PEOPLE

Myers making music in The (Dulaney) valley

By Maxine L. Wallace
AFRO Staff Writer

The concert choir at Dulaney High School under the directorship of a noted artist Gold Medal in an International Music Festival held in New York City.

Bill Myers has been directing the school's choir for some 19 years and says its achievements are the result of hard work.

"I attribute their (the students') success to hard work and determination," he said.

Called Thursday's Minstrels, the choir is presently composed of 33 students who are in grades nine through 12.

Myers said the choir accepts one or two freshmen per semester.

In preparation for the recent festival, Myers said he motivated and challenged his students to strive for higher than their best.

"I said I don't want you to give me the best you can. I want you to think of this as an Olympic competition... For once in your life, go completely beyond yourselves," said Myers

Forty-eight groups competed in 11 cities here in the United States and abroad and out of that 48, only two gold medals were offered.

Under the outstanding directorship of Myers, the choir to date has won two gold medals, three silvers, and five bronzes.

Myers is noted for his willingness to go beyond the required. He aims high and with skill and determination hits the mark.

"I go for the biggies... It will stretch my own abilities," he said.

"I was determined there would be growth..." he said.

To define Myer's character more in depth, he takes both pride and pleasure in molding the music abilities of his students as he simultaneously develops within them a sense of commitment and the pursuit of excellence.

"They're here because they want to sing... We believe the discipline here will go with them," said Myers.

Myers said seven students who had sang in this choir went on broadway; and two are currently studying privately.

"They have been given this God given gift of the voice."

Myers seemed sensitive to not only the acquisition of musical skill in his students but also that they not be hurt in the process.

"I do a lot of rearrangements so as not to hurt these instruments," said Myers.

He referred to the human voice as being an instrument.

Myers smiled at the remembrance of his students singing to him after winning the gold medal award in New York.

"The last dance they played as "I've Had the Time of My Life."

Myers said his wife, Hollie is actively involved in his profession in music and production. Being a model, she lends her expertise in the area of cosmetology.

Myers said he and his wife invited twenty students to their home following their prom.

To his teaching, Myers brings experience as a singer, musical director, actor, choral director, band director, piano player.

As a singer, he has had professional experience with the Count Basie's Band-Bordeaux, France; Johnny Mathis, The West Coast Young Americans; Grand Ole Opry-Nashville, Tenn. and UMBC Camerate-International Tour-Spain, 10 cities.

His professional experience as a director is reflected in the Performing Arts Department of Dulaney High School. Productions include West Side Story, The Boy Friend, The Wiz, Bye Bye Birdie, and many others.

Guys and Dolls — Nicely Johnson/Summer Stock; and And Justice for All-Movie extra were avenues for Myers' experience as an actor.

Myers is the author of a Christmas musical, Ebony Scrooge, 1978; a Kidney Foundation Commercial, 1972; the musical director of The East Coast Young Americans, 1973-1982; artistic director of Americana East-1985; theatre-orchestra director of Performing Arts Department of Dulaney High School.

Myers was educated at the Paris Conservatory, the American Education Theatre Association, the Children Theatre Association of Maryland, the Fred Waring Music Association, the American University, and the Peabody Conservatory.

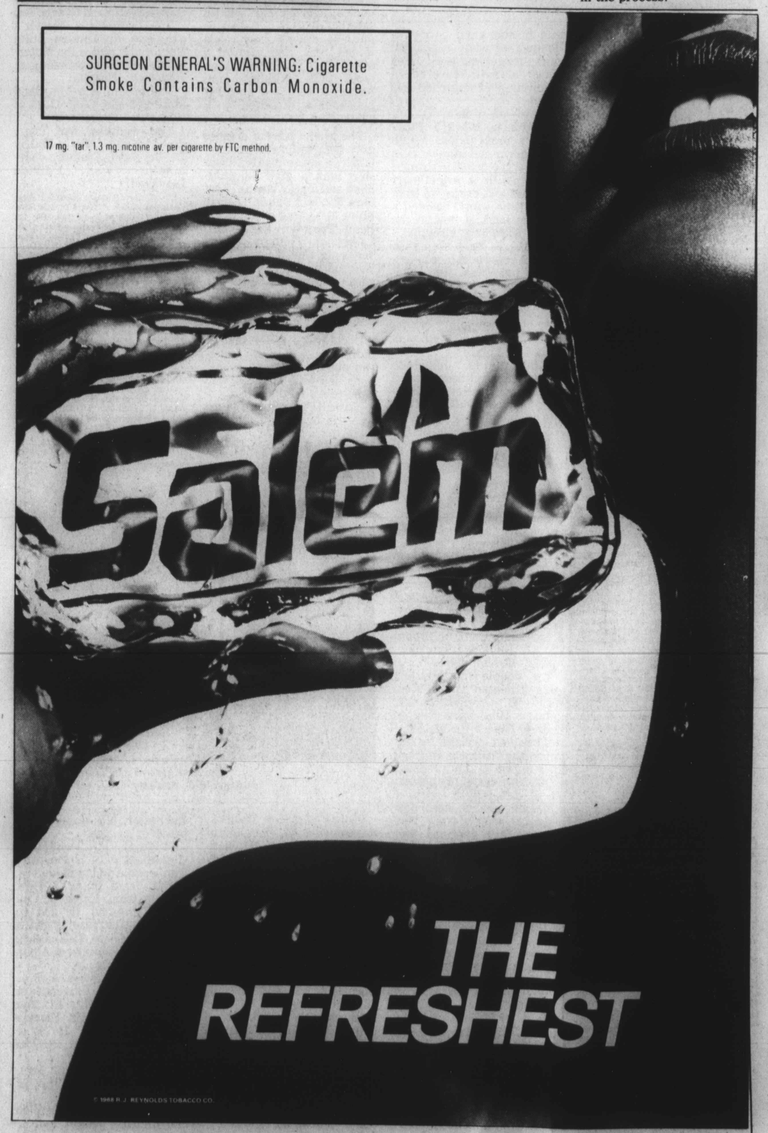
Myers, who currently works at a school that is predominantly white said his blackness is not a hindrance to him reaching the students but an asset.

