

Showcase '96: Miss ECSU candidates dazzle the crowd with beauty, talent

by Tiffany Newell

Although the four contestants in this year's Miss ECSU Showcase had plenty of opportunity to display their physical beauty, the event also required them to reveal their more serious sides as well.

In addition to strutting their stuff in a wide variety of attire, the candidates also had to field questions like "What's the greatest issue facing black women today?"

Contestants Kimberly Jones, Synetheia Newby, Dana Phillips, and Vanessa Vinson responded to this question during the "In Search of a 'Get Down to Business Queen' interview."

"Black women do not get any respect," said Vinson. Dana Phillips' response was, "Black women settle for less than the best." Jones believed there should be more equality between black women and men, and Newby re-

sponded with, "Black women aren't taken seriously."

Dimmed lights, black columns connected by red streamers, and a checkered black and white floor transformed Moore Hall Auditorium's stage into a 1930's ballroom during the April 2 Showcase. This year's theme, "In Search of the Queen of the Savoy," was based on the theme of last year's coronation, "An Evening at the Savoy."

The 1930's mood was further enhanced by music from the Northeastern High School Jazz Band. While the mellow sounds filled Moore Hall each candidate sashayed to the tunes, allowing the audience to observe them.

The event was marred by some male members of the audience who shouted out rude comments about the women on stage.

SGA President James Cherry asked students to take the showcase seriously,

reminding them of its importance.

"One of these ladies will represent the University," he added.

Audience members continued making rude comments, despite requests by Cherry and reigning queen Trenace Fayton to show more respect.

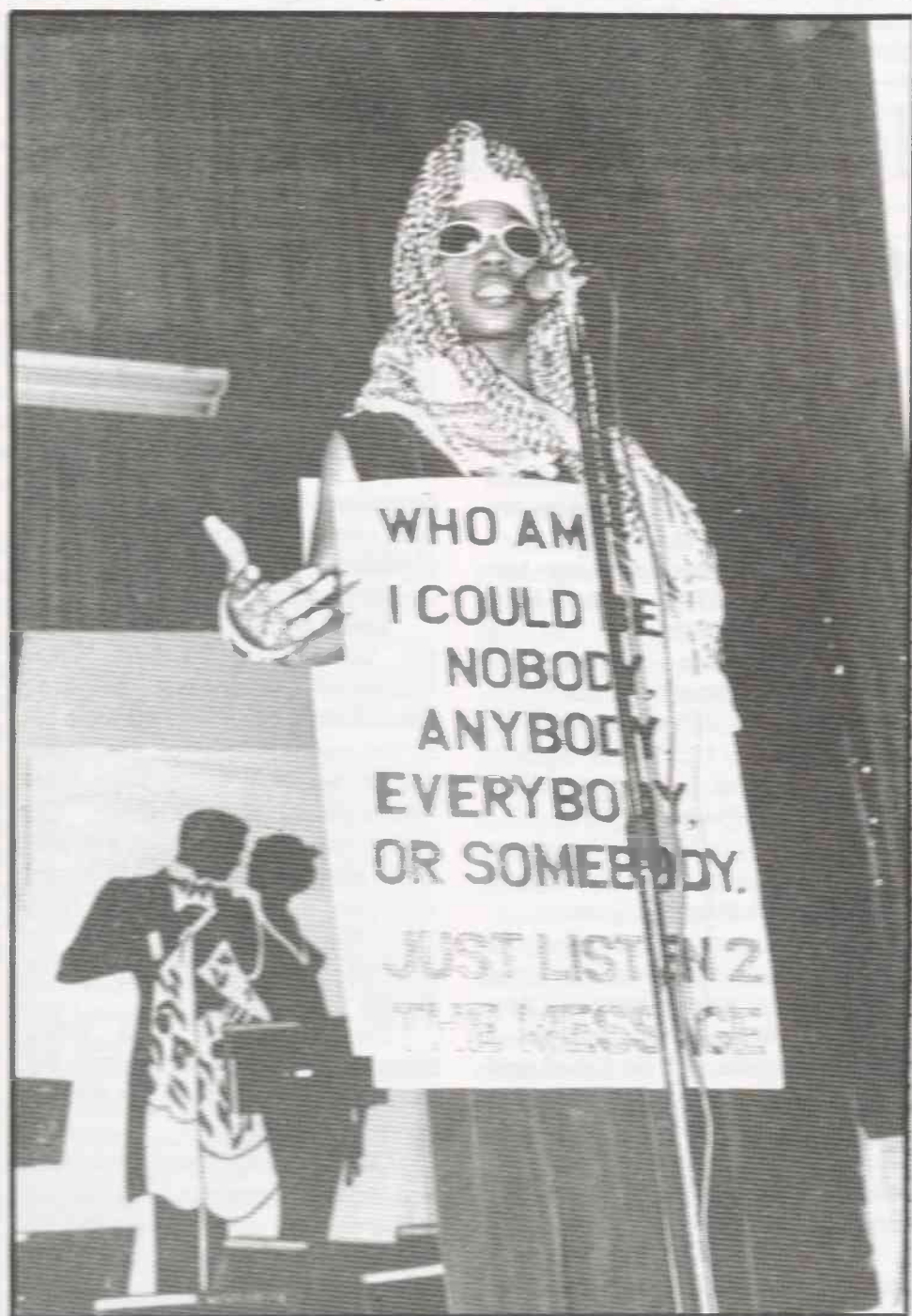
In the first part of the showcase, "In Search of a 'Down-to-Earth' Queen," the four candidates modeled their casual attire and introduced themselves to the audience. Kimberly "Kim-me" Jones, modeled a lavender satin two-piece pants outfit with black granny knee high boots. Vanessa Vincent strutted her stuff in a burnt orange pants ensemble. Dana Phillips dazzled the crowd with her black and white dress. Synetheia Newby sizzled in a black and white pants outfit.

