Black Voices of Inspiration Spring Concert
Gospel Meets Symphony

Michael Sullivan, staff writer

For the first time ever, the Lafayette Symphony Orchestra and the Black Voices of Inspiration will team up to make music radiate through the Long Center for the Performing Arts on April 5 at 7:30 p.m.

During this event, called Gospel Meets Symphony, both groups will perform collaboratively and independently. The performance is modeled after the annual concert that was started by the Akron Symphony Orchestra and has been running for 21 years.

BVOI, established in 1971 is dedicated to the performance of spirituals, gospels and contemporary songs of inspiration by African American composers. The choir has won several wards of excellence and toured extensively throughout Indiana, visiting other university campuses, metropolitan churches, civic organizations and elementary schools. The Lafayette Symphony Orchestra began in 1949 by local musicians with a goal of providing an opportunity for local musicians to perform orchestral music. By 1950 the group had grown into a full fledged orchestra, with a board and a part time conductor.

The Black Voices of Inspiration, or BVOI, will feature pieces from both classical and contemporary settings. Over 25 members in the organization have logged in more than 50 hours of rehearsal time each in preparation for the Gospel Meets Symphony event.

BVOI will also join the Lafayette Symphony Orchestra, or LSO, to perform works such as “Hallelujah, You’re Worthy To Be Praised,” and Richard Smallwood’s “Total Praise.” LSO will perform pieces independently from BVOI as well.

The performances by these two groups will combine beautiful orchestral sounds with powerful words and vocal melodies. The event hopes to draw members of the surrounding community closer together as well as offer a great opportunity to experience quality gospel music.

Tickets for concert ($8.00-$35.00) are on sale now and can be purchased online at www.lafayettesymphony.org or by calling the Long Center Box Office at 765-742-6463.
Participate in Purdue’s Day of Giving...

The first ever Purdue Day of giving – set for April 30 is a 24-hour online fundraising event designed to boost visibility and giving for all of Purdue University. The BCC is proud to be one of nearly 40 campus units involved in promoting Purdue during this event. All BCC alumni, students and friends are encouraged to participate in this opportunity to launch dreams and achieve greatness while promoting an affordable and accessible Purdue. Please plan to engage in this new digital and mobile way of giving to the BCC on April 30. Designate your gift to BCC scholarship fund. Your gift makes a difference.

Thanks for your support of the BCC and its many important programs and students.

Renee Thomas, Director
Haraka Fest

People will crowd into the Black Cultural Center to listen to moving words presented and performed during Haraka Fest on March 28 and March 29 at 7 p.m.

Haraka writers will perform their poetry through expressions of their individual personalities during the free show. There will be a great degree of personalities expressing their work with strong, assertive, risky, humorous, and picturesque language.

Nine artists will perform about 2-3 pieces attacking the constraints of time. The show titled, “Time Lines: A Momentary Exploration of Now,” will tackle issues that people encounter daily in multiple artistic fashions. Some pieces will be accompanied by music; others will simply rely exclusively on the performer to assert the emotional power behind the words.

In order to effectively perform their pieces, the artists have thrown a significant amount of hours into practicing and refining their pieces. Practices are held every Monday and Wednesday from 6:30 p.m.-9:30p.m. at the BCC for more brainstorming, writing workshops, and critiques. Before they get on stage to perform, they run through the show to perfect every technical aspect of the performance as a whole.

Haraka provides a familial atmosphere, according to Brandi Smith, a performing member. She enjoys exploring new emotions and knowledge under the guidance of the group’s leadership.

Haraka Fest is March 28th & 29th at 7 p.m. at the BCC. We hope to see you there!

Michael Sullivan, staff writer

Black Thought Collective Spring Symposium
Wednesday, March 26, 2014
2 pm Black Cultural Center

Black Thought Collective Spring Symposium will be an interactive and intellectual cultural journey. Through workshops and presentations, audience members will be enlightened and enriched.

