

A COMMENT ON THE SECOND BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL, MAY 4 & 5

THE SECOND ANNUAL BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL will be presented May 4th and 5th at the CARVER HI SCHOOL Auditorium. Portions of this year's festival will be aired on VIEWPOINT, a local T.V. program on WXII Channel 12 between 1 and 2 p.m., Saturday, April 28. This year's production is sponsored by the N.C.S.A. Student Council, MODEL CITIES CULTURAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM, and the CITY RECREATION DEPARTMENT. Admission is free and the public is invited.

As a result of comments and questions I have encountered in the past few weeks, I will try to clear up the purposes and objectives of the BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL. First of all the BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL doesn't mean an ANTI-WHITE FESTIVAL. This festival does not now, nor did it ever intend to reflect any racist attitudes of the Black Artist on campus. This is not a rebellion nor are we trying to make any statements, be any saviors of humanity, save Black people or start or express any kind of artistic revolution.

As you may have noted in previous articles, I express concern for the awareness of N.C.S.A. student in relation to Black Theatre, Black Literature, Black History and etc. That concern is still present, but the roots extend beyond the boundaries of the campus. It must go beyond the boundaries of school and into the community. Talking about the lack of Black classes won't teach the history of a free people. Constantly complaining to Deans and Administrators won't teach students the knowledge that I feel should be taught here. I definitely feel it should be shared by all students, all faculty members and anything else that walks, flies or crawls that claim to be human. Talking only creates a lot of noise and often misunderstandings. Lack of actions cause a lot of problems I have previously discussed in this column and actions will cure those ills (if you consider them ills). It is evident there won't be a Black Theatre course here this year; thus any student that is interested in that sect of theatre must discipline himself and do a lot of independent study. Students must recognize the need for a knowledge of all people and all cultures in order to relate to and understand all types of people.

I believe the culture of 33 million people can no longer be overlooked, but the solution lies with the Black Artist. Thus we proudly present the SECOND ANNUAL BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL. This year circumstances dictate that the entire production is student directed. We must continue this until members of the school administration understand this is probably the best public relations possible, as far as contact with the Black community is concerned. This must be continued until administrators understand why the auditorium was full of the people darker than blue at the previous B.A.F. and why very few have bothered to attend any other school functions, regardless of the artistic quality and thousands of dollars spent. Why did so many people come see a fifty dollar show (on a \$50.00 budget) and why have they not returned?

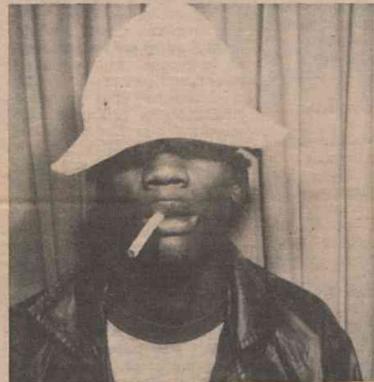
One of the first lies I heard when I entered N.C.S.A. was that the Blacks were not interested in the artistic endeavors of the school, but I believe the truth is, the artistic endeavors of the school are not interested in the darker audience. When will we be able to see the meaning of the long lines of Blacks all over the country, waiting to see the cheaped up, raped up, super niggerish films that have been recently released in the name of liberation. Do these lines reveal a people uninterested in the Arts or a people so hungry for the arts they feast on anything MGM puts out and labels "heritage." To me, these lines reveal proof that MY people are ready and waiting for universal and SELF study and exposure to the arts, but are the artist concerned enough and ready to be exposed to the people, all people. Does this audience count? No, we can't all afford to give big grants to the colleges and universities all over the country, but we can offer (and are willing to give) unlimited appreciation for any artistic achievements put before us, and we only ask to INCLUDE us.

Members of the Black student body have often come under heavy criticism from the community. We have often been accused of being totally white-washed and never doing anything for the community and I think we haven't been criticized unjustly. Please note that the only segregation we have participated in has been a segregation of a knowledge of SELF. It is easy for faculty and administrators to think that because you are Black you are exposed to a knowledge of self, but if that is the case, why do other students study their cultures so intensely? Why are other students required to study so much literature reflecting the artistic developments of their past and present. I don't mind being required to study universal literature, but I only say that if I must study about other people to get a degree, then those other people should be required to study about me to get their degree. To me this is only fair, this is only logical for any human being that has any pride or intelligence. No, I am not asking for separate teachings of any artistic cultures, I humbly ask to be included, not integrated.

