

Break's Editor A Dynamo In High Heels And Fuchsia

By M.L.LaNeY

Post Entertainment Editor

The young woman parked and got out of her car. Smartly dressed in a fuchsia sweater dress and cream-colored shoes, she stepped quickly and gracefully toward the front door of McDonald's Cafeteria on Beatties Ford Road.

She had just completed a very long day, yet the alert eyes and subtle smile betrayed no hint of fatigue. She is, as it turns out, Constance Simpson and she is a very busy woman.

Her business keeps her mental wheels turning and represents the fulfillment of a life-long ambition as well.

Simpson is the editor-in-chief of Charlotte's *Break Magazine*. As editor of *Break* she has an immense responsibility, which she finds immensely rewarding.

She shared her thoughts through an exclusive *Charlotte Post* interview covering a wide range of topics relating to her work.

This is the editor's first full-fledged interview. It is a portrait of a modern woman on top of the moment.

Originally from Columbus, Georgia, Simpson has been in Charlotte for almost four years.

The 28-year-old Georgian is a collegiate product of the University of Georgia. She received an BS degree in public relations in 1983.

Long before college, Simpson recalls that during her youth, "I always liked English, writing and reading. It seemed quite natural for me to go into a field where I could use those interests to their best advantage."

She maintains she was not following in anyone's footsteps. "I've thought a lot about role models. My family have always been my role models," Simpson admits. "But, honestly, I can't think of anyone that really stood out as an influence in my career. There was no one in journalism that I looked up to when I was growing up."

"It was just that I liked it and did very well in it. Everyone expected me to pursue it as a career."

Quite naturally, Simpson was seriously involved with the publication of both her high school newspaper and yearbook. Before coming to Charlotte, Simpson worked for her hometown newspaper, *The Columbus Enquirer*, which is part of the Knight Publishing empire. She covered metro stories and international articles for 18 months as a copy editor.

In 1985, when the chance for a transfer to *The Charlotte Observer* came up, Simpson was eager for the opportunity.

She was hired at *The Observer* as a lay out and headline writer for the features department.

She remembers this period as "...A time I spent perfecting layout techniques and doing everything you need to do with a news page."

"Basically, I did that for about 18 months. Then I worked on the main copy desk for about a year, just editing stories and writing headlines."

By 1987, with her talents for layout and her enhanced skill for editing stories and writing headlines, Simpson found herself in possession of the very skills she needed to have when the editor's position at *Break* became available.

Break Magazine is the entertainment tabloid, published weekly by *The Observer*. It debuted in March 1987. Simpson became the publication's editor in November 1987.



Photo/LaNEY



"This is a diverse publication. What I want it to be is diverse."

Constance Simpson,
Editor, *Break Magazine*

Since taking over the position, Simpson has firmly, but gently established that she can handle all the requirements that go with the territory.

She maintains complete editorial control over what goes in the magazine and what doesn't. Personally responsible for the magazine's entire layout, she relies on only one assistant, Kathie Gimla. Gimla is the compiler of the *Break*'s listings and she also helps with about five pages of the layout requirements.

But the gist of the ideas are funneled directly through the mind of Simpson. She takes a professional and personal pride in some of the covers she has conceived, such as: the Tracy Chapman cover as well as the JazzCharlotte special.

She believes she has the human resources to whip out just about anything that could possibly be dreamt up and there are plenty of suggestions forthcoming.

After praising the fine technicians who assist her as freelance photographers and writers, Simpson reflected on the other aspects of her work.

She has a clear vision of how *Break* will be seen by its readership. "This is a diverse publication. What I want it to be is diverse," she begins.

"It has got to represent a multitude of various musical taste, since it is very musically oriented. I may not like a this or that form of music, but this is not all about what I like."

"This is what our readership expects and any other consider-

ation is wholly besides the point."

Basically, says Simpson, "I'm a behind-the-scenes person. I don't want to be out in front of it the magazine. I'd rather have it out in front of me. I want it to speak for itself."

She plans to further her journalistic aims by doing more challenging types of writing.

Simpson points out that it is very important to appreciate the job from the reporter's perspective. "The beat on the street," as she puts it, "shows which direction we need to be going in."

Asked what she considered the most important thing that she has learned about herself, Simpson smiles momentarily.

Then with purposeful intent she declares, "I learned that I could work effectively under pressure and perform in such a way as to get the job done."

"I can do things that I didn't know I could. There are so many intangibles involved, things that I never dreamed of."

"But still I have managed to encounter things for the first time and still come out on top. I don't panic as much."

After some thought, Simpson remarked, "If I really thought about here I am, a black woman, responsible for getting these 40,000 magazines out, there might be some days that I wouldn't get out of bed in the morning."

Then she concluded, "I still panic, but I can produce despite the anxiety attacks."



Gospel Stands Tall With Clark Sisters' Album, "Conqueror"

By M.L.LaNeY

Post Entertainment Editor

What has become of gospel's standing in the music industry? Have you been listening more and enjoying it less?

Well, fear not for relief is more than at hand. Sit down with a copy of The Clark Sisters' new album, "The Conqueror," for some real satisfaction.

If you are looking for the true gospel sound, The Clark Sisters are the number one gospel group in America today. They have the power and the talent to deliver undiluted, the messages of the true gospel music.

The Clark Sisters are: Jack, Twinkle, Dorinda and Karen. Originally from Detroit, Michigan, the girls are the offspring of the renowned Dr. Mattie Moses Clark. The elder Clark has been known as a dynamic force in moving gospel music for years.

The Clark Sisters exude the belief that the world needs to take heed of the ministry of God's music. On "The Conqueror" they let the music come across for

maximum effect.

