

Spirited Ghosts

Latest Mainstage play could be university's best performance ever

By MEGAN CRAMER
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

Bursting with energy, surging with a sense of unity, *Holy Ghosts* is everything the title promises: beautiful, moving, mystical and at times frightening. Written by Romulus Linney and directed by Sharon Andrews, an adjunct professor of theater, this production, from the first moment on, sucks the audience into the lives of 15 fascinating people. This production is one of the best the university has ever seen, due mainly to the actors' commitment and the director's sensitivity.

The story initially revolves around a young couple, Nancy (senior Tiffany Burleson) and Coleman (junior Bo Perry). Nancy has run away from Coleman and has found refuge in a snake-handling Pentecostal Holiness church deep in the Appalachian Mountains. Coleman comes to find her, armed with his lawyer, Rogers Canfield (senior Craig Joseph), to tell her that he wants a divorce. However, the story quickly deviates from the couple's problems as the members of the church start trickling in.

From the moment you are in this church, you don't want to leave. Your eyes have a hard time picking one image to look at, as everyone on the stage is always worthy of attention. Every actor in the ensemble creates a very unique, interesting and compelling character, and they all contrast each other.

The congregation is a motley crew of outcasts who have all found their only community in this religion. The church is led by the Reverend Obediah Buckhorn (graduate student Trent Merchant). Merchant is very strong as the charismatic, but faulted, leader, and is essential in energizing the congregation. He provides an interesting contrast to Burleson's small figure with his own looming one.

Another interesting contrast can be found between Perry and Joseph. Even though they both have very big acting styles, they managed to really convey the differences between Coleman's brash, shocking nature, and Canfield's gentler, more accepting one.



The cast of *Holy Ghosts* demonstrates the Pentecostal tradition of snake handling. The play runs at 8 p.m. today, Friday and Saturday and at 3 p.m. Sunday.

Freshman Bill Diggle, who plays Virgil, the mentally retarded young boy, never once popped out of character and had fantastic characterization.

Junior Whitney Lester, who plays the 15-year-old mother of a new baby, made me believe that there was a real baby inside her blanket. Though some portrayals were better than others, even the weak ones did not detract from the whole effect of the play.

Perry and junior Kenneth Thompson, as Carl Specter, stole the show with their incredibly sophisticated and complex portrayals. Perry's energetic acting style worked perfectly for the character of Coleman.

His emotions went from one end of the spectrum to the other smoothly and skillfully.

Whether yelling, cussing, or sobbing, Perry showed real courage and maturity in his por-

trayal that is seldom seen at the college level.

Thompson has created a fascinating character: a man who sees the ghost of his dead hunting dog. He is a joy to watch, but he also can break your heart. His soft-spoken but enthusiastic way of trying to relate to Coleman is beautifully done.

Andrews' directing was phenomenal. The improvisations between the characters makes one want to see the show again, just to see if anything would be different the second time. Her attention to every single character was obvious.

The play was filled with wonderful moments. This was aided by the choice to have music playing throughout the majority of the play. This was a welcomed backdrop, and helped in establishing the mood and climaxes. Andrews also treated all of the characters

with sensitivity. Whether it was a retarded boy or a homosexual couple, each character was lovable and sympathetic.

It was obvious also that she worked very hard to communicate a strong and clear message to the audience of acceptance and stretching yourself to the limit for your faith. As this was her first show directed on Mainstage, one can only hope that she will continue to do more.

The technical aspects of the show were also exceptional. Jon Christman, a lecturer of theatre and the technical director, was responsible for set and lighting design. They were exactly as they should have been: simple and unassuming.

The set was relatively bare: a small, wooden room with benches and a piano, but very realistic; the plants and weeds around the

edge of the set were an especially nice touch.

The lighting effect that produced trees all around the church was very realistic, too. Sound design was done by junior Jenny Harrison.

The memorable snake handling scene was enhanced superbly by the "God light" and the sounds of a boys' choir. The costumes, designed by Mary Wayne-Thomas, a lecturer in theatre, suggested lower class, rural people.

The show has many messages for the audience, but none are thrust upon them or too spelled out. All in all, I found it a phenomenal show about a phenomenal subject.

Holy Ghosts plays today, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m., in the Mainstage Theatre at the Scales Fine Arts Center. Tickets are \$5 for students and can be reserved by calling Ext. 5295.

EYE ON THE ARTS

■ Piano duo coming to campus

The Janus Duo pianists Barbara Rowan and Francis Whang will perform at 8 p.m. Nov. 21 in Brendle Recital Hall at the Scales Fine Arts Center.

Named for the Roman god with two faces, the Janus Duo looks backward to the 19th and early 20th centuries in its repertoire while looking forward to include newer music.

During the summer of 1996, the Janus Duo performed a program of American music and Liszt at the International Liszt Festival and the Congress of the European Piano Teachers Association in the Czech Republic. The concert here will feature music from that program.

Rowan and Whang are members of the music faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Rowan's specialties in 19th and 20th century music have taken her as a recitalist, orchestral soloist and chamber musician across the United States and to Austria, France, Sweden and Germany.

Whang has performed as a soloist and chamber player in the United States, Europe and Asia.

Admission is free. For information, call Ext. 5026.

■ Dance company to give concert

Local guest artists will join the 16-member university dance company for a dance concert at 8 p.m. Nov. 21-23 at the Mainstage Theatre in the Scales Fine Arts Center.

The program will feature works choreographed by several faculty and guest artists, including "Take Five," a new piece by the dance company's director, Nina Lucas.

