

Close-Up

Andrews: From cotton picker to artist

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

Noted American editor and author H.L. Mencken once said, "Nothing can come out of an artist that is not in the man." He may well have based his

premise on prominent black artist Benny Andrews. Andrews, who presented a lecture at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art last week on the black aesthetic in art, has exhibited his work in museums across the country and served as visual arts director for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Andrews says his work is an extension of his past

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-- Benny Andrews

and is most often inspired by the people and places of his childhood.

"I grew up in rural Georgia," says the 55-year-old Andrews. "My parents were sharecroppers, and as children we had to walk three miles to school and three miles back. The funny thing about it is that now you hear all of this discussion about busing, but when we were young we would walk that long distance to our school, and the white children would ride the bus, although they only lived a few

blocks from the school. Now, it's interesting to me to hear all the fuss about busing."

It was this background that Andrews says nurtured his love of art and his creativity.

"My family was poor, very poor," says Andrews. "The children didn't have a lot of elaborate toys and things. In our school we usually received the hand-me-downs from the white schools. We got the materials that were broken or outdated and the books that had outlived their usefulness. But we learned to improvise and make do with what we had. When we needed things, we would make them, and we would illustrate things that were in books, and so we were creative almost out of necessity. So I think I've been interested in art all of my life. I've done it all of my life, and it's all I've wanted to do."

Andrews, who says he picked cotton for several months out of every year as a child, attended the segregated Georgia schools for only five months each term.

Though his family was materially deprived, it was rich in artistic skills. Andrews' father, George, is also an artist. His mother, Viola, was a published author, and his brother, Raymond, is also an author.

Andrews recalls times when his mother would sit down with her children and read literature to them for hours.

Andrews is an articulate man who talks fondly



Artist Benny Andrews verified the existence of an aesthetic in black art during his lecture last week at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (photo by James Parker).

about art, but his devotion to his family is very obvious as he speaks.

He makes frequent references to his childhood and family life and occasionally illustrates a point by recalling his years as a youngster.

He seems particularly attached to the time that he

spent at his grandmother's church and with the people with whom he came into contact in the small Georgia town of Madison.

Drawing upon this background, Andrews' works often blend the real with the imaginary, and his view Please see page A12

Social Notes

Former Twin City resident to head Lung Association branch

Eva Wilson, formerly Eva M. Hillian of Winston-Salem, has been elected president of the Board of Directors of the American Lung Association, Fairfield County Branch, in Connecticut.

She is the first black and the first woman to be elected to the post.

Mrs. Wilson, who lives in Bridgeport, Conn., will be responsible for maintaining an active interest in the goal of the association, which is the control and prevention of lung disease.

A respiratory therapist in the pulmonary medicine section at Norwalk Hospital, Mrs. Wilson has served as a stop-smoking facilitator for the American Cancer Society, the American



Former Winston-Salem resident Eva Wilson will head the board of directors of a Connecticut American Lung Association chapter.

Lung Association and the National Emphysema Foundation.

She is a CPR instructor for the American Heart Association; a first aid instructor for the American Red Cross and a certified emergency medical technician.

She also volunteers as a probation officer and a Sunday school teacher.

Mrs. Wilson's parents, the Rev. and Mrs. James R. Hillian, and her son, Terry Hillian, are residents of Winston-Salem.

COMMUNITY NEWS DEADLINES ...

The Chronicle welcomes community news and calendar items. The deadline for announcements is Monday at 5:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

• North Carolinians Against Intoxicated Drivers will sponsor a public meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Polo Park Recreation Center. The featured speaker will be Capt. C.C. McGee of the Forsyth County Sheriff's Department. He will discuss efforts to establish a countywide plan in cooperation with the Winston-Salem Police Department and the State Highway Patrol. Volunteers are also being sought to help with the effort. For more information call Ann Esch at 723-3738.

• The Drama Guild of Winston-Salem State University will present James Baldwin's "The Amen Corner" at 8 p.m. in the Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium. The play is about a female preacher who fails to achieve solace and love in her marriage and turns to her storefront church and congregation to find them. The performance is free and open to the public. For more information call 761-2150.

• The School of Dance of the North Carolina School of the Arts will present its Winter Dance Concert at 8 p.m. at the Joan Hanes Theatre of the Stevens Center. The show will run through March 8. There will also be a show at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 9. For more information call 784-7170.