Laverne Cox
Ain’t I a Woman:
My Journey Into Womanhood
Wednesday, March 26, 2014
7 pm Loeb Playhouse
Stewart Center

Laverne Cox is a critically acclaimed actress who stars in the Netflix original series “Orange is the New Black.” She will draw from her own personal story and explore how the intersection of race, class, and gender uniquely affect the lives of transgendered women of color.
The BCC congratulates Tenecia Waddell on her recognition as a “Woman of Innovation” during the Greater Lafayette Area YWCA’s 40th Annual Salute to Women. Tenecia Waddell, an officer with the Purdue Police Department, is the first and only female African American police officer in Tippecanoe and surrounding counties. She joined the Purdue Police Department since 2008. Prior to Purdue, she was a corrections officer with the Tippecanoe County Sheriff’s Department for seven years. Through her work in law enforcement and in community service, she is an outstanding role model and mentor in the community. As an instructor of self-defense programs, she empowers and educates women and children. In addition, she is on the Ultimate Pink Party committee which is an annual fundraiser for the YWCA Women’s Cancer Program, she participates in the Shop with a Cop program and reads to children at local schools. Her desire is to bridge the gap between the community and law enforcement by being involved in the schools, participating in community events and being accessible to the public. She is a co-founder of Delivering Smiles Tippecanoe which raises money to assist local public safety employees in times of emergency need. Tenecia assists yearly with the PALS (Purdue Athletes Life Success Program) and created a gang awareness program to incorporate into their curriculum. Tenecia is also an executive board member of the Black Caucus of Faculty and Staff.

We would also like to congratulate the following Purdue women who were also recognized during the YWCA celebration:

JoAnn Brouillette
Woman of Distinction
Purdue University Trustee

Jeanne Norberg
Woman of Distinction
Purdue Retiree
Purdue’s 1st Female spokesperson

Dr. Leah H. Jamieson
Mary Keller Ade Woman of Wisdom
John A. Edwardson Dean of the College of Engineering
Co-founder, Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS)

Learn more about the accomplishments of these outstanding Women of Purdue at www.ywcalafayette.org/salute
Orange is The New Black was first released on Netflix in July of 2013. The series is based on the book with the same title by Piper Kerman. The show tells the story of the main character, Piper Chapman, who was sentenced to over a year in a federal women’s prison for transporting drug money for a former girlfriend who was a drug smuggler. The arrest and sentencing occurs after Piper has been living ten years as a law abiding upper middle class citizen. Therefore much of the story revolves around Piper’s difficult adjustment to prison life.

The series features a complex cast of characters whose interactions with Piper range from challenging, frightening, self-serving and compassionate. Although the series is entertaining, features a diverse cast, and perhaps can bring overdue attention to conditions many women face in prison, the show is not without its problems. For example, one has to remember that the story is told through the lens of Piper, a white upper middle class woman who had little to no meaningful interactions with women of color prior to her incarceration. I point this out because the women of color on the show too often are portrayed stereotypically and when the complex layers of their life are revealed it is through the voice of Piper, the white woman. Once again, as in too many media portrayals of women of color; our stories are significant only when told in someone else’s voice other than our own. However the popularity of the show has given Piper Keman a platform to advocate for criminal justice reform. The show has also enlarged Cox’s audience for her transgender advocacy.

Despite my concerns about the portrayal of women of color and the risk of desensitizing the public to the real conditions faced by inmates, I recommend viewing the series and to use it as an opportunity to start a long overdue dialogues about our contemporary prison system and also transgender lives in the U.S.

Laverne Cox, who plays the character Sophia Burset, a trans woman, on Orange is The New Black, will speak at Purdue on March 26, 2014 in Loeb Playhouse at 7 pm. Her talk, Ain’t I a Woman: My Journey to Womanhood” is free and open to the public. This is part of the Purdue LGBTQ Center’s Distinguished lecture series and the Black Cultural Center is one of the event’s co-sponsors.

