

Sweet Honey In The Rock

By Felicia M. Caslein
"Sweet Honey allows me to be who I am, a black woman singer. That is my political position, my economic dilemma, my cultural, social, racial, sexual, and spiritual identity."

These are Bernice Reagon's feelings about the musical group she founded in 1974, Sweet Honey In The Rock. Sweet Honey In The Rock is a group of four black women—Reagon, Evelyn Harris, Yasmeen Williams and newest member Tulani Jordan. Singing a capella (without musical accompaniment), they view their music as a means of political organizing and conscience raising work rather than an entertainment. They use a wide range of musical forms—from the traditional music of the black church to modern rhythm and blues, gospel and jazz.

The original group formed from a workshop led by Reagon, then vocal director of the Washington, D.C. Black Repertory Theater Company. Still based in Washington, the group sings about such issues as the neutron bomb, South Africa and political prisoners.

Reagon's career as an activist began with her participation in the Albany Movement in 1961. Functioning primarily as a songwriter, she moved on to singing with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Freedom Singers. She later joined the Atlanta based Harambee Singers.

Reagon said she writes and composes most of the songs, in addition to serving as a cultural historian at the Smithsonian Institute.

Harris' development as a politically aware singer began with her participation in the student rights movement at Howard University. There, said Harris, she also received her first experience in gospel music. At present, she is studying radio and television at the University of Maryland School of Communications.

Williams, a graduate of Atlanta's Spelman College, has performed as a gospel singer with the Second New St. Paul Gospel and Choral Choirs and the Ward Singers. She has also danced with the Dance Troupes of Atlanta and Bowie State University. Although she is completing a degree program in English literature at Maryland's Bowie State, Williams said she "would love to return to dance" as a full-time career.

"Religion is the basic foundation of the group," according to Jordan whose musical experience began in her grandfather's Pentecostal Church. A native of Boston, she worked part-time as a jazz vocalist for the past three years. As the most recent member of "Sweet Honey," she brings to the group experience in Pentecostal, gospel, jazz solo and choral song styles.

The group performed at Duke University on Saturday, September 15. They dedicated their program to the symbol and person of Reverend Benjamin E. Chavis, Jr.

Chavis is leader of the Wilmington Ten, a group that was convicted in 1972 of arson and conspiracy during a period of racial turmoil in Wilmington.

Since then, the three prosecution witnesses have recanted their testimony and the Ten have been termed "prisoners of conscience" by Amnesty International, a London based civil rights organization.

On Saturday, Sweet Honey opened with several songs from a soundtrack they recorded for a film entitled "Wilmington Ten U.S.A. 10,000." An album of the soundtrack will be released next spring. The later song of the political crises in Chile and South Africa, often being interrupted by applause and ovations.

In addition to concerts, the group performs at conventions and conferences all over the U.S. This past weekend they performed at Madison Square Garden for Musicians United for Safe Energy (MUSE). Later this year they will appear in Albany, Hartford and Boston.

According to the members, "The name 'Sweet Honey in the Rock' is based on the choral refrain of a traditional black song that refers to a land so rich, honey flows from the rocks. As used by this group, according to Reagon, it symbolizes the unique characteristics of black womanhood: strength, consistency, warmth and gentleness." The group has recorded

Triangle Club Plans Gifts For Others

At the September meeting of the Triangle Community Club, held at

two albums: "Sweet Honey in the Rock" and "Believe I'll Run On... See What the End's Gonna Be." Following Sweet Honey, Brother Yusef and Friends, a local jazz group, performed on Saturday. "Yusef" featured singer Eve Cornelius. Both groups were co-sponsored by Duke's Black Student Alliance and Lady Slipper Productions.

the home of Mrs. Janie Garrett on Booker Street, members discussed plans to send Thanksgiving baskets to the sick and shut-in. Plans were also made for each member to create some artistic gift to be given to rest home patients for Christmas.

Mrs. Elise Green, president; Mrs. Anne Butler and Rev. Odessa Thomas were in charge of the opening of the meeting. Mrs. Doris Stalk, secretary, presented the report of cards sent.

Mrs. Garrett served a repast and Mrs. Flossie Ewing thanked the hostess for her hospitality.

The following members were present: Mmes. Odessa Thomas, Anne Butler, Fannie Harris, Teresa Williams,

Lamplighters Meet

The Lamplighters Club of the Hayestown Community met on September 17 in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell on East End Avenue.

Mrs. Janet Allen presided over the business session. Members present were Mmes. Mary Perry, Hester Brown, Della Hubbard, Marie Cuttino, Ollie Ray, Louise Lee, Josephine Lassiter, Alice Carrick, Janet Allen, Alma Mitchell; Miss Ann Lassiter and Thomas Royster.

