

On the pulse of music: Premiere a success

By ROBERT SHAW
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

Somehow, one feels that nights like Saturday at Wait Chapel truly live forever. Dan Locklair, a professor of music and the composer in residence, and Maya Angelou, the Reynolds professor of American studies, capped off the evening of great music with their splendid collaboration. "Since Dawn (A Tone Poem for Narrator, Chorus and Orchestra Based on Maya Angelou's 'On the Pulse of Morning')." Locklair stretched his contemplative compositional style to dramatize words to which active listeners would indeed find it hard to listen while sitting back in their chairs.

Living the art... the duo implored us not to take our art to be mulled over, but to be shone like a sunburst to our community. Hidden message here? Hardly. Angelou's

imperious presence, flanked by one of the state's great orchestras and a full 140-person choir, was a grand finish that swept the capacity crowd off its feet to rousing applause.

The work made bold and clear statements about the dawn of the Year of the Arts. The piece, dedicated to "all artists who, through their work, seek to make the world a better place," was an inspiration to a community that will spend a year exploring what art is within a tightly-knit group imbued with youthful spirit. The impressive student and faculty showing surely "sensed" dawn on the occasion (Locklair has a fondness for puns both in titles and everyday conversation).

Opening with a palpable pulse of morning reflective of the imagery of the title of Angelou's poem, it ushered in the poet narrator with consistent grace and dignity. The large choir gave musical dimensions to the words that

were grafted into the piece. Locklair interwove musical themes on the images of "a rock, a river, a tree" through the piece to support its extramusical meanings.

Angelou's grand presence commanded attention as she spoke the words that inspired the work. The choir lifted the poetic craft with its own unique blend of music and word imagery. Indeed, the piece proved an ideal finish to the opening concert for the Year of the Arts. Combining students, community and a star faculty member in music and poetry was an incredible sight. Locklair's and Angelou's accessible styles resonated with an uncommonly diverse and full audience in an uplifting manner.

Angelou's resounding last exclamation, "Good Morning!" also was the third great affirmation of the vitality of art in a week in Wait Chapel. It nicely complemented opening convention speaker Beverly Sills' reassurance that "the arts will never die."

The second such affirmation was of course the Academic Festival Overture by Johannes Brahms, which kicked off Saturday's performance. The piece was a splendid opening; one could almost hear old man Brahms gruffly chuckling in his grave. The piece is a thematic depiction of the artistic ideals of college life. How can the arts possibly fall into irrelevance with an enthusiastic new generation that Brahms sees? The four student themes gave the overture what David Levy, an associate professor of music and chairman of the music department, called a "decidedly impish" nature. The rousing performance did what it could to kick off the evening and year.

Also performed was another of Locklair's works, "Hues," in three movements. Like "Since Dawn", "Hues" exhibited a strong extramusical dimension.

"Moonshine," the second movement, proved a quiet, See Locklair, Page B7

KLEZMERIZATION

Yiddish musical style takes cues from all over

By SETH BRODSKY
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER



Courtesy of Aaron Concert Management

The Klezmer Conservatory Band, founded by Hankus Netsky in 1980, takes its name from the kind of music it performs — a unique style originally performed by Jewish musicians who took inspiration from whatever musical styles and instruments surrounded them. In the 1940s, the Klezmer style fell out of fashion, but today a revival is in full swing.

A fantastic expression of laughter through tears, the joyous languishing stomp and the tragic triumph, Klezmer music is both a prince and a pauper among the world's forms of musical expression.

And wouldn't you know it, as I write this, one of the greatest living Klezmer institutions is packing up to make its way onto our campus, to give us this very stuff of life.

As this year's first Secrest Artists Series event, the Klezmer Conservatory Band will grace Wait Chapel with a performance at 8 p.m. Saturday.

An apparent combination of the Yiddish words *kele* (vessels) and *zemer* (of song), Klezmer music is itself an amalgamation of histories, of cultures and styles. It originated in the Jewish ghettos of 15th-century Europe as a sonorous accompaniment to social celebrations — weddings, bar mitzvahs and circumcisions alike.