Recommended Reading

Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women’s Prison
By Piper Kerman

Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the U.S. Prison Regime
By Dylan Rodriguez
CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services) has a liaison program. They have discovered it is often easier for students to avail themselves of CAPS services when the staff is familiar with students and staff outside of a traditional office setting. They work with residence halls, the Black and Latino Cultural Centers and the LGBTQ center. Their goal is to build relationships with various groups and to help with those who are hesitant to approach the office. Dr. Donald Werden has been fulfilling this role at the Black Cultural Center. Dr. Don, as he is affectionately known, serves as the Assistant Director of CAPS and Data Management and Technology Coordinator for CAPS.

When asked about his job, his face lights up. He states, “I love working with students and helping them reach their potential.” He gets his joy out of helping someone along their way and being a supportive mentor. He identifies the most common issues the CAPS encounters are transitional issues for freshmen and stress relating to balancing the stress of class demands and facing obstacles that may arise which may affect academic performance. According to Werden many people try to resolve an issue by themselves and that often the issues begins to tax our coping mechanisms. Working in his office and at other campus locations, gives Dr. Don a chance to interact with students in multiple settings and to see their strengths. Dr. Don believes it is important for students and staff to know that CAPS provides a variety of services in addition to traditional individual sessions, some of which include: alcohol and drug programs, recovery groups, resting for attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disorders, group counseling, and a variety of support groups. Additionally there are on call and crisis services available.

So how does the office work? When someone contacts the office the first step is triage. This involves talking to a senior clinician for the purposes of assessment to determine needs and the resources available. This can be done via a phone call. Afterwards clients will come in, complete paperwork and set up counselling sessions.

Dr. Don is at the Black Cultural Center on Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm. visiting with students and listening to their conversations and concerns about life. If students desire to talk privately there is a space dedicated for that to occur. In his spare time he enjoys fly fishing and his favorite quote is “The way we think about something directly influences the way we feel about it, so if something isn’t clicking in your life consider whether you’re thinking about it in a rational, reasonable and realistic way.” Dr. Don says it best, “If you see me at the BCC speak!”

In addition to the services provided by Dr. Don, Dr. Maria Williams Alexander, CAPs staff therapist, facilitates the MOCHA support group at the BCC. MOCHA provides a confidential and supportive group for undergraduate Black women to explore personal and shared experiences and concerns.
Legendary Purdue Basketball player and 10 year veteran of the NBA returned to Purdue University to give a gallery talk and autograph copies of his memoir, Growing Up in Words and Images. The book consists of work selected from his 70 acrylic and mixed media portraits. Several pieces of this collection were on display throughout the Black Cultural Center from January – March 15, 2014. Carroll, majoring in economics, attended Purdue from 1976 to 1980 during which he led the men’s basketball team to the NIT finals and the NCAA Final Four. However, after his basketball career he returned to something he has always loved, art.

During the gallery talk, Carroll read from the book which shares personal narratives of the triumphs, aspirations and adventures of growing up. The standing room only crowd was moved by the vulnerable stories from Carroll’s youth which impact the renaissance man he is today. When asked about his time at Purdue Carroll replies, “Being at Purdue is one of the most memorable times of my life. Returning is also very special, especially being able to bring my art work to the Black Cultural Center, a place where I spent a lot of time.”

Photos courtesy of Mark Simons
Accolades to.....

Congratulations to the following winners of the Let’s Talk About Hair: An Interdisciplinary Symposium. Students displayed posters from a variety of disciplines about their hair related research:

**Undergraduate Winner** - Doniece LeShore, “The Battle of the Naps: Nappy is Not a Bad Word!”

**Graduate Winners** - Casarae Gibson/Kadari Taylor-Watson, “Domesticating Blackness: Black Hair, Politics of Respectability, and Citizenship”

**Audience Favorite** - Blair McDaniel, “What Lies beneath: An Examination of Comprehensive Natural Hair Care”

Hats off to Heather Moore, American Studies PhD candidate and BCC night manager for being named the Ann Plato Pre-Doctoral