

Weekend

The Arts, Leisure, Music, Columns



They dropped the "Champaign" from Evelyn King's name to attract an older audience, but with the release of her new album, the "Champaign" is back (photo by James Parker).

King concert excites WSSU audience

By ALBERT NICKERSON
Chronicle Staff Writer

It was a shame when RCA officials convinced Evelyn King to drop the "Champaign" from her name.

"I tried to tell them not to drop Champagne, but they did," said King who appeared last Thursday night in the Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium as part of the Winston-Salem State University homecoming celebration.

The change was made, said King, because RCA officials wanted to change her image to attract an older audience. "The idea didn't work."

"We suggested dropping Champagne from her name in order to attract attention," said Elliot Horne, manager of black music publicity for RCA. "We did it as a publicity stunt."

Horne said the record company dropped the nickname in 1980, but decided last year to put the "Champaign" back in her name with the release of her "Face to Face" album.

But the audience at last Thursday night's performance didn't care what her name was. She treated them to a foot-stomping, hip-grinding, hand-clapping, soul-stirring performance during the homecoming show. Dressed in a gold sequin top, black skintight body suit and black heels, she shook, rattled and rolled the audience into a homecoming frenzy.

King introduced her new single entitled "Just For the Night." The new album "So Romantic" is scheduled to be released this week. On the album is a song she co-wrote called "Talking In My Sleep" a slow-moving ballad. A new video is also scheduled to be released with the album.

Throughout the performance King demonstrated her musical versatility. She sang tunes ranging from disco to punk rock. Her powerful voice often exploded over the band. The show stopper for the night was "You Make My Love Come Down" which brought a red and white wave to the stage.

"I think my voice has gotten stronger over the years," said King. "When I was much younger I didn't need as much rest, but now I need plenty of rest in order to give a strong performance."

Six months out of a year King does concert tours, leaving the remaining six to write, rehearse and record new albums.

King's rise to stardom is a sort of Cinderella-like story that every aspiring singer dreams of.

A Bronx native, she was employed as a maid for Gamble and Huff studios in Philadelphia; also, her mother was employed with the company as a maid.

While working for the company, she was discovered by T. Life who was a writer, producer, and artist at Philadelphia International Records. "Smooth Talk" produced by Life, was their first Please see page B12

Broadway Is My Beat

Michael: A prisoner of his own success

By JOEY SASSO
Syndicated Columnist

Observations in covering the Night Beat.

Michael Jackson, the world's hottest superstar, idolized by millions, spreads his hands out to a jampacked stadium and asks: "Shall I come down there?" It's a plea from the heart -- because there's nowhere he would rather be. The thousands who have already flocked to the Jacksons' Victory Tour -- and the hundreds of thousands anxiously awaiting their idol -- have no idea of the agony he is suffering. For one brief moment, he's sitting on the edge of the stage, swinging his legs, looking out at 43,000 eager faces -- and he wishes he was out there with them.

At 25, Michael is a little boy -- just as he was when the Jackson Five hit the big time. He loves to play with his toys and animals, and mix with other kids. But his electrifying success has squashed all that. He is a prisoner of success -- a prisoner to be cocooned. An army of security guards keeps his worshippers at arm's length. He is allowed to mix only with "safe" people -- which means his brothers and sisters plus celebrity friends like Brooke Shields and little Emmanuel Lewis, of TV's Webster.

Michael Jackson is a commodity, handled by agents, promoters, publicists and producers; and coveted by every moneymaking shark in the business. Millions of dollars are invested in a wave of his gloved hand, a smile here, a gesture there. No wonder the Victory Tour has caused him so much agony....

We all know that Mr. T is big and strong, but did you know that he's a great dancer? Mr. T showed up at the Silver

Shadow Disco, 57 West 57th Street in New York, and wow-ed the crowd with his great disco dancing. He was a gentle giant as he was nice to one and all and graciously signed autographs for anyone who asked....

Lena Horne, still a stunner at 67, says she's a long way from being ready to retire. "I guess at my age I should feel a little older, but I really don't," she told an interviewer. "My body still feels like it wants to run in the park. I guess as long as I keep acting young, I may be able to fool the rest of the system into believing it." Lena is just concluding a four-year tour with her one-woman production, "Lena Horne -- The Lady and Her Music." Her last engagement, at the Adelphi Theatre in London, had audiences screaming and stomping every night.

