Cyrus Chestnut to headline ECU's Billy Taylor Jazz Festival
The Daily Reflector
Thursday, April 22, 2010

Again this year, the East Carolina University School of Music Jazz Studies Program brings a world-class jazz performer to Greenville for the Billy Taylor Jazz Festival. Critically-acclaimed pianist and songwriter Cyrus Chestnut will headline this year’s event at a concert Friday night at the Murphy Center. The ECU Jazz Ensemble A, under the direction of Carroll V. Dashiell Jr., will accompany.

“Cyrus is one of the most influential jazz artists on the scene today, bringing or combining his African-American church-service influences with the traditional jazz influences,” Dashiell said. The ECU Jazz Bones — directed by George Broussard — and ECU Jazz Combos will perform a free concert at the Hilton Greenville, 203 S.W. Greenville Blvd., at 8 p.m. today.
Born in 1963, Chestnut began playing the piano when he was 3. By age 6, he was playing at the Mount Calvary Star Baptist Church in his hometown of Baltimore, Md. At age 9, he was studying classical music at the Peabody Preparatory Institute. He was given the opportunity to hone his keyboard skills with such notable musicians as Jon Hendricks, Wynton Marsalis, Branford Marsalis, Chick Corea, Joe Williams, James Moody, Isaac Hayes and Dizzy Gillespie, to name a few.
His skill as a soloist led him to be a top choice for piano in many big bands including the Dizzy Gillespie Alumni All Star Big Band, the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra.
Chestnut has been featured on film playing a Count Basie-inspired character in the Robert Altman film “Kansas City.”
The festival’s namesake, Billy Taylor, is a Greenville native who is the house pianist at Birdland, an art correspondent for CBS News Sunday Morning and an artistic advisor for jazz to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He’s received two Peabody Awards, an Emmy, a Grammy and 23 honorary doctoral degrees.

2010 Billy Taylor Jazz Festival Schedule
Thursday
8 p.m.: ECU Jazz Bones, Hilton Greenville, 203 S.W. Greenville Blvd.
10 p.m.: Jam Session, featuring ECU Jazz Combos, Hilton Greenville
Both concerts are free.
Friday
8 p.m.: Pianist Cyrus Chestnut and ECU Jazz Ensemble A, Murphy Center
Tickets are $15 per person, $35 per person table seating, $250 table sponsorship
Call 328-4788 or visit www.ecuarts.com.
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Upcoming: Barefoot on the Mall
By Kristin Day
The Daily Reflector
Thursday, April 22, 2010
It’s a day of swag, food, games, live music and — this year — a free outdoor movie.
East Carolina University’s Barefoot on the Mall, which will be held today, has long been a day anticipated by students for the free gifts and big musical acts, which in the past have included Schwayze, Eric Hutchinson, Jason Mraz, The Spin Doctors and The Plain White T’s. This year, the Student Union’s Barefoot Committee has booked rock band Carolina Liar (scheduled to begin at 6:45 p.m.) and R&B singer Jason Derülo (5:15 p.m.) as dual headliners.
Bringing in musical acts of different genres gives the event more of a music-festival atmosphere, said Alex Davis, assistant director for student activities and major events.
Carolina Liar is best known for last year’s hit “I’m Not Over” and their latest single, “Show Me What I’m Looking For,” which appeared on “American Idol” in March and Fox Sports commercials for the MLB All-Star Game.
For Derülo, this performance is just a part of what’s become a whirlwind year for the newcomer, even before his self-titled album dropped on March 2 and became iTunes’ fourth-best-selling album that week.
His singles “Whatcha Say” and “In My Head” have made him a constant presence on the music charts, and he’s even made a lasting impression on the “Fame Monster” herself, Lady Gaga, with whom he toured through January.
Before he took the spotlight, Derülo spent most of his time in the studio writing and producing songs for other artists like Sean Kingston and Diddy. Now he’s enjoying his time as a star — except for the mandatory rounds of interviews his profession now requires.
“I think mostly, my schedule is really, really different,” he said by phone on the week his album was released. “Where I used to be just in the studio all the time and practicing dance moves in the studio, now it’s just interview after interview. Totally, totally, different schedule. (And) getting noticed in the street is an everyday thing.”
Derülo, who’s been dreaming of becoming an entertainer since he was 5, said he never wanted to be behind the scenes; he always wanted to be a performer, and “it’s refreshing that it’s finally happening.”
After seeing Michael Jackson on television as a child, Derülo said he knew he wanted to be an entertainer. His aunt was the first person to take him seriously — when he was 6 — and convinced his mother to help him pursue his dreams. While enrolled in a school for performing arts, Derülo said he also fell in love with acting, but music is much more important. Even without his formal training, Derülo said he would have found his way into the business some way.
“I’m the kind of person who will make it happen under any circumstance,” he said. “This is all I’ve ever wanted to do.”
As per tradition, the winner of ECU’s Battle of the Bands, which was held March 19, also will take the stage at the festival. This year, that winner is Mixed Solution, a hip-hop/electronica group out of Raleigh. They will begin at 3:15 p.m.
The battle’s second-place winner, Crimson Refuge from Rocky Mount, will open the day’s band performances at 2:15 p.m.
Barefoot on the Mall begins at 2 p.m. with a performance by the Magnolia Belles, a student-run female a cappella group, as vendors and organizations set up to hand out free goodies to guests. After the music ends around 8 p.m., Davis said — for the first time since Barefoot’s inception — they will show an outdoor movie.
The feature will be last summer’s hit comedy “The Hangover” — starring Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms and Zach Galifianakis — to be shown in the same location as the stage.
Contact Kristin Day at kday@refletcor.com or (252) 329-9579.
Policeman sticks rifle in journalist’s back

