

Nightshift

Local band faces long hours, low pay on rocky road of full-time performing

By MARK PEEL
Staff Writer

It's 2 p.m. and the bar is deserted except for a man who mops the floor and pauses now and then to listen to six musicians rehearsing for the night's show. They've been working on "Smoke From A Distant Fire" since 10 a.m., and although they've got the chords and changes down pretty well, the song still sounds tentative and labored. The two guitarists and the keyboardist try out a riff, go into a verse and are joined by the singer for the chorus. Suddenly, it all grinds to a halt. Someone has missed an entrance and it's thrown off the rhythm section. But instead of breaking for lunch, they run through the song again.

This time it goes smoothly. The singer reads the lyrics from a scrap of paper which he then holds between his knees while he blows a sax break. At the end of the song, the drummer hums a pass line which is slightly different from the one the bass player had been playing. The bassist tries to follow once, and the whole band repeats the last four or five bars to tie down the ending, then call it quits. They probably wouldn't try the song that night.

Since the members of Nightshift, a local band that will appear at 9:30 tonight at the Mad Hatter, decided to quit their day-time jobs and devote their energies into becoming a professional band, what once were weekly rehearsals have become daily sessions where songs are worked up, standards are polished and originals are presented.

Very few people who will dance to Nightshift tonight will appreciate the work that has gone into a song that seems to flow from the band like water from a tap. All they know is that either it grabs their attention or it doesn't.

Nightshift is gambling that it will. When a band decides to go full time, it does so recognizing several hard facts. It means giving up the security of a regular job and subsisting on what people are willing to pay you for playing music and traveling to cities like Greenville, Winston-Salem, Jacksonville and Rocky Mount. It means frequent long practices, egos frayed by indifferent audiences, bills past due and frustrated wives or girlfriends.

Nightshift plays roughly four jobs a week. More dates mean more money; also more travel. Some weeks the band nets \$70 per man. Some weeks they don't even

make that. Why, then, would anyone do it? Not unsurprisingly there are no rational reasons.

Although the band members share an obvious interest in making music professionally, each member seems to derive something different from his participation in the band. Tim Hildebrandt, who plays rhythm guitar, seems to have the strongest sense of direction. He simply wants to make a living as a songwriter and performer. A prolific writer, he contributes most of Nightshift's original material.

Carter Minor, who sings lead vocals and plays sax and harmonica, seems to get a more obvious ego satisfaction from playing for an audience. Although he claims to be terrified by a crowd, he seems to feed on an audience's reaction—the more involved and attentive an audience is, the better he performs.

Like Minor, Eddie Ibarguen, the lead guitarist, is a performer—but unlike the effusive Minor, "Grateful Ed's" emphasis is on virtuosity rather than showmanship. Even if he sometimes seems a bit stiff on stage, there is no question that he is among the most accomplished guitarists in the area: he plays gracefully, and yet with a righteous fury.

Keyboardist Bill Butler and bassist Joe DeLuca seem to get a personal and professional satisfaction from contributing to the Nightshift sound. And indeed, a sound is definitely emerging from this peculiar gumbo of country, soul, southern boogie and fusion-jazz.

Nightshift began its life as a band, culling its members from local institutions like Heartwood, Gravyboat, Southwing and Bro. T. Holla. Although Nightshift's antecedents had little in common except perhaps a thinly veiled disdain for one another's styles, expectations were high for the Crosby, Stills, Nash and Youngs of the Piedmont.

Unfortunately, Nightshift turned out to be exactly what one might expect from six musicians of different backgrounds, temperaments and tastes. After two months of work the band still had a diffuse, somewhat murky sound, looked a bit ill-at-ease, and lacked a strong identity. What made things especially difficult for the band, however, was the inevitable disappointment that fans of one or more of the parent groups felt at the rough mix.

The result was consumer resistance to the group. But

the emergence of a group identity, a Nightshift sound has been marked since the band went full time. Not only are the performances more polished, the material is more challenging and the personalities more engaging. Jim Mitchell, who sings and plays drums, has characterized funk as the binding quality that unites the group's diffuse elements.

"Funk is where the holes are. It's a way of playing and a way of not playing—it's music with an almost palpable feel to it. And it thrives on response," Mitchell says.

It's no surprise that musicians who are tuned into a crowd's response are bitterly disappointed when they fail to reach an audience. Nightshift, like any dance band, plays a certain amount of commercial music in order to get people to pay attention to their original material. And very often, the crowd only responds to the pop material.

At one job in the eastern part of the state, for instance, the band couldn't get any kind of reaction from an audience. In desperation, Ibarguen announced one of Nightshift's original tunes as an Aerosmith number: it was the only song they did that night that drew applause, but it was a smash. (That job was on the coast, at an outdoor site that was so ridden with mosquitos that the audience listened from inside their cars!)

Asheville had been bad. The date had sapped their energy and the band collectively felt beaten.

If the people took enough time from trying to score to get into the music and if the band could feel some kind of collective response, Asheville would be forgotten and Chapel Hill would set Nightshift's mood at least for a while.