On side one, the quartet launches a joyful noise with "More Than A Conqueror." There is a very pronounced African sound to this number, but also present is the distinct Calypso joined to a light jazz treatment.

The song "Take Me Higher" catches the attention of the listener with its African rhythms and its scripture-based lyrical content.

The remainder of the first side maintains a mixture of jazz, classical and contemporary sounds that typify what The Clark Sisters do best.

The second side of the album has three particular pieces that are outstanding.

"I Won't Let Go 'til You Bless My Soul" uses the carefully crafted words of the writer to convey the desolate condition of a lost soul and the only hope of redemption.

"So Much Joy Inside Of Me" forms the third cut on side two. It takes the form of a danceable

piece with a powerful sense of devotion to the joy of religious conviction.

Finally, "Jesus Forever More" has a softer, more traditional sound than the rest of this fine album. There is a sweet octave change found in this song that begs for a second and third hearing.

Overall, "The Conqueror" is a fine example of gospel music in the 1980s. The engineering is brilliant and the quality of the arrangements and the production are superb.

The themes the Clark Sisters deal with on this album are secular enough to be accessible to most people. Their approach to the material is dynamic.

The style of the delivery explains how the sisters have developed and retained a national following.

The group will provide first-hand proof of their performing prowess in a Charlotte concert, which will be held on Sunday, Feb. 12 at Owens Auditorium.

Rock Hill Host Young, Matthews Show

ROCK HILL, SC - The Rock Hill Fine Arts Association and Winthrop College will present a concert February 16 by soprano Eddy Pierce Young and bass-baritone Benjamin Matthews. The singers' program will include numbers by George Gershwin, operatic pieces, and more.

The program will begin at 8 p.m. Thursday, February 16, in Byrnes Auditorium on the Winthrop College campus. Tickets are \$12 each, or \$6 for non-Winthrop students and persons over age 65. Tickets are available from the Rock Hill Arts Council, 803-328-2787, or from the Byrnes Auditorium box office on February 15-16.

Soprano Eddy Pierce Young has appeared in recital, opera and oratorio throughout the



Young (L) and Matthews

United States and Europe. A national finalist in the Metropoli-

tan Opera Auditions and winner of the San Francisco Grand Finals, she made her New York debut to fine reviews and audience acclaim.

Young earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in voice performance from the University of Colorado, and currently is a member of the faculty at Penn State University.

Bass-baritone Benjamin Matthews has appeared in operas and as soloist with major orchestras throughout the U.S., Europe, Canada and South America. He has received awards from a number of important organizations, including the International Vocal Competition in Vercelli, Italy.

Matthews received his musical

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Museum Of York County Presents "Africa Alive! '89"

With its international acclaimed African animal and ethnographic collections, the Museum of York County is a natural setting for a festival celebrating the rich, cultural heritage of African Americans. "Africa Alive! '89" is just that - a celebration highlighting the diverse traditions of African peoples.

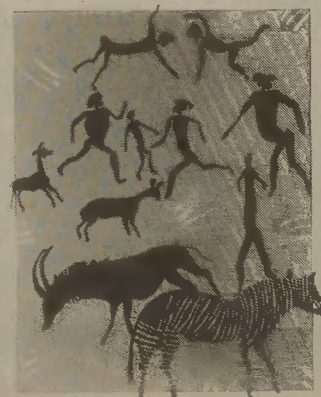
In its third year, "Africa Alive! '89" will be held at the Museum of York County Saturday, February 11, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., and is being underwritten by Rock Hill National Bank and the Rock Hill Arts Council Small Grants Program. Other support is being provided by the NAACP, and the Advisory

Committee on Multi-Cultural Arts Development of the Rock Hill Arts Council. All events and entrance to the Museum are free. The Central City Optimist Club will provide transportation to the Museum on the WBT Fun Bus. The bus will leave the library each hour beginning at 9:30 a.m. and from the Museum each hour at 10 a.m. The last bus will depart from the Museum at 4 p.m.

The day will begin at 10 a.m. with a quilt registration of African American quilts and a quilting demonstration by Mozell Benson, one of the artists in the 10 Afro-American Quilt Show. The exhibit, on loan from the Center for the Study of South-

ern Culture at the University of Mississippi features quilts created by 10 black women from the Southeastern United States. Ms. Benson will be in the Alternate Gallery throughout the day demonstrating the tradition of joining strips of cloth to form a quilt, a technique which is clearly associated with African textile designs.

The quilt registration, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., is an effort to document quilts made in the African tradition before 1960. These quilts are recognized as a vital and beautiful tradition, distinct from European or white-made quilts and characterized by using strips of bright cloth to form the patterns. Each quilt will be



photographed and any information concerning the maker will

be catalogued. This will be filed at the Folks Art Resource Center at McKissick Museum for reference and research.

Lively performances by the Ilu Drum Ensemble and the Nubiance Dancers will be held in the morning and afternoon.

The Ilu African Drum Ensemble takes their name, "ilu," from the Yoruba word for drum. Their dynamic performance at "Africa Alive! '86" had the audience clapping their hands and dancing to the chants and rhythms of the Yoruba Culture. Back by popular demand, the Ilu African Drum Ensemble will perform at 11:30 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.

The Nubiance Dancers, performing at 12:30, 2 and 3 p.m.,

grew out of the Afro-American Children's Art Program in Charlotte, a cultural group started to expose inner city children, ages 8-16, to African culture and their own African heritage. The 12 dancers have been together for two years, performing traditional West African dances in costume and accompanied by musicians.

Other "Africa Alive! '89" activities include an African Cultures Presentation with Berta Day at 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Ms. Day, a retired elementary school teacher and a Museum docent, has studied African art, history and culture and made several

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