

INSIGHTS & entertainment

Durham Jazz Singer to Tour Japan

By Ray Trent

Gretchen Fields, noted jazz singer and Durham native, will embark October 16 for Japan and a series of engagements there.

Japan is competing with Paris for American artists. Jazz has become a big attraction there.

On Tuesday, September 14, Gretchen performed at a coffeehouse at NCCU Student Union to give a rendition of what the Japanese will be hearing.

Gretchen Fields is a jazz purist in the style of Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday and Carmen McCrae. She does not use electronics or overdubbing.

At Central her accompanists were Brother Yusuf Salim on keyboard and Dick Batchelor on drums. Gretchen depends on her strong voice which delivers the classics in a style that is her own and not a copy, although one can hear that she has studied "the masters."

She delivered on such standards as "Red Sails In The Sunset," "Sentimental Reasons," "Guess Who I Saw Today" and the upbeat "All Of Me."

Gretchen Fields' range is very expansive and she runs the scales with smoothness and ease.

At the Student Union, she was joined by student Iyana Smith on Erroll Garner's "Misty." Ms. Smith also shows the greatness of the talent in Durham.



GRETCHEN FIELDS with Bob Batchelor on drums and Yusuf Salim on keyboard. (Photo by Ray Trent)