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Section

A & I



INSIDE Charlotte author Omar Tyree unveils latest drama. Page 2D.

PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON



PHOTO: LIVE RECORDS

Raheem DeVaughn brings the love to Charlotte June 29th at Amos' SouthEnd on S. Tryon Street. Tickets to the show are \$20 in advance.

DeVaughn intervention

Fusing R&B and soul influence takes crooner past neo-soul

By Cheri F. Hodges

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When Raheem DeVaughn writes music it has a message and that's just the way he meant for it to be.

"The Love Experience" is his first album on a major record label, but DeVaughn has recorded nine CDs. He'll be in Charlotte June 29 at Amos' Southend, 1423 S. Tryon St. Doors open at 8 p.m. and tickets are \$20 in advance.

"Music has always been around me," the DC native said.

As a child, DeVaughn would play his mother's records when she wasn't around. His list of musical influences read like an iPod shuffle. Bob Marley, Prince, Patti LaBelle and countless others.

"I could go on and on," DeVaughn said.

And that's probably why he earned the title of "R&B Hottie Neo-Soul Rock Star."

"I think people are starting to get it," he said. "My music can't be placed in one box."

DeVaughn has a very diverse style using a lot of guitar riffs-something that isn't typical of neo-soul DeVaughn's voice - velvety, chalky, pristine and gut wrenching - borrows heavily from generations before him. From the hypnotic and soulful "Catch 22," to the party-ready flirtatiousness of "Nice To Meet You," (featuring labelmate Nivea), DeVaughn recreates a time in musical history before hip-hop existed, when revolutions were recorded on vinyl and Marvin, Donnie and Bob Marley were all at the height of their creativity. He switches between love songs and social con-

sciousness that show love for all people.

Lyricaly, DeVaughn is a pistol, a take-no-prisoners songwriter who goes for the jugular. Questioning the woman who bore a child believed to be his, only to be confronted with the truth three years later, DeVaughn takes this true-life tale and mixes a blend of bewilderment, despair, and rage on "Until."

One of the album's highlights is "Breathe," an unabashed tribute to Prince, heavy on guitar and synthesizer but smooth enough to belong in any modern soul library. The production - intense without being overbearing - is subtly sensational. And Raheem's voice, flittering from deep alto to pure falsetto, is both soothing and profound.

Please see DEVAUGHN2D

Jefferson, Changes at Afro Center

Jazz concert at Attic Theatre Sunday

SPECIAL TO THE POST

Tyrone Jefferson and Going Through Changes will feature an evening of contrasts - hot jazz in a cool place - this month at the Afro-American Cultural Center. On Sunday, the band will play from 5-8 p.m. at the Attic Theater. Admission is \$8 for AACC members and \$10 for non-members.

With so many jazz aficionados in the city and so few live performance venues, All That Jazz, AACC's monthly series, is music to a straight-ahead jazz lover's ears - literally. "Tyrone and the band are guaranteed to play a favorite you haven't heard in years," an audience member pointed out after hearing them at the Center in April, "tonight it was [Quincy Jones'] Killer Joe."

Born in New York City and raised in Charlotte, Jefferson joined singer James Brown in 1979 and by 1980 had risen to musical director of Brown's band. Jefferson worked with the "Godfather of Soul" off and on from 1981 through 2003 to rave reviews. During one performance, the Boston Globe said "... the best moment of the James Brown show was Tyrone Jefferson's ... solo."

Jefferson has also played - and in some cases recorded - with jazz artists Frank Foster, Slide Hampton, Carla Cook, Alex Bugnon, and the Ray Abrams Big Band. He's even recorded with L.L. Cool J and Public Enemy.

Going Through Changes, along with Jefferson, are featured every fourth Sunday at the Afro-American Cultural Center. Jefferson is an accomplished composer and arranger, so a typical set might include original compositions as well as brilliantly-arranged jazz standards.

The monthly jazz series was launched six months ago as a prelude to the Afro-American Cultural Center's 2006-07 theme, Jazz. The Story of a People. During the forthcoming season, AACC's educational outreach initiatives and visual and performing arts presentations will explore the development of "America's classical music" from its origins in Africa to its present-day fusion of styles.



Please see ACTING 2D

Bitten by acting bug? Classes at Actor's Theatre

SPECIAL TO THE POST

Registration is now open for the summer session of Adult Acting Classes, beginning July 9 and 10 at Actor's Theatre of Charlotte.

Taught by professional actor/director Martin Thompson, these classes are appropriate for both aspiring actors and professionals who would like to improve their skills. Class registration is limited and will be accepted one week prior to the first class of each session. Call Actor's Theatre at (704) 342-2251 for information and registration. Or reg-

ister on the Web at www.actorstheatrecharlotte.org.

