



Teresa Moore



Michael John-Myers



Milton Butler

Handel's Messiah to be presented

The First Baptist Church Choirs presents the Forty-eighth (48th) Annual Presentation of George F. Handel's Messiah Sunday, December 8, at 6 p.m. in the main sanctuary of the church located at 700 Highland Avenue.

The choir will have participants from other church choirs as well as all of First Baptist choirs.

The soloists this year are Ms. Teresa Moore, soprano; Mrs. Dorothy Childs, alto; Mr. Michael John-Meyers, tenor; and Mr. Milton Butler, bass. The choir will be directed by Ms. D'Walla

Simmons, Minister of Music, First Baptist Church and Director, Winston-Salem State University Choir.

Ms. Moore of Winston-Salem is enrolled as a graduate student at UNC-G. She holds a B.A. in Music from Pfeiffer College. Ms. Moore began her career at the age of ten. She is accomplished in classical.

Mrs. Childs of Orangeburg, S.C. is a graduate of Winston-Salem State University with a B.S. and received a M.S. in Intermediate Education from N. C. A&T State University. Mrs. Childs has been a featured soloist throughout the

United States.

Mr. John-Meyers of Norfolk, Va., attended Norfolk State University, Norfolk, Va. and is the Director of Special Music at the Living World P. H. Church, Norfolk, Va.

Mr. Butler is currently assistant Professor of Music Education at Ohio University, Athens, Oh. Mr. Butler has appeared with the Corpus Christi Symphony, the Southern Arizona Symphony and Masterwork Choral.

The choir will feature 100 voices with orchestra accompaniment.

William Diggs tells slavery's story at museum

POMONKEY, Md. (AP) — William Diggs tells the story of slavery not from a history book, but using the ball and chain that was shackled to his great-grandfather and the whip that "tickled my grandfather's back."

Diggs, 80, the grandson of slaves, has run the Afro-American Heritage Museum on an old Army base since retiring as a teacher in 1980. Visitors learn about slavery the Diggs' forbearers told him.

Diggs said he has told thousands of youngsters about "things your teacher didn't tell you."

Diggs said if children hear the stories of his grandparents they won't be as susceptible to "all this hate and prejudice" that others teach them. "People start the lie at home, but they can't keep it alive," he told The (Baltimore) Sun. "They can't carry it but so far until it runs into a brick wall and it stops right there. I'm the brick wall."

Diggs started a recent lesson with flags. The flag of Maryland has the same colors as the Baltimore Oriole, he noted.

The red and black of the African-American national flag represent the "blood that is in us" and the "color of our skin." And the green is there to show that "we all live on God's green earth," he says, smiling.

He moves on to the heavy, 19th century irons. "Imagine these old black women using this all day to iron the massa's clothes," he says. He shows them the chamber pots that the slaves had to clean and the feather beds and dolls, most of them made from black socks stuffed with rags.

He picks up one doll by its hair

and begins shaking it. "Now, ol' Mista White Man says I can't be a citizen of this country less'n I have skin like him and long straight hair that blows in the wind," he says. "Phooey on ol' Mista White Man. I can't do that. I'll just let my hair grow the way it does."

Diggs breaks up laughing. "My grandmother and them would sit on the porch and crack their sides laughing about ol' Mista White Man with this doll," he recalled. He has lists of slaves that were filed with the Charles County register of wills when a plantation owner died. They are listed by first names, age, trades and appraised value.

"You can hear these things, but if you see the actual thing in a book, then you're seeing something," Diggs said.

The iron ball, he explained, was shackled to his great-grandfather's leg for the last 20 years of his life. And the whip often "tickled my grandfather's back," he said.

Norma Hurley, a spokeswoman for Charles County schools, calls Diggs a "treasure" whom people are "lucky to have."

"He does all the things he does with his whole heart," she said. "We can all benefit from that." Robert Sondheimer, whose fifth-graders from Mount Hope/Nanjemo Elementary School toured the museum a few weeks ago, said Diggs is "a wonderful storyteller." He just hopes "the kids respond in a positive way," Sondheimer added.

