

**ENTERTAINMENT**

**Gary Hooker Performs with UNCG Summer Theatre '91 Season, Three Acts**

BY STEVE GILLIAM  
Special To The CAROLINIAN

GREENSBORO—Gary Hooker has put aside his radio jazz broadcasts for the month of June in order to entertain a different kind of audience.

Fans can catch him on stage in Taylor Building at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where he's performing in three of the five productions in the UNCG Summer Theatre '91 season.

A junior communications major at North Carolina A&T State University, Hooker and three other Aggie actors have joined the UNCG troupe for the summer theater schedule. Until he started rehearsals earlier in May, he had been a regular DJ for the "Sunset Jazz" program broadcasts from 6-9 p.m. Tuesdays on WNAA, the A&T campus radio station.

"I really love jazz and the 'Sunset Jazz' program is something I really enjoy doing," said Hooker. "I hope to get back to broadcasting after the summer program at UNCG is over, but I'm taking a break from it right now."

Hooker has a lead role as Seth Holly in "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," August Wilson's powerful drama life among black people migrating from the South to the industrialized North in 1911. The play opens Tuesday, June 11, with 8 p.m. show times through Saturday, June 15, in Taylor Building.

Tickets are \$7 each Tuesday through Thursday, \$8 on Friday and Saturday. Reservations can be made through the Summer Theatre box office (334-5546) in Taylor Building. Hours are noon to 5:30 p.m. weekdays and 7 p.m. on performance dates. Coming productions for UNCG Summer Theatre '91 will be: June 18-22, "A Midsummer Night's Dream;" June 26-29, "What I Did Last Summer;" June 26-28 (10 a.m.), June 29 (2 p.m.), "Rumpelstiltskin."

Hooker's role as Seth Holly in "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," he says, is among the meatiest he has held in a student



"JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE"—August Wilson's powerful drama, "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," which focuses on the black experience in America, will run Tuesday to Saturday, June 11-15, in UNCG Summer Theatre '91 at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Pictured above are junior Gary Hooker of Raleigh and graduate student Donna Baldwin-Morrow of Greensboro as Seth and Bertha Holly. Curtain times will be at 8 p.m. in Taylor Building on campus. Reservations can be made by calling the Summer Rep box office at 334-5546 in Taylor Building. Hours are noon to 5:30 p.m. weekdays and at 7 p.m. on performance dates.

acting career that has brought him honors at N.C. A&T. There, he's been named a member of the All-Star Cast during the annual "Robie" Awards ceremony held by the Paul Robeson Theatre. He's also received an acting excellence award and been named best actor for a studio production.

"Joe Turner's Come and Gone," Hooker explains, is a drama of black

people who sought a better life as they migrated North. The play is set in a black boarding house, owned by Seth and Bertha Holly, in Pittsburgh in 1911. While many of the characters are new arrivals in a big city, each seeks his or her own identity in a dark and distant past. The boarding house serves as a cultural crossroads.

Seth Holly, Hooker said, is a black man who was born of free parents. He has a trade, making pots and pans, and the boarding house is inherited, left to him by his father, making him a man of property.

"My character already has arrived, and is not really searching for himself," said Hooker. "He learns more about himself through other people. He's about 60 years old, kind of a grouchy old man who's so grumpy that he's funny. Maybe he's a little like Redd Foxx as Fred Sanford. But he's someone who doesn't go for a lot of foolishness around his boarding house."

Hooker and the rest of the 15-member Summer Theatre cast have been busy with the morning-afternoon-evening rehearsal schedule. During the last week of May, Hooker was rehearsing three plays daily.

"In his other two roles, Hooker has experienced a couple of firsts. The season opener, "Cotton Patch Gospel," had him playing the role of Jesus in a musical setting of the Gospel story in rural Georgia. In the coming June 18-22 production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Hooker is tackling his first Shakespearean role as the carpenter, Peter Quince.

"I was kind of in shock when I found out I'd be portraying my savior," said Hooker. "I didn't know they had me in mind for that role when I auditioned, but it's one you have to do your best with."

Hooker is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel L. Hooker, 609 Juno Court, Raleigh, and a graduate of Sanderson High School.

**MY TUNE**  
by  
Obataiye B. Akinwole

When Columbus, of "I discovered America" fame, arrived in the Caribbean in 1492 he "passed ships filled with merchandise and manned by Africans returning from the West Indies to their homeland." As early as 1310 Mansa Abubakari I believed it possible to "sail to the limits of the neighboring seas [the Atlantic Ocean]." The Indians were here when we got here. So much for being discovered.

Over the years many Africans came to this country. Many were explorers, some were craftsmen, some were servants and of course many were slaves. Of course with us came our art. It is both a blessing and a curse that many others consider our music, dance and art to be our most significant cultural contribution to America. Take some time, as I often do, to research the many contributions we made to every facet of life in America.