BY JULIAN MARSH
CORRESPONDENT

CHAPEL HILL — A UNC-Chapel Hill student journalist covering a simulated shooting on campus says a police officer stuck a rifle in his back during the drill.

Police acknowledge an encounter took place but say that the weapon was not loaded and that the officer mistook the student for an actor in the drill.

The Wednesday exercise took place on the Outdoor Education Center off Country Club Road, a 20-acre wooded area 10 minutes from the student union.

Will Gorham, a senior and the managing editor of Carolina Connection, a campus radio program, said he was walking on the shoulder of Laurel Hill Road trying to pick up sounds of actors portraying hostages screaming for help.

"The first thing that happened was I felt a gun barrel in my spine," Gorham said. "He sort of gently, jabbed it into my spine, and I just fell down."

Gorham said the officer asked if he was authorized to be in the area.

Gorham said he was a member of the media. Gorham said the officer radioed to the command center, and then apologized.

"He said, 'I'm sorry, I thought you were a bad guy,'" Gorham said.

"The officer involved had no idea who the person was," said Chief Jeff McCracken, director of the UNC-CH Department of Public Safety. "The young man should not have been there."

Chancellor Holden Thorp, who was also at the news conference, said members of the media were told in advance that they should be in a staging area in a nearby parking lot.

"It doesn't appear, at least at this point, there was anything done incorrectly," Lt. Kevin Gunter, a Chapel Hill police spokesman. "Again, we have not heard all the facts."

Gorham said he wasn't physically hurt. "Emotionally," he said, "I haven't really dealt with it yet."
Turnage, ECU team up for theater workshop

By KEVIN SCOTT CUTLER  
Lifestyles & Features Editor

What do super heroes, princesses, good and bad witches, wizards and unicorns have in common? They were all featured during Saturday's Fables and Fairy Tales children's workshop at the Turnage Theater in downtown Washington. Katherine Bland and Kasidy Sharp, students at East Carolina University's School of Theatre and Dance, planned the event with the support and encouragement of their professor Patch Clark, well-known locally for her efforts in making children's theater opportunities more accessible.

"This is all about imagination and putting that into dance, stories and fairy tales," Clark said as she watched youngsters select hats for a production number. "This is a fun, celebratory day of creativity."

In just a few hours, Bland and Sharp, along with four fellow ECU students, led the young participants through the process of writing plays, learning dances and designing costumes, props and backdrops. The workshop culminated with a live theater performance starring the children, with their parents, grandparents, siblings and friends as an appreciative audience.

The event, which began as a student project, soon evolved into a full-fledged drama workshop. With the cooperation and support of Turnage executive director Scotty Henley, it also supported the historic theater.

Youngsters write stories and learn dances during Saturday's Fables and Fairy Tales workshop at the Turnage Theater. (WDN Photos/ Kevin Scott Cutler)
UNC-CH students to rally for dining workers

CHAPEL HILL -- A group of UNC-Chapel Hill students will hold a press conference at noon today to demand better working conditions and the rehiring of several workers in Lenoir and Ramshead dining halls.

The petition, organized by Student Action with Workers and signed by close to 1,000 students, asks administrators to hold Aramark, the private company that runs the dining halls, accountable to the high standards of managerial conduct and working conditions, according to a news release. This campaign began after Angela Vargas, a popular worker at Rams Head Dining Hall, was fired.

According to the students, employees of Aramark report being harassed by managers or even fired after raising grievances.

"It's time for the university to take responsibility for the workers who make this campus run," said Lauren Traugott-Campbell, a junior. "If they don't have basic rights and dignity in the workplace, UNC-CH is responsible. It doesn't matter that Aramark is private. It must meet Carolina standards if it is going to operate and make money on our campus."