

R&B singer takes UNC stage

Michele impresses campus audience

BY ANDREW DUNN
SENIOR WRITER

For her third song of the evening, R&B vocalist Christette Michele sat down at the keyboard and played her own piano accompaniment.

When she was through, she let the more than 750-person crowd at Memorial Hall in on what she called a little secret.

Michele said that while studying jazz in college, her attention-deficit disorder made piano class nearly unbearable.

When she graduated, she made herself a promise.

"I challenged myself to play it on every single stage," Michele said. "It may look easy, but the hardest part of the show is putting my fingers on these keys."

Personal strength and self-confidence were dominant themes for the Grammy-nominated artist during her hour-long concert Tuesday

evening, which repeatedly had the audience on its feet and swaying with the beat. The concert was sponsored by the Carolina Union Activities Board.

"It's very respectful, and it has a lot of morals," N.C. Central University freshman Makendra Umstead said of Michele's music. "It's ladylike."

And along those lines, crowd favorites Tuesday night included "Be OK," which Michele called her "girl anthem," and "Good Girl," which included the lyrics, "I don't need a sugar daddy because I can be a sugar mommy. ... I'm a lady, and I'm hard to find."

Michele, whose music blends soul, jazz and R&B reminiscent of Ella Fitzgerald, is slated to headline New York City's "Jazz in the Garden" concert and will also tour throughout the U.S. next month. She gained fame in 2007 after



R&B singer Christette Michele performed Tuesday night in Memorial Hall.

she received a Grammy Award nomination for best R&B vocal performance in her single "If I Had My Way" and for singing on tracks with Jay-Z, Kanye West and Nas.

But the now-famous artist made her Memorial Hall concert personal.

Michele frequently sat down on the edge of the stage to sing, reaching her hands out in the audience. She also interjected personal anecdotes and advice in between songs, such as "I really, really, really love smart people. ... I appreciate that you're all here studying," and "Y'all better behave while y'all are in school, for real." Michele also handed over the

microphone to audience members while introducing her band members, giving students the opportunity to try vocal improvisation.

As each audience member sang, Michele seemed impressed.

"I can't wait till you're a superstar," she told one woman.

UNC co-ed a cappella group Tar Heel Voices opened for Michele, drawing applause for its rendition of Justin Timberlake's "What Goes Around ... Comes Around."

But the decibel level increased dramatically as Michele entered to a hard-charging guitar and drum beat.

And many in attendance left saying Michele gave a phenomenal performance.

"I love her voice. It's very unique," said UNC senior Medina Musawwir.

"I don't have her album, but I'm definitely going to go buy it now."

Contact the Arts Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

CASTRO

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Angelo Coclanis, a UNC junior who studied in Havana in 2007.

UNC began sending students to study abroad at the University of Havana in 2003 and is one of only a handful of universities to do so.

Coclanis said Cubans accepted Raul Castro as his brother's proxy and likely will continue to do so because Raul Castro is expected to maintain his brother's policies.

"The real change will come after Raul," he said.

Raul Castro, 76, is not young, and Fidel Castro has expressed a desire to pass on leadership to a younger generation.

However, that's unlikely to happen until after Raul Castro's rule because Cuba's government is not conducive to drastic change, Pérez said.

"Somebody's going to have to step up soon, but I don't think it's going to be in this election," said UNC senior Jonathan Tyus, who also studied abroad in Havana in 2007. "That's too much change all at once."

Despite Fidel Castro's departure, few believe relations with the United States will change until the

administration changes.

"I think, until we have a change in leadership in south Florida and in the White House, you're going to see status quo politics," said Joe Garcia, former chairman of the Miami-Dade Democratic Party.

The Cuban exile community has great influence on south Florida's leadership. That constituency has played a pivotal role in securing Republican victories in the region.

Despite a flurry of excitement beyond the island's borders, Cubans accepted the announcement with little fanfare besides snapping up copies of the Communist Party newspaper, Granma.

The paper, Fidel Castro's mode of communication with Cubans since last spring, broke the news on its Web site.

"There has been no discernible reaction. Today was a normal day," UNC sophomore Alex Merritt stated in an e-mail from Havana, where he is studying this semester.

"People went to work, went to school and went to Coppelia, the famous ice cream stand, as usual."

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DISCUSSION

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professors face.

"You have to make dozens of decisions in the span of an hour, and that can be very difficult," Neal said. "You can never predict what something you say will elicit in class."

"We are dedicated to molding minds and creating critical thinkers, and that's dangerous territory."

Sophomore Cat Park said opinions in class help form original ideas. "If it's in a way to facilitate discussion, then it's OK," she said. "If it's done in a way to influence how people think, I don't think that's right."

Many professors try to engage students in discussion by saying something controversial, said Joe

Templeton, chairman of the faculty.

"There's a huge gray area, and most of us live in the gray area," Templeton said. "My view is (Harris) exposed the gray area."

In February 2004 Elyse Crystall, an English professor, sent an e-mail to her class that criticized one student's antihomosexual remarks.

