

## Close-Up

### Jenkins' rainbow brightens hearts, souls

By ROBIN BARKSDALE  
Chronicle Staff Writer

There was a whole lot of good feeling in Reynolds Auditorium last weekend when Ella Jenkins brought her musical rainbow to town.

Ms. Jenkins, an international children's entertainer, presented two concerts in the Twin City last Saturday and captured the spirits of young and old

*"It's the kind of thing you just do. As long as I feel I have something to give, I won't give it up. Besides, you never fully retire as long as you have something to give. I feel good when I think that I've shared some of my rhythms, rhymes and games with children, and I feel just great when I meet a child who can reflect some of my songs."*

-- Ella Jenkins

alike. Children -- and their parents -- hummed happy tunes and danced on stage as Ms. Jenkins performed old favorites and taught new songs and dances to the crowd.

Many of the parents grew up listening to Ms. Jenkins' songs, and they were now exposing their children to the same lighthearted music that they remember from their own childhoods.

Though she has been performing for years, Ms. Jenkins says that no two performances are the same and she looks forward to each opportunity to share

her music with others.

"I never blueprint my programs," says Ms. Jenkins, who is celebrating her 30th year as a full-time children's performer. "I have to be flexible and see what kind of chemistry takes place. There is always a new group, so the programs can never be exactly the same."

A native and resident of Chicago, Ms. Jenkins has traveled worldwide. She studied sociology in San Francisco before returning to Chicago, where she worked for four years as a teen-age program director at the YWCA. But it was in 1956 that she decided to answer her musical calling full time and devote her energies to providing happy, entertaining music for children.

"I always wanted to work with children, and I had been a director at the YWCA for a few years when I decided it was something I wanted to do all the time," says Ms. Jenkins, who makes frequent television appearances, including stints on "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" and "Sesame Street."

"I gave myself five years, and I said that if it didn't work out I would just go back and do what I had been doing. This year makes my 30th year entertaining children, and next year will mark my 30th year recording music for children."

While working at the Chicago YWCA, Ms. Jenkins says her interest in children was strengthened. She worked a lot with the city's poorer children and says she could relate to how they were feeling about themselves and about life.



Children's entertainer Ella Jenkins charmed parents and children at Reynolds Auditorium last weekend with her musical rainbow (photo by James Parker).

"I became very, very fond of children," she says, a serious tone replacing her usual upbeat voice. "We always seem to be labeling people. I remember for the longest time I didn't know what ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) stood for, I just knew it was associated with poor children."

"I grew up in a poor family on the South Side of Chicago. A lot of what I do is to take them back to

my own childhood. We were very poor economically, but there was such richness of culture."

Her skill in storytelling also grew out of her childhood days in Chicago, and Ms. Jenkins encourages today's parents to involve themselves in telling stories to their children and to encourage their children to relate their own experiences in the

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THURSDAY, SEPT. 18

• The Piedmont Impotence and Sexual Dysfunction Support Group will meet at 7 p.m. in the Martin Conference Room in the basement of Whitaker Rehabilitation Center at Forsyth Memorial Hospital. Dr. Steve Lowder will be the guest speaker. The public is invited at no charge. The topic will be "Diabetes and Endocrine Disorders Affecting Sexual Function."

SATURDAY, SEPT. 20

• The Family Awareness Task Force will present its Fourth Annual Family Conference at the Winston Lake Family YMCA from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The theme for this year's conference is "The Family and the Changing Economy." The keynote speaker will be Les Brown, management consultant, who specializes in motivational techniques. The luncheon speaker will be the Rev. John Mendez. Lunch and babysitting services will be provided for participants. For more information call 777-1051.

• The Nature Science Center is holding an autumn festival from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the center grounds. The day's activities will include games, animals, pony rides, hay rides, food, a crafts sale, a raffle and live entertainment. For more information call 767-6730.

• Total Allure will hold its final exercise fashion show/dinner at Stouffer's Winston Plaza Hotel at 6 p.m. For more information call 724-1534.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 21

• The Pfafftown Jaycees have invited candidates for local, state and national office to attend "Meet the Candidates Day" at a giant yard sale/flea market from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information call 945-3430.

• "Fall Open House" at Reynolda Rose Gardens will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. Members of the Winston-Salem Rose Society will be on hand as hosts to answer questions. The event is free. For more information call 924-8832.