In the last few weeks students have asked me specific questions that I will now direct my attentions to.

WHY A BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL?

We are having a Black Arts Festival for the same reasons any other productions on campus are produced. The only difference is that it is a show showing artistic development of people that just happen to be darker than blue. I hope that in the future there will be no need for a B.A.F. Anytime (this has happened over and over again) community people come up to me and ask me "When are ya'll gonna do anything we can come see", then it is time for a Black Arts Festival. This is not an attempt to separate from any school functions but merely an opportunity to show the artistic developments of an often forgotten people. We must make the choice about how we want to be seen as



artist. We must not be fooled into thinking that philosophizing about the BLACK THEATRE REVOLUTION is going to bring any meaningful changes. We must get off our butts and show what we want to be seen and do what we want to be done. We want to be involved in the universal arts. We cannot afford to flunk our matriculation examination for artistic integration in the universe. We must NOW make definite decisions about our place in OLD Glory as Human Beings, as BLACKS and as artists. We must set our goals and try to reach them, depending on SELF and no one else for liberal hands. We must not loose contact with the community because no tree can grow without the help of its roots. This year we are placing a great deal of emphasis on the community to make this festival a success (notice our outside sponsors this year).

ARE WHITES EXCLUDED FROM THE BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL?

No, this is not the case now and never has been out of intention. Our main purposes have been to display the Black Artist and artistic forms to the community and let them make their own judgments. Our true selves can only be shown by showing the forces that molded us into our present shapes. This has been achieved by many outside forces and certainly WHITES have played a significant role in the development of the present conditions of BLACKS. To tell the complete story we must use all forces involved. Our main concern is that the true story is told. As I said before, we are not trying to exclude anyone, only to include ourselves. As far as revolutions are concerned, the most revolutionary thing we can do as far as theatre is concerned is to be true to the material involved and play it for truth.

WHY IS THERE A LOT OF ANGER IN BLACK PLAYS?

Black plays often represent the feelings of Black people. This history of us can explain the motivations for any anger shown. Observers often mistake hurt for anger and anger for hurt, but Black Theater cannot survive on just negative energies. We cannot afford to do theatre just to show hate, only truths. Negative energies only give birth to negative results and this is not our goal. We want something positive to come out of this community project. We want the entire community to have a greater knowledge, wisdom and understanding as well as appreciation of us as artists.

I am often told to stop writing articles in this school's paper because many individuals believe that these articles are not appreciated by the majority of students. I am told that only a small minority of students and faculty read the paper and an even smaller minority pays any attention to what they have read. I am often told that faculty and administrators only read to check for grammatical errors and EQUAL COVERAGE. I am even told that they ignore everything they read. (Please note ignore is the root of ignorant). Sometimes I am even called a fool to write articles expressing any kind of concern for my peers. My response for these comments concerning being a fool are very distinctly and vividly expressed in the words of the late LORRAINE HANSBERRY, "always have been. A fool who believes that death is waste and love is sweet and that the earth turns and men change every day and that rivers run and that people wanna be better than they are and that flowers smell good and that I hurt terribly today, and that hurt is desperation and desperation is energy and that ENERGY CAN MOVE THINGS."

H.J. Pankey

Pictures:

NO. 1 - "I AM A BLACK WOMAN" (costumed and background painting by Glenda Wharton)

NO. 2 - "A BLACK ONENESS, A BLACK STRENGTH, A BLACK BEAUTY." (costume design by GLENDA WHARTON)

NO. 3 - "AS-SALAAM- ALAIKUM" (costume and painting by Glenda Wharton)

NO. 4 - "PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MIND IS"

NO. 5 - "THIS YEAR'S B.A.F. IS PROBABLY MY SWANSONG AT N.C.S.A."

NO. 6 - "THIS YEAR I DO MY OWN ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHY"!!!

NO. 7 & 8 - GENESIS a local POP group will appear in this year's festival.

(all costumes are designed by Glenda Wharton. Painting by G. Wharton)