

Conference to celebrate tradition of Southern sound

By LISA ANTONUCCI
Staff Writer

The rich heritage of traditional music from the American South will be the focus of "Sounds of the South," a three-day conference marking the official opening of the Southern Folklife Collection.

Nearly 250 scholars, collectors and musicians have gathered at UNC to join in the "celebration."

"The conference lets people across the country — even in other countries — know that we are here," said Daniel Patterson, chairman of UNC's Curriculum in Folklore and a Kenan professor of English.

"Sounds of the South" has received positive response nationally as well as internationally, according to George Holt, director of the Folklife Section of the North Carolina Arts Council.

"We have a wonderfully diverse group of people attending the con-

ference," Holt said. "Many influential people are coming just to be in the audience."

The North Carolina Arts Council recognizes the collection as a tremendous resource for the state. UNC will become a major research institution for this type of study and we are happy to support it."

The collection was established in 1968 by some of the UNC faculty members who began using long-playing albums in their classes. Since then faculty, graduate students and others have donated material to build on the collection. With the purchase of the John Edwards Memorial Collection in 1983, the archive has grown to contain nearly 38,000 recordings. Music ranges from blues to Cajun to Tex-Mex, but the collection is strongest in its number of country music recordings.

According to Patterson, the collection and the work that it represents

is a "window into a culture that may have passed away. This conference therefore is a time to look back at our strengths and weaknesses, achievements and failures."

Scholars like Patterson and David Whisnant, an English professor who teaches a class in country music, believe their major strengths have been in documenting, collecting and recording. "We captured so much before it faded away," Patterson said, "which is a real accomplishment considering that for a long time, many were ashamed to admire such music."

The conference is also a time to reminisce over the last 60 years, back to when the record companies discovered there was a market for this music and people spent their own money and personal time to create these new music genres.

"Most of this work was done outside an institutional context since the information was not of value at

the time," Whisnant said. "People would come home from their real jobs to this enterprise that they loved and work on it with incredible persistence and dedication."

The conference also allows an opportunity to assess the collection's flaws. Patterson said he believed some of the most obvious weaknesses have been the failure to record and document people who did not seem to be important at the time, or the failure to record the music without finding out about the musician.

Whisnant, who will address the conference this afternoon, goes further in his assessment of their weaknesses. "Our enterprise has been shaped by racism, sexism and political conservatism. I would like to see a deeper study of the relationship between the black and white artists as well as more attention paid to the role of women — not only as performers but also as subjects.

Moreover, there is a whole genre of politically influenced music that needs to be dealt with."

The third aspect of the conference is planning for the future. Whisnant said he felt this "enterprise" had carried it beyond scholarship to the hearts of the people involved. Patterson recalls talking to a religious singer who "began to weep when she sang. 'I don't know if I can finish,' she said. 'It means so much to me.' It is that meaning that's worth finding out about. It's profound."

In conjunction with "Sounds of the South," a concert of Southern traditional music will be held at the ArtsCenter in Carrboro Friday at 8 p.m. It will feature artists such as blues guitarist Etta Baker; Doug Wallin, an English and Appalachian song and ballad singer; and Mike Seeger, Tommy Thompson and Alan Jabbour of the string band music revival. Tickets are \$8 and are available at the ArtsCenter.

Nationally known poet to read from his prize-winning work

By JESSICA YATES
Staff Writer

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Henry Taylor will kick off a new series of poetry events at UNC with a special reading of his poetry today at 4 p.m. in 203 Bingham Hall.

Taylor, who is the co-director in the creative writing department at American University, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1986 for one of his poetry collections "The Flying Change." James Seay, the director of creative writing at UNC, invited him to launch the opening of the Blanche Armfield poetry fund.

Seay said he selected Taylor because of his national recognition and stature. He admires Taylor's works for their clarity. "He has a very keen sense of the formal attentions of the poetry. It strives toward an excellence."

In addition, a well-defined sense of place characterizes Taylor's works, he said.

Taylor, who grew up in rural Virginia, describes his own poems as having "a feeling of fullness about them. The style tends to be more accessible, not influenced by modernism." He has based many of his poems

on the years he spent growing up on a farm, but he is careful to point out that he is not an overly reminiscent person.

"I sort of like cities, as a matter of fact," Taylor said, "though it is easier to find the solitude to work in the country."

He said he felt that governmental and economical forces have made life harder for farm people although he himself doesn't feel these effects. "I didn't come from a hard-scrabbling background or anything like that."

Taylor's experiences growing up on a farm have had certain advantages.

For instance, "it came to be useful to have been a competitive horseman during my youth," he said. "It helped to develop patience at an early age."

Taylor has now applied this habit to poetry writing by not hurrying to finish a poem. "A poem can never be exactly what you thought it would be before you started writing." Since poetry is language, and what is in the writer's head are feelings, "finding the right words is sometimes nearly impossible," he explained. He regards this, however, as part of the challenge, saying "it keeps it interesting and sometimes makes it better."

