

Ebony readers

The words and sounds of Blackness

Jackie Forney and
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Staff Writers

"I must say that I am proud not only to be the director of the Readers, but also to be an Ebony Reader," said Sylvia Collins.

The Ebony Readers, conceived in 1972 to perform at the BSM Coronation Ball, were so successful during their initial performance that Herman Mixon, the director at the time, decided to keep the group together in an effort to make them an important and successful part of the BSM.

However, the success of the group may be largely attributed to Sylvia Collins. "What we try to do is express a theme of Blackness through the oral interpretation of poetry," Collins explained.

Bernadine Ward, a novice Ebony Reader agreed with Collins and added that she would like "to see the Readers expand to do more than just poetry, like dramatic interpretations of plays and short stories.

"Also," she added, "I would like us to experiment with lighting and costuming and solicit more original poems to add more variety to our performances."



Staff photo by James Parker

Wekesa Madzimoyo, a grad student and Ebony Reader, feels that the group needs "to understand fully their responsibility to transmit our culture" and to focus on the educational aspect of transmitting Black culture as well as the entertainment aspect of it. "Hopefully," he said, "the Readers can develop a set of by-laws which will lead to professionalism."

In their first performance, the Ebony Readers moved their audience through various themes of militancy, love and African heritage. Touching many ideas and

issues related to the Black experience, this performance was very emotional.

However, their April 20 performance was very poorly attended and was, many of the readers felt, not as satisfying to them as their previous one. Andra Reid explained, "We as Readers get psyched up through the audience. I don't think the performance was good as it could have been because we didn't get much audience response." Both Beverly Wells and Teresa Howie expressed their disappointment with the turnout

Wednesday night. "I thought the performance was good considering the amount of practices we had; there were no practices which everyone attended," Wells pointed out.

Although depressed with the attendance at their last performance, the Ebony Readers are looking forward to working together next year and are encouraging new members to join the group.

The Readers have performed at Livingstone College in Salisbury, at the Pan African Festival at N.C. State University in Raleigh, at Chapel Hill High School, at Great Hall and at Upendo.

Not only have Ebony Readers had more performances this year than at any other time in their five year existence, they now have the largest number of participants. The 17 member group of oral interpreters also includes Darlene Belton, Bobby Best, Nathlyn Bryant, Anthony Greene, Jelanie Jawhar, Joy Johnson, Lillie Love, Jackie Neal, and Roland Staton.

Enjoying their performances and travel experiences, the group is proud that it can bring enjoyment as its members expose their Black culture to the campus community.

Good Luck on Exams!

When blue books begin to sell like hot cakes, when aspirins and coffee become prized possessions, when that last check for that last meal on 'the Hill' prior to Mama's home cooking is written. . .we know what time of year it is.

Here's wishing you good fortune on your exams, and a fruitful, enjoyable summer.

P.S. Yes, we do buy your textbooks and we'll be here this summer.



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