



Members of the University Choir show their exuberance at being on the road. They are: (from left at front) Eva Ruffin, Toneika Stephens (low), Delecia Wright, David Gibson, Donald McClain, Brandon Egerton, Tanisha Williams, Kimberly Hines, Brandon Evans, and Damond Nolan. photo submitted by Donald McClain

# Long days, hard miles still add up to success for Choir's spring tour

by Kimberly T. Hines

It's approximately 3:30 A.M. as groggy students with scarves and do-rags tied around their heads drag their luggage to the bus. Pillows and blankets fill the seats with the things that members have marked their territory with, in preparation for the week ahead.

The University Choir Spring Tour is scheduled to mark its official beginning at 4 A.M. despite the cramped bus and crabby early morning attitudes.

Many of the students have never experienced the excitement and aggravation of the Spring Tour; nor are they prepared for the way they will probably feel at the end: like they have gained and lost new friends.

Professor Billy C. Hines, conductor and Dr. Gloria J. Knight, accompanist, load the bus and a hush falls as members await Mr. Hines' "safety prayer."

The bus finally gets rolling, and the joking and laughing can now begin. And the sleeping too. The entire tour will follow this same routine until the end when people will even get tired of their best friend, or dog if possible.

The very first day had members tired for the whole week: two morning per-

formances and an evening concert and NO BATH since approximately two o'clock earlier that morning.

All choir members wanted after such a long day was something to eat, a nice, hot bath and a comfortable, warm bed to sleep in. This was the first of many nights that the choir was housed in homes.

We were fed dinner that evening and breakfast the following morning at the churches where we gave concerts.

Thank God for Saturday. On the seventh day even God rested. It felt like the seventh day.

The next day we were the acting choir at a church service in Richmond. We performed a concert that evening at a church in Hampton.

The applause of the audiences and the great meals kept the choir members going, despite the exhaustion everyone felt. Just hearing the acoustics in a church where we would sing, or seeing tears of pride and smiles on our parents' faces made the aching feet and sore muscles seem worthwhile.

The next week was filled with new experiences for new members, likes and dislikes; new acquaintances and old. Choir members were able to meet the

composer of one of the pieces we sang, "I Know I've Been Changed," and in Durham, many were reunited with former choir members, who made the tour seem more worthwhile.

There were only four days left before we'd be able to part company and many were already anxious for that day to arrive.

There had already been one altercation, which was easily resolved and no one was looking forward to another one.

The choir shared many fun experiences. Frustrations were calmed with laughter, care of David Scott Gibson's one-man show. Scott, an ECSU alumnus and returning Education major, has a wonderful mimetic instinct. He would take the microphone on the bus and mock everyone—from members of the choir to Mr. Hines. Even people we would just run into. He made many moments humorous.

By the end of the week spring had begun to show her beauty and the sun shown bright and warm. We ate breakfast at our last stop, climbed on the bus and slept until we reached our destination: Elizabeth City State University.

After a tour which began in Richmond, Va., stopped in Manteo,

Durham, New Bern, Charlotte, and ended in Kings Mountain, NC, a six-hour drive from Elizabeth City, no one wanted to sing another song for quite some time.

Mr. Hines must be a psychic.

We returned to school and, after expressing his pride in us, Professor Billy C. Hines, the best professor in the world, gave us a week off!

Now we can all catch up on our work, greet our friends, and get some real sleep.

The tour members were Kimberly T. Hines, Nekita Mitchell, Hope Jones, Tanisha Williams, Delicia Wright, Wanda Morgan, Amy Gollard, Stephanie Scales, Eva Ruffin, Sharlen Steward, Elizabeth Scott, Toneika Stephens, Natasha Peters, Sherri Williams, Michelle Lewis, Shondalyn Dawson, Kimberly Carter, Jade Hughes, Candace Hardnett, J'ame Powell, David Scott Gibson, Brandon Egerton, Terris Carter, Todd Peterson, Christopher Whitfield, Damond Nollan, Brandon Evans, Damon Freshwater, Donald McClain, Spencer Faulkner, Michael Lewis,

Brian Snow, Anthony Moore, and Charles Butler