

ENTERTAINMENT

Under comic surface Joe Turner probes search for meaning

By Tarsha White

The University Player's presentation of August Wilson's critically acclaimed play, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, was dynamic, highly entertaining and full of humor.

Set in Pittsburgh in 1911, the action of the play centers around a group of colorful characters who live in a rooming house owned by Seth and Bertha Holley (Chester Dunton and Sheila A. Reid).

The plot deals with the efforts of Harold Loomis (Barry Gray) to locate his wife, Martha Pentecost (Glenda Davis) who has been missing almost ten years. Loomis and his daughter Zonia (Elaine A. McLean) have been searching for her for the past four years.

Loomis' dark, brooding temperament soon brings him into conflict with the boarding house owner, Seth Holly. Being a Northerner, Seth cannot understand the passions and fears of Loomis, who has been a slave.

Seth is nosy, talkative and outgoing; Loomis is introverted, private and laconic. The contrasting personalities create much of the tension in the drama, which builds to a powerful climax.

Seth also has conflict with Bynum Walker, a resident of the boarding house, whose obsession with voodoo and magic shocks and annoys the more practical-minded Seth. Bynum's obsession with discovering "the secret of life," touches on many of the play's deeper meanings, and he articulates most of the play's ideas.

Although much of the action is comic, the play explores a more serious theme: the search for individual meaning and definition in a chaotic universe.

Swift turned in a credible performance as Bynum. He was able to convey the feeling of an older character,

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unlike some of the other characters in the play.

Chester Dunton performed with spirit and flair, and he had some of the funniest lines in the play. He sustained his high-energy performance throughout the play. Being the leading character, there was a tremendous amount of responsibility placed upon Dunton, and he got better and better as the play went on.

One of the most highly entertaining moments in the play comes when several of the characters in the boarding house dance a "juba"; their comic antics and cries delighted the audience. The juba dance was expertly choreographed by Gene Owens.

Aaron Williams' performance as Jeremy Furlow was excellent. Williams' character, Jeremy, was a hard drinking womanizer. Williams conveyed great skill and versatility in his performance as a trifling smooth-talking man out for a good time.

Sheila Reid did a wonderful job of playing Bertha Holley, Seth's wife. She was the one who always tried to keep peace among Seth and all of the boarders. She was able to establish a strong presence on stage, and she delivered her lines flawlessly, and with convincing emotion. The chemistry between her and Seth was good; Sheila's down-to-earth warmth and logic was a good balance to his more impetuous temperament.

Dr. Glenda Davis (Martha Pentecost) was great, too. Although she came in at the end of the play, her character was a memorable one in that she had been an important figure throughout the play. She was the long lost wife of Herald Loomis and the mother of Zonia.

Brenda Clark (Mattie Campbell



In the foreground Vincent Swift (left) consoles Barry Gray during a climactic scene in the play, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. The University Players performed the hit play Nov. 7, 8, 9 and 11. Gray turned in a powerful performance as Loomis, a former slave who spent 11 years looking for his wife, Martha Pentecost. In the background from left are Sheila Reed, Chester Dunton, Elaine McClain (standing), and Brenda Clark.

and Garlinda Hollins (Mollie Cunningham) were two women who boarded at Seth's place. Mattie was there because her "man" had left her. Mollie was there because she had missed her train. Jeremy flirted with both of them, and ended up running off with the vivacious Mollie.

Clark's performance of a woman abandoned by her man was moving and credible.

Jim Bridges played Rutherford

Selig, the white man who came to buy pots from Seth. Bertha believed that he was the person who had taken Martha Pentecost away to be a slave. This was Bridges' first appearance with the Players, and one hopes he will return in future plays. He played his role convincingly and with flair.

Elaine McLean and Joel Deonanan were the younger cast members. They both performed well considering the fact they both had little experience as

actors.

The most moving scene in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* comes near the end when Herald Loomis sees his wife for the first time in almost ten years. The emotional intensity has built to a feverish point, and the characters do a good job in managing this intense emotion on stage without overacting.

The background work for the play was wonderful also. The scenery was realistic. With the play being set in the

early 1900's, the set not only presented the look of that time, but it also gave a feel of that time as well.

The Player's did a very professional job in performing *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. The cast communicated exceptionally well and their acting was superb. Overall, the play was enlightening and well worth the time spent to see it.

The play was directed by Shawn Smith.

Corrections

In a front page photograph appearing in the last issue of *The Compass*, Lisa Burnette was incorrectly identified as "Lisa Bonet."

In that same issue, in News Notes, Terrence Taylor's name appeared as "Florence Taylor."

The Compass regrets these errors.

The Editors

THE COMPASS

Staff

would like to wish the ECU family a safe and joyous holiday season and a happy new year.

Rap artist shows understanding of the streets with new album mixing dance, original music

By Tarsha White

Album Review

MC Hammer takes

his music into a new direction with his most recent album.