Immediately under attack by the church, Klezmer doggedly continued to extend its mortal coil, assimilating into its nomadic idiom the trappings of its surrounding cultures — the expressive classical world of 19th-century Austria, the humble folk idiom of Yiddish theater, the jazz and blues of 1920's New York.

The result is a music of enormous expression — a la the European *homo sentimental*, combined with the sincerely irresistible swing of early American dance halls.

The word Klezmer actually refers not to the style of the music, but to its performer, who serves as the literal "vessel of song," transmitting a tangible human voice with its infinite array of expressive inflections and gestures directly into fibers of a musical instrument. It "speaks" with a presence rare in other music.

And it speaks in the extreme — the Klezmer is the first to interrupt, to spill the soup, to break the nice crystal wine glass.

It leaves its heart everywhere — on your sleeve, in your pocket, at your feet; it loses its

reserve and dignity at every turn, it laughs in your face and then laughs louder, it wails and weeps in bountiful buckets, and it does all these things at the same time.

As a dinner guest, the paradoxical Klezmer is a substantially embarrassing mess — but as music, it hyperbolic body moves with the grace and eloquence of a born dancer.

The Klezmer Conservatory Band consists of 11 of these Klezmers, playing everything from violin to saxophone to banjo to drums. The band was founded by pianist and composer Hankus Netsky 16 years ago, motivated by a passion to take Klezmer out of the mire of pop-music hybrids and restore its colorful roots with fuller impact.

Also among its performers is the celebrated vocalist Judy Bressler, a third-generation Yiddish performer of enormous talent and appeal, as theatrically gifted as she is musical.

The band has been enormously successful since, achieving praise the world over.

In addition to its concert tours and seven successful albums (complete with titles like *A Touch of Klez*), the band has also participated in major theater projects, among them Joel Grey's music revue, "Borschtcapades '94," and the celebrated musical, *Schlemiel the First* (I believe they possess a certain weakness for puns).

Its latest project has been the much-praised collaboration with previous Secrest performer and world-famous violinist Itzhak Perlman for "In the Fiddler's House," a PBS documentary on the art form, and newly released CD; together they recently rocked the house on *The Late Show with David Letterman*.

The band promises to give an electrically vivid performance.

Known for causing involuntary dancing in the aisles of even the most reserved institutions, the band may very well create a ruckus in Wait Chapel, but one whose sincere enthusiasm would be dearly welcome.

Come and partake of these sweet sounds; you may laugh, you may cry, but more likely will laugh and cry.

Tickets for all students, faculty, and staff are free and may be obtained at the information desk in the Benson University Center.

The word Klezmer actually refers not to the style of the music, but to its performer, who serves as the literal "vessel of song."

Hugh Grant: not just a funny Brit anymore

By JOHN E. SPITLER
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

I'm a big fan of things that don't change. I take comfort in knowing that there are some truths in this world that can be counted on. Spring follows winter. I love that. There's a Super Bowl every January. Excellent. And Hugh Grant only stars in romantic comedies in which he plays variations on the daffy, flustered, but always charming commitment-phobic character that made him a star in 1994's *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

Okay, maybe not. It seems Mr. Grant decided to mix things up this time around, which is why I approached his new medical thriller *Extreme Measures* with a certain degree of apprehension. After all, the film is neither romantic nor a comedy, and I felt that Grant had probably wandered too far out of his element. I am pleased and rather surprised to report, however, that not only does Grant shine in his decidedly non-daffy starring role, but that the film itself is fairly grossing from start to finish. See *Measures*, Page B7

McCarthyism, witch trials subjects of play

By CHRISTIAN CONTI
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Witch trials are coming to the Mainstage Theatre Friday as the theatre department presents *The Crucible*, its first production of the year.

Donald Wolfe, a professor of theatre and chairman of the department, is the director of this production. He said he chose this particular play especially because of its depth of plot and character. It will premiere at 8 p.m. Friday, with other performances scheduled for Saturday and Oct. 9-13.

The production will consist primarily of underclassmen. Junior Jim Frazier stars as John Proctor, a simple farmer, with senior Katie Brewer as his loyal wife Elizabeth. The strong-willed protagonist of the play, Abigail Williams, is played by sophomore Kourtney Vahle. Reverend John Hale and Deputy-Governor Danforth, the authority figures, will be played by freshman Trent Merchant and junior Edwin Howard respectively.