"People look at me and say: That old lady up there is working her butt off, and she ain't bad," Lena has declared. "I get out there, and burn it. I sweat buckets on stage -- about five pounds a night trickles away somewhere. But it keeps my weight down..."

In a unique marketing move, RCA Records has added a super bonus offer to its packaging of Evelyn "Champaign" King's new album, "So Romantic." Each "So Romantic" album and cassette, will contain an insert sheet headed "Toast Romance" that avails to consumers the opportunity to purchase a set of four customized crystal champagne flutes with a retail value of \$35. The special price to "So Romantic" buyers is \$19.95. As a further tie to the album itself, all of the flutes will have the title, "So Romantic," hand-etched on their bottoms. Consumer initials on the flutes will be op- Please see page B12

Ask Yolonda

True love not measured in terms of finances or possessions

By YOLONDA GAYLES
Syndicated Columnist

Dear Yolonda: I was especially interested in the column from the woman who said she was in love with a man who is not doing as well as she is financially. I can speak to that issue because about 20 years ago I was in the boat that she is now in. I had saved and scrimped and got a little house. When I started dating my husband he had nothing. He was renting a room from someone. He had a part-time job as a bartender. I had furniture, a savings account, everything. When I allowed him to move in with me, my mother stopped speaking to me. After six months, and against my family's

wishes, we got married.

All through our young married lives I was embarrassed by comments from my family. Because James couldn't find a full-time job right away, my friends and family made it seem like he was using me. Even though I would tell everyone that we were in love (which was more than they had in their marriages), everyone would tell me that I was being a fool.

We struggled for what seemed like forever, but finally James got a good job and we were able to do better. People today tend to look for someone with material possessions instead of someone they can love and live with. What they forget is that those material things

fall apart.

I still make more money than my husband, but with both of our incomes, we have managed to survive. I believe we are still married because we put more emphasis on our marriage than on the size of our house.

Please pass this on to your readers. They seem to be in desperate need of this knowledge.

Janette C.

Dear Janette: Thanks for the inspiring letter. It's great to hear from someone who has made things work, as you have. As you say, we desperately need to put things in perspective.

Musical Notes

Marie's LP labeled hazardous

Teena Marie has released "Lover Girl," the first single from her upcoming Epic album "Star Child." The record is the latest in Marie's string of hits, which dates back to 1979's "I'm Just a Sucker For Your Love" and includes "I Need Your Lovin'," "Square Biz" and last year's "Robbery."

"It's a fun song," says Marie of the single. "It's a real rock-funk record -- one of the songs that made us decide to put a sticker on the album that says, 'Warning: the Surgeon General has determined that this album may be hazardous to your feet.'"

Marie wrote, produced and arranged the song herself. "Lover Girl" will soon be the subject of a video to be directed by noted actress Cicely Tyson, who was Teena's own choice to work on the project.

"Star Child," says Teena, is a departure from last year's acclaimed "Robbery" LP, which she calls "my most polished and intricate album, and one I loved. But this one is a lot rawer and