MONDAY, SEPT. 22

• The American Association of Retired Persons will meet at 10 a.m. at the Highland Presbyterian Church Activities Building, 2329 Cloverdale Ave. The speaker will be Dr. Elizabeth Welch; her topic will be "Legislative Update and the Legislative Process." The program is free and open to the public. For more information call 777-1241.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 23

• The La Leche League will hold a fund-raising event at 7:30 p.m. at 3638 Hege St. Items from Creative Circle, the No. 1 needlecraft company in the world, will be available. Door prizes will also be given. For more information call 785-2485.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 24

• The YWCA will run two separate programs from 6 to 9:30 p.m. for children ages 6 weeks to fifth grade. For children in kindergarten through fifth grade, "A Night on the Town," offers a Mexican dinner at a local restaurant and a recreational swim. The cost is \$12.50 for members and \$18.75 for non-members. For infants and preschoolers, "Parent's Evening Out" offers stories, music and organized play. The cost is \$5.50 for members and \$7.75 for non-members. Discounts are available for more than one child

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## Social Notes

### Benson, Miller & Benjamin Trio to present musical event

The Benson, Miller and Benjamin Trio will be presented in concert Saturday, Sept. 20, at 6 p.m. in the M.C. Benton Convention Center.

Works by Bach, Handel, Swanson, Roberson and Paul will be performed with special arrangements by the trio, including classics, instrumental solos, ballads and spirituals.

The performers are natives of Winston-Salem. They are private music instructors and serve as church musicians.

They are noted for works throughout the United States and abroad and through the radio and television media.

Shirley P. Miller is the wife of



Shirley Miller, left, Christopher Benjamin and VirNessa Benson will present a variety of musical works in their concert at the Benton Convention Center (photo by James Parker).

Robert Miller, the mother of Almaurice and Alex Miller and the daughter of Sara Patterson.

Christopher Benjamin is the son of Earline Benjamin and the late Austin Benjamin.

The concert honors the celebration of VirNessa D. Benson's birthday.

Ms. Benson is the daughter of Sam and M. Earl F. Benson.

## COMMUNITY NEWS DEADLINES ...

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

### Beneath the Elms benefit to feature Daphne Goodall

A benefit for the deaf will open the Beneath the Elms ice rink this season on Saturday, Sept. 27, with exhibitions scheduled at 1 and 3:30 p.m. The benefit will be held from 1 to 6 p.m.

Daphne Goodall, a 16-year-old deaf skater from Greensboro, will be the featured skater.

Ms. Goodall is a member of the Carolina Circle Mall ice skating team and has won several medals during her four years as a skater.

Born in Chicago, Ms. Goodall moved to North Carolina at the age of 4 and attended school at the Central North Carolina School for the Deaf. She is now a 10th-grade student at Smith High School.

In 1984 Ms. Goodall began competing with the Ice Chalet Skating Team, and she has won a

gold medal in competition. She plans to pursue a career as a skating instructor for deaf children.

Others on the program will include Mayor Wayne Corpening; Honey Noah of WXII Channel 12; Cindy Sparks, a deaf dancer; Karen Dunn, Mrs. Hanes Mall; Dean Bates, a former Ice

Capades skater; Hand Made, a sign language troupe; Rayanne Strong, 1985 winner of the N.C. Original Oratory Contest, and the Beneath the Elms Ice Skating Team.

Radio station WKZL will broadcast the event.

Tickets are \$2 in advance and \$3 at the door.

### SECCA to present 'Group Sax' concert

The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, or SECCA, will present an outdoor concert by Group Sax from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 21. In case of bad weather, the concert will be held in SECCA's main gallery.

The concert, planned for the whole family, will be a medley of blues, bebop and jazz, with arrangements by Charlie Parker,

Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis and Thelonius Monk.

Based in Raleigh, Group Sax is a sextet with an avid following of jazz aficionados throughout the state. The group's repertoire also includes contemporary and original works. Owen Cordle, reviewer for the *Raleigh News & Observer*, writes, "Group Sax ...

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Daphne Goodall

## About Town

### Atkins High Class of '61 celebrates journey of faith

By ROBIN BARKSDALE  
Chronicle Staff Writer

The Atkins High School Class of 1961 recently held reunion activities in the Twin City, renewing old friendships and striking up new acquaintances.

Meeting under the theme, "We've Come This Far by Faith," class members enjoyed several events during the reunion.

The mistress of ceremonies for the Aug. 30 buffet dinner was Carolyn Archie Rice, and the program's invocation was given by Bernard Byrd.

Robert Harris brought greetings to his classmates, and

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Participants in the recent reunion of the Atkins High School Class of 1961 take part in the memorial service held during the reunion activities (photo by James Parker).