

N.C. Black Repertory & White Repertory group in Charlotte collaborate on *Fences*

By PATRICIA SMITH-DEERING
Community News Editor

The North Carolina Black Repertory Company, a professional Black theatre based in Winston-Salem, and the Charlotte Repertory Company, a professional white theatre based in Charlotte, have formed

for the Arts. Mark Woods, producer for *Fences* and artistic director of the Charlotte Repertory Company, sees similar financial benefits in the collaboration. "When we're all under financial pressure, that's the first thing we do... look for ways to bet-

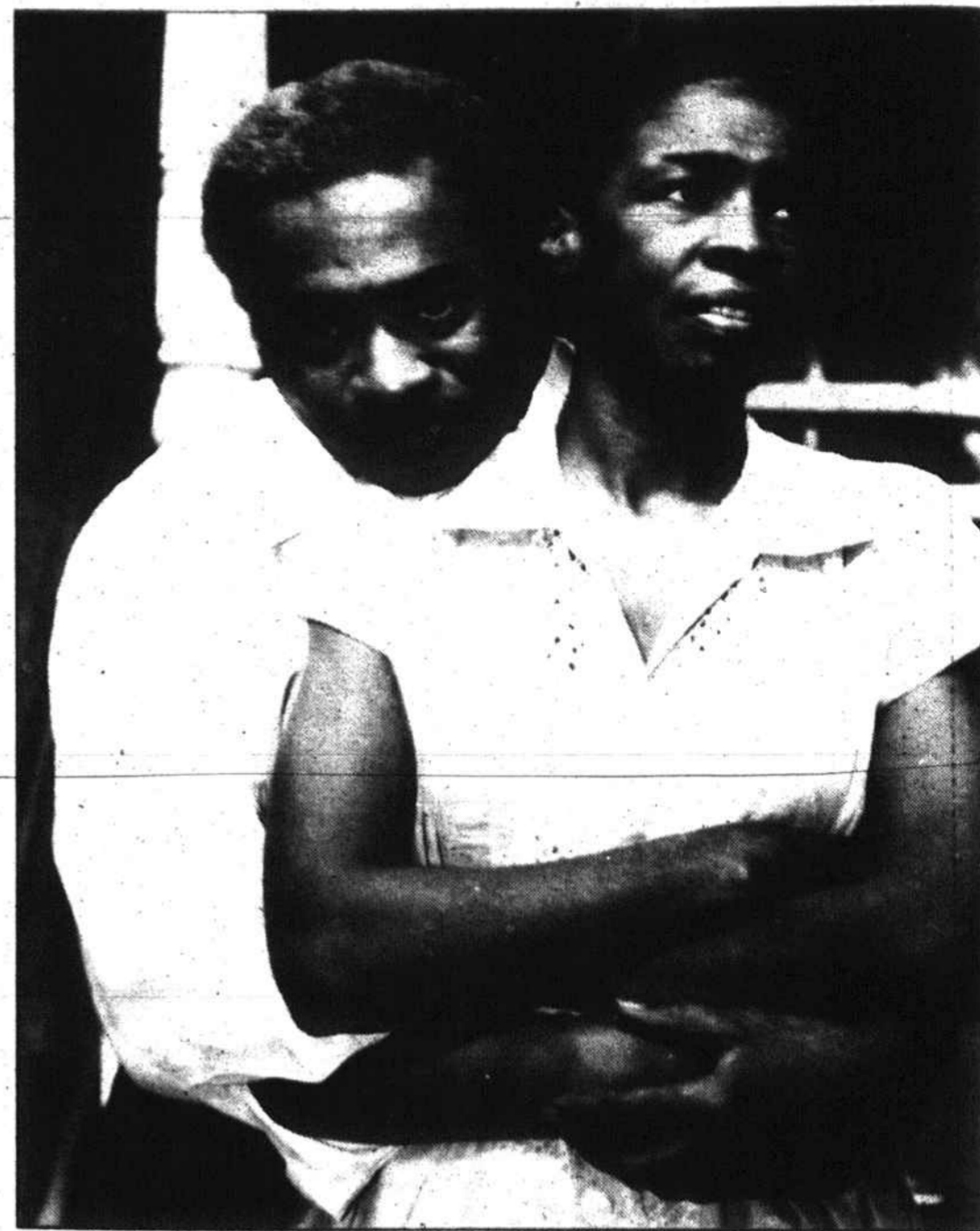
Woods said he feels the "walls of cultural provincialism" are being broken down. "We have found friends among people who were acquaintances, broadening our horizons... (and) strengthening artistic relationships." But, the experience goes beyond the interaction of the two repertory companies, he said, adding, "It finds its