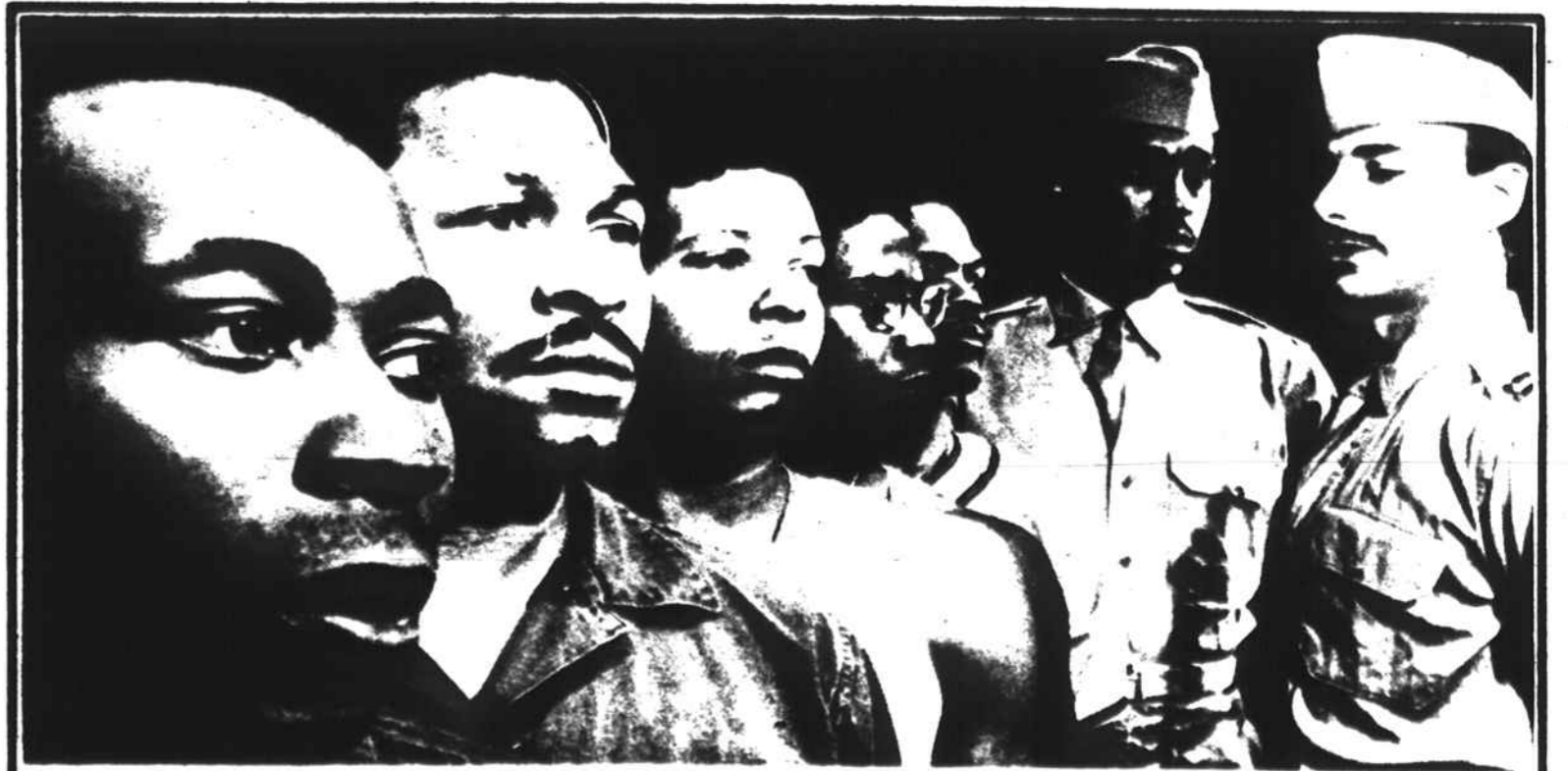
funkier, with simpler arrangements and no horns. It reminds me of some of my earlier records, albums like "Irons in the Fire" and "It Must Be Magic."

Marie wrote six of the album's nine tracks by herself and collaborated on the other three. The songs include a short spiritual; the funky, rap-spiked "Young Blood"; a tribute to Marvin Gaye; and "Alibi," a song which begins with a European new-wave feel and turns into a heavy rock ballad.

Teena Marie began her recording career with the "Wild and Peaceful" album in 1979. Subsequent records included "Lady T," "Irons in the Fire" and "It Must Be Magic," and last year she released her first album for Epic, "Robbery."

Vanity's Wild and Crazy

Singer-songwriter Vanity calls her new Motown album "Wild Animal." Is it because she's pic- Please see page B12



Award-winning Drama

"A Soldier's Play," the intense drama which captured the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for drama, will be presented on Oct. 24 at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro at 8:15 p.m. in Aycock Auditorium and on Oct. 25 at 8 p.m. at Reynolds High School Auditorium. Both shows will be performed by the Negro Ensemble Company of New York City. For ticket information on the Oct. 24 show, call 379-5546 and for the Oct. 25 show, call 723-7907.