

Dr. Rama Datta: World Class Professor

by Kathleen Barron

Dr. Rama D. Datta, Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities, has a lengthy list of credentials as an educator and lecturer both abroad and in the United States. She received her Ph.D and M.A. in Philosophy at Syracuse University, New York as well as an M.A. at Calcutta University in India. She received her B.A. (honors) with a minor in Economics and a major in Philosophy at Presidency College in India where she ranked first among the Philosophy Honors Students.

Dr. Datta has received many scholarships and awards including the J. C. Jones Award for Outstanding Teaching in the Humanities at FSU a nomination for Teacher of the Year in the College of Arts & Sciences in 1991. She has had a book and numerous papers published and is frequently invited to par-



ticipate on panels and in seminars, both as a lecturer and as a speaker. She is a member of professional organizations on Asian Studies and a lifetime member of an organization on Indian Philosophy. In 1985, she received an Honorable Mention

in the Directory of Professors in the United States and Canada, and in 1991 she was accepted as a member of the Aristotelian Society at University College in London, United Kingdom.

When selected philosophers from American universities trav-

elled to China for two weeks in September of this year, Dr. Datta was a member of the delegation. At that time she received an invitation to speak in Switzerland. As I compose this article, Dr. Datta is again out of the country conducting a seminar in her homeland, where she received the prestigious honor of being asked to conduct a seminar at the University of Calcutta during FSU's winter break.

Despite all of the honors in her list of credentials and her obviously busy schedule, Dr. Datta still has time to have a personal interest in each and every one of her students. She goes out of her way to seek them out and ask how they are doing. Anyone who has had the privilege of meeting her knows that she is a lady of class, a friend and, most importantly, a woman who sincerely cares.

FSU Group Hosts *The Piano Lesson*

Due to production errors in the last issue, the following article is being printed in its entirety here.

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The Piano Lesson by August Wilson was a Pulitzer Prize winner in 1990. According to the program from the play, the primary theme underlying all of Wilson's plays was the importance of connecting with your past in order to understand your relationship in society. This enabled the self-proclaimed "cultural

nationalist" to use theater to raise the consciousness of black people. In the play, the woman is denying her past in order to gain a sense of self-worth.

According to Kevin Moore, the play is a drama about a black family in Pittsburg in 1936. The story centers around a piano that comes into the family's possession. The piano had been the property of the same family that had "owned" this particular family's ancestors. Located in various places on the piano

were marks carved by those former slaves.

The controversy centers on the question of what to do with the piano. The sister wants to keep the piano as a tangible reminder of those bygone days. The brother argues for selling the piano and use the money to purchase the land on which their ancestors had worked.

The play was directed by a seasoned veteran in Educational Theatre, Dr. E. J. Fisher. Dr. Fisher holds advanced degrees in speech and theater from Grambling University, Tennessee State University, and the University of California. He has performed as a professional and served on the Mississippi Film Commission for several years. He has directed over 150 theatrical productions including several showcases and, most notable, the centennial production celebrating the history of Jackson State University.

Kevin Moore, a native of California, is an instructor in the Department of Communications, as

well as the stage designer and technical engineer. Mr. Moore would like to see more interest in theater classes such as mask making.

The cast consisted of Sherrie Deil, Joleffa Brown, Roger Grimsley, Owen Williams, Spencer Williams, Denicia Rashmon Matthews, Iris Joseph, and Gerald Puckett.

Members of the production staff included Mr. Kevin Moore, Ms. Aretha Bonds, Ms. Brenda Echole, Ms. Lashawna Fitzpatrick, Gerald Puckett, Jeffrey McLaurin, Porche Pegues, Ms. Jennifer Lockett, Michele Dresel, Tonya Hall, Loralie Frenchette, Lillie Shelton, and Ericka Williams.

The spring production will be *Female Transport* by Steve Gooch. It is the story of a prison ship transporting women from England to Australia when Australia was still a penal colony.

Tryouts will be January 18-21 with parts for four men and six women of any race.

Lyceum Committee Sponsors Play

From the Mississippi Delta -- From prostitute to professor and playwright, from wild country child to civil rights marcher and feminist, the dramatic life story of endesha idea mae holland is a moving personal portrait of a half-century of astonishing social change. Dr. Holland's acclaimed memoir is being toured by a trio of women whose considerable theatrical skills range from their rich evocations of gospel

and blue to sharply-etched portrayals of a stage-full of friends and neighbors, both urban and country.

Fayetteville State University's Lyceum committee is sponsoring this play on Friday, January 28, 1994 at 8:00 P.M. in the Seabrook Auditorium. Admission: FREE for FSU students with valid school ID; \$2.00 for high school and other college students; \$5.00 for the general public.