August Wilson's play, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, illuminates the story of four generations of Black Americans and how they have passed on a legacy of morals, mores, attitudes, and patterns through stories with and without music.

Fences is the story of Troy Maxon, born to a sharecropper father who was frustrated by the fact that every crop took him further into debt. The father knew himself as a failure and took it out on everyone at hand, including his son, Troy, and his wives, all of whom "leave him." Troy learns violence from him, but he also learns the value of work and the fact that a man takes responsibility for his family no matter how difficult circumstances may be. Troy was an excellent baseball player in the old Negro League but was denied the opportunity to play in the majors because of racism. He passes on to his extended family principles for living, which members of his family accept or refute through the manner in which they choose to live their own lives.

Hamlin feels the play is important in its focus on the Black family and relationships within the family, something he believes the Black community needs to focus on. He said the play shows how some things that are said and done can help and some can hurt. "We learn through this powerful production that fences are not only built to keep harm and people out but also to keep people in."

Fences is expected to be a sell-



Troy Maxon, central character in August Wilson's *Fences*, shares rare, tender moment with wife, Rose.

out production in Winston-Salem just as it was when the play ran in Charlotte Feb. 15 through Mar. 9. Opening night in the Twin City, Mar. 15, is already sold out with performances through Mar. 31. The first night is also being used as a fundraiser for the Children's Loft, something organizations frequently do with the NCBRC, according to Hamlin. "They've helped us in the past by supporting us," he said. "This is one way we have of giving something back." St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is sponsoring performances on Mar. 16 at 8 p.m. and Mar. 17 at 3 p.m. for the church's fundraising efforts. The Citizen's Coalition for a Better Tomorrow will sponsor the Mar. 22 performance.



Troy Maxon (Ed Bernard - far right) tells one of his outlandish tales to (l-r): Gabe (Donald Taylor), Lyons (Lawrence Evans), Bono (Lavelle Ziegler), and wife, Rose (Joy Moss) in a scene from *Fences*.

a partnership to stage the first professional production in North Carolina of the Broadway hit drama, *Fences*, by Pulitzer-prize winning Black playwright, August Wilson.

"The two companies... had planned on doing the production," said Larry Leon Hamlin, artistic director and founder of NCBRC. "We were going to do it in March, they in February." But, there were mutually advantageous reasons for the two companies to join forces and resources. "The benefit of co-producing, at least the pre-production, is that we would have a larger pool of money," he said. Given the massive undertaking involved in staging the production, that money has allowed them to obtain the caliber of actors required. The production, under the direction of Hamlin, was funded by grants from the Winston-Salem Arts Council and the National Endowment


for use existing human and financial resources," he explained. The key, however, is timing. "If you can find someone to do what you want to do when you want to do it, it's worth it to break down whatever barriers exist," he added.

And just as the theme of the play, *Fences*, revolves around fences that not only keep people out but also keep people in, the two companies have dealt effectively with the artistic fences that tend to separate theatrical companies. Since the partnership between NCBRC and the Charlotte Repertory Company is the first of its kind in the state, it is symbolic, according to Hamlin. "It shows that a Black organization and a white organization can work together," he said, adding, "It is a signal to the community that racial harmony can exist if they want it."

Echoing Hamlin's sentiment,

way into the community."