"I have been able to bridge the gap between races... most of my kids see my blackness as well as a very talented musician," he said.

Myers seemed confident that his contributions are not yet over as he attributed his place in life to being where God has placed him.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

17 mg. "tar", 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.



© 1988 R.J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.

Butler moves up at UM

Leon Butler

Dr. Leon Butler, former City campus president of Eric Community College in Buffalo, New York, has been named director of planning and institutional research at the University of Maryland at Baltimore.

In this position, he is responsible for the implementation and management of a strategic planning process for the professional schools campus.

"A collaborative approach to decision-making takes us much further down the road to institutional excellence," says Butler. Building consensus and implementing positive change is what Butler has spend much of his professional career doing. A most notable example was the 10-year period, 1972 to 1982, he spent at Erie Community College in Buffalo,New York.

When Butler arrived in 1972 to assume the post of academic dean, the 90 percent black city campus was a fledgling institution at best.

Begun as a temporary campus in response to citizen needs, it had few students and ever fewer resources. Severe financial cutbacks and declining enrollment led most to speculate that the school would close. Butler was not one of the doubters.

By 1976, Butler was named president of the city campus and vice president of the three-campus Erie Community College system and a major turnaround began.

Under Butler's leadership, the city campus gained full accreditation, 10 new academic programs were started, FTE enrollment rose form a low of 679 to 2,400 and the budget tripled to $4.5 million.

Raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Butler attended a premiere public high school in Harvard's backyard. Following graduation, he spent four years in the U.S. Air Force. When Butler decided it was time to pursue a college degree, he chose Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Later as a Rand Foundation Fellow, Butler entered a doctoral program at State University of New York at Buffalo, School of Management, specializing in policy analysis.

Among his past positions was a three-year term as deputy director of Buffalo's Model Cities Program, prior to moving to Erie Community College.

Following his decade at ECC, Butler joined the faculty of the SUNY at Buffalo where he taught graduate level courses in educational administration. In 1985 he headed for the Baltimore region to join Westinghouse Institute for Resource Development in Columbia, Maryland, as program manager.

Butler lives with his wife, Toni, in the Bolton Hill section of Baltimore City.

Training school youths get life lesson

By Alicia Benjamin
AFRO Staff Writer

Something happened to the students of the Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School last week.

They were exposed to people that could possibly change the course of their lives at the fourth annual seminar on drugs, held at the school.

People such as Dr. Garry A. Mendez, Director of the Administration of Justice of the National Urban League; Doug Nettles, former football player for the Baltimore Colts; Del. Tony Fulton (D-40) and others spoke to the students about alternatives to using drugs.

The Hickey School, located in Baltimore, houses about 380 incarcerated male youth. The boys live on the school grounds and attend classes at the facility.

The day-long seminar began with remarks from several city officials and continued with workshops, a play and announcements of poster and essay contest winners.

In a workshop headed by Mendez, he told the audience of about 70 boys that use of drugs is counter to their African heritage.

"The issue of taking drugs and altering your conscious is not the African way," he told the students.

If blacks adopted their African value system, drugs would not be such a menace in the United States, according to Mendez.

The value system of environments plagued with drugs is directly opposed to that of the African culture, he continued.

The drug culture says, "Don't trust anybody," but African culture says, "Trust your brothers and sisters," according to Mendez.

Another problem facing blacks is that older black males and older black females are not meeting their responsibility of teaching and guiding their younger counterparts, as they do in Africa, stated Mendez.

He said the African tradition incorporates all blacks as family members and all are responsible for one another.

Delivering a similar message, Earl El-Amin of the National Center for Institutions and Alternatives, told the boys that even if they do not have biological children, their responsibility as black males is to take care of younger black males.

He asked how many of the teenage boys had children, and 10 of them raised their hands.

"You think your son wants to see you like this?" he asked one boy.

"You can't be a father to your son now, can you?" he asked, and the boy had no answer.