Five dance selections will feature the Wake Forest Dance Company. "Napoli," a traditional ballet piece, was staged by former American Ballet Theatre member Fanchon Cordell. Three students — sophomore Michelle Hallor, junior Ann Horsley and junior Aurora Smith — have solo parts in the piece.

"Spaces," a modern dance work choreographed by Diane Markham, the assistant dean of the North Carolina School of the Arts, will highlight four university dancers.

The program will conclude with a modern dance piece by Ronen Koresh, a teacher at Philadelphia's University of the Arts.

Rusted Root finds new directions

By ANDY TENNILLE
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

It seems to be a prerequisite for an up-and-coming band: Following a popular debut album, bands tend to go into the studio for their second effort with a new outlook on life, and much of what they produce is reflections on what has happened to them in their rise to stardom.

With the release of *Remember*, Rusted Root is no different. While their first album, *When I Woke*, was immensely popular and put the unique sound from this Pennsylvania band on the map, the songs from the second release seem to deal with much more complicated issues and the sound has changed from the "Send Me on My Way" days.

When they burst onto the music scene in 1994 with their first album, Rusted Root introduced a sound that had never made it to the mainstream. Combining insightful song-writing, a driving, tribal-like percussion section, and a powerful lead singer, Rusted Root grew in popularity because of its unique sound and lack of commercialization.

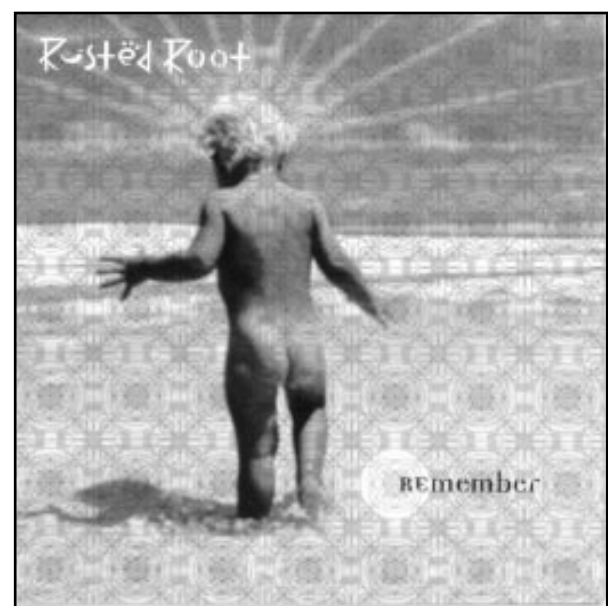
In their second album, Rusted Root has changed. With a guitar-oriented, harder feel to their new songs, Rusted Root has shed its image as a light-hearted, tribal sound that was evident on the previous album.

The new approach to music that Rusted Root has taken can be seen on the album's very first track. "Faith I Do Believe" features lead singer Michael Glabicki on guitar, as well as some great vocal melodies between Glabicki and Liz Berlin. However, the noticeable change is the fact that the once ever-present upbeat rhythms and fast-paced jams have been replaced with a haunting rhythm that, coupled with Glabicki's vocals and song writing, creates an eerie feeling to all the songs on the album.

The third track, "Sister Contine," and the fourth song, "Virtual Reality," both feature great lyrical abilities and acoustic guitar work by Glabicki, especially the slide guitar on the fourth track. "Baby will Raam," the ninth song on the album, demonstrates John Buynak's genius as a mandolinist interchanging with Glabicki's guitar and Berlin's vocals.

After listening to Rusted Root's newest release, it is easy to see that the band has matured a lot as musicians both individually and as a group.

While their new album may not have widespread appeal and sell millions of copies like the band's previous effort, the songs and the music are much more advanced than what was present on "When I Woke." Gone are the radio-friendly, catchy ditties. They've been replaced with clever, perceptive songwriting and tight, powerful jams. Listen to this new CD — and keep an open mind.



Rusted Root
Remember

Asian rap innovates while America's stagnates

DJ Honda's self-titled release features guest artists, fresh beats

By PAUL GINDER
CONTRIBUTING REVIEWER

A good producer/DJ is hard to find. The countless proliferation of tired beats, recycled Gap Band and P-Funk tracks with rap lyrics and Dre-modeled west-coast hard core should make that painfully obvious.

As rap becomes more clichéd and boring here in the United States, a growing contingent of Japanese producers are displaying that they can drop beats with the best of them. Following the release of DJ Krush's album *Meiso*, featuring the Roots among others is DJ Honda's first stateside self-titled release on Sony/Relativity Records.

Honda's album showcases some of the best talent in rap as he drops some of the freshest beats around to make for quite an impressive combo. The album is split in half with two intros of beats laid down for sampling purposes.

The first song is a DJ battle and Honda proves his chops, cutting up an album in world class fashion. Both halves of Gangstarr help out Honda on "What You Expected," with Premiere doing the scratches.

Redman is featured on "Dat's My Word," and he is up to his usual wild and woolly style. Also on the album are the Beatnuts, Common, Sean Black Al Tariq, Problemz, Grand Puba with Sadat X, BizMarkie, and the Alcoholic.

The Common song is too short and sounds like a freestyle.

Biz drops a freestyle also in his own inimitable style, which is a cool old school meets new school cut. My personal favorite is "International Anthem," with Tha Alcoholic.

The beat is smooth and eerie, perfect for rolling at night with a chill in the air.

DJ Honda is probably not the most famous artist in the rap industry, but his album shouldn't be slept on. His beats are smooth and unique and varied enough to maintain interest level throughout the album.

The rap artists on the album are top-notch and also an interesting sampling of the industry, mixing many styles of delivery.

Japan has been put on the map. DJ Honda's first album is definitely worth a listen for any fan of hip hop.



DJ Honda
DJ Honda