

1B ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Afro Center exhibit closes this Sunday



"The Gathering of Spirits"



Arican Hornbill

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

You owe it to yourself to check out the Afro-American Cultural Center's terrific "Evidence of a Culture: Breaking the Silence" art exhibit which ends this week-end.

Really, you should. The exhibit is a semi-annual event the Center started in '94 to give the state's artists a chance to make their work known. That year the Center sent out invitations for slides. About 25 artists responded

and 15 were picked for the show.

"This year Vanessa Thaxton, the associate curator at the Hampton University Museum in Hampton, Va., served as juror," said Harry Harrison, program director for the center. "We sent out about 400 invitations and got about 35 responses. They brought in their work and 19 made the cut."

The show's diversity is as amazing as some of the work. Paintings dominate the 30 pieces on display, but most are mixed media. All are interest-

ing. One of the most interesting is Quentin Currie's "In My Father's Name," a depiction of an old-time baptism. The image of the preacher is huge and imposing, taking up most of the canvas. The candidate for baptism is held by the preacher. Both are faceless, but you feel the emotion of the event.

"The work seen here records my investigation - both of process and aesthetics," Currie says in the exhibit's brochure. "It represents what is essentially a lifelong journey of self-expressive creativity. This

journey's emphasis centers around the search for visual language that allows one to speak with the prity and honesty of earlier enlightened artists."

As impressive is Carl E. Karni-Bain's "The Gathering of the Spirits." The faces are mask-like, Karni-Bain's favorite type of face. It's imposing as well, but in a different way. It overpowers the senses, serenely.

"Everyone wears a mask," Karni-Bain said. "I enjoy painting the mask because of the emotional stages it reflects, whether it be the artist's or the viewer's. The mask's outer expression conceals, exposes, protects and attacks."

Other paintings to be seen are Pauline Dove's "Mixed Metaphor," Willie Bigelow's "Blues Trumpeter," and Dwayne McKinnon's "Indignation," made entirely of leather.

Photographs also make up a large part of the exhibit. Walt Davis' "Father and Son" is one of the largest, measuring 11 inches by 14 inches. He took it in West Africa, a place he holds in high esteem.

"African culture has been suppressed tremendously in America, and often misrepresented in the media," Davis said. "I felt it was time that some one should see the other side of an untapped cultural rich world of West Africa. Let it be truth. Let it be clear evidence that there is a culture in place. A picture may be worth a thousand words, thus the visual silence is broken."

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By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST



"The truth is that I walked away from Laurens and Division streets that night with only one ambition," writes Kweisi Mfume. "To turn my life around."

In what will surely be controversial new autobiography "No Free Ride: From the Mean Streets to the Mainstream," NAACP President and CEO, Kweisi Mfume shares his life story and offers a glimmer of hope for even the most "lost brother."

Mfume shares his struggles, his triumphs and tragedies and in the process becomes even more human and more accessible.

But Mfume's struggle is more than just a black man's conquering of the American Dream. It is a journey from rural Maryland to inner city Baltimore and finally to Capital Hill, through the eyes of yet another African American statistic.

In "No Free Ride, Mfume, with the aid of journalist and author Ron Stodghill, II, Mfume does more than just capture one man's odyssey he that the injustices indigenous to the American landscape.

Born Frizell Gray on October 24, 1948, to Baltimore native Mary Elizabeth Willis, Mfume has lived a varied and extraordinary life. Hated by his father and adored by his mother, Mfume grew up insecure. His mother's death when he was 16

left Mfume hopeless and plunged him headfirst into the rough and tumble world of inner city Baltimore. Mfume went from being a good student to being a "gang banger," a gun toting tough guy, using brawn rather than brain to get his point across.

Father of five by the time he was 22, Mfume decided to change his life. He enrolled in a GED program, the Community College of Baltimore and finally Morgan State University, eventually earning his bachelor's degree.

There were many stops in between for Mfume, including a



Mfume

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Adams, Brown add spice to Ovens 8/24



Oleta Adams

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Patrons looking for power, grace and unadulterated smoothness need to go no further than Ovens Auditorium this weekend. That's where Oleta Adams and Norman Brown will be.

Adams is headlining the 8 p.m. Saturday concert. Brown is her special guest.

Special may not accurately describe how good this concert will probably be.

Adams voice came known to the music world when she was guest vocalist on Tears For Fears album "Sowing the Seeds of Love." Her sultry rich alto made that album spectacular.

Soon afterwards Adams offered her first solo effort "Circle of One" (☆☆☆☆ out of five), a breath of fresh air amongst a plethora of mediocre works released the same year. Included on the release was "Get Here," a stunning tune of overwhelming longing and commitment. It was a breakthrough hit that climbed slowly to the Top 10 on both pop and r&b charts. It was

dled passion.

"This album is a real attempt to step outside myself and try some new things," Adams said. "The encouragement I've received to take more responsibility on myself has led to an album that not only sees me take control over complete songs for the first time, but one which, I think, re-emphasizes my r&b heritage."

Adams even co-produced two of the work's best songs, "New Star" and "You Need To Be Loved."

Adams will be complimented by Brown, a supremely gifted guitarist. Brown's first CD "Just Between Us," was the first to be released on Motown's new label MoJazz. It included such Motown luminaries as Boyz II Men and Stevie Wonder. The three combined for a remake of Wonder's "Too High."

Brown's second release "After The Storm," made him a household name among a lot of contemporary jazz fans. It included an expertly done remake of Luther Vandross' "Any Love." Brown's nimble fingering brought a new meaning to the song, not an easy task to achieve on a Vandross song. Brown also tackled Janet Jackson's "That's The Way Love Goes." Again, his angelic tone made the song fresh and breezy.

"After The Storm" has logged more than 115 weeks on Billboard's Contemporary Jazz Chart, a huge accomplishment for a still-new artist. It also won awards from the Gavin

Report and Soul Train.

Brown's latest "Better Days Ahead," may hold just that for him. It is a superb follow up to his near-gold sophomore set. It contains the same kind of warm and friendly music-the kind you listen to as you sit by the fire and reflect.

"It's just been an evolutionary process," Brown said. "All of those three areas, the writing, the producing and the playing have all evolved and grown, which sets up a basis for my career."

Brown includes another remake, this time borrowing from sex balladeer R. Kelly. Brown takes "Your Body's Calling" and makes it into a good listening experience.

Brown started playing the guitar at 8 in his Kansas City hometown. He's the only musician in his family, but his father loved jazz while his mother listened to gospel and blues. His brother and sister listened to r&b, thus giving Brown a well-rounded musical palate.

George Benson is one of Brown's greatest influences. He's been compared to Benson on many occasions but doesn't take offense.

"Benson was a specialist," he said. "He popularized jazz guitar in contemporary pop music. The combination of sounds intrigued me so much that I had to explore it further."

"But the only real similarity is that I play a Benson-designed guitar so the physical

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Norman Brown