Maybe tomorrow the phone would be cut off, but tonight there was a guy down in front of the stage who danced like he was wired with 20,000 volts. Smiling over at Minor, Ibarguen peels off a smooth, funky lead line, and the guy dancing gives up whatever sanity he still had and screams in affirmation of the music.

For Nightshift, it can't be the money—it's strictly from the love of moments like this.

Tonight is Ladies Night at the Mad Hatter. Gals will be admitted for free and guys for \$2. Call 929-8276 for information.



Carter Minor, saxophonist and vocalist for Nightshift

Shakespearean rep group takes stage for UNC workshops

By CHUCK BURNS
Staff Writer

With lights blazing down, four actors of the Royal Shakespeare Company took their places on the Playmakers Theatre stage. They were not there for a play, but to exchange ideas and share their experiences with one of Carolina's Drama 15 classes.

Sheila Allen, Charles Keating, Ben Kingsley, and John Kane participated in a question and answer session, for as Keating said, "As actors we're not qualified to give long, stimulating lectures."

Questions ranged over a myriad of topics in drama, and the actors answered the questions as well as possible. At times, two or three would answer a question jointly, causing a lively banter between the actors.

All agreed on one point, however—that they were not there to dictate to the students, but rather, to try to show some of the ways in which they had interpreted Shakespeare and other playwrights through acting.

"We don't know everything," Allen told the students. "We just want an exchange of ideas and attitudes. We want to explore Shakespeare together with you."

Allen has been acting with the RSC since 1962. She graduated from drama school in 1951 and said the school helped her learn how to bring together all aspects of acting. Since then she has done some stagework, some work in films and some technical work.

Even for the casual observer it is easy to see why Allen is an actress. Each of her speeches was augmented by graceful, flowing movements of her body, mesmerizing her audience with dignity and refinement.

Although Keating did some acting in Minneapolis for Sir William Tyrone Guthrie, he has been with the RSC off and on since 1970. Keating also has done work in the television and film industries.

Keating transmitted an impression of forceful character, with a voice that sounded as if it could bring the roof down. His hands moved constantly in majestic sweeps as he spoke, as if he considered the entire audience his domain.

Lounging in his chair and obviously relaxed, Kingsley has been with the RSC for about 11 years as an associate artist. Starting as an apprentice English actor, joining the RSC gave him his first major job in large scale productions, and he said he still loves it.

A playwright as well as an actor, Kane attended drama school in Glasgow, Scotland. He worked as an RSC actor for about two years and then switched to writing for three years. Since 1974 he has combined both writing and acting.

Kane received a hearty round of applause for his double-recitation of Shakespeare's sonnet 130. His first version was romantically soft, but the second was a realistic and honest; and that, he says, is what audiences want now—realism.



Actor Sebastian Shaw

Although the RSC usually performs Shakespeare's plays, it also has done plays by 59 other playwrights. "We have a varied mixture," Keating said. "We do contemporary authors as well as Shakespeare."

The RSC will be giving workshops, performances and informal lectures in classes this week. Formal lectures will be at 8 p.m. today in 100 Hamilton Hall. Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday in Memorial Hall.

Thursday's production will be "Lovers and Madmen: A Shakespearean Frenzy," a gallery of the bard's lunatics and lovers. Friday's production will be a program of poetry, prose and songs from writers as varied as John Donne and Bob Dylan, called "Groupings." "Sigh No More Ladies" will be presented Saturday and is a comprehensive study of Shakespeare's literary lovers.

Lectures are free. Tickets for performances are available at the Carolina Union and Ledbetter-Pickard for \$3 a performance, or all three shows for \$6.

Olivier, Bates in Pinter drama

The Associated Press

Take an early play by that master of menace Harold Pinter, add performances by Sir Laurence Olivier and Alan Bates, and you have a recipe for an hour of engrossing television.

That's just what the Public Broadcasting Service is dishing up Wednesday evening when it presents *The Collection* as part of its Great Performance series. The show will be seen

locally at 9 p.m. tonight on Channel 4.

Engrossing, yet frustrating, because like all Pinter's works, *The Collection* deliberately raises far more questions than it answers. The plot revolves around a sordid sexual encounter that either did or did not take place during a dress designers' convention in a hotel in Leeds, England, between Stella, who is married to James, and Bill, who lives with Harry.

At first it seems a simple case of jealousy on the part of James, who

confronts Bill and gets him to admit that he slept with Stella. But is Bill simply pretending he is guilty to goad James on? Is James suffering from paranoid delusions, as Stella tells Harry? Did Stella make the whole thing up, as Harry tells James? Or did the two merely talk of having an affair?

James is played with marvelously understated passion by Bates, known to American audiences as the artist in *An Unmarried Woman* and as the title character in Masterpiece Theatre's *Mayor of Casterbridge*.

Olivier, who also served as co-producer, has the smaller role of Harry, and he is perhaps too old for the character described by Pinter, as in his 40s. Malcolm McDowell, who starred in *If... and A Clockwork Orange* plays Bill, and Helen Mirren, little known in this country, is Stella.

