

Old-time Blues

Folk Artists Play, Sing, Dance Like in 1890s

As Alga Mae Hinson's deft fingers glided over her acoustic guitar, suddenly she lifted the guitar and held it behind her head, all the while continuing to play.

Then, she stood up from her chair and began and intricate "buck dance," all the while continuing to play her guitar.

When the feeling "got good," a graying man who bears the name "Guitar Slim" Stevens, got up and joined in the dance too.

The scene could have been a farm courtyard in the late 1890s, but it was instead, the Reynolda House, Monday night as four of the state's best old time blues musicians enthralled an audience that jammed the main sitting room and the balconies above.

Along with Ms. Hinson of Johnson County and Stevens of Greensboro, Ella Baker and James Putnam, both guitarist, also performed their own compositions and tunes whose authors have been lost to posterity.

The performances were part of Black Heritage Week Activities at Wake Forest University.

"I've been playing the guitar since I was 14 and the organ and piano since I was five," said Stevens. He has never feared that the earthy, melodic, mournful yet joyous notes of the blues would be lost.

"I always figured somebody would be able to go along with it," he said. "Now, it's getting better and better."

Musicians such as Stevens and his fellows now have dates around the country and their own record albums. A big breakthrough was the 1978 N.C. Folklife Festival, which gave many of them real exposure for the first time.

The state office of folklife programs in the Department of Cultural Resources made a record of the early music, in conjunction with the Black Heritage in N.C. exhibit called "Eight-Hand Sets and Holy Steps."

Several individual albums have been recorded for Hinson, Stevens and other N.C. blues masters. The hopeful note is in line with the underlying theme of the blues. A close listen to the lyric generally reveals a triumph in the end. As Putnam put it, "The Train I Ride is Further Down the Road."

—John Tompkins

In Review

Children's Book Depicts Strong Black Family

Words By Heart
By
Ouida Sebestyen
(Atlantic, 1979)

Set in cotton country in the first decade of the twentieth century *Words by Heart* poignantly presents Lena as the heroine of constant struggles between blacks and whites.

Lena, the oldest child of four, has a continuing battle to be the best, to be free, to be accepted among throngs of white schoolmates and neighbors where her family is the only black one.

Competing in Bible verse contests, Lena wins but loses because the prize she is given is intended for a white boy.

She learns quickly but reluctantly that whites consider themselves superior and that no matter how intelligent, blacks still are expected to take back row seats.

Sebestyen has expertly

created an essay depicting the struggles and hardships of a strong, loving black family. Although not really as suspenseful or spine-tingling as *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor (Dial, 1976), *Words by Heart* holds a close second in explicitness and presentation of reality.

When her father dies from a gunshot wound by a young white foe, Lena learns the true meaning of love and finds it so hard to put into practice the Bible verses which she has so skillfully memorized:

Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you. Give to him that asketh thee.

Because she loves her father so dearly, she has to obey his death wish not to hate or punish his assassin. **By Dottie Butler.** Ms. Butler is supervisor at the East Winston Branch Library.

Appalachian Author To Speak at Library

Jesse Jackson, a well known children's book author and educator will be the guest speaker at the East Winston Library, Friday Feb. 15 at 4 p.m. The Chronicle incorrectly said the author would appear last Friday, as part of the library's Black History Month celebration.

Jackson is writer-in-residence at Appalachian State University in Elementary Education and Educational Media Department, where he teaches the children's literature. The Chronicle regrets the error.



Jesse Jackson



Michael Jackson shows his platinum copy of "Off the Wall" to actress Jane Fonda and producer Quincy Jones during Hollywood party.

Wilson From Page 8

New and reborn Christians are the talk of the town as the Reverend James Cleveland, who has been honored with more than twenty nominations by the Grammy committee for his gospel recordings, organized a special showbiz service at the Cornerstone Baptist Church that had Tinseltowners spilling over into the streets. *That's My Mama* star, Clifton Davis, testified with great feeling about his new-found faith and told me that since finding religion everything in his life has taken on new meaning and all is going smoothly. Expect to see the talented Clifton in many projects before the end of the year.

Singer Cheryl Lynn moved the packed house with her tears as she spoke of her days in the choir of Cornerstone and how her faith brought her a gold record on her first album. When the fever hit international gospel artist Cassietta George she moved forward, took a microphone and brought the worshippers to their feet in thunderous applause with a long version of "Jesus Loves Me." Singer D.J. Rodgers quickly told the crowd about his bout with cancer and how his faith kept him afloat when his doctors had given him up for dead.

BLOCKBUSTING

"Blockbusting," or persuading owners to sell or rent housing by telling them that minority groups are moving into the neighborhood, is a violation of fair-housing laws. If you believe "blockbusting" is occurring in your neighborhood, give the Winston-Salem Human Relations Department a call.

Aggie Choir Plans Trip

GREENSBORO - With a slogan "Adventure 79-80," A&T State University Choir under the leadership of conductor, Dr. Sam Barber, is attracting critical attention and making its presence known and felt on the campus and during the upcoming Spring break, along the Southeastern seaboard states into Georgia and Florida.



Dr. Sam Barber

Dr. Barber, a native of Trenton and the brother of G'boro councilman Jimmie I. Barber, has recently earned and attained the distinction of being admitted into the society of learned men. On June 10, 1979, he received the coveted doctorate degree, a Doctor of Musical Arts in CHORAL CONDUCTING, from the University of Cincinnati.

Dr. Barber's thesis topic was "The Choral Style of the Wings Over Jordan Choir." His former degrees are from Howard University, Washington, D.C. and the Chicago Musical College, Roosevelt University, Chicago, Ill.

Before joining the Music Department at NCATSU in August, 1978, Dr. Barber had distinguished himself as a teacher and as a conductor in the Green County Public Schools, Snow Hill, North Carolina, the Chicago Public Schools, the Cincinnati Public Schools, the University of Cincinnati, and the Ohio State University. Dr. Barber has conducted public school choirs, church choirs and college choirs as well as participated in amateur, college, and professional choirs, including the University of Chicago, the University of Cincinnati, and the Cincinnati May Festival Chorus, all under renowned conductors. He holds membership and has participated in all professional organizations in his field.

On Feb. 19, the choir, along with the choirs from UNCG and Guilford College will perform Honneger's *JOAN OF ARC* with the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Peter Paul Fuchs at the War Memorial Auditorium at 8:15 p.m.

"Adventure 79-80" will peak with a Southern tour. Performances will be given for the Goldsboro Alumni, Goldsboro, N.C., the Marine Air Corps, Cherry Point, N.C., the Morris Brown A.M.E. Church, Charleston, S.C., the Ebenezer Baptist Church, Savannah, Ga., the Urban League and the Edward

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