

ENTERTAINMENT

Count Basie orchestra revives the big band sound

MICHAEL E. PARKER
STAFF WRITER

Fingers snapping, heads bouncing, and hands clapping, was the enthusiasm shown for the world-famous Count Basie Orchestra during Winston-Salem State's Lyceum Performing Art Series, on Nov. 30.

The orchestra, directed by Frank Foster, has been introducing millions of people to jazz music and the "big band" style of music originated by William "Count" Basie.

"We are glad to perform here," said Foster. "This place brings back some good memories for the band." The orchestra performed at the dedication ceremony of the K.R. Williams Auditorium on April 15, 1975.

Irving Stokes, a trumpet player for the orchestra and a native of Greensboro, dazzled the crowd as he played a feature

piece from the song, "Everything Happens to Me Except Love." Stokes played with a great deal of intensity as he played his trumpet gracefully.

The Count Basie Orchestra played well known oldies as "Am I Blue," "You've Changed," "Right On, Right On" and "More Blues." They also entertained the crowd with some new sounds from their latest release, "We Be Jammin'."

The Count Basie orchestra has existed through financial difficulties, hard times, and deaths of the musicians—But the orchestra has survived with the help of their loving fans. The orchestra currently has members who have played in the group for 35 years.

Count Basie died at the age of 80 leaving behind a rich musical legacy. That legacy maintains Basie's high standards under Frank Foster's leadership.



Photo supplied by WSSU Public Relations

Frank Foster, director world famous Count Basie Orchestra

Drama Guild presents Baldwin's "The Amen Corner"

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Last month the WSSU Drama Guild presented James Baldwin's play, *The Amen Corner*. The performance was hosted in the Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium.

Members of the Drama Guild held various roles in the production. Michelle Hewitt, Robby Jackson, and David Mahatha held the leading roles of sister Margaret, Luke, and David, their son. Other roles were played by Shannise Payton, Diane Jackson, Tamala Joyner, Lena Hopkins, and Donnell Sanders.

The *Amen Corner* centers on Sister Margaret's relentless preoccupation with

her ministry. She believes simply in the way of the ministry, regardless of logic and common sense. Therefore, she places the ministry's existence before her family life and her congregation's. Her preoccupation with religion results in a strained relationship between her and those surrounding her.

The students participating in the production are not the only members of the Drama Guild. Dr. Fred A. Eady is the Drama Guild's advisor. "The guild is a family organization and having Dr. Eady as advisor elicits student's interest," said Calvin Holloway, president of the guild.

Dwight Sills' guitar sounds are smooth and soulful

BY DUANE HACKNEY
STAFF WRITER

In the age of powerful drum beats and hyped up synthesizers, no one really places much emphasis on the soft, easy listening sounds of music... especially when it comes from a guitar. No one, that is, except for Dwight Sills.

Sills is a new artist who appears on the Columbia recording label. Produced by Wayne Henderson, the name of the album is entitled "Dwight Sills."

The album features the masterful guitar playing of Sills as never heard before. It contains hints of jazz tunes as well as slow R&B mixed with soft sounds of guitar. The songs are mainly instrumental tracks that seem to soothe the savage soul.

One song on the album, "Whip Appeal", is an instrumental version

of Babyface's hit and features Sills on the guitar. Another song that truly demonstrates Sills' mastery over the guitar is the theme to the hit movie, "Driving Miss Daisy."

Dwight Sills can sing too. One song entitled, "Never Too Late To Fall In Love Again", displays Sills' wonderful voice. Although he is not a true ballad man, I can truly say that this song ranks with those of known artist such as Luther Vandross and Keith Sweat. It is a true love song that inspires romance.

This album is only for those who like smooth and mellow instrumentals; for those who have full appreciation for free flowing guitar; and for those who have a taste for soulful romance.

Columbia recording artist Dwight Sills pictured to right releases new album entitled "Dwight Sills"

