

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Players to present next play Nov. 7-11

The University Players, Elizabeth City State's drama troupe, will present August Wilson's award-winning play *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* as the opening production of the academic year.

Performances will be on November 7, 8, 9, and 11 (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday) at 8:00 p.m. in the Little Theater on campus.

Wilson, the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright of *Fences* and *The Piano Lesson*, is considered America's leading contemporary playwright.

Winner of the New York Critics' Circle Award as Best Play of 1988, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* is set in a boarding house in Pittsburgh in 1911. The play's story centers around the migration of blacks from the South to the industrialized North, searching for jobs and self-identity.

The play has received critical praise for its humor and passion. A *Washington Post* critic wrote, "Joe Turner has the haunting power of a ghost story." *Time* magazine hailed the drama as being "August Wilson's best play!"

The cast of the University Players' production includes Chester Dunton, a sophomore Criminal Justice major, as Seth Holly, the owner of the boarding house; Sheila A. Reid as Bartha Holly, his wife; Vincent M. Swift, a senior Business major, as Bynum

### Coming Soon

Walker; Aaron T. Williams, an ECSU sophomore as Jeremy Furlow; Barry Gray, a sophomore from Teaneck, New Jersey, as Herald Loomis; Elaine McLean as his daughter, Zonia; Brenda Clark as Mattie Campbell; Joel Deonanan as young Ruben Mercer; Jim Bridges as Rutherford Selig; and Glenda Davis as Martha Pentecost.

Shawn Smith is directing the production. Stephanie Crouail will serve as stage manager, and Paula Forehand is technical director. Sets and lighting are being designed by Scott Telford.

Given the strong cast of students, faculty and staff, combined with the outstanding August Wilson script, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* should be an exciting and entertaining event in the Little Theater.

Admission for the general public is \$3.50. ECSU faculty and staff tickets are \$1.50, and ECSU student admission is \$1.00. Tickets may be purchased at the door on the evening of the performance.

For advanced reservations and information, phone the Players' office at 335-3436 (campus extension #436).

Photo by Eugene O'Neal



Members of the cast of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* include (left to right) Barry Gray, Vincent Swift, Elaine McLean, Chester Dunton, Vincent Swift, Brenda Clark, and Aaron Williams. The University Players' production of August Wilson's prize-winning play will be presented November 7, 8, 9, and 11 at 8:00 p.m. in the Little Theater.

## Band beauties



Jimmel Hines, Demetria Freeman, and Kathy Thomas, dancers for the ECSU Marching Band, show off their talent during the Port City Classic Game in Wilmington, N.C.

## Jazz artist Monte Croft's album showcases exciting new talent

By Tarsha White

He describes himself as "a musician" and that he is. Not only is Monte Croft a very talented instrumentalist but he is also a strong vocalist as well.

Croft's debut album, *A Higher Fire*, is a very soulful and relaxing album for jazz-lovers. While most of the songs are instrumentals, "What Is Love?" and "Mandela" reveal Monte's ability as a vocal performer which is very similar to that of Stevie Wonder. Both songs are soulful and soft and place more emphasis on the piano.

The other songs on the album are more fast-paced, progressive jazz-

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oriented tunes that place much emphasis on the drums, bass, and the vibraphone.

"Mandela" is a short but sweet song dedicated to none other than the great Mandela. "Mandela" has incredibly beautiful lyrics that do a fine job of describing Mandela. Take, for instance, the chorus lines where Monte sings, "Mandela, Mandela. When you said freedom now, they disagreed. But you have come to symbolize what it means for all meant to be free."

"What Is Love?" is also a touching

song of self-pity and once again Monte's passionate style of singing and his unique vocal range are a real attention-grabber.

In both songs Monte shows his political awareness and concern for people.

The title track, "A Higher Fire," is a soothing traditional jazz piece and is a basic example of the rest of the instrumental songs on the album. The songs make you feel as if you are sitting in the front row of a great jazz concert.

*A Higher Fire* is an enjoyable jazz work that showcases the talents of an exciting new jazz artist.

## One-act celebrates Black composer

By Veronica Wills

Harry T. Burleigh, the first successful Black classical musician to teach, sing and compose, was celebrated Thursday, October 4, in Moore Hall Auditorium.

