned the USA South MVP award for his sterling play as he led the Bishops to a regular season title and a chance at the tournament championship. Presenting the award was USA South Commissioner Rita Wiggs. And last week, the senior guard was named second team All-American and first team All-South. See related story on page 3.

SI Photo

Tuition & Fees to Exceed \$30K for NCWC Education

By Jarad Brown
Decree Editor

NCWC students have heard the talk of "Wesleyan becoming America's next great college."

Now as a new academic year approaches, those same students will hear the cost of being "great."

Wesleyan plans an increase in tuition of 5.6 percent, pushing the cost from \$21,780 to \$23,000. Room rates will increase 2.99 percent and board will rise 3.02 percent. The total cost will rise 5.1 percent to a grand total of \$30,914 per year, according to President James Gray.

"I would have liked very much to report no increases in costs for our students and their families," Gray said. "But we believe strongly that our investments in the future will speed us on our way to being that kind of educational leader that we all aspire to be."

The increase comes at a time of high employment. The U.S. Department of Labor reported that as of February the unemployment rate was at a steady 9.7 percent, which breaks down to 14.9 million Americans without jobs.

The same department reported that North Carolina ranked as the state with the ninth highest unemployment rate (11.1 percent). This means finding an extra \$1,220 for tuition alone might not be possible for all NCWC students and their families.

"People are already struggling to pay their bills at home," sophomore Justin Lowe said. "An increase in tuition is only going to push students deeper in debt with loans. I mean, we have to start paying that back six months after graduation, so we're starting off in a hole."

Junior Mike Young agreed that the price increase comes at a tough time. "I'm not going to struggle personally, but I know plenty of people who will," he said, adding, "I hope we at least get better food out of the deal."

Despite reaching the \$30,000 mark, the overall 5.1 cost increase is the smallest in the past six years. In contrast to older, more well-established colleges and universities, it's harder for Wesleyan to dip into its endowment to pay for operating expenses, not to mention financial aid. Its endowment was about \$8.6 million as of February, Gray said.

"We are on our way to reaching our potential as America's next great college," Gray said. "Unfortunately, a college education gets more costly each year. It is our duty—and my personal commitment—to provide greater value in return for that increase."

President Gray included a laundry list of explanations for the increase, ranging from escalating costs in food and electricity to enhanced security on campus and the provision of a larger admissions staff.

Among other benefits, students will soon see more programs and a larger staff in student affairs, a new director of residence life as well as more scholarship money for both new and current students. The college hopes to continue making improvements to the campus and residence halls as well.

"I know it is challenging for our students and their families to provide for a top-quality education that Wesleyan provides," Gray said. "I want to emphasize that we believe

we are enhancing both the academics and campus environments—giving our students clear benefits from the increases."

Included in the overall cost increase is a \$50-per-semester student activities fee, to be given directly to student services. With the fee, nearly \$40,000 is expected to be available.

While President Gray wasn't able to completely define how the money would be spent he did state "let me stress that it will all be used to provide a more meaningful and enjoyable campus life."

Despite the benefits, some worry that the higher costs will hurt Wesleyan in luring new students to campus. While this is a valid concern, a peek into the cost of competing schools should ease minds.

Greensboro College already charges more than \$30,000 per year for students, and according to its official website, an expected 5.7 percent increase will be put into effect for the 2010-2011 school year.

Likewise Methodist is raising its price tag. Vice President for Enrollment Services Rick Lowe said that MU expects an increase above five percent. It currently includes charges to students such as a \$300 activities fee.

"We have done a thorough study of our costs versus other schools with whom we compete for students," Gray said. "I'm pleased to say that we are just a small amount above the average in both the cost of matriculating at Wesleyan and the increases from last year."

Gray dismissed speculation that Wesleyan's price hike is connected to recent problems in the financial aid office.

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SGA Elections Set for April 5-7

By Melanie Rhodes
Decree Staff Writer

A new voter registration process has been implemented as SGA gears up for the election of the 2010-11 president and executive board April 5-7.

Begun March 15, voter registration will continue until Friday, April 2. Students may register in the cafeteria from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and from 5 to 7 p.m., in the Hartness Student Center via sign-up sheet, or by e-mailing SGA Vice President Juliana Richardson at jr148954@my.ncwc.edu.

Two-term President Jacob Strickland believes that implementing the voting registration process will "help the students become more informed politically."

As vice president, Richardson is overseeing the voting registration process. She agrees that it will "provide students with a real-world process, will help cut down on random voting, will simplify the voting process."

Samantha House agrees that voting registration is good idea. "I like the idea of registering to vote through e-mail because of the easy access and it's not too complicated," she said.

SGA is enforcing existing eligibility rules for candidates in each of the three open positions—president, vice president and treasurer. In order to run for office, a student must have held voting rights

and maintained regular attendance at the biweekly meetings during the previous year. The secretary position is open to all students. For each of the four positions, candidates must maintain a 3.0 GPA and meet other criteria for their particular position.

As the election approaches, students identified qualities that they would like to see in the SGA President. House said that she would like a president that has the "ability to lead, provide guidance and take initiative. The president should set a good example, be understanding and fair to all clubs and individuals." It's important, she added, that SGA continue to "build connections and relationships with every student organization."

Terrance Johnson said that the next president should be a strong communicator. "I would like to see a President who has good communication skills and is willing to listen to the student body," he said.

Jaren Wilcox hopes that the new SGA administration will provide more student activities on campus, adding that the next president should be "honest and trustworthy."

The election will take place in the school cafeteria and the new president and executive board will be announced two days later, on April 9.

Students Headed in All Directions for Break

By John Kostet
Decree Staff Writer

March Break, Spring Recess, Study Week and even Reading Week are all various names for what most of us refer to as Spring Break. But usually spring break includes anything but reading, as students tend to leave campus and head south for beaches and parties.

"The best part of my break was to be

away from the dorms and enjoy a new environment, full of palm trees," said Anton Hysen who spent his break with friends in Panama City, Fla. "I had an awesome time at the beach, meeting new people from all over U.S."

Florida has for decades been one of the classic spring break destinations for college students and this year's break was certainly not an exception as many of the Wesleyan students hit the road down south.

Kristin Seidel and her boyfriend Florian Schmedes flew down to Miami and South Beach to enjoy the sun a couple of days. "The weather was amazing during the day with temperatures around 70 Fahrenheit," Seidel said.

Seidel also said it was hard not to be impressed by Ocean Drive, which is a popular street known for its surrounding design. "I loved walking there during the nights, as the streets were filled with all kinds of lights and music," she said.

Chynna Laws went down to Fort Walton Beach, Fla. to both see her sisters and spend time on the beach with her roommate, Tiara Joyner, and her husband. "I had a great time even though it was a bit chilly," Laws said, noting temperatures around the 60s.

The weather seems to play a major role when the students choose their destination, and it certainly did for Manuel Lomba and Jorge Ventura who took no risk of rain, flying down to Guatemala to stay ten days at fellow student Victor Wong's house.

Lomba said they enjoyed the weather every day, lying on the beach. But during the nights it was all about partying. "There were some incredible

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