In addition, some of Taylor's poems are the result of a unique writing technique. "They don't seem to be the result of endless cutting down, but rather, some are the product of the direct opposite," he said.

Taylor felt honored in winning the Pulitzer Prize, but said he had no idea why he was awarded the prestigious prize. "Prizes like this are sort of like a lottery. I was extremely lucky in that they just happened to like my kind of thing."

Joseph Flora, chairman of UNC's English department, said the new

Blanche Armfield fund would be announced at the reading. He explained that the fund is designed to "allow the department to regularly have poetry readings, contests for students and many other related activities."

The department hopes Taylor's visit will be the first in a long series of events involving poetry. Flora indicated that Armfield would be on hand for Thursday's reading. Armfield is closely tied with the University because she received her master's degree in poetry from UNC. She lives in Washington, D.C.

Sports

Padres outgun rest of West

Mike Berardino
N.L. West

In a fickle sport where it's best to stay away from blanket statements, one such all-encompassing remark may safely be uttered: baseball's toughest division is the National League West.

The Los Angeles Dodgers won the West by seven games on the way to their improbable world championship last season, but a mere five games separated the next four teams.

This year's race should be just as tight and even more fun to watch, thanks to the importation of such American League superstars as Eddie Murray, Jack Clark, Bruce Hurst and Todd Benzinger. Here's how it will turn out:

1. San Diego Padres — "Trader" Jack McKeon has done it again, continuing a trend of winter wizardry which has the Padres, absolutely abominable this time last year, sitting atop a heap of divisional contenders heading into this season.

McKeon's offseason acquisitions of slugging first baseman Jack Clark as well as top-notch starting pitchers Bruce Hurst and Walt Terrell were just what the Padres needed to make it back to the postseason for the first time since 1984. Incidentally, before that season McKeon picked up Steve Garvey, Goose Gossage and Graig Nettles. Is this déjà vu or what?

Mainstays Tony Gwynn (who is going for his third straight batting title), Roberto Alomar, Benito Santiago, John Kruk and Carmelo Martinez (super spring) will surround Clark in the league's best batting order this side of New York.

Vastly underrated hurlers Eric Show (16-11) and Dennis Rasmussen (16-10) round out the rotation. And in the pen, McKeon has lefty Mark Davis (28 saves, 2.01 ERA) to snuff out enemy rallies.

2. Cincinnati Reds — There's nothing funny about Pete Rose's alleged gambling problem, and I wish people would stop mocking a man who was once America's greatest sporting symbol. At this point, odds are good that Rose will

be suspended for the season, but that definitely should not prevent him from entering the Hall of Fame on his first try in 1992.

Preaching aside, the Reds are my pick to finish second for the fifth straight season. That's right, the dominant team of the 70s has become the Alydar of the 80s — always close enough to sniff the stogie, but never able to taste it. In fact, it's been 10 years since Cincy last won the division.

Whoever manages this team will delight in filling out a daily lineup card with names like Eric Davis, Kal Daniels, Paul O'Neill, Todd Benzinger, Barry Larkin and Chris Sabo, last season's top rookie. They will score runs, no doubt, and in Danny Jackson (23-8, 2.73 ERA), Tom Browning, Jose Rijo and stopper John Franco (1.57 ERA, 39 saves), they have the pitching talent to protect even the slimmest of leads.

So why not pick them to win? Two reasons: the distraction of the Rose situation and the Tom Kite Factor. Explanation for the latter reason: some people, like the unlucky golfer, are just meant to finish second.

3. Houston Astros — Bob Knepper has a point. If Astros owner John McMullen was really serious about winning it all, he would have resigned the ageless Nolan Ryan instead of letting Houston's heart and soul become a Texas Ranger for a few extra dollars. And don't think for a minute that newcomers Rick Rhoden and Jim Clancy (combined 23-25, 4-plus ERA) will offset Ryan's loss.

Glenn Davis (30 HR, 99 RBI) and Gerald Young (65 SB) are very productive, but not enough to hide gaping holes at shortstop, third base, catcher and in the bullpen.

4. San Francisco Giants — The 1987 West champs could reclaim

their lofty throne this season on one condition: that manager Roger Craig stop teaching that awful, elbow-shattering split-fingered fastball to his poor impressionable staff.

Mike Kruckow and Dave Dravack have already been irreparably damaged by the tinkering of their well-meaning skipper, and the tender joints of Kelly Downs, Atlee Hammaker and Scott Garrels can't be far behind in the twinge parade. Things have gotten so bad that the new stopper is Mike LaCoss, a man whose career has been recycled more times than a Pepsi can.

