

And Still I Rise

Angelou exposes the soul

By SHERIDAN HILL
Managing Editor

Make no excuses that would allow you to miss Maya Angelou's musical which is world-premiering this week in Winston-Salem. Get out of a meeting, send the kids to the neighbor's (take them if they're teenagers or older) hock your jewelry if you must, but get yourself down to the Arts Council Theatre tonight.

Precious few performances (Sept. 10-15 only) remain of Angelou's production, which explores and celebrates the soul in a rare combination of song, poetry, dance and theatre.

And Still I Rise will satisfy the most demanding appetite for entertainment and touch the heart with its profundity.

It's about being human. It's about looking back on your life, remembering your childhood; days when you were small and the world was large "and the sky was dark and sweet like licorice, and the stars were marshmallows."

The central characters, who are about to meet their maker, are played by Ja'net DuBois of *Good Times* fame, Clifton Davis, star of television's *Amen*, and Larry Leon

Hamlin, who plays the gatekeeper.

The three, along with ten highly talented performers including members of the North Carolina Black Repertory Theatre, boldly expose the pain and the glory of being African-American. *Pow, Pow; Life Doesn't Frighten Me At All; Now Ain't We Bad*; reminisce romantic passion, *Oh, To Be Young and Happy, Memory of Love*, and, before it's all over, they *Get Right With God*.

Hamlin, founder of both the North Carolina Black Repertory Theatre and the National Black Theatre Festival, has once again stretched his energy and talent; he serves as production manager and assistant casting director as well as a key figure in the production.

Dubois plays the 70-year-old Annabelle with a powerful sense of the character's inner direction, and

the stage presence of the seasoned professional she is. She has also developed her abilities as a singer and dancer for this part.

Davis proves himself a talented dancer and singer as well as a first-class actor. As the young Zebediah,

To be a member of this audience is to join the cast in a celebration of life, and a triumphant statement of individuality, which Angelou puts forth with clarity and power: "people see one small side of me, and they think they know



(L-R) Larry Leon Hamlin, Ja'net DuBois, and Clifton Davis, the principal players in the musical, were exuberant as they took a curtain call Sunday.



(L-R) Carlotta, Dauna L. Brown, and Larry Leon Hamlin join the rest of the cast to sing God's praise in the closing song, *Thank You Lord*.

Angelou on play: 'I'm over the moon'

Yesterday, Maya Angelou took time out of a busy week to answer questions about the world premiere of *And Still I Rise*.

Chronicle: Are you pleased with the show?

Angelou: I'm over the moon. It's a sell-out; that's exciting. It's wonderful to see people trying to get tickets and being turned away. That's thrilling.

It means a lot to me, just what people get from the play. I talked to my own pastor, who said that he felt that every couple ought to see *And Still I Rise*, just to see how they have to go through certain experiences together and some experiences alone. Certain spiritual people say this is a gift from God.

The president of the university (Wake Forest) and my colleagues feel it's a gift to the city and to this state. It means a lot to

me to feel that everybody, black and white, see a connection for themselves in the play. I couldn't ask for more. I wouldn't know how to ask for more.

Chronicle: How is it that *And Still I Rise* became the one poem you developed into a full play?

Angelou: The poem for years has had its own life. It's amazing. I hear it in some of the strangest places. There's a mostly men's college in Indiana, and 90 percent of student body is white, and a few years ago the senior class took as their motto for the year, *And Still I Rise*. So there were these huge chaps (athletes) walking around with bulging pectorals, and across their chests were the words *And Still I Rise*.

In airports, little black children come up to me and say, "Hi, Maya," and quote it, "you can trod me in the very dirt, but still, like

dust, I'll rise."

That's the essence of the human spirit; no matter what happens to us, somehow miraculously we rise.

Chronicle: The songs in the production are a big hit. Had you written songs before?

Angelou: I have written songs for B.B. King, with Quincy Jones, and I had a song performed by Roberta Flack, *And So It Goes*, that was number seven on the charts.

Chronicle: Did you have difficulty getting this script into production on Broadway?

Angelou: I had the avenue open to produce it on Broadway 12 years ago, but didn't agree with the terms and put the script way in a dresser drawer. I did another version of it off-Broadway, but it

has just sat in a drawer for 12 years.

I can't speak to the difficulties of getting work performed, because I have earned and been given a name which will open doors, but to be young and black — is very hard. All of us, black white, native American, Hispanic, Asian, should reach into the community and help the young person realize the dream, once we've made a little bit of an indentation.

Other members of this tremendously talented cast and crew include: Dauna L. Brown of Greensboro; Michael A. Coward of Washington, N.C.; Robin Stamps Doby of Greensboro; Lawrence Evans of Mississippi; Matema Hadi of Oakland, California; John Henry Heath of Winston-Salem; Junious "Lenny" Leak of Greensboro, Robin Littlejohn of Winston-Salem; Carlotta of Winston-Salem, and Kenneth Mallette.

