

# N.C. Black Repertory to present anti-apartheid work, 'The Island'

By ROBIN BARKSDALE  
Community News Editor

Larry Hamlin is taking time out from preparing for this summer's National Black Theatre Festival to send a wake-up call to the local community.

Mr. Hamlin, executive director of the North Carolina Black Repertory Co., said that the time has come for the African-American community to become more vocal in opposing South African apartheid. Toward that end, Mr. Hamlin is producing a performance of "The Island," an anti-apartheid work written by Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona. The show, which deals with the injustice and cruelty of apartheid, will open in the Arts Council Theatre, Friday, June 2, at 8 p.m.

Mr. Hamlin said that African-Americans seem to be in need of something to constantly spark their interest in helping blacks in South Africa. He said he hopes that the NCBRC is in some way helping to end the injustice by presenting works such as "The Island."

"We have always felt a very real need to always focus on the cruelty of South African apartheid," he said. "We have always wanted to be a part of the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa. We're trying to keep our audiences focused on the issue. Our African brothers and sisters need our help. They need American blacks to help them in their struggle. We know we have to keep these issues out there."

"The Island" is set on Robben Island, South Africa's maximum-security prison for political offenders. The story centers around the attempts of the warden to break the spirits of two black prisoners. The story climaxes with the effect on the prisoners' relationship when they learn that one of them will be set free in a few months.

The production's director, Ernie McClintock, said that the play will shed new light on what audiences have learned from media reports.

"I think the play, as performed in the United States, is a play that gives us a particular kind of information that we don't really get in our day-to-day lives in terms of the information on television and in the newspaper," said Mr. McClintock, the director of New York's Harlem Jazz Theatre. "The play gives a more in-depth view of what living under racist, South African apartheid is like. The acts of hero-

## Williams selected as pageant finalist

Christine Williams has been selected as a state finalist in the Miss North Carolina Pre-Teen Pageant which will be held June 30 and July 1 in Charlotte Hotel.

Ms. Williams, the daughter of Mark and Tonda Williams, participates in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. She attends Hall-Woodward Elementary School, where she has a B average.

Her hobbies include cooking and dancing. Her sponsors for the pageant are Merit Trucking, David Hager, Billie and Barbara Corner, Connie Prevatte and her parents.

## Salem grad

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told me that when he hauled in bricks, he had to come through the back way because at that time they weren't allowed to come through front entrances. He said 'We had to come through the back, but now we're coming through the front and my daughter is going to school here.' He got a big thrill out of that."

Even the recent tornado, she said, brought home to her how important her great-grandfather's contributions to the city were.

"People were looking around at the things that survived the tornado, and I told them that the reason the doors were still standing was because my great-grandfather had made the bricks for them," she said. "The trees fell but the buildings are still standing."

ism that the people display on a daily basis in defiance of that government give us an insight into the loneliness that many of those men and women have to suffer."

Mr. Hamlin said that the timing of "The Island's" opening is particularly significant because the newly formed South Africa Crisis Coordi-

nating Committee also will be holding anti-apartheid activities in the city this weekend. He said that the group will hold their reception at the Arts Council Theatre just before the show on Friday evening. "It is natural for us to work together," Mr. Hamlin said.

A post-production discussion

on apartheid will follow each performance.

"We just want to start some dialogue so that people can spark their feelings," Mr. Hamlin said. "We really want to move people. What I like about Fugard's work is that he always deals with the issue of apartheid. Although he may deal

with some other event, the underlying theme is to end apartheid and the negative effect it has on the lives of South African people. It stimulates me to do whatever I can to end apartheid. Until it ends, the Black Repertory Co. will continue to stimulate people in Winston-Salem to fight apartheid."

Mr. McClintock said that in addition to being informative, the play also is entertaining.

"This is a very theatrical production," he said. "It is extremely entertaining. It's not like it's a weighty political lesson. It's quite an event."

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