

Festival plagued by ups and downs again

Allen H. Johnson
Arts Editor

An analysis

The Black Arts Festival is a strange animal.

Approximately 10 audience members enjoyed an "Evening of Dance" in Great

Hall which conflicted with festival events on March 20.

Another is the wait involved in confirming Black Arts Festival events while the Campus Governing Council decided whether or not to fund the package.

Still another bugaboo which has affected Black Arts Festivals time and time again is, as Montgomery mentioned, a lack of

The BSM will have to learn that it can't expect the campus to support activities that the organization itself will not support.

Hall featuring the Opeyo Dancers and a visiting troupe from Shaw University.

"The performers outnumbered the spectators," said one Opeyo.

Two days later, a full house apparently loved the "Freshman Bloc Show" to death.

It was the only full house the festival would see.

Wanda Montgomery, coordinator of the festival and newly elected BSM cultural coordinator, mulled over the lack of attendance at festival event following the end of it all on March 23. "Communications was a big problem," Montgomery said as she pondered plans for the 1981 festival, which she also will coordinate. "One of my major goals will be to dissolve communications problems."

There are a number of possible explanations for the sparse turnouts at all event except the "Freshman Bloc Show" and the Fats Waller tribute "Ain't Misbehavin'."

One is "Ain't Misbehavin'." Ironically, although the Broadway production was a part of the festival, its evening performances also conflicted with other festival events.

Another is the speech department production, "To Be Young, Gifted and Black,"

communication.

And finally, the BSM will have to learn that it can't expect the campus to support activities that the organization itself will not support. Very few Central Committee members made the time to attend activities. That does not make good logic, good common sense or good public relations.

Despite the problems, however, the Black Arts Festival 1980 offered a good, solid variety of programs for those who took time to attend them.

Freshman Bloc Show

More than three hundred people filled Great Hall on a Saturday afternoon to see an impressive display of freshman talent.

Acts ran the gamut from baton twirling to dance to music to drama to that reliable old common denominator, the step show.

Particularly notable performances included Renee Branch's rendition of "Be A Lion," a series of comedy skits depicting freshman life and Greg Jones' "Summertime," a tune from "Porgy and Bess" sung a capella.

"I thought it was very impressive," said



Freshman Renee Branch shone twice in the festival — with the BSM Gospel Choir and the Freshman Bloc Show. Photo by James Parker.

Anita Foster, a freshman and a participant in the show. "(The program) reflected things that we like to do."

Concerning the skit, which included among its scenes Dean Hayden Renwick's Pre-Orientation address to freshmen, Foster said: "I think it encourages freshmen to continue. Not to give up. No matter what."

BSM Gospel Choir
Sensational Aires

Later the same day, a handful (numerically about 30) people witnessed the Black Student Movement Gospel Choir and the Sensational Aires, a gospel group from Lexington.

The audience received a special treat when Gospel Choir soloist Elijah Freeman, at the request of audience member Phil Woods, gave a stirring performance of "I Don't Feel No Ways Tired."

"It was in the Lord's hands," said Freeman, who had not planned or expected to sing the song.

The Sensational Aires, on the other hand, appeared to be out of touch with the audience which obviously had little taste or enthusiasm for the music of gospel quartets.

Undaunted by the relatively cool reception and the small crowd, the Aires kept right on singing, though.

An Evening of Dance

One might have expected things not to go quite right for the evening when a lemon of a Union record player refused to play the Opeyo Dancers' music.

"It was so embarrassing," said Opeyo Director Pam Perkins.

The Opeyos, with the help of a technician, finally got the record to play and treated the audience to two group dances and two couples dances. The Shaw dancers followed with a long disco number.

Perkins said following the performance that one problem with the Black Arts Festival is a lack of priority or attention given by the BSM to its own cultural groups. "They have to give some kind of respect to people on campus that they're asking to perform," Perkins said. "If they want us, they need to support us."

(Continued on page 8)

'Day of Absence' ends BSM drama drought

Allen H. Johnson
Arts Editor

The drama "A Day of Absence" ironically ended a year of absence for Black Student Movement drama.

And not a minute too soon, says "Absence" director Margaret Brewington.

"The Ebony Readers-Onyx Theatre has

so much power that it can use through drama and readers' theater," says Brewington, a first-year graduate student in drama. "A lot of students on this campus have the talent to do things but they don't have enough confidence."

Brewington adds that the budding actor's demand for dramatic productions at UNC far exceeds the supply.

"So many students wanted to be in the

play," she says, "that we didn't have enough roles to go around."

"Day of Absence" brought back BSM drama in style. Black actors in whiteface pondered their fate in a town in which all blacks suddenly had disappeared. The one-act play was performed twice in Great Hall on March 16.

Brewington says that she was pleased with the Onyx production of the play but refused to single out any individuals for exceptional performances. "So many times just as much hard work is involved in a very small part as in a bigger one," Brewington says. "If I were to name someone I'd just about have to name the whole cast."

Too, Brewington was pleased at the coverage given to the play by the *Daily Tar Heel*, including a front-page photo. "I was glad and surprised to see that picture," Brewington says.

Brewington added, however, that she was curious as to why the *Tar Heel* did not review the play.

"I don't know the general policy of the DTH," she says, "but I wonder why they didn't review it. I was curious to know how they felt about it."

As far as the future of black student drama is concerned, Brewington sees a "very good outlook."



Pointed satire Curtis Sutton as the Mayor in "A Day of Absence." *Daily Tar Heel* photo by Jay Hyman.

CHAPEL HILL
Varsity
121 E. FRANKLIN ST.

ROY SCHEIDER
AL Ben Vereen
HAT

2:15 7:05
4:40 9:30

JAZZ

R

STARTING HERE
STARTING NOW

A NEW
MUSICAL
REVUE
BY
RICHARD MALTBY JR. & DAVID SHIRE

April 9-12
8:00 p.m.
Great Hall

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT UNION DESK
UNC STUDENTS \$2
GENERAL PUBLIC \$3

RETURN ENGAGEMENT!