Of the many song forms brought to America by Africans, the form that eventually became the blues is perhaps the most distinctive. My wife is a blues "fanatic." I mean that literally. I hear the blues almost every day. My weekends are filled with the sound of the blues, even when I want to hear something else. Not surprisingly, we talk a lot about the blues. We come to some conclusions often. Sometimes we don't arrive at the same conclusion.

To me the blues has grown out of the confusion and violence of our times. African-Americans are literally caught between two worlds. On the one hand, we are Africans with proud heritages. On the other, we are Americans trying to accept a culture that is not and will never be ours. The blues is a unique song style. It is not only a musical expression. It is also a social statement. Again, our songs and song styles are evidence of our separateness from the larger culture. Even those of us who think we have arrived discover it difficult to find our niche. This kind of existence gave us the difficulties and pain that provided much of the materials for this music.

My wife says, "The blues is spiritual, akin to one's soul. It is derived from low self-esteem brought on by slavery." Of course my next question to her was, because the blues is so popular today, does that mean slavery still exists? She quickly responded, "We suppress our feeling for the blues today because of our newly found social status. In other words, we've arrived and can't relate to the blues. The only problem is that we are in reality no better off than our forefathers."

We have quite a few of these discussions. They are often very intense. Both of us try as we may to get our points across. Most often they end with us coming to the same conclusion. Then we put some more blues on the stereo.

**Richard II To Appear In TIP, Latin Setting**

Theatre in the Park's executive/artistic director, David Wood, discovered long ago that Shakespeare's works transcend all boundaries of time and place. The verse always remains the same, pure, lyrical Shakespeare while the setting could be anywhere, anytime.

"Hamlet," TIP's first Shakespearean production, was produced 19 years ago in modern dress in an outdoor amphitheatre. "The Taming of the Shrew" was set in the "Roaring '20s." Both were great successes. It comes as no surprise, then, to find Richard II leaping forward to the 1960s in a "Latin-American tropical" setting.

Wood chose this era for its striking political parallels and to enable audiences to readily identify with Shakespeare's universal themes, encasing them in a familiar framework.

Wood recalls the '60s as a turbulent time when the idealistic generation, who hoped to change the world, was stunned by the assassination of John F. Kennedy. "It was this generation's first brush with death. Many had a mounting fear that the United States was deteriorating into a state of terrorism prevalent in the so-called 'banana republics.' I don't think there ever was a sense of closure to this period. By reflecting on the past, we can gain a greater understanding of the future and possess the necessary tools to cope with whatever lies ahead. Richard II (transposed to the '60s) gives us an opportunity to do this."

American society's experience with political conspiracy can be related to Shakespeare's England of 1595 when Richard II was first presented. At the time, every Englishman feared the chaos that might ensue if Queen Elizabeth died without an heir leaving the fate of the kingdom to quarreling favorites.

Shakespeare could not foresee when he wrote Richard II that six years later the Earl of Essex would lead a rebellion against Elizabeth, just as Henry Bolingbroke does in Richard II.

"Richard II" is actually the first of four plays dealing with the reign of the inept King Richard. The series continues with "Henry IV," parts 1 and 2, and "Henry V." Shakespeare did not intend to present the story of England's past in historical sequence. For example, "Richard III," a play about the reign that ended the War of the Roses, was written before "Richard II." But once all the historical plays were completed, Shakespeare had created consecutive works which dramatized the background of the Tudor age.

The time span in "Richard II" runs from 1398 to 1400, leading to the end of Richard's rule. The play opens at Windsor Castle with a hearing of a dispute between Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, and Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. King Richard resolves the conflict by banishing both. Upon the death of John of Gaunt, Bolingbroke's father, Richard confiscates Henry's inheritance to finance the Irish war.

While Richard is in Ireland, Bolingbroke boldly invades England and upon Richard's return, imprisons him. After Bolingbroke's coronation as Henry IV, Richard is murdered by Sir Pierce of Exton, acting on a hint from the new king. Professing horror at the deed, Henry plans a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to do penance.

Scholars have argued about which sources Shakespeare most likely used. The majority agree, however, that Raphael Holingshead's "The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland" (1577) was the primary source.

Performances will be held June 7, 8 13-15, 20-22 at 8:15 p.m., with a June 9 matinee at 3 p.m.



THE REVIVAL—The members of music group "Tony! Toni! Toné!" reveal why the singles on their album "The Revival," are songs that will be played "for four or five years," rather than tunes, which they describe as "something that you get up and shake your butt to." Natives of Oakland, California, the three members Raphael Wiggins, Timothy Christian and Dwayne Wiggins are

credited with changing the face of Black music in the 1990s with their unique hip-hop twist on 1960s and 1970s rhythm and blues. Their current album sizzles with the No. 1 hits "Feels Good" and "It Never Rains (In Southern California)," although group members achieved superstardom with their 1988 platinum LP "Born Not to Know."