The e-mail prompted the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education to investigate whether Crystall's comments were an incident of racial or sexual discrimination.

The civil rights office found evidence of intentional discrimination and harassment in Crystall's actions but did not require the University to take further action to uphold constitutional protections.

A report the Office of Civil Rights

released in September 2004 stated that UNC responded appropriately to the e-mail by recognizing the e-mail's inappropriateness and setting a meeting with students, Crystall and James Thompson, the English department chairman at the time.

Jan Boxill, director of the Parr Center for Ethics in the Department of Philosophy, said discussion of these controversial issues is necessary in a classroom.

"It's important for students to do critical thinking," she said. "Are some of these issues going to offend people? Sure. But what people need to understand is that these are academic issues."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

RADIO

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shelter guests Elaine and Abdul.

Abdul, who is only using his first name for the radio, said he hopes people will learn that IFC services, such as career counseling and assistance, are successful if the homeless work to better their condition.

"Because the program does work," Abdul said. "You have to work the program."

Homelessness Marathon Director Jeremy Alderson did the first marathon in central New York City in 1998, and it has since spread to more than 125 radio stations.

"I thought it would be a one-time deal, but ... people responded so positively that I decided to do it

again on a national basis," Alderson said in an e-mail. "The broadcast has grown ever since."

It is intended to increase awareness and will include no fundraising, Alderson said.

"Odd as it may sound, the more I've delved into this rather depressing subject, the more uplifting it became, because I really have come to believe in the good heart of the American people," Alderson said.

Chapel Hill Town Council member Sally Greene will speak on the air with Carrboro Mayor Mark Chilton about area efforts to address homelessness.

Chilton plans to specifically discuss "housing first," a program that places homeless people in affordable permanent residences.

"It's partly a moral issue of how we treat human beings, but it's also an economic issue," Chilton said.

Layden said she wants listeners to understand that there is more than one picture of homeless. Homeless people are not merely panhandlers on Franklin Street or drug addicts, but people suffering from poor economic and health circumstances and other hardships, she said.

"We want people to say, 'Hey, these are human beings. Don't create a prejudicial picture in your mind,'" Layden said.

"We want people to wake up and see there is a real problem. We are not immune to it."

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SPECIALIZED TREK

HEADSCARVES
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yers and politicians from wearing headscarves, and those bans remain in place.

The headscarf has become increasingly popular in Turkey as women attempt to incorporate religion and piety into their lives. It is not necessarily a sign of religious extremism, Gokariksel said.

"People have fears that an Islamic identity will change Turkey into an Iran or a Saudi Arabia," Yuksel said.

"But we're very different. We don't even call them hijabs," he said, referring to the name used in many Arabic countries.

The new government aims to combine moderate Islam with pro-

business and Western-friendly policies, stated UNC-Charlotte political science professor Jim Piazza in an e-mail.

"As Turkey has become more economically successful and a closer candidate for EU membership, the old ... secular guard has weakened as a political force," he stated.

"I think in the U.S. we have a different sense of secularism," said Maryam Al-Zoubi, a junior international studies and Arabic major from Raleigh who began wearing a headscarf when she was 8.

"It's not 'no religion,' it's 'freedom of religion.' I don't think you can compare (Turkey) to the States."

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ANIMALS
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"Having an article about this would kill the fun and anonymity and be against the interests of the program," Cash said in a phone interview.

The organization has used the costumes on and off during Comedy Week and to promote other

events for the past six years, CUAB President Robert Gurdian said.

The costumes are ordered and funded by CUAB. And every time a need arises, they are shipped from Colorado, Gurdian said.

"You can just walk around campus and be an animal," he said. "We don't really ask questions when we give the costumes out, so we don't know what they do."

But there are rules the costumed critters must follow. Students who tried to talk to the animals were disappointed to discover that they are not allowed to talk in costume or reveal their identities.

Even in a telephone interview, the CUAB member who dressed up as a moose refused to break character, instead giving an animal backstory, employing a Kermit the Frog-like accent and asking to be referred to only as "Moose."

He said he enjoys being part of the Carolina campus because his only other human contact is with hikers because he lives in the woods.

Some students weren't sure what to think when the random creatures weren't holding signs to advertise or publicize an event.

Sophomore Cameron Taylor said she often sees unusual things at UNC and thought it might have been part of a social experiment.

"It's free expression. It's just kind of a normal thing here," she said, noting that she saw a person dressed as a monkey riding a bike last year.

Jessie Nosworthy, a desk assistant at the Student Union, said she thought the animals broke up the day and brought a livelier mood to the Union.

"We definitely wanted a picture with them," she said.

Nosworthy said she saw the giant green turtle jump out and startle someone. Another costumed student delivered his girlfriend flowers on Valentine's Day, Gurdian said.

But the shenanigans aren't all fun and games for everyone.

Senior Sarah Buie has seen the animals around campus during her time at UNC but never enjoys it.

"I have kind of an intense fear of mascots," she said. "I'm not sure what these ones were for, but they scare the hell out of me."

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