The Giants do have plenty of hitting, led by the potent bats of first baseman Will Clark (29 HR, 109 RBI) and left fielder Kevin Mitchell (19 HR, 90 RBI), but all too often Craig's overmanaging runs them out of big innings.

5. Los Angeles Dodgers — After going from worst to first, the Dodgers will fall back in the pack. Tommy Lasorda's win-with-mirrors policy of last year will be shattered by the harsh realities that Willie Randolph is old, Fernando Valenzuela is washed up, John Shelby is painfully mediocre and World Series hero Mickey Hatcher is just plain horrible.

6. Atlanta Braves — Earlier this decade, the Braves were billed as America's team. With visible assets like that, it's wonder the dollar is worth around two quarters and the Japanese now own every U.S. company that's in the black.

Fortunately for Superstation subscribers, the youth movement is on. Only on WTBS can we follow a Triple-A team on a daily basis. Tune in and watch Tom Glavine, Pete Smith, Derek Lilliquist and Jeff Blauser take their lumps in the majors against vastly superior competition.

Trading Dale Murphy and Zane Smith for a truckload of talent is an essential step in the renovation of baseball's most laughable bunch of losers. But not surprisingly, GM Bobby Cox doesn't seem able to pull the trigger on any deals.

7. Montreal Expos — The Expos were right with the Mets last year until mid-August, but they're still just a notch below the New Yorkers.

The starting rotation finished second to the Mets last year in ERA, before workhorse Kevin Gross and

Well-armed Mets rule N.L. East

Dave Glenn
N.L. East

In the baseball world, or the Land of No Repeat, no team has won back-to-back division titles since way back in 1980-81, when the New York Yankees pulled the trick in the American League East.

This year, at the other end of the New York subway, another team has what it takes to close out the 80s in similar fashion.

1. New York Mets — This team is about as close as you'll come to seeing a modern baseball dynasty. Five consecutive seasons of 90 or more victories, with an average of 97 in the W column.

Still, in the what-have-you-done-for-me-lately sports world, numbers from 1985 don't win you a pennant in 1989. With the Mets, though, that brings us to a somewhat scary thought. What they have done in the past might not be as impressive as what they are capable of doing in the future.

The Mets have eight proven winners on the staff to go with some talented youngsters. The biggest problem with the starting rotation is figuring out who's the ace. Dwight Gooden (18-9), David Cone (20-3, 2.22 ERA), Ron Darling (17-9), Bob Ojeda and Sid Fernandez are second to none. In the bullpen, Randy Myers (7-3, 1.62 ERA, 26 saves) and Roger McDowell make up the best lefty-righty combo in the league.

The Mets' offense, which led the league in runs, homers, slugging and on-base percentage last year, could be better this year. Kevin McReynolds (27 HR, 99 RBI), Darryl Strawberry (39 HR, 101 RBI) are joined by upstarts Gregg Jefferies and Kevin Elster in the explosive lineup. Strawberry, McReynolds, Lenny Dykstra, Mookie Wilson and Howard Johnson provide speed and defense. Veterans Gary Carter and Keith Hernandez are tailing off, but they're both in the option years of their contracts. Look for the salary drivers.

2. Montreal Expos — The Expos were right with the Mets last year until mid-August, but they're still just a notch below the New Yorkers.

The starting rotation finished second to the Mets last year in ERA, before workhorse Kevin Gross and

Herzog and friends, all teams are required to put a ninth man on the field, on top of a large mound of dirt, in the middle of the infield.

Well, it's not really that bad. The Cards do have ace relievers Todd Worrell and Ken Dayley, but even they are coming off mediocre years. Jose DeLeon, with a team-high 13 wins last year, needs help from Joe Magrane (2.18 ERA) and no-longer youngsters like Scott Terry, John Costello and Greg Mathews.

The Redbirds will be off and running again this year with newcomer Tim Jones (39 SB) joining the Stolen Base Express of Vince Coleman (81 SB), Ozzie Smith (57 SB) and Willie McGee (41 SB). With the big bats of Pedro Guerrero and Tom Brunansky behind the roadrunners, Herzog will have a productive offensive blend.

5. Chicago Cubs — The Cubs will score some runs, with Ryan Sanderberg, Mark Grace and Andre Dawson leading the way. There will be a lot of dead grass between the dugouts and the batter's box at Wrigley Field this year. Unfortunately for the Cubs, their opponents will be doing a dance of their own as they parade around the diamond.

No. 1 starter Greg Maddux (18-8) can't reproduce last year's numbers. The rest of the staff probably wouldn't want even want to look at last year's numbers.

6. Philadelphia Phillies — The Phillies farm system has produced more major leaguers than any other. The problem is, most of them are playing (and doing very well) for other teams. With Juan Samuel, Von Hayes, Ricky Jordan and a rejuvenated Mike Schmidt leading the way, they'll score some runs. But they have no pitching. None.

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