Ernestine Young, Pearl Hunter, Rubye McNeill, Maggie Wilson, Doris Stalk and Janie Garrett.

Bible Way To Serve In Raleigh

Members of Bible Way Apostolic Church, along with their pastor, Bishop John Russell, Jr., will render service at the Resurrection Holiness Church in Raleigh, Sunday, September 28, at 7:30

p.m. There will be five nights of pre-Appreciation Service given in honor of Evangelist Robert Bratcher, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30, October 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6.

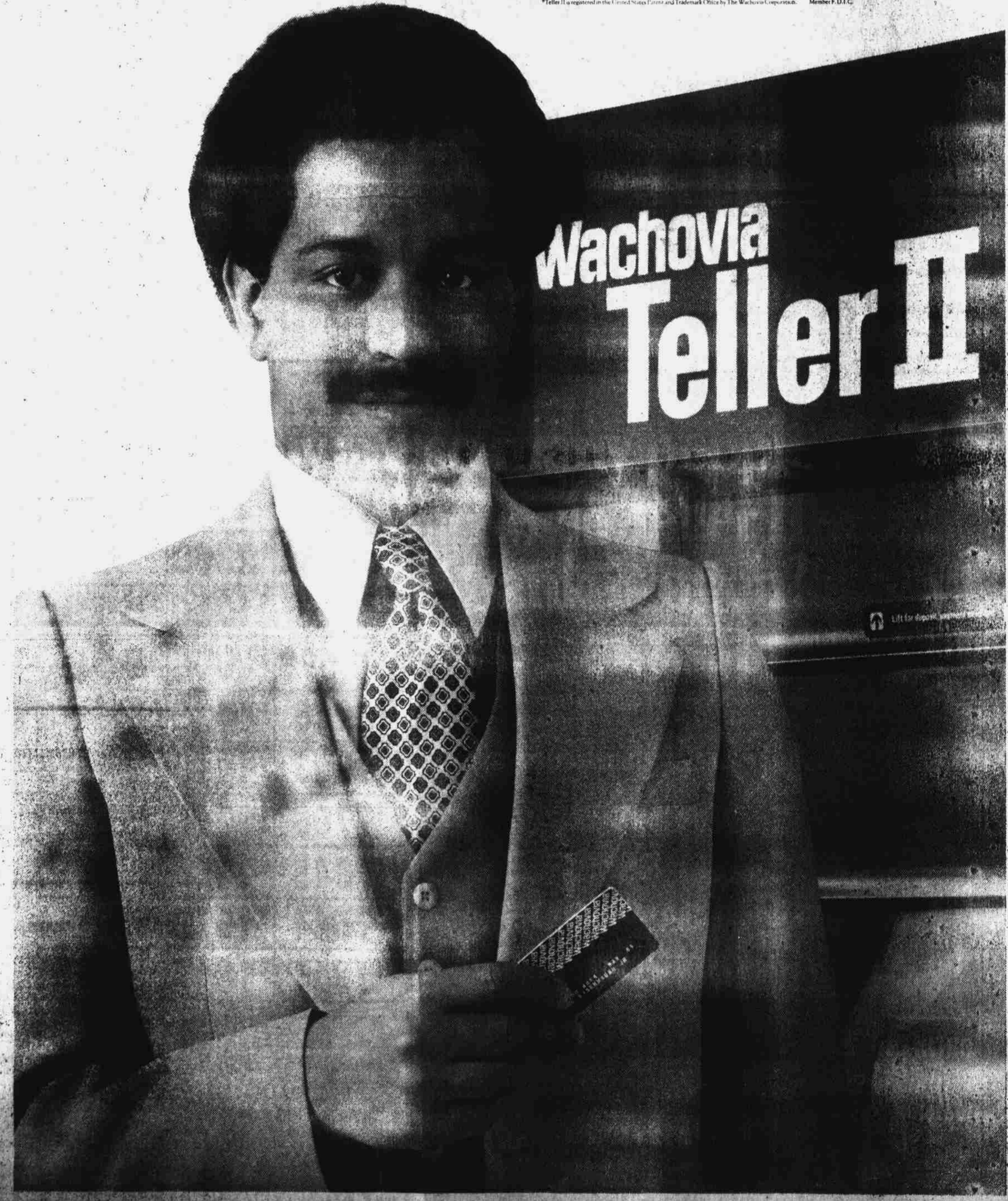
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EMBARKING

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be seduced when he publicly lauded Kissinger for Kissinger's "bold new Southern African policy," when all that Kissinger was doing was dressing up neo-colonialism in a different set of clothes. By endorsing Kissinger's strategy, Mr. Jackson was unwittingly serving the interests of the old and elusive enemies of Africa," Fuller continued. Neo-colonialism in Fuller's comments referred to the domination and control the economic, political, and social life of a nation, community, or group by another group.