Basic technique classes will be held Sunday evenings from 7-9 p.m. for eight weeks: July 9 - August 27. Cost \$175 per student.

Scene study classes will be held on Monday evenings from 7-9 p.m. for eight weeks: July 10 - August 28. Cost \$175 per student. Returning students eligible for discount.

About the classes:

Basic technique: This class provides a very practical and easily accessible method of working for both beginning

and experienced actors. Incorporating today's best and most modern principles of acting, this distinctive Layering Technique has been developed by the instructor to provide a practical working foundation for the actor, and to serve as a solid framework on which to build more complex work. Here the actor will identify his unique responsibilities to the creative process, study the essential tools of his craft, and learn to properly apply those tools towards the creation of reality on the stage or in front of a camera.

Scene study: For the more

advanced actor, the emphasis of this class is on the practical and creative application of the actor's technique through a variety of scene work. In this class we will explore the unique skills required to be a truly creative actor. Students will discover how to make strong and interesting choices, and how to unlock the pathways that propel a character into dynamic action. Other topics will also include: script and character analysis, audition techniques, rehearsal methods, and specific performance skills for both period and modern

plays. Students must be prepared to spend time outside of class for rehearsal with their scene partners. Instructor's permission is required for those who have not taken the Basic Technique class.

About the instructor:

Martin Thompson (AEA-AFTRA-SAG) is a professional actor and director with extensive credits on the New York stage, as well as in regional theatres across the country. His motion picture credits include "Spies," "The Boneyard," "Mr. Destiny," and "Billy Bathgate." On televi-

Please see ACTING 2D

Jumping on Oprah won't earn rappers any street cred

By Cheri F. Hodges

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Who is Boyce Watkins and what's his deal with Oprah Winfrey?

Watkins, a finance professor at Syracuse University and author of "What if George Bush were a Black Man," has jumped into the fray of Oprah versus rappers.

Recently, he was on "The Wendy Williams Experience," which airs in Charlotte on

92.7 FM (WQNC) where he spoke about the feud between Oprah and Ice Cube.



Watkins

rappers on her show. She didn't even have him on there when she invited the cast of

the hit movie "Barbershop" for a sit-down. Cube starred in the movie.

Watkins says Cube is right and Oprah has a problem with showing rank and file black men on her show.

"We have those who worship Oprah like she's a god," he said. "And we have those who are thanking me for having the courage to confront the issue openly."

The issue, Watkins says, is black men don't get a fair

shake. He said Winfrey welcomes the rich and famous but for a regular guy to get on, he has to be on the down low or beating his wife.

Watkins admits that Cube and other rappers who've given Oprah lip over that last few months have lyrics that are offensive to women.

This all started when Ludacris, also known as Chris Bridges, was miffed at Winfrey for her comments to him when he was on her

show to talk about the hit movie "Crash." Since then other rappers have come out of the woodwork bemoaning Oprah's non-support of their misogyny.

These dudes act as if they don't have anywhere to go and voice their opinion. Last time I checked, BET was still around.

What I don't get is why a man with a Ph.D. doesn't see what Oprah is doing is creat-

Please see OPRAH 2D

Star of Spike TV's 'Blade' looks to add his own twist on vampire fare

By Cheri F. Hodges

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There aren't too many black superheroes out there, so having a series like "Blade" on Spike TV is something big, according to the man who plays the half human half vampire butt kicking machine.

Kirk "Sticky" Jones, known to some as "Sticky Fingaz" from the rap group Onyx or as an actor from movies like "Clockers," "Dead Presi-

dents," or the FX series "The Shield," is Blade, Marvel Comic's immortal superhero man who's trying to rid Detroit of its creatures of the night.

The TV series picks up where the movie left off, but Jones isn't doing an imitation of Wesley Snipes, the first to bring Blade to life.

"I'm not subtracting from the role, I'm adding to it," Jones said in a recent interview from the set.

He's also doing his own

stunts and there are a lot of them in this show. Jones said he does about 90 percent of his own flipping, kicking and swordplay, much to the chagrin of his stuntmen.

"That's not taking anything away from them, because they are incredible," he said.

But for Jones, it's easy to get caught up in being Blade. He said he's been a fan since he was younger.

The two-hour premier opens with Jones setting up shop in Detroit, investigating the

vampire House of Chthon. Along the way, Blade forms an uneasy partnership with Krista Starr (Jill Wagner), a military veteran who's investigating the death of her brother.

This action-packed premiere has enough twists and turns to be its own movie. Jones' performance as Blade is dead on - he has the body, the attitude and the scowl. Jones said he had to fight for the role.

Please see BLADE 2D



Kirk "Sticky" Jones takes on the role of Blade.