The Collection was first performed on British television in 1961 and later was presented on stage. The current production was taped for British television in 1977.

'Yack' to sponsor bike giveaway

The *Yackery Yack*, Carolina's yearbook, will give away a 10-speed bicycle, concert tickets and other prizes in a drawing scheduled for Friday, Nov. 15.

Anyone who purchases a 1978-79 *Yack* by Nov. 15 or who has a *Yack* portrait made by Nov. 3 automatically is eligible for the drawing.

Sign up for portraits, which are free, is being held at the *Yack* table in the Pit between 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and at a table in the Y court between 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday through Friday. Portraits this year are being made in Rooms 205 and 217, Carolina Union. Students may purchase *Yacks* when they have their portraits made.

Grand prize for the drawing is a silver Windsor International 10-speed bicycle, donated by Tumbleweed Cyclery, which will be displayed in the Carolina Union prior to the drawing.

Other prizes include two tickets to the December concert of the Doobie Brothers at Chapel Hill, donated by the Carolina Union, and food, beer and movie passes donated by area merchants.

JEWISH STUDIES? JEWISH CAREERS?

Discover possibilities at JTS.

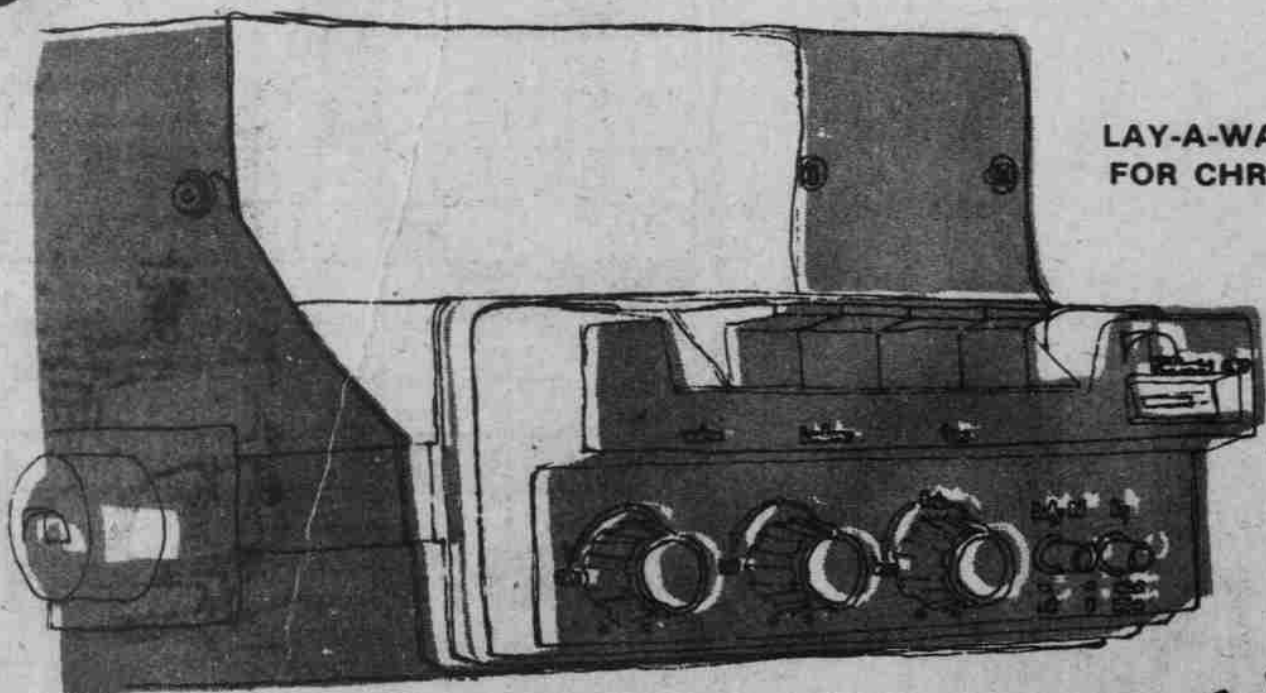
Rabbi Donald D. Price, assistant dean at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, will be at the Hillel House on Thursday, October 26 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon to discuss:

- undergraduate and graduate programs in Judaism
- visiting student programs and summer programs on undergraduate and graduate levels
- alternatives for study in Israel
- Rabbinical School
- Cantors Institute, and academic programs in ethnomusicology and liturgical music
- a joint program in Jewish communal service with Columbia University School of Social Work

For an individual appointment with Rabbi Price, contact UNC-Hillel, 942-4057



Nakamichi



LAY-A-WAY NOW FOR CHRISTMAS

Studio quality performance in a portable cassette:

- Nakamichi 250 car cassette tape deck \$310.00
- Nakamichi 250 AC/DC \$335.00
- Nakamichi 350 record/playback tape deck \$440.00

SOUNDHAUS STEREO

242-3162
113 N. Columbia
1106 Broad St., Durham
Cameron Village Subway, Raleigh