

# ENTERTAINMENT

Faculty goes to the stage

## Scholarcade production flawed; however, play had high energy

By Ursula McMillion

ECSU's faculty and staff's presentation of Langston Hughes musical folk comedy *Simply Heavenly* was spirited but plagued with difficulties.

The play, this year's Scholarcade production, was presented April 14 in Moore Hall Auditorium.

The production's major flaw was that the lead character was miscast. Langston Hughes' lead character, Jesse B. Semple, played by Michael A. Godfrey, was an earthy, common type, but Godfrey was unsuccessful in projecting this image.

Godfrey projected a sweet and timid Semple which prevailed throughout his performance. Godfrey's primary strength was his excellent singing voice. His "Look For the Morning Star" duet with Joyce Lane (Brenda Clarke), was especially charming, eliciting warm applause from the audience.

Several alterations in Godfrey's lines disserved Hughes' initial character. Dropping the profanity from the original script weakened the character's credibility to the audience and undermined the play's authenticity.

Godfrey also had difficulty remembering lines and projecting dialogue as well as some of the musical numbers.

The play's plot centers around Semple's efforts to get a divorce from his wife in order to marry his current

### Play Review

love, Joyce Lane (Brenda Clark.) Clark's performance was mediocre; she sounded as if she were reading her lines from memory cards.

The play unfolds at Semple's Harlem hangout, Paddy's Bar.

Several of the characters are brought to life with true authenticity while others lagged with amateur deficiencies. Miss Mamie (Dorothy Wills) and her sidekick, Melon (Willie Sullivan) were highlights of the play with their barroom antics and near brawls. Whether she was talking about "chitterlings" or singing the blues with the hillbilly watermelon salesman, Wills captivated the audience.

Other humorous characters at the bar included the couple with seventeen children—Bodiddly (Lavern Jones) and his wife Archie, (Bennie J. Lewis); their son, John Jasper, (Kirk Rivers); Hopkins, the bartender (Andre Smith); the pianist (L. Anthony Johnson); a "highfalutin" visitor to the bar (Glenda Davis); Giffiddle (Bobby J. Lewis) and Zarita (Robin Gresham), the luckless and loose ex-girlfriend of Semple who continued to seek his companionship even though he constantly reminded her of his intent to marry Joyce.

Other mentionable characters were Madam Butler, (Burnella W. Griffin)

Mrs. Caddy, (Mattie N. Perry) Ali Baba, (Cornelius Goodwin) the nurse, (Catherine Iglesia-Flores) and the patron's of Paddy's Bar, Myrtle Rivers, Shelia Johnson, Shirley Jones, Marian Mitchell and Edmond Koker.

*Simply Heavenly* was directed by Shawn Smith, with the assistance of Paula Sutton.

Although the musical had high energy the pacing and momentum were flawed by characters' inability to project and or remember their lines.

The technical direction by Vicki Webb Thomas left something to be desired with lights blacking out and false lighting cues to close scenes; however, the setting presented a realistic 1950's Harlem.

The overall musical numbers, directed by L. Anthony Johnson, exposed a wide range of musical talent among the cast. Brenda Clarke, Mike Godfrey, Dorothy Wills and Bennie Lewis all gave commendable performances in this area.

Even though the musical's momentum dragged at times the audience responded well with laughter, sometimes even cheering characters on. And the play had enough bright moments to partially redeem the flawed production.

Scholarcade, an annual production by the faculty and staff, was launched by Chancellor Jenkins in 1980. Its purpose is to raise scholarship funds for students.



Brenda Clark and Michael Godfrey, playing Joyce Lane and Jesse B. Semple, cuddle in Joyce's room sharing a moment in love's bliss, during rehearsal for the presentation of Langston Hughes' *Simply Heavenly*. The play, directed by Shawn Smith and Paula Sutton, was performed by members of ECSU's faculty and staff April 14 in Moore Hall.

## Safire releases her second album

By Tarsha White

Safire is one of the hottest recording artists on the dance scene today. Her new album, *I Wasn't Born Yesterday*, was released just a month ago and, already, the first single, "Made Up My Mind" is on the charts. It is #13 on the Dance Sales chart and #38 on the Dance Singles chart.

Safire is a not your average dance diva. She was born Wilma Cosme in San Juan, Puerto Rico but later moved to East Harlem with her family as a small child. By the age of 12 her singing in church and school had led her to the desire to become an entertainer. Eventually, she won an audition contest for Cutting Records and recorded "Don't Break My Heart" and "Let Me Be The One" which became instant hits in many dance clubs across the country. Safire's self-titled 1988 debut album brought forth 3 major crossover hits: "Boy I've Been Told," "Gonna Make It," and a Top 10 smash hit "Thinking of You," which was written in memory of her uncle who died of AIDS.

Just last year, Safire received a New York Music Award for Best Latin Music Artist and the Hispanic Entertainment Award (DESI) for Best Female Vocalist.

"Made Up My Mind," the first song on the album, is a very danceable song. The music is great and the lyrics are meaningful. Safire says that this song is about her independence. "This song is about my independence because that's the way I feel. I'm a person who can make a decision and stick by it no matter what, no matter how," Safire refers to this song as her Declaration of Independence.

"Loves Gotta Be There" is another danceable track on the album. Safire says that this song is about relationships that last a lifetime. "I think everybody knows that I was married at one time. I recently got a divorce because I was too young and didn't

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know what I was getting into. The song is about relationships lasting a lifetime. In order to have a relationship last there must be love." Safire says that this isn't just another silly love song, though.

