

D Section

The latest edition

New Edition still making music, but philanthropy is important, too



PHOTOS/WADE NASH

New Edition celebrates over 20 years in the industry by starting the New Edition Foundation to give back to kids.

By Cheris F. Hodges

Not many groups can sell out shows when they don't have a single on the airwaves

Then again, not too many groups are New Edition.

Twenty-three years ago they burst on the scene with the bubble gum pop sounds of "Candy Girl," "Popcorn Love," and "Is This The End."

"For the last 23 plus years, we've been able to make a living and travel

the world. Right now it's all about touching communities," said Ronnie DeVoe

DeVoe said the foundation would keep programs like those that helped them in the communities where they are needed.

"There are so many people that helped us get to where we are and we're going to make sure that we put ourselves in a position to give back," said Ralph Tresvant.

Bobby Brown chimed in saying that, "We've been

able to do this on friendship and true love and we don't want people to think that where we came from is a bad place to grow up.

"Don't think NE has given up music for charity. They're still performing and recording on Bad Boy Records.

"We love Puffy (Combs)," Michael Bivins said before their show Saturday in Columbia. While they haven't recorded a new album since 2004, New Edition fans still show up to see the group clutching albums-yes, the vinyl ones-and screaming as if they're still teenagers.

attended a private luncheon with the group, said she's been a fan from the beginning.

"I've always admired their style and their performance," she said. Hunter said the first time she saw New Edition perform she was a college student. As an older adult, she was more than excited to see them again.

Bivins said people aren't as excited about today's music.

"Are people going to cherish the record they bought last summer for 23 years? Back then we were probably like the only young group for the young black females and men."

Please see NEW/2D

A & E

Igunnuko back from hiatus with artistic lineup

By April Turner FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Igunnuko is back and stronger than ever.

The festival began in Charlotte nine years ago to promote community and togetherness. For years, many in the black community have looked forward to the dancing, drumming, eating and singing that transform Frazier Park into an African celebration ground.

After a two-year hiatus and a little restructuring last year, festival chairman, Obakunle Akinlana says that this year's Igunnuko celebration has something for the entire community to enjoy.

"This festival is for the people, by the people. There is something for everybody at Igunnuko."

In addition to traditional Igunnuko features like the African Marketplace and the Children's Educational Village, this year's festival includes a Spoken Word Café headlined by poet-activist, Sonia Sanchez.

Akinlana says he made a special effort to bring Sanchez to Charlotte because he believes her words can help address a need in Charlotte's black community.

"I have always been an admirer of Sonia Sanchez,

her strength, her purpose, her poetry. I had the pleasure of being on the same program with her at a festival in Tennessee. When I saw her presentation I said, 'Charlotte needs this.' She articulates the essence of our theme, We Need Each Other," Akinlana said.

"Sonia Sanchez is in tune with the needs of our people. She brings a practical, inspiring message that writers, leaders, professionals, parents, everybody can draw from."

Akinlana said he hopes Charlotte will embrace the festival's We Need Each Other theme.

"I think when you look at the African American community worldwide often times we put a lot of divisive politics, religions, isms and schisms between us when really we are one people and cannot afford to be divided," he said.

"Everyone has needs and everyone has assets they can give. Everyone in our community is important. Elders give wisdom, young people provide strength, on down the line. Everybody has something to give. We need everybody."

Another new highlight of the festival this year is Elders Day. On Sunday, dance luminary Chuck Davis and his African American Dance

Ensemble will perform a dance tribute to all of the elders in the community.

"We want all of the elders to come spend the day with us, relax and show off their grandchildren. Elders are our heroes. We wouldn't be where we are today without their contributions and sacrifices," Akinlana said.

In another Igunnuko first, blues singer Betty Pride will launch her new CD during her Saturday performance at the festival. Akinlana says Charlotte should be excited about Pride's work in the blues arena.

"She is the hidden treasure. Please see IGUNNUKO/2D

GALLERY REVIEW

School daze: McColl exhibit of juried collegiate art

N.C. State University student Hollin Norwood created machine-embroidered Middle Eastern figures festooned in pink and blue.



By Sandy Seawright THE CHARLOTTE POST

Launched: First N.C. Undergraduate Juried Exhibition McColl Center for the Visual Arts 721 North Tryon St.

This show of five student artists selected from 30 entrants by noted abstract painter Grace Hartigan has an earnestness about it that makes looking at the exhibit a serious proposition without much fun or spontaneity. However, there are visual rewards.

college students may be ambitious but probably haven't been at their art long enough to relax and let the viewer relax with them.

