

ECSU to present hit play

By Lynn Chapman

The University Players, ECSU's drama troupe, will present "The Member of the Wedding" November 11-13 and 15 at 8:00 p.m. in the Little Theatre.

The play, which evolved from Carson McCullers' novel, deals with an adolescent girl's loneliness and dreams as she faces the pain of growing up. The "Member of the Wedding" has been performed as a successful Broadway play, and also as a film, starring the late Ethel Waters.

John Smith will direct the production. The cast of the play includes Vickie Webb-Thomas as Frankie Addams; Rosa Sawyer, as Bernice Sadie Brown; and Joel Deonanan who portrays John Henry West. Also appearing in the show are James Gibbs, Zelene Bunch, Nathan Baxley, Glenda M. Dantes, Tacia Murrell, Beverly Johnson, Kimberley Bailey, Jerome Thers, James Hardy II, and John Smith.

This fall the Players will also perform Vanities a comedy about Texas women. The story follows their lives from high school and college to a reunion years later, in which they realize the separate paths that their lives must take. Vanities will be directed by Zelene Bunch, an ECSU graduate who has returned to receive her English/Drama teaching certification. Ms. Bunch has also directed "The Good Doctor" and served as assistant director of a production of "Moonchildren."

This spring, the Players will present The Fantastics, the first musical to be produced at ECSU in four years. The Fantastics, which is in its 28th year on Broadway, is New York's longest running musical. The play features popular hits like "Soon It's Raining in the Rain" and "Try to Remember."

John Smith will direct the production, and will work in conjunction with Billy Hines, ECSU's musical director. Willie McElroy, Musical Director, and the Department of Music.

The Fantastics will be performed



Photo by Eugene O'Neal

Joel Deonanan (left) as John Henry West, Rosa B. Sawyer (center) as Bernice Sadie Brown, and Vicki Webb-Thomas as Frankie Addams in the University Players' production of the comedy-drama "The Member of the Wedding." The play opens in the Little Theatre on Wednesday, November 11.

formed March 2-4 and on March 6, at 8:00 p.m. in the Little Theatre. There will be a 2:00 p.m. matinee on Sunday the 6th.

A workshop production of student-directed one-act plays will be held April 18 and 19, 1988.

The ECSU University Players is a division of the Department of Language, Literature and Communication. The group invites any interested students to get involved in the theater.

The troupe holds a workshop on

Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

"Experience is not necessary and extra help is always appreciated," Smith said. Smith can be reached by calling 335-3463.

X: gifted group who got "bum rap"

By Steve Smith

Unfortunately, many people associate the band X with skinheads, violence, and the Los Angeles punk scene. It is true that they have their beginnings in the scene of the late 1970's, but the band's sixth album shows they have grown beyond their origins without losing the energy and spirit of that beginning.

X has weathered the loss of its highly acclaimed guitarist Billy Zoom, his replacement Dave Navarro, and the romantic breakup of bassists John Doe and Exene Cervenka. Despite these problems, the band has endured and released an album that could give them the recognition they deserve.

In "See How We Are," regulars Cervenka and drummer D. Bonebrake are joined by newcomer Tony Gilkyson, who in admirably on guitar with just copying old Billy Zoom's. Gilkyson brings a sound all his own, reminiscent of Zoom's skanking, slashing style, but a little more of an understated, somewhat folksy sound. Bonebrake's drumming and Gilkyson's bass give the band a power-driving rhythm section.

Of course, the heart of X is in the lyrics and vocals of John Doe. On this album, the voices blend together very well and could almost be called monolithic on a few songs. Yet their voices still retain some of the drive and anger from the old days. Doe and Cervenka still sing an off-beat harmony un-

matched by any other male female duo.

Lyrical, the album is much less angry, but it still is full of loneliness, anger and frustration. However, some songs seem to suggest a kind of hope. In "When It Rains," Doe and Cervenka sing of "a rain that will wash away the sins of the world/a rain that shows beauty never dies."

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"I'm Lost" is as chilling and effective a song about loneliness and alienation as any ever recorded. Beneath a slashing, punky chord progression, Doe and Cervenka lament, "All the lights go out/the evenings go on and on/the sun goes down and I'm too lost/to ever, ever be found."

