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ENTERTAINMENT THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte's Fastest Growing Community Weekly

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Herbie Mann

To Perform Here

This Weekend

Herbie Mann will appear at NCNB Performance Place in Spirit Square with his magic jazz flute Friday and Saturday, January 16-17 at 8:15 p.m.

Tickets are still available at the Spirit Square Box Office at \$8.50 each. For more information or reservations, call the box office at 704-376-8883.

Mann was born in 1930 in Brooklyn of Romanian and Russian parentage. He started playing piano at the age of six, but three years later switched to clarinet and within a few years to tenor saxophone and eventually flute.

His four years in the Army with the 98th Army Band in Trieste gave him his first insight into European music. On his return to civilian life he first recorded with the Dutch accordionist, Matt Matthew, playing tenor saxophone and flute. At this time, flute was given short shrift insofar as its acceptance as being a significant jazz instrument. Herbie decided "If a man can play jazz, he can play jazz on the flute," and set out to do just that.

He began working fervently in developing techniques on the flute. He worked with Pete Rugolo's Band in 1954 and began writing music for television dramas. He visited Europe again in 1956, touring Scandinavia, France and Holland, working with local rhythm sections. Within a year he had won his first of many "Downbeat" Magazine Awards as the leading flutist.

His album "Memphis Underground" created a sensation in the mainstream jazz world.

As the noted jazz critic Leonard Feather observed: "Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, Middle Eastern, Memphis, or New York, the beat goes on in the indomitable Family of Mann."

Spirit Square is funded in part by grants from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Arts & Science Council, the North Carolina Arts Council, the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, the State of North Carolina, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

School Of The Arts

The Community School of the Arts will begin registration of new students for its electronic piano lab on January 5, 1981. New classes will begin on January 27 at Spirit Square. Children between the ages of 5-8 with no previous piano experience are welcome!



WILLIE TYLER & LESTER

...Hot commercials performers

Tyler Is America's Foremost Black Ventriloquist-Comedian

By Teresa Burns
Post Staff Writer

You've probably seen Willie Tyler and Lester on television. If not on specials or television programs, then certainly on commercials. They seem to be doing a lot of them lately.

Because Tyler is so talented he couldn't be ignored. He is America's foremost Black ventriloquist-comedian. (Can you think of any other Black that has made it as a ventriloquist?)

He started at ten mastering his art. His first ventriloquist's figure was handmade. Tyler took a doll discarded by one of his sisters, cut out the area around the mouth with a saw, attached a hinge and a rubber band, and presto he had what he needed.

Willie and his figure began performing in school shows and amateur contests in the Detroit area where he grew up. His father worked for the Ford Motor Company while his mother raised him, his six brothers and three sisters.

Following his graduation from high school Tyler entered the Air Force, entertaining special services. About this time the figure became Lester and the name has stuck since.

The Air Force years were behind Tyler and Lester now. Local club

dates around the Detroit areas was in. Tyler signed with a local record company where he was in the company of other unknowns: "Little" Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight and the Pips, The Four Tops, The Spinners, etc.

He appeared, and before long landed an audition for "The Merv Griffin Show." The team flew to New York and after the audition the producers wanted them to stay and do the show that very night.

"The Merv Griffin Show" was Tyler's and Lester's first national television performance, but it wasn't to be their last. From there they were signed by the producers of the "Flip Wilson Show" for several guest spots. Then came Rowan and Martin's "Laugh-In," the "Lola Falana Special," "The Mike Douglas Show," and "The Tonight Show."

As the reputation for being one of the best at his trade grew, Tyler

and Lester received more and more offers - until the big time hit - Las Vegas. Many say that is where the money really is.

Today the act works Las Vegas, Reno and Lake Tahoe with Sammy Davis Jr., Ann-Margaret, and John Davidson. Tyler is also an actor and has alone performed in Hal Ashby's smash hit film "Coming Home" starring Jane Fonda and Jon Voight.

The duo has also performed with Andy Williams, Tony Bennett, and Bobby Vinton both in concerts and television. They made a guest appearance on "The Jeffersons" and stole the show.

Tyler is even more than an actor and ventriloquist-comedian. He also composes and performs his original songs. Tyler is planning to complete an album, combining a host of his skills - Lester, his songs, his singing abilities and his gift to make people laugh.

"The Choirboys" Will Air On Channel 9

"The Choirboys," the story of the wild after-duty hours shenanigans of some rule-breaking, pleasure-seeking cops, debuts as "The ABC Sunday Night Movie," on January 18, at 9 p.m. on WSOC-TV, Channel 9.

"The Choirboys" are ten Los

Angeles cops who meet in the park, after their night watch ends, for some off-duty and offbeat bouts with wine, women and innocent bystanders.

"The Choirboys" Joseph Wambaugh's No. 1 best-seller, airs on January 18 at 9 p.m.

WSOC-TV To

Air "All Star

Inaugural Gala"

A two-hour, "All-Star Inaugural Gala," honoring President-elect Ronald Reagan and his family and members of his administration, airs on WSOC-TV, Channel Nine, on January 19 at 10 p.m.

With more than 18,000 attending, Johnny Carson emcees the spectacular gala from the Capitol Centre in Landover, Maryland. Along with Mr. Carson, Debby Boone, Charlton Heston, Bob Hope, Rich Little, Dean Martin, Ethel Merman, Donny and Marie Osmond, Charlie Pride, Mel Tillis and Ben Vereen appear on the program. Frank Sinatra produces the special event. General Omar Bradley appears as a special guest, accompanied by James Stewart.

The "All-Star Inaugural Gala," honoring President-elect Ronald Reagan and his administration, airs on Monday, January 19, at 10 p.m. on WSOC-TV, Channel Nine.

Jon Bauman

Stars In His Own

Special "Bowzer"

Jon "Bowzer" Bauman, the most recognizable and versatile member of "Sha Na Na," stars in his own television special, "Bowzer!," Monday, January 19, at 8:30 p.m. on WBTB, Channel 3.

Bowzer, the man, is the tall, skinny, greasy-haired bass singer of the popular rock and rollers "Sha Na Na." He is the epitome of all greasers in his rolled sleeve black muscle shirt, skin tight black pants and sneakers. He swaggers about opening his cavernous mouth and flexing his puny biceps.

"Bowzer!," the program, is a half-hour of comedy and music from the 50s, 60s and 70s based on the everyday life of Bowzer - a life that has more than the normal comical predicaments and off-beat solutions set in his apartment and at "Chez Bowzer," a shabby nightclub where Bowzer is the entertainment, as well as the help.

In the special, Bowzer is hard-pressed to come up with the rent money for "Chez Bowzer." Pretty and talented Barbi Benton guest stars. Musical selections include "Accentuate the Positive" (Bowzer and girlfriend, Victoria), "Mr. Bassman" (Bowzer and student, Jason), "That's Entertainment" (Bowzer) and "Splish, Splash" (Barbi Benton).