Congratulations to UNC-Charlotte, which had two students selected. Shelly Sloan Lineberger makes very ambitious abstract stoneware sculptures using military camouflage colors of green and brown with orange added. In "High Way," it feels like Lineberger is really finding her own vision. This sculpture gave me pleasure - especially looking

at it from the west side of the gallery. It is risk taking with unexpected clay elements. It appears to have a three dimensional orange and green road-shaped form which is echoed by a neutral-colored, raked path.

Erich J. Moffett of UNC-Charlotte has majestic and mythic visions of godlike people in isolated nature settings expressed in graphite and charcoal.

His drawings such as "The Fisherman and His Soul" savor joy and love. In a artist's statement on the wall Moffett says, "I

am a firm believer in the human act of capturing one's joy for later examination."

Hollin Norwood of N.C. State University has created machine embroidered Middle Eastern figures festooned in pink and blue. His figures look like they are right off the Paris fashion runway instead of being affected by the war in Iraq.

Michael Triplet of UNC-Greensboro has color photographs of musicians who supported him when he had aseptic meningitis. Please see LAUNCHED/2D

OutKast's meandering 'Idlewild' little more than long video

By Cheris F. Hodges

I've always loved OutKast, from their first album, Southernplaymisticadillacmuzik to the phenomenal Speakerboxx/The Love Below. So I wanted to love their first movie, "Idlewild."

I didn't. Directed by Bryan Barber, who directed the "Roses" video, "Idlewild"

played like a two-hour video. There was a lot of dancing, rapping and Matrix-like camera work.

"That would be fine if 'Idlewild' was set in the 21st century, but it's supposed to be about a 1930s southern speakeasy in Idlewild, Georgia.

Andre Benjamin (Andre 3000) plays meek and mild

Percival, a shy piano player who has a song but no one wants to hear it.

Antwan Patton (Big Boi) plays Rooster, the flashy rapper and club owner. When Terrance Howard's gangster character Trumpy kills the club owner Sunshine and Rooster's uncle Spats, Rooster assumes the club and its debts. Then all kinds of wild-

ness unfolds as well as people breaking out into song at the drop of a hat.

I'm all for musicals. Some of my favorite movies are musicals, "Rent," "The Wiz" and "The Wizard of Oz" to name a few. But the rapping doesn't fit the time period. It's not as if they were new songs, either. Big Boi did so many songs from Speakerboxx that it didn't

make much sense to me. However, it did reveal that not too many people listened to that disc because the folks I saw the movie with didn't seem to know those songs, but I digress.

I expected OutKast to put their own spin on 1930s music, kind of like they did on the soundtrack. Well, they Please see IDLEWILD/2D



TV show has new live on DVD

Threshold Charles S. Dutton, Brent Spiner, Carla Gugino and Robert Patrick

Benedict Paramount Home Video Three-disc set



CBS punked out with "Threshold," pulling the plug before all the episodes were broadcast.

Too bad. "Threshold" was well-written and acted. It was part of a host of alien-invasion based television show, many of which didn't make the cut, either.

Like ABC's "Invasion," CBS's "Threshold" was a gamble. "Lost" was a huge success, but has hints of the supernatural, not aliens. Maybe both networks thought this was the next logical step.

Anyway, "Threshold's" premise was great. Aliens land on Earth in the Atlantic Ocean, or at least an alien probe. The U.S. government has a contingency plan for such an event and springs into action. A motley group is assembled to investigate becomes infected by what seems to be a five-dimensional object. Some people die, others develop super strength. All share the same dreams about the alien race that plans to change human DNA into their own.

It seemed to be a simple enough plot to pull in millions, but America didn't bite, nor did it have a taste for ABC's even better "Invasion." Maybe they canceled each other out.

Charles S. Dutton, Brent Spiner and Carla Gugino are part of the great cast and do a fine job over the 12 episodes. Some were never aired so fans of the show are in for a treat. There's also a lot of bonus material, including a four-part documentary, deleted scenes and commentaries.

Thankfully, CBS has the sense to release this fine series on DVD. I was hoping the Sci-Fi channel or another network would pick it up but that doesn't look promising. Oh well, these episodes will have to do for now. And I can always watch the excellent "4400" on USA.



Ratings section with a star chart and text: Classis, Excellent, Good, Fair, Why?, No stars - A mess