The interview portion of the showcase tested the contestants' ability to answer questions quickly but adequately. Questions dealt with problems on campus, current events and issues facing women.

During the talent section, Kimberly Jones performed a dramatic monologue, Vanessa Vincent sang "Safe in His Arms" (accompanied by Barry Reid), Dana Phillips performed an interpretive dance, and Synetheia Newby performed a dramatic interpretation entitled, "Lord Why Did You Make Me Black?"

The finale, "In Search of an Elegant and Classy Queen," included the evening wear competition. Jones flaunted her stuff in a hunter green velvet gown accented with white sequins. Vinson wowed the audience with a black handmade sequined gown and matching purse. Phillips glowed in a gold floor-length gown set off with matching gold shoes. Newby sparkled in a silver floor-length satin gown.

After modeling their evening gowns, each contestant had to answer a question selected in a random drawing. The audience was then given one last look at the nominees before it was "lights out at the savoy."



Kim Jones performs a dramatic monologue during the talent section of the Miss ECSU Showcase.

POETRY

If Black Is Not Beautiful

If Black is not beautiful
Then how could it create
Cultures dark and light
throughout this world
When her offsprings find
their mate?

If Black is not beautiful
Why is it that I find
Black becomes sunshine
at night when black is all
I see?

If Black women are not
beautiful
Why can't I help but
notice
When our hips sway to
the music of the air
All men can't help but
focus?

If Black is not beautiful
What is it that I see
When I look into the
mirror

And Black looks just like
me?

If blackness is not
beautiful
And my Black man is
only a villain

Why is it that he
provides for me
And gives me love and
"sexual healing"?

If Black is not beautiful
Am I then to believe
That I am a
representation of ugliness
By wearing black upon
my sleeve?

To answer this grand
question
Look within your fear
And ask yourself this
question:
"Am I seeing ugliness in
the mirror?"

by Kimberly Hines