

THE CHRONICLE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Music highlight of King celebration

T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Guilford College will use its "voice of Africa" to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. by later this month, as it stages a concert featuring some of the state's most acclaimed African American musicians.

The Jan. 15 concert is part of Carolina Roots, a series of concerts that celebrate the rich tradition of music in North Carolina.

The MLK concert will feature a mixed-bag of musical genres, all of which spawned from the African continent and were seasoned and perfected by generations of African Americans.

The Badgett Sisters, an a cappella gospel duo from Rencypville; Joe Thompson, a fiddler from Mebane; and Durham blues man John Dee Holeman will headline the show.

Celester Stellars and Connie Steadman, The Badgett Sisters, learned their trademark style of harmonizing from their father, Cortelyou Badgett.

That was more than half a century ago. Today they are known for their infectious bluegrass-style spirituals and hymns.

The sisters are regulars on the N.C. Arts Council's Black Folk Heritage Tour, taking their sound to cities and towns throughout the state.

Holeman has fused together traditional blues with urban styles, jazz and R&B. He has been singing the blues since he was 14.

"I'd sit around the barn, keeping the fire to cure the tobacco," Holeman recalled. "For my entertainment, with my guitar, you know, I'd bang it. I kept doing that (and) picked up a few chords."

Holeman is also an expert rock dancer, a talent that may soon be showcased. Holeman lives in Durham home. The city has given rise to several well-known blues men, like Blind Boy Fuller, Thomas Burt and Luther Lyons.

There is demand for Holeman's music outside of North Carolina. He has toured overseas and has performed at the National Folk Festival and



Celester Stellars and Connie Steadman, better known as the Badgett Sisters, will be one of the headlining acts at a Martin Luther King Jr. concert at Guilford College.

Carnegie Hall. Among his many awards is a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Thompson is known as an "old-time fiddler." He is said to be one of the few African American fiddlers still active in the South today.

Thompson's love for music started early. In his house music was valued. His father, Walter Thompson, played the

fiddle and banjo and was greatly sought after to play at social events.

Joe Thompson found his voice in the early 1970s, when interest in black folk music was revived in the country. Recently, he has played at the National Folk Festival and Carnegie Hall. Thompson's "dynamic" vocals and playing style have brought him acclaim at every venue he has visited.

Artists' bios were provided by The North Carolina Arts Council

The MLK concert will be held at Dana Auditorium on the campus of Guilford College in Greensboro. Tickets for the event are \$10 for the general public and \$8 for students and senior citizens. For ticket information call 336-316-2400 or email sterrill@guilford.edu.

'Sunday' delves into agony of adolescence

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

"My legs felt like they were melting down into my sneakers. Ben took off his watch. ... He 's going to kill me, I thought. He 's going to kill me and he doesn't want to hurt his precious watch.

"Put your dukes up, Louis." Mom lit a cigarette and left it hanging from one side of her mouth. She raised a glass above her head and clinked a spoon against it hard and fast and for so long, I was sure it would shatter and rain down onto her face. "Round one!" she shouted.

At 14, Louis Bowman's life revolves around the hopes, schemes and standards of his mother, Jeanette Stamps. He is fiercely protective of her, awed by her dreams of a house of their own away from the projects—and eager to escape her daunting expectations, bitterness and fury. Bil Wright chronicles the emotional battles of a searching, hopeful and sometimes bruised young protagonist in his fiction debut, "Sunday You Learn How to Box" (Scribner Paperback Fiction/A Simon & Schuster Trade Paperback Original, February 2000, \$12; ISBN: 0-684-85795-2).

Wright captures the anguish of adolescence and the complex

bond between mothers and sons. This coming-of-age story is at once universal and an intimate exploration of the frustrations of poverty and the ideals of masculinity in the black community.

Set in the downtrodden and dangerous housing projects of urban Connecticut, "Sunday You Learn How to Box" is told in the candid voice of Louis Bowman, a boy on the brink of manhood and in an ongoing fight, as he says, "just to get to the end of the round."

Sharing the heart of this novel is Jeanette Stamps, at turns brutal, tender, and heroic. She is relentlessly upwardly mobile, constantly reminding her son of "our plan" for a better life.

"Nobody ever wanted to know what Mom would do next more than I did," Louis confides. "But with Mom, I could never even begin to guess." When Louis is 3, Jeanette moves them from Harlem to Connecticut for a job on the sales floor of Saks Fifth Avenue in downtown Stratford.

When Louis is 9, Jeanette bets their future on a shipping clerk, marries "Daddy Ben," and ousts her son from the apartment's only bedroom to the couch. Cheered by scotch and Saalems, she shares fond memories of her days with

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Superwoman or chickenhead?

BY CHERIS HODGES
THE CHRONICLE

Joan Morgan is the author of a new book that is sure to cause a lot of people to start talking.

The book, "When Chicken-Heads Come Home to Roost," is a hip-hop feminist view on feminism. In the past, feminist writers like Angela Davis and Alice Walker talked about the plight of the female from a historic perspective.

Morgan tackles the here and now of black women. She does not take the victim/oppressor approach to writing this book. "Chickenheads" is written for a generation of women for whom the issues of gender, sex, race, love and relationships rarely play themselves out in simple black

and white," said Morgan.

She takes a stand on issues dealing with sexism in hip-hop, the myth of the "endangered black male" and the "strong black woman."

Morgan also looks at the phenomenon of "chickenheads"—a term rappers used to describe their groupies. Chickenhead is a woman who is pretty, young and seemingly empty-headed. She is busy clucking, strutting and sleeping her way to money and power.

But there are similarities between chickenheads and "superistas" (the hardworking, independent and educated black women who despise chickenheads). Morgan said most women

See Superwoman on C7



What a swizzle stick refers to as
"hitting the big time."



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