

THE ARTS

'Down Home' a celebration of Blackness

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Staff Writer

African warriors and maidens in a harmonious dance, innocent Blacks and the Klan, rejoicing slaves, a street-wise minister preaching Jim Crow's funeral, going up north, staying down south, and realizing home. No, this is not a preview to a network documentary. These are descriptions of segments from Dr. Lee Greene's production "Down Home," performed January 13 in Memorial Hall.

The public response to the production was tremendous. Although there were hazardous weather conditions the production not only saw a huge representation of students, but also a large number of people from the community as well.

The cast had prepared for this production several months but the Wednesday before the Friday premiere saw the entire cast rehearse together for the first time. Dr. Greene felt that everyone performed particularly well under these circumstances. He singled out that the dances and music were outstanding but quickly adds that different parts were done for different effects and "in their own right, each part performed was great."

Due to tremendous and well-deserved praise "Down Home" will be performed again for the general public on January 31 in Memorial Hall. When asked about the

possibility of showing the production on television Dr. Greene smiled and said, "The idea is still in negotiations and nothing is definite right now."

Greene said that he was extremely pleased at the success of the production. The audience was particularly receptive to the action that took place on stage and the actors responded exceptionally well to the enthusiasm of the audience.

The production will be shown in the classrooms, particularly English 84, and Afro-American studies. It may also be used during orientation. Dr. Greene expressed a wish that the production could, in addition, tour predominantly white and Black campuses.

Another production has been started by Dr. Greene. He reported that he and student writers are working on something "a little more dramatic this time." This program is tentatively scheduled for the end of the semester.

Dr. Greene feels deeply indebted to the audience and to all of those many non-performing student, such as Gwen Bullock, who contributed precious time and money.

"I am extremely proud of this production," he said. "It has, in a sense, created a stronger bond among Black students and given them confidence. Students are praising, not begrudging,

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Senior Harold Woodard portrays a haunting, yet majestic symbol of the African past in the original stage production, "Down Home." An encore presentation of the musical will be performed Tuesday night, Jan. 31 at 8:00 in Memorial Hall. Staff photo by James Parker.

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