The Crucible revolves around the members of a small community in Massachusetts during the time of the Salem witch trials. The production opens in the attic of the Reverend's house, where the subject of witchcraft in the town is first discussed.

From this point on, this old community falls into a tailspin of deceit and suspicion that threatens to destroy its way of life. The evil that looms over the town is being orchestrated by the children, led by Abigail Williams.

Abigail is accusing many of Salem's citizens of being witches based on the sole purpose of redirecting attention away from herself and her friends.

With the town in a bloodthirsty uproar, Abigail sees the perfect opportunity to kill the wife of John Proctor, the farmer with whom she is obsessed.

The play revolves around Abigail's plot and Proctor's fight to thwart her before he loses his friends, and possibly his own life.

When Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible*, Sen. Joseph McCarthy was leading Congress on un-American Activities Committee in a massive investigation of suspected Communists throughout the country. Miller felt that McCarthy's trials were unjust and an abuse of power for political purposes.

Most critics agree that Miller's main reason for writing the play and putting a great focus on the trial scene was to criticize the government's actions.

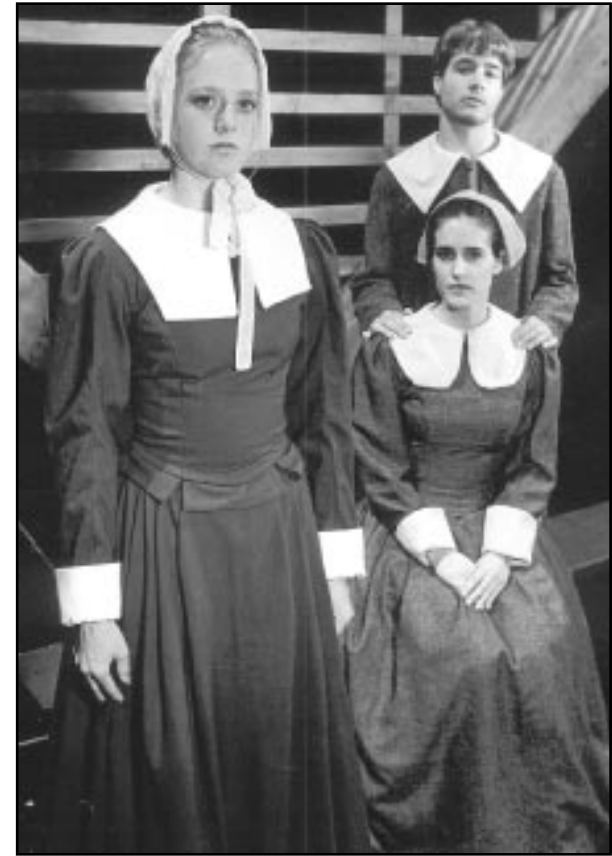
However, Wolfe said he chose not to focus heavily on the background of the play because he felt it was more important to accentuate the empathetic nature of his characters.

He said the most important aspect of putting on this play is to ensure that students who are not familiar with McCarthyism can still relate to the underlying themes of the story easily.

Many of the actors in this production have found a deep connection with their *Crucible* counterparts. Frasier said of his character John Proctor, "He was truly an honest and good man. He made a grave mistake but I believe he truly loved his wife."

"Abigail knew exactly what she was doing all of the time. All of her actions were calculated towards her goal," Vahle said.

These incarnations of the main characters will help make the university's interpretation of the play deep with emotions, and it attempts to express as much of everyone's personalities as possible. Freshman Cameron Wilson, who plays Ann Putnam, said she has great faith in her fellow cast members. "The cast is committed to make this production one of the greatest to ever play at Wake Forest, and from the looks of our rehearsals it will easily live up to our expectations and the audiences," she said.



Courtesy of university theatre

Sophomore Kourtney Vahle plays Abigail Williams, senior Katie Brewer plays Elizabeth Proctor and junior Jim Frazier plays John Proctor in *The Crucible*.