As an inmate almost three years ago, El-Amin spoke to the students frankly about life as a prisoner.

"You all don't have what it takes to make it in the penitentiary," he said.

"I've seen all those guys you think are so tough cryin' and beggin' because they don't want to be in there," he stated.

"You wouldn't last one week in prison," he told them. "You're hard on the outside and soft on the inside."

He told them of a man who had been in prison and had not heard a baby cry in 22 years. He also spoke about a 19-year-old boy with a life sentence plus 10 years who had never had a girlfriend.

"I know a lot of you have fathers, cousins and uncles in prison. I know many of them, and I know they don't want to be there."

The seminar was co-sponsored by the Black Mental Health Alliance.

Zora Neal Hurston

Hurston conference to open soon

By Jeanette Gibson
AFRO Staff Correspondent

The Harlem Renaissance will be the focus of a conference sponsored by the Zora Neale Hurston Society of Morgan State University next week.

The three-day conference from June 2-4, at the Baltimore Holiday Inn, will include slides, lecturers, and music relating to the theme "Interface: The Black Arts and Aesthetics During the Harlem Renaissance."

The society recognizes the art of Zora Neale Hurston, novelist, anthropologist and 1919 graduate of Morgan Academy, now Morgan State University.

Hurston has been overlooked by the public as a major black writer partly due to sexism by blacks, says Ruthe Sheffey, founder of the society and professor of English at Morgan State University.

"I think there is a factor of sexism in deciding who is important in the literary world," says Sheffey.

Hurston's flamboyant lifestyle and controversial work led to criticism from many including blacks, says Sheffey.

"Richard Wright wrote and objected strenuously that he thought Zora Heale Hurston's works were not sufficiently militant; that she was not writing and publishing enough about the oppression of blacks in the U.S. Others said she didn't get down to the nitty gritty of blacks in America," Sheffey said.

Explaining the universal human condition and interactions between blacks was Hurston's work, says Sheffey.

"On her side, it wasn't that she didn't see herself as a black writer. But as a black woman who grew up in an all black town, she wanted, not just to write of oppression, but of the humanity and interactions between blacks."

Hurston grew up without a sense of limitations because her hometown of Eatonville, Fla., was governed by blacks. Her father was the mayor.

Hurston was praised by critics for her vibrant use of the language and colorful descriptions of black life and folklore. "She didn't say there wasn't a black problem," says Sheffey.

Hurston received Guggenheim fellowships to collect folklore in Jamaica, Haiti and Bermuda in 1937-38 and compiled southern folklore from the United States.

Other black authors as Langston Hughes used her folklore in their writings, Sheffey said.

"Langston Hughes had never been in the south. He didn't know about the south. Zora Neale Hurston was born there. She had first hand knowledge of the stories ... the fables. She could just go to her bloodstream and pull it out," Sheffey said.

The exodus of blacks to northern states after WWI and WWII caused a loss of black culture which Hurston tried to preserve, says Sheffee.

"Zora knew tradition first hand. Lots of Harlem Reinassance writers were taking her stories, tales and games and putting them in their works," says Sheffey.

The revival of interest in Hurston is not limited to the black community but includes whites, say Sheffey.

"It's not just historically black institutions. As a matter of fact, most intereste is from predominately white institutions."

Hurston was a unique woman during her lifetime in pursuing international study instead of traditional homelife, says Sheffey.

"She wasn't going to stay in one place. That took a lot of courage in her time. That takes a lot of courage now, too. She was unusual. How many black women were doing that in the late 20's and 30's? She was courageous if nothing else," says Sheffey.

Registration for the conference is required. Contact Ruthe T. Sheffey, P.O. Box 550, Morgan State University, Cold Spring Lane and Hillen Road, Baltimore, MD 21239.

BUSINESS SESSION

TALK IT UP—Daniel Henson, Councilwoman Agnes Welch and Del. Tony Fulton, above, chat during a recent awards ceremony ffor black Maryland businesses sponsored by the sunpapers. Below, Harlow Fullwood and Edward Hitchcock confer at the same ceremony.

How the Lyons twins engineer their own reality.

Early on Mamie Lyons taught her twins, Vincent and Elliot, a very important lesson: Life only gives you what you have the courage to demand. So they demanded excellence.

And they got it, from themselves and from others. That's why they were able to graduate from a small town high school in Wynne, Arkansas to a full scholarship in engineering at Southern University, in Baton Rouge, LA. It's also why General Motors is paying for that scholarship and providing them with challenging summer jobs through the GM internship program.

Looking toward the future, General Motors has made a commitment to community development. It's the reason we invest in promising young people like Vincent and Elliot by establishing scholarships at minority colleges and universities across the country. It's also the reason why we have 12.3 billion dollars in property damage insurance managed by minority insurance brokers.

At General Motors we realize that standing behind the people who buy our Chevrolets, Pontiacs, Oldsmobiles, Buicks, Cadillacs and GMC Trucks is more than just a corporate responsibility—it's good business.

GM GENERAL MOTORS
We never forget who's driving.