"Whatever Happens" is a beautiful ballad off the album. It is more Pop-oriented than Rhythm and Blues with



Dancer, singer & songwriter Safire.

its use of the guitar and keyboard. This song also has a lot of meaning behind it. "This song is about love. It's also a song about me. When I love someone, I love them honestly and deeply. That song resembles truth, honesty, and commitment. I hang in there no matter what." This song expresses Safire's feeling very well.

"Taste The Bass" is another uptempo dance song. It sounds a little more like hip-hop music with its use of rap in the song. The music sounds very similar to "Made Up My Mind" in beat, unfortunately. Safire describes this song as a fun song because she is rapping in it herself.

Safire also raps in the title track, "I

Wasn't Born Yesterday." Like most of the fast songs on the album, this song is also very danceable. The music sort of in the style of Sheena Easton. Safire describes this song with one word: attitude.

"Some Things Never Change" is perhaps, the most special song on the album to Safire because she co-wrote it with a good friend, Tony Moran, who also sings in the song. Safire says, "A good friend of mine, Tony Moran, co-wrote that song. In my life I had a lot of friends who turned out not to be my friends. When all those people out there made my life difficult he was there. We're still the best of friends and that won't ever change. This song is, however, somewhat a repeat of some of the other up-tempo songs."

"I Can't Cry" is a slower-paced song. The beat is good and the lyrics are meaningful. It's an emotional song. Deep inside I may be crying, but I'm not going to let you guys see that," says Safire.

"Shame" is another song about independence. In this song, a woman catches her man in the act with someone else and she's not going to be taken advantage of. She says, "you're busted, I'm disgusted, out you go." This song has a great beat and it is also easy to dance to.

"I Never Heard" is a song written by Michael Jackson. This song is about a man who falls in love with someone who doesn't know he's there. It is different, musically, from the other fast-paced songs, too. Says Safire, "Michael Jackson wrote this song and he's my idol. I've always looked up to him and learned a lot from him as a performer and as an artist. Michael is someone who will always be remembered. I'm striving for that as well."

"I'm A Victim" is the last song on the album. This is another song that Safire uses rapping in. The beat is good but a little weaker than the other songs, however.

## Jumps Reply

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with the article. "Everything is posted as far as clubs and activities," she said "It has never been specified that white students are not welcome to participate."

ECSU's student body president, Renel Sample, said the article is more an issue of involvement than one of black and white.

"The opinions expressed were only from a few people," said Sample. "There is tension between whites and blacks. There are also black students who don't get involved."

The most common gripe heard from black students concerns money that white students receive. Some students feel that the Incentive Scholarship is designed for white students and are upset about white students getting refunds.

"Not all of us (white students) are here on the Incentive Scholarship," said Wynns. "Many of us are here because we like this school."

"I'm not getting a damned cent to attend this University," said a white student who is angry about this assumption. "I got a bank loan to come here, and I'm here out of choice. I don't care what color the people are."

"The University is here for learning as well as socializing," said ECSU alumnus Tony Price, "A person has to grow to deal with both races socially and economically. I was disgusted when I read the article."

Price, an Elizabeth City businessman, has kept in close contact with the University since graduating in 1983.

Franklyn Creef, an English and Art Education major feels that the race issue is moot.

"We're all here for an education," said Creef, "not to socialize. It's all about student opinion."

## Miss ECSU

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she said. "As Miss ECSU I will be giving something back to the University for the scholarship I received three years ago."

Tonya has chosen this personal motto to guide her through the course of her reign:

"Life is best when you live it. Love is best when you give it."

By this she means, "Everyone should experience life and reach out to others and in turn they will do the same."

DeVaughan's career goal is "to work in a business corporation in the marketing field." Her ultimate goal, she added, "is to own my own company."

DeVaughan cited her mother as her greatest influence in life.

"She has risen from poverty and abuse to a lifestyle of love, success and happiness," she said.

## Of thee I sing...



The National Opera Company performed Donizetti's "Daughter of the Regiment" in Moore Hall on April 4. The opera was the last production of ECSU's 1991-92 Lyceum series and the fourth since the celebration of the Centennial began.

## SACS

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examined the University's records and documents in a diverse variety of areas, including all academic departments, major administrative offices, and finances.

"There were fifteen members in the group," according to Henderson. "They included college professors, vice chancellors for academic affairs, and one representative from SACS itself."

Henderson said that in order to be reaccredited the University must make any changes recommended by the

team. All changes must be made "within a very specific period of time," she added.

"We know we were very well prepared," Henderson continued. "People across campus came together and worked hard to get ready for this visit."

Final announcements about which schools have been reaccredited will be made in December at the SACS meeting in Atlanta, Ga, Henderson said.

"ECSU has been the most prepared campus thus far for the SACS team," she said.

McCleure, Director of the SACS team, is President of Virginia Union University.

## Correction

In our last issue a misprint occurred on p. 4: ECSU instead of ECSU. Also, Sylvia Walton wrote the story on women's fashions (p. 5). The editors regret these mistakes.

The Editors

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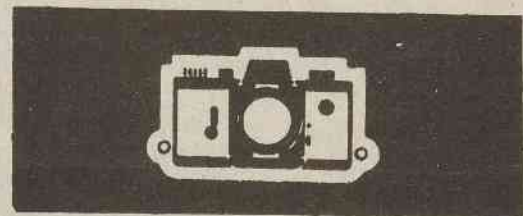
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