**Black Music Month Tribute Honors Legends**

Dionne Warwick, Philip Michael Thomas and Diahann Carroll will host a special Black Music Month tribute honoring living legends in R&B/soul music in a two-hour nationally syndicated television special. The first annual "Celebrate the Soul of American Music" was taped before a live black-tie audience at the Pantages Theatre in Los Angeles June 4.

"Celebrate the Soul of American Music" will feature all-star salutes to legendary performers Etta James, Little Richard, Ella Fitzgerald, the Shirelles, Bo Diddley, Dizzy Gillespie, Charley Pride and the Dells. Many of today's top contemporary music artists will perform. One of the highlights of the show will be a special commemorative tribute to musical treasures Nat King Cole, Sarah Vaughan, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Rev. James Cleveland.

"Black Music Month has become an important annual milestone for all African-Americans," stated executive producer Don Jackson, president of Tribune/Central City Productions. "It not only recognizes black artists and all forms of black music, but also the influence black music has had on music as a whole. We felt there was a need to create a vehicle through which some of the pioneers who are responsible for the strength of black music today could be honored for their contributions."

"Celebrate the Soul of American Music" will be syndicated to more than 85 percent of black television.

**New Filmmaker Is Only 19-Years-Old**

NEW YORK, N.Y. (AP)—The tough-looking teenager with the gold front tooth hugging his grandmother in her apartment in the Red Hook projects in Brooklyn doesn't look like one of the hottest new filmmakers in the world.

When he walks around his old neighborhood, he points out the bench where his brother was beaten into a coma. He gets angry when he looks at the small asphalt courtyard and remembers his six friends from childhood, all of whom are now dead.

Matty Rich, now 19, was only 17 when he wrote, cast, directed, produced and acted in the new film, "Straight Out of Brooklyn." The movie does not open nationwide until next month but he already has an offer of nearly \$15 million to direct his next movie.

"Straight Out of Brooklyn," a raw story about a black teenager from the projects and his troubled family, was drawn from Rich's life. He financed the film on a shoestring, using his mother's credit cards, some community donations and a lot of chutzpah.

"My mother saved my life by helping me do this," he said. "Without her, I'd be another one of the dead ones."

Rich hopes the film will inspire other black youths and show people "another side of the black people, someone who uses his brain, not someone who robs people."

Rich said he made the film because he was angry about the struggles his friends and relatives faced when he was growing up.

"It's all about seeing your father stripped bare and having nothing and feeling like a failure and wondering, 'What do I do? How can I keep from doing the same thing?'" Rich said. "People always told me, 'Matty, you're not going anywhere,' but I'm proof of how far you can go if you stay focused and positive."

Rich said his inspiration came as a result of watching reruns of the 1970s TV show "The Brady Bunch" when he was 10 years old.

"You know, when Peter dropped his ice cream on the floor, Mr. Brady would just say, 'That's okay, Pete, get another one,'" Rich said. "If I

dropped ice cream, I get slapped in the face by my father and he'd yell at me, 'That's \$1.50 worth of bad-assed ice cream you just dropped.'"

Rich has not seen his father, a Vietnam War veteran and alcoholic who verbally abused his mother, in nine years. His brother, who was beaten with bats by a gang several years ago, is following in his father's footsteps, he said.

On Rich's 14th birthday, both his aunt and uncle died. His aunt was in the hospital where she had just had a heart attack. His uncle was robbed and fatally shot on his way to the hospital to see her before she died.

"We got a phone call before I even blew out the candles on my cake," Rich said. "I got so upset thinking, 'Why does everyone I love get killed?'"

His best friend, Logan, died in a jail cell when he was 15. His five other friends from the projects dealt drugs and were killed mostly during bad deals.

Rich said he never used drugs or gangs when he was growing up. He said his dream was always to

have a life like the kind he saw on television.

"I told my mother, 'I want to make a family like the Bradys,'" he said. "I wanted my parents to be like Mr. and Mrs. Brady. I wanted to float in a bubble bath like Alice [the housekeeper]."

As he stands near his old apartment in the projects, he gestures in the direction of the Manhattan skyline, as do two characters in a scene from the movie.

"That's what you see from over here, the American dream," he said. "That's what people in this neighborhood are killing themselves over. They want a piece of that dream but they don't know how to get it."

Everyone knows Rich in Red Hook. They shake his hand when he goes to buy his favorite egg and pepper sandwich at a local deli. Drug dealers come up to him, give him the "high five" and wish him luck.

"I'm the real McCoy," Rich said. "I'm from here. I ain't no middle-class boy."

Rich said his mother encouraged him

**Live**  
Explore Your Fantasies  
**1-900-329-0005**  
Call The Bi-Girl Line  
**1-900-329-0008**  
Single/Couples Welcome  
Dominant Women  
**1-900-446-3001**  
(10 minutes of talk, \$2.49 a minute)