

The Arts

Visiting artist presents Berlin tribute

By: Oreta Wade

On March 10, 1990, at 8 p.m. in Wayne Community College's North Campus Lecture Hall, Phillip and Beth Stovall received a standing ovation after their performance of Irving Berlin's music.

The Stovalls appeared at WCC in an exchange concert courtesy of Tony Medlin, WCC's visiting artist.

Stovall, a baritone, is the visiting artist at Beaufort Community College where his wife Beth is the music instructor.

Stovall received his B.A. degree at Lenoir Rhyne College and his master's degree from UNC in Greensboro.

He has performed as feature artist with the Western Piedmont Symphony Orchestra, Winston Salem Symphony Orchestra, Greensboro Symphony Orchestra, the Asheboro Symphony Orchestra and others.

He is now attending UNC in Greensboro for his doctorate in music.

Beth Stovall, a mezzo soprano, received a B.A. degree at Kentucky Wesleyan College and a master's degree from UNC in Greensboro.

In addition to teaching at BCC, she is director of music at the First Christian Church in Washington, N.C.

Both Beth and Phillip have performed in operas, oratorios, recitals, musicals, folk music and theater.

Accompanying the Stovalls was Linda Smith, Chief Music Therapist at Cherry Hospital and parttime music instructor at WCC.

Marshalle Lewis, WCC music instructor, assisted her.

Stovall narrated a biographical account of Irving Berlin that was accented at intervals with songs sung by both artists.

The couple sang approximately twenty of Berlin's songs including, "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Play a Simple Melody," "Blue Skies," "How Deep is the Ocean," "Easter Parade," and "No Business Like Show Business."

Stovall asked the audience to sing along with three selections which included, "Always," "White Christmas," and "God Bless America" (the grand finale).

Stovall stated that what inspired him the most about Berlin is that he never learned how to read music and his total output of songs was three thousand.

Berlin died this past September at the age of 101.



The cast of "Mermaids on Black Velvet" accept kudos from an admiring audience after another brilliant performance (l to r) K. Hales, J. Delcastillo, J. Mazingo, R. Taylor, L. Griffith, A.P. Thornton, D. Collier, J. Tart, K. Dunlap, K. Smith, J. Hales, T. Medlin.

Photo: Michelle Albrecht

'Mermaids' WOWS audience

By: Michelle Albrecht

Where does a writer get his inspiration?

For playwright Micah Harris, it came from watching numerous hours of pirate movies, studying mermaids, and reading novels about princesses-- all ingredients in his first play "Mermaids on Black Velvet," performed during March at WCC's North Campus.

Harris, a former WCC Continuing Education and Liberal Arts Department instructor, now teaches at Pamlico Community College.

Harris was especially pleased with the leading roles played by Liz Griffith, Ron Taylor, Mary Margaret Thompson, and Alan Thornton.

"They put all their efforts into their character," he said.

Five WCC students Doug Collier, Jennifer DelCastillo, Kathy Mitchell, Jeff Mazingo, and Jon Tart participated in the play.

Mitchell, who played the part of the mermaid, said her character was different from anything she was used to since she spoke no dialogue.

She used sign language instead.

Director was Tony Medlin, WCC's Visiting Artist, who commissioned Harris to write the play.



Tony Medlin and Liz Griffith during the performance.

Photo: Michelle Albrecht

Harris began writing the play in November and continued revising into rehearsals.

Medlin said he especially appreciated the work of SGA officers who took care of refreshments and the ticket booth.

The Jerry White String Band performed before and after the play as well as during intermission.

Slides of cartoon art were an integral part of the play, and an exhibit of cartoon art was displayed in the Atrium, an appropriate setting with its balconies reminiscent of crow's nest on a ship.

The comedy-fantasy had the entire audience laughing one minute and sitting on the edge of their seats with anticipation while they waited to see what would happen next.



Participants in "A Tribute to Irving Berlin" pose before the performance: (l to r) WCC music instructor Marshalle Lewis; accompanist Linda Smith; Beth Stovall, mezzo soprano; Phillip Stovall, baritone.

Photo: Oreta Wade