Hamlin described *Fences* as "one of the finest plays I have ever read, dealing with a Black family."



By EDWARD A. ALLEN

The coming of Spring

On Mar. 20 at 22:02 EST, the sun crosses the celestial equator and spring begins in the Northern Hemisphere. The equinoxes, the two points on the celestial sphere at which the ecliptic intersects the celestial equator, are the two points where the Sun in its apparent annual motion crosses the equator. The Sun crosses from south to north of the equator at the "dynamical equinox" (the ascending node of the earth's mean orbit on the earth's equatorial plane), originally called the vernal equinox. At present this point lies in the constellation of Pisces. The equinoxes are not fixed in this position but are moving westward around the ecliptic as a result of procession of the Earth's axis; the advance is about 50 seconds of arc per year.

On the same evening, Mar. 20, we can observe the last Pleiades occultation by the moon until the year 2005. This should be a beautiful event on or near the east coast. Even where the sky is bright, users with telescopes should be able to see the brightest stars.

Four planets will also be observable on this evening. From east to west, you can see Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury. Mercury is in line with the moon, Venus, and the Sun. Do not try to find Mercury using binoculars or a telescope while the Sun is above the horizon unless you use a filter. The Sun sets at 6:32 p.m. and Mercury will be 15 degrees above the horizon and 15 degrees below Venus. To find Mercury, move your binoculars slowly from Venus down towards the Sun set point. Mercury will pop into view midway to the horizon. Observe from a location that has a horizon clear of buildings.

Jupiter will be high in the eastern sky, and Mars is just west of the zenith point and east of the moon.

The occultation of Pleiades by the moon will begin early in the evening with the Sun still 12 degrees above the horizon, so the stars will not be seen with the naked eye. The moon will be entering its first quarter and will be easily seen. Using binoculars, start looking about 5:15 p.m. moving east from the dark limb of the moon. You may be able to see the brighter star, Alcyone, at that time. The Pleiades are the clear cluster that most people not well acquainted with the sky mistakenly think of as The Little Dipper. The Little Dipper is in the northern sky and the North Star, or Polaris, is the last star in its handle.

The moon will make first contact with the Pleiades about 5:30 when it moves across the star Electra, the first star in its path at our latitude. Thereafter, it will cross the stars Merope, Alcyone, Atlas, and Pleione at 6:10, 6:50, 7:42, and 7:47 in that order. Each star will reappear about an hour after it is occulted, with Pleione reappearing about 8:10 p.m.

If you are using a telescope, sight on the moon's dark limb and keep just a little ahead of its eastward movement. The eyes should be relaxed, and it would help if you are sitting while viewing. As the darkness overcomes the evening, you will be able to see more if you use binoculars because they will give a wider field of view than the telescope. With the naked eye you can see about seven stars in the cluster, but even with 7-power binoculars many more can be seen, and after dark you can see the blue nebula (interstellar gas) that the stars were born in.

WEEK after WEEK after WEEK



Winston-Salem Chronicle

Sources of funds to promote bonds remain a mystery

Who buys city bonds?

How bonds work

Every Week for 56 Weeks

\$18.52 Get 4 Weeks FREE!

Reg. \$26.00 newsstand

SAVE \$7.48

* Add \$5.00 for out-of-county subscriptions.

The *Chronicle* brings you the best in Community News.

Receive

4 WEEKS FREE!

When You Order 1 Year of the

Winston-Salem Chronicle

Complete this Coupon and Mail to:

This special introductory offer is for new subscribers only and must be paid in full in advance. (Must not have been a new subscriber for past six months.)

Circulation Sales Department
Winston-Salem Chronicle
P.O. Box 3154
Winston-Salem, NC 27102

Yes, I Want 4 Weeks for FREE!

Start sending me the *Winston-Salem Chronicle* for: **52 Weeks Plus 4 FREE Weeks for only \$18.52** (My check is enclosed.) Please add \$5.00 for out-of-county subscriptions.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
PHONE _____

Winston-Salem Chronicle