He has been called the best dancer since James Brown and his music proves him to be a great talent. MC Hammer takes his music into a new direction on his most recent album which is just as good if not better than his first.

In his first album, MC Hammer concentrated mostly on heavy rap songs which featured soulful tunes. On his second album, however, the music is much lighter.

The songs on MC Hammer's second album, *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'em* are very well written and shows MC Hammer's appeal to his pop audience as well as his rap audience. "You Can't Touch This," the first song released from *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'em* and perhaps the hottest song on the album is a take off from a Rick James tune from the early

80's called "SuperFreak." MC Hammer uses his own lyrics, however. This song is so full of energy that you can't help but want to dance when you hear it.

"Here Comes The Hammer" is also a very energetic rap cut in which Hammer uses original music. The music, however, is similar to the music of other tracks on the album. "Dancin' Machine" is another take off from Michael Jackson's "Dancin' Machine." Hammer uses some of the same lyrics in his version as well. The beat is of MC Hammer's own style, which adds some distinction from the older

version.

"Have You Seen Her" is a slower, more melodious song which features singing by Hammer's backup group. "Have You Seen Her" is a soulful remake of The Chilites' song of the same name from the 70's. The group shows tremendous singing talent which they have not used in any of the other songs. The group even sounds very much like the Chilites too. The theme of "Have You Seen Her" is mainly the yearning for an ideal love, which is demonstrated in the music video for the song. The video is a very unique one for MC Hammer because

it features little dancing.

"Help The Children" shows MC Hammer's awareness of the problems of the streets. It is a very heart-grabbing song which deals with the problems of drug and violence among the nation's youth. In this song, MC Hammer suggests that adults should be more responsible in bringing up youth today because of all the outside problems such as drugs, alcohol, and gang violence.

"Pray" has a similar theme to "Help The Children" as it also deals with the problem of drugs and violence as well as homelessness and problems that many people encounter daily in life. "Pray" is a mid-tempo track that combines the beat of Prince's "When Doves Cry" with Hammer's own rhythmic sound. In "Pray" MC Hammer suggests that it is important to pray in order to get through all of today's problems.

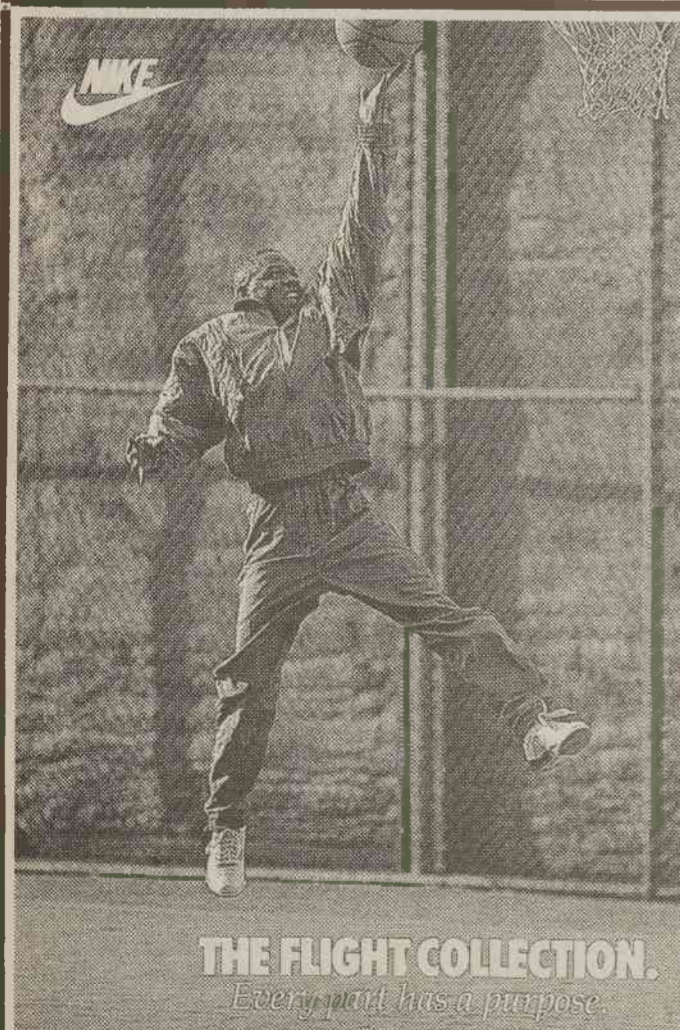
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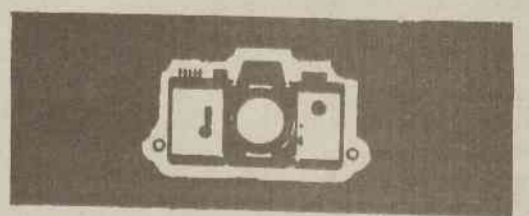
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