Burleigh's achievements were featured in a one-act play, *Harry T.*, written by Trivis Wicker, an Elizabeth City native and former director for continuing education at the College of the Albemarle.

The presentation was done in Readers' Theater style with music. The audience was treated to "Heav'n, Heav'n" and "Little David Play on Your Harp" as the cast entered from the back of the auditorium. After they reached the stage, Wicker and the rest of the cast narrated the play, presented around an arrangement of spirituals, a

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musical form Burleigh did much to make popular.

During the play, which chronicled Burleigh's life from a childhood of leading his blind grandfather, who was blind, around town to his struggles to get into a music conservatory to becoming the first black to be the featured soloist at St. George Church a job he held for 52 years.

In addition to Wicker, the cast, who served as readers and vocalists of the life and works of Burleigh, consisted of Debbie L. Barnes, Diana Covington, (accompanist) Horace Fisher, Desiree Roots and Wanda Wherry.

Fisher dassed the audience with a dramatic rendition of "Swing Low,

Sweet Chariot," Wherry exhibited her operatic talents on "Balm in Gilead" and Wicker had the audience giggling with his humorous version of "Hard Trials."

The company sang familiar spirituals that had been arranged by Burleigh, who had heard the songs sung by his grandfather, who had been a slave.

Spirituals and gospel music have important differences, according to Wicker. "Spirituals are traditional plantation songs which were sung by slaves during their daily tasks."

Under Wicker's direction, the group has staged the play at the University of Richmond, Virginia State University and within the Richmond school system.

The performance was part of the Lyceum series sponsored by ECSU.

## Rhythm Nation attacks racism sexism, drugs, gangs and lies

By Miracle Perry

### Album Review

With *Control*, Janet Jackson was out to call her own shots, and to be totally in control of her life without her parents telling her exactly what to do. In *Rhythm Nation*, she is dealing not just with personal affairs but world affairs. The album takes a stand on racism and the effects that it has had and is having on our world.

In *Rhythm Nation*, Janet is trying to get everyone to see that we have a problem with our young people and that we must start today bettering them for tomorrow. She not only attacks racism, but also bigotry in all its forms, including judging a person by his or her sex.

"Let us know all that we should understand are the ways of a person and their abilities before we judge them," she sings, in "Knowledge."

This theme appears again in "Pledge One":

"In complete darkness we are the same; it is our wisdom and knowledge that separates us."

In these and other songs on the album, Janet seems to be saying that too many people today judge others

by their appearance rather than on what comes from the heart. *Rhythm Nation* deals with the fact that we as a nation, are a part of what is going on today, we must try to make a change.

"Miss You Much" deals with another of the album's themes, "love" (especially the pain and conflict of love), when she sings "that it feels wrong when I'm away too long; it makes my body hot," because she misses her lover so much.

Janet tries to express to us that if you are in love that it isn't wrong to express yourself to whomever it might be because this world needs love, care, and understanding.

"Escapade" is Janet's adventure song. It is about how she has worked hard all week and now she is ready to party. This song and video are filled with action and excitement.

Janet never once fears letting the audience know that she is a love giver and receiver. She loves the world and all of the people that make it work. In this album she also goes from R&B, and rap to hard rock with her chart

breaking song "Black Cat."

In "Black Cat" she deals with the problems of gangs, drugs, and murders. The constant telling of lies, and the stealing and heart breaking that being a gang member often means, are very much a source of anger and pain for her.

Despite the gravity of her themes, Janet sings this song with a seething sexuality, and the mood is accentuated by the frenetic guitars and the song's wild, frantic beat.

As with her earlier albums, Janet puts her heart and soul into her work.

The interesting thing about this album is its social consciousness, with its emphasis on racism, gangs, violence and corruption among our youth. Today we have to begin to make a change and Janet is hoping that it will begin with her.

I would strongly recommend this album and all of its lyrics to any family that would like to help end these problems that are killing our young people. In Janet's words, "It is in complete darkness we are all the same, it is only our knowledge and wisdom that separates us. Don't let your eyes deceive you."

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