Defoy Glenn of Michigan is the assistant director, Laurin de Teige Poydras of Louisiana is the music director, Mabel Robinson of Savannah, Ga. is the choreographer, Angela Simpson Holloway of Hampton, Virginia is the stage manager, John L. Bright is the sound engineer, and Arthur M. Reese is the sceneographer.

30th Anniversary Sale

1 Dozen Boxed Red Roses Only \$849
Cash & Carry

1 Dozen Boxed Carnations Only \$799
Cash & Carry

Offers Are Good at Both Locations

George K. Walker Florist, Inc.
"Florist with the Personal Touch"

823 S. Marshall Street 723-2938 8:00 - 5:00
546 S. Stratford Road 724-1666 9:00 - 6:30

Craft and Art Classes begin September 16.
Drag a friend along.

Sign up for a class with a friend, and save 10%
Call 723-7395 today for a class catalog.

SANTOOTH CENTER FOR VISUAL ART
The Triad's Place to Create

226 N. Marshall Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27101 919-723-7395

FAUST

Piedmont Opera Theatre presents

FAUST
By Charles Gounod
Sung in French (with English supertitles)

SEPTEMBER 25, 27, 29, 1992

FOR TICKET INFORMATION CALL
PIEDMONT OPERA THEATRE: 725-2022

The September 25th performance is sponsored by Decision Point Marketing, Inc. Performance talk by Lesley Hunt 15 minutes before curtain.

Blood in the Face - Tuesday, September 15 - 7:30 p.m.

The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) continues its film/video series entitled *See for Yourself*. The series generates questions about dominant culture values. *Blood in the Face* is a compelling, darkly humorous look at the radical right in America. Wake Forest Professor of Sociology, Dr. Ian Taplin will lead the question and answer session afterwards. Recommended for mature audiences.

Admission \$2 - SECCA members, students and senior adults
\$4 - General public

Purchase a film ticket and see the Annie Leibovitz 1970-1990 and Joyce Scott exhibitions for free. Galleries will be open prior to the film's screening.

Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art
750 Marguerite Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27106
(919) 725-1904

SECCA

Week of September 6, 1992

- ARIES (3/21 - 4/19):** Focus on friends, hopes, wishes, money and love. You'll get just about everything you want. Assume position of leadership if asked.
- TAURUS (4/20 - 5/20):** Be careful not to try and accomplish too much at once. Do one project at a time. Don't stretch yourself too thin when it comes to attention and time spread between home and work.
- GEMINI (5/21 - 6/20):** Treat gravely serious situation with air of humor, light-heartedness. Your attitude will break the ice and ease tense nature of those involved.
- CANCER (6/21 - 7/22):** Someone close to you looks for approval. Offer praise and reinforce efforts to continue in forward motion. Gain inspiration through other's accomplishments.
- LEO (7/23 - 8/22):** Good laugh coming your way. Don't hold emotions back. Carry happiness into other's lives. Personal reward will come from inside.
- VIRGO (8/23 - 9/22):** Focus on communication with those in influential positions. Inventiveness and wit will be noticed and called to attention. Pious plays role in recognizing your talents.

Horoscopes LIVE

Renowned Psychic Elizabeth Maffeo and associates... are now on the line for your personal readings. Prominent media personality and educator, Elizabeth and her associates take an individual approach to astrology and find the "person in the horoscope". You will readily feel comfortable and truly amazed at the insight of these talented individuals as they peer through the heavens and find the hidden meaning for you. You must be 18 years or older to use this service. Call 11am to 11pm seven days a week.

CALL 1-900-903-4567 Ext. 9191
Call is \$2.95 per minute
A service of DataMeter Inc., 235 North Bryant, Oswego, NY 14043

LIBRA (9/23 - 10/22): Trade magazines offer helpful hints to face and overcome competition through technology. Read carefully, take notes, and request additional information.

SCORPIO (10/23 - 11/21): Persistence will pay off in job pursuit. Interviews will go well. Be conservative in dress and mannerisms. Surprise mate and family with good news.

SAGITTARIUS (11/22 - 12/21): An Aquarian will try to interfere, slow down your pace. Stand up for what you believe in and you will triumph. Run don't walk.

CAPRICORN (12/22 - 1/19): Either see way to resolve conflicts or sever ties and seek new companion. Keep emotions at bay when making decision.

AQUARIUS (1/20 - 2/18): Will begin to see significant other in realistic light. What friends and family had professed earlier will start to come true. Capricorn involved.

PISCES (2/19 - 3/20): Emphasis on moderation, family harmony. Too much push and lack of sleep will result in irritability, illness. Take vitamins and precautionary methods.