The students are enthusiastic about the dolls with nappy hair and the collection of old-fashioned irons.

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READ THIS!!!

[The following is a review from the 1990 production of "Celebrations: An African Odyssey"]

Friday evening's performance of "Celebrations: An African Odyssey" was in many ways like Frederick Douglas' 1845 Narrative in which the author chronicled his dramatic triumph over that "peculiar institution" known as slavery.

Winston-Salem, N.C.

With book & lyrics by Ricardo Pitt-Wiley, music by Pitt-Wiley, Kent Brisby & Lawrence Czoka, "Celebrations" is the story of a young and beautiful African princess stolen and enslaved in America while trying to solve the mystery of the "Lost Baby King." The production features African spiritual and Gospel music combined with the traditional

of my ancestors, portrayed by "Big John" Heath, Carlotta Samuels-Flemmings, Kenny Mallette, Sharon Frazier, LaTonya Black, Sherone Price & Company. I also heard their fortuitous words of wisdom... declaring to all who would listen, "appearance is buy a small part of leadership; no gift should be given with the expectation of receiving a gift; and all things lost can be found."

Oh, if only we would listen more often more often to the words of our ancestors!

Now, about that scene! It occurs at the conclusion of Act I when the young princess is kidnapped by the "people stealers," sold into slavery, and transported on a ship thousands of miles away... as that old hymn goes, "... long as I live and trouble rises" ... it was the visual image of the young princess (my daughter, your daughter, sister, niece, cousin, friend, anybody), trapped like an animal, yet fighting, struggling with all of the intellect of one's might, captured, only as Mabel Robinson could, through dance, song, sets, and lighting. (Even as I write to you of my experience, recalling this scene fills me with emotion.)

After having searched for the past eleven years, the North Carolina Black Repertory Theatre believes that "Celebrations" is the right holiday musical to reflect the culture and history of the African-American family and community.

Go see it for yourself. I will tell you this, after he stopped crying, my ten-year-old son felt that everybody — black, white, or otherwise — should see "Celebrations." And a little child shall lead them!



ON THE AVANT-GARDE

By TANG NIVRI

Just as Douglas' story illustrates the power of the individual — a nation to transcend even the direst of circumstances, so does "An African Odyssey," which fuses music, dance, singing, playing, acting, and storytelling into a powerful drama, compelling its audience to "celebrate" the triumph of the human spirit!

Not to get too far ahead because there is plenty to see, hear, and talk about in this production, however, there is one scene that I will never, ever forget as long as I live — but more about that later.

This sparkling production presented by the North Carolina Black Repertory Theatre Co., directed and choreographed by Ms. Mabel Robinson, produced by Larry Leon Hamlin, further confirms that fact that there is a reservoir of extraordinary talent in the City of

African dance and movement.

Under the very gifted eyes, ears, hands, heart and soul of none other than Ms. Mabel Robinson (a veritable "Who's Who" on Broadway in the world of musical-dance theater), the entire cast, including the technical crew which created a brilliant set & lighting design, effectively transported its audience back to the early 1990s to experience life first, as it might have been in the small West African M'Cuta Village, then later as slaves on an American plantation.

The contrast between he two is very important.

As an audience, we were introduced, then immersed, surrounded and engulfed in the African "Ceremonial Ring" where we each became a part of the energy of the "new time celebration."

While bathing myself in the emotions

The North Carolina School of the Arts Broadway Preview Series brings you ...

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IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

DIVIDING THE ESTATE

by HORTON FOOTE

4 time Academy Award winner Horton Foote wrote the screenplays for TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, TENDER MERCIES and THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL as well as many other well known films and plays.

VARIETY calls DIVIDING THE ESTATE "a fascinating and remarkably simple study of the changing South ... with a powerful narrative that has sufficient depth, poignancy, and originality to move audiences ... the end result is a delightful play with the potential stature of an American classic."

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