

DOWN HOME

Spirited musical drama showcases campus talent

By ALLEN JOHNSON
Arts Editor

Friday afternoon. Memorial Hall is a maze of cardboard, wood, nails, cables and anxious, jittery performers. Dr. J. Lee Greene, an English professor, is like a little general, advising firmly but encouragingly what goes where when and how. Everyone chuckles when "Doc" shows one of the dancers how to leap correctly. Thud! Not cracking a smile, Greene has just shown us how an African warrior flies through the air and lands.

Friday night. An African tribe is herded into captivity . . . a funeral congregation mourns the death of ol' Jim Crow . . . a Black daughter terfully recounts the grisly murder of her father by white men . . . an outraged mother of a son who overdosed gives the pusher a piece of her mind . . . an icy cool pimp and his two sultry ladies snare a customer.

"Down Home" has arrived and anxiety turns into pride. Billed as a history of Blacks through the arts, "Down Home" debuted in the spring of 1978, but its effect lives on. The play was more than a musical. It was a happening.

"I've never seen such a diverse group of students brought together for a common cause," says one observer. "Saints, sinners, whites, Blacks, Greeks, non-Greeks, veterans, rookies. It was amazing."

Deborah Woodward, a multi-talented doctoral student in English who performed in "Great Jones Street" and this year's version of "Down Home," adds: "We brought together so much talent. I'll say for certain that UNC has its share and perhaps more than its share of talent. I was pleased to see that the talent was not latent."

Another campus Jack of all trades, Greg Pennington, choreographed and performed in most of the dances in "Down Home." Pennington, a doctoral student in psychology who is now interning in Michigan, has been a poet, artist, dramatist, dancer and (lest we forget) psychologist during his academic career.

"The number of people in 'Down Home' made it different," says Pennington. "There wasn't just one group putting it on."



Being a good actor requires diligent training

By RUBY PITTMAN and
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Contributors

The first in a series on acting

Not everyone has the potential or the desire to become an actor. Yet, most of us do enjoy on a fairly regular basis some display of acting, via television programs, movies or plays.

Becoming a "good actor" requires diligent training as does becoming a good athlete. Possessing talent is certainly a necessary asset of the aspiring actor, but molding that talent into a craft from which a profession may evolve is a serious and



Pittman in "The Wedding"

difficult task for the aspiring performer. Technique development is an individualized effort, but certain fundamentals are prevalent.

Acting is, perhaps, the most competitive of all professions. While most of us have an idea of the training process for a lawyer or a dentist, not so many of us are aware of the preparation required of an actor.

Before attempting to "act," an actor in training should develop and sharpen his tools: voice, body, and imagination; just as an aspiring pianist may wish to learn the keyboard before playing his first tune. Preconceived notions of what acting is or is not should be abandoned.

Neutrality is not easily achieved, but is a necessary goal of the aspiring actor so that

truly authentic experiences may unfold.

There are various exercises that may be used to develop artistic skills. There are exercises for relaxation, concentration, imagination and precision as well as emotional recall. Many of these exercises, such as those for relaxation, may be of benefit to a non-actor also.

Future drama workshops, sponsored by the African/Afro-American Studies curriculum, will focus on acquainting interested persons with some of the fundamentals of acting. Specific information regarding the workshops will be available at a later date. Future publications of this column will take a closer look into the training process of the aspiring actor.

Natalie, Peabo: Best friends make soulful blend

By HUBERT GADDY Jr.
Staff Writer

What do Natalie Cole and Peabo Bryson have in common?

Besides being individually responsible for gold and platinum records and a string of hits including "This Will Be," "Feel the Fire," "Love on my Mind," "Reaching for the Sky," "Our Love," and "So Into You," these two super talents have joined forces on an album on Capitol Records entitled,

We're the Best of Friends.

In an industry that has been recently bombarded with songs urging the public to dance and party, it's nice to hear an album

MUSIC

which offers some serious, soulful love tunes.

As you might have guessed by the title,

love and togetherness are the key messages in the album. All eight selections are love songs that are done with that soulful feeling only Natalie and Peabo could produce.

The current single, "Gimme Some Time," and "I Want to Be Where You Are" are two cuts that may suit the fancy of those devoted to the dance floor. The rest of the album, however, contains mellow music with a touch of jazz. Those songs include, "This Love Affair," "Love Will

Find You," Natalie's hit "Your Lonely Heart," "We're the Best of Friends," Bobby Caldwell's "What You Won't Do for Love" and a medley, "Let's Fall In Love/You Send Me."

This is definitely one album that should be listened to for its beautiful words and music. Despite the difference in their singing styles, Natalie and Peabo manage to soulfully and harmoniously blend their voices on each selection without getting in each other's way.