"You" is a beautiful song about a long-distance romance. Cervenka's voice almost sounds sweet in this song, a far cry from the old monotone. This song will hit home with anyone who has ever been involved in a long distance romance. "You" is one of the songs which shows X's softer stance and growth.

"The 4th of July" and the title cut are two other songs that show X's growth. "The 4th of July" is about a love affair on the rocks and could almost be called beautiful, a rarity for an X song. "See How We Are" is the most powerful and beautiful song on the album. The guitar has a distinctly folksy sound and the chilling lyrics are sung quietly. This song is a

realistic indictment of today's society—condemning excess commercialism, lack of communication and lack of compassion for the downtrodden. In plaintive voices full of woe and anger, Doe and Cervenka sing "Now that highway's comin' through/so you all gotta move/this bottom rung ain't no fun at all/'cause now fires, and rock-houses, and grape-flavored rat poison/are the new trinity for this so-called community." This song more than any other shows the still tough but softer, more folksy approach of this growing and expanding original American band.

However, the album is not all as folksy and beautiful as "See How We Are." There are still quite a few songs that forge ahead at breakneck speed with that characteristic "harmony" of Doe and Cervenka. "In The Time It Takes," "Anyone Can Fill Your Shoes," "Left and Right," and "Surprise Surprise" are all upbeat rockers with anger aplenty, but the anger is less self-indulgent and seems turned outward. Much of the angst of their earlier albums is gone. Doe and Cervenka see the ills of a less than perfect world, but instead of having the I don't give a— attitude, they seem to be saying that recognizing the injustices is the first step in doing something to change them.

Doe and Cervenka even manage to question themselves and laugh at themselves in "Surprise Surprise" when they sing "I drive to work/in a rented bus/Two hundred miles/or more each day/Just so that you/can get a look at us/and figure out/if we're worth what you paid."

"See How We Are" is one of the more important albums of 1987. It shows that the punk movement was not a waste and most of all, it shows one of America's best bands in the process of growing up. This is an album that should be heard, but because of X's reputation as an LA punk band, it might not get the exposure it deserves. And that's a shame, because one listen to the album would show many people what some of us have known all along—that X is a very intelligent band that just might be one of America's best.



National tv show promotes black colleges, schools

By Kathleen Pait and J.M. Rubin

ATLANTA, GA. (CPS)—Twenty-one students gathered in the TV lounge at a dorm at Spelman College September 24, waiting with some eagerness and some skepticism for the show A Different World to begin.

The students had some special reasons to be excited: the fictional black college at which the show takes place is based on Spelman, and the production company had filmed location shots on the campus, which had competed with several other local black colleges for the privilege.

including the everpresent, over-eager young man trying to hustle Denise and "my roommate hates me" syndrome.

Not everyone was impressed. "That Denise," said one student, "was an unbelievable character." Another viewer thought the character's clothes were so "way out" that they detracted from the plot.

But in general, most seemed to agree with student Beverly Hillman's summation: "That was a good show. I was surprised, very much surprised."

Educators also had reason to like it.

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And Spelman, a 105-year-old black women's college, had other things at stake: unprecedented and invaluable national exposure for the school and black colleges in general.

No one at Spelman, at the show's production company or at the United Negro College Fund could remember another TV program that has featured a predominantly black college.

Such national exposure can be invaluable to a school, especially a relatively small institution that doesn't get on TV much.

"Black colleges are known for their academic excellence," said Adrienne Rhodes of the United Negro College Fund. "The new school will expose that to a broader public."

Rhodes hopes "it will show that black colleges are place where black students can get good role models, find mentors and take active roles in student government and clubs."

Spelman Development Director Tanya Moore adds A Different World can illustrate to nation that a young black woman's "life at college is important. That reinforces what we say."

But some of the benefits have been more immediate.

"The exposure Spelman has gotten through the show has helped with recruitment and visibility," Moore reported. "We've gotten letters from Iowa and Nebraska, not all from black people. The show has made Spelman stand out in people's mind."

Moore added a small foundation in Florida had awarded a grant to Spelman, as a result of the show, and that the production company itself had enhanced Spelman's grounds by planting azaleas, dogwood and other flowers on the campus.

Nevertheless, the students who gathered to watch the premiere episode didn't see much of the campus.

And they may not see much more of it during succeeding episodes.



Photo by Richard McLuttre

CFM recording artist Jimmy Castor performing with the ECSU marching band on October 3. Castor is a native of Plymouth, NC.