FRIDAY, MARCH 7

• Radio station WTOB will sponsor a benefit concert for SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now) from 7 to 8 p.m. at Wait Chapel. The Rainbow Choir of Children will present a one-hour program. A goal of \$5,000 has been set for the concert. The program is rescheduled from Feb. 14. For more information call 723-4353.

• North Carolina School of the Arts School of Music alumnus Nelson Padgett and guest artist Phillip Bush will perform a two-piano recital featuring works by Mozart, Britten, Hindemith, Brahms and Ravel at 8 p.m. in Crawford Hall on the NCSA campus. For more information call 784-7170.

SATURDAY, MARCH 8

• The East Winston Noon Optimist Club will hold registration for its fifth annual spring soccer season from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the East Winston Library. Boys and girls ages 6 through 16 can sign up. A fee will be charged. For more information call Bob Adams at 777-6289.

• The Winston-Salem chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers will hold its March business meeting at 10 a.m. at University Place Apartments. For more information call Deborah Thompson at 727-8305 or Marty Penn at 788-3923.

• The education committee of the NAACP will organize local residents who are interested in involving parents in the education of their children to help bridge the educational gaps between black and white students. The program will be held at 10 a.m. at Emmanuel Baptist Church, 1075 Shalimar Drive. For more information call 722-0513 or 748-1072.

SUNDAY, MARCH 9

• The 1986 Omega Talent Hunt Contest will be held at 3 p.m. in the Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium at Winston-Salem State University. The event is free and open to the public. For more information call Rudolph V. Boone Sr. at 767-4087.

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

• The YWCA Mother's Network will feature a program titled "The Decision to Stay Home with Your Child" from 10 to 11:30. Please see page A9

Sophisticated Gents prepare for distinguished citizens awards

The Sophisticated Gents Inc. will present their Fourth Annual Distinguished Citizens Awards Program at the John H. Stevens Center Sunday, March 23, at 6 p.m.

Headlining the program will be Brandi Wells and "Stroke," nationally known recording artists, and Eve Cornelious, a jazz artist.

Rudy Anderson, a broadcast journalist with television station WXII, will serve as master of ceremonies.

Also included on the program will be Elder John Heath, Francis Wright, James Washington and

Kerry Waiters.

The Sophisticated Gents is a fully chartered non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide positive activities for the community.

The group will present 26 awards to individuals for their contributions to the Winston-Salem community.

Melvin "Rip" Wilkins, chairman of the board of the Sophisticated Gents, is encouraging the support of the entire community in recognizing the efforts of the honorees.

"For the past five years the

Sophisticated Gents have gone out into the community to make a positive impact on it," said Wilkins. "In the process we have worked closely with numerous individuals who, like our organization, have given of themselves to

make our community a better place to live.

"We would like for everyone to help us show these individuals that their efforts are appreciated," Wilkins continued.

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Omegas to showcase local classical talent

The local chapters of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. will sponsor the 40th Annual Omega Talent Hunt Contest at 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 9, at the Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium at

Winston-Salem State University.

Students in 10th through 12th grade will compete in the performance of classical or semiclassical music.

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About Town

Young resident ready to tackle big world of child modeling

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

Move over, Gary Coleman, and watch out, Emmanuel Lewis. A young Winston-Salem resident is hard at work preparing for his debut in the world of child modeling.

Next month, Paul Brandon Johnson, who has not yet reached his fourth birthday, will compete in three events in the International Models and Talent Competition.

The contest is an international event which is held annually. This year it will be held in Miami Beach, Fla., from April 17 to 22.

The competition is acknowledged by leading New York and European agencies as one of the most prestigious



Paul Brandon Johnson (photo by David Amundson).

organized events in the United States.

The categories include runway, photo, television commercial, Broadway talent and team modeling.

Johnson, who has been modeling for one year, will compete in the runway, television commercial and photo categories. His agency is Lasting Impressions Model Agency/School.

The contest's media profile is extensive and provides national exposure for contestants.

Previous national coverage has included People magazine articles, and the event has received international coverage from Linea Italiana and Photography Review in Paris.

Johnson's mother, Chenita Johnson, says that her son has "always been a ham" and "likes

to take a lot of pictures."

The Johnsons are now in the process of obtaining sponsors to help with Brandon's registration costs at the competition, and his mother says she thinks he "will do real well down there."

Johnson is a student at First Assembly University Preschool.

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The Belview Community Flower Club held its regular monthly meeting Sunday, March 2, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Brevard.

The highlight of the meeting was a doll contest, in which Ethel Ford captured first place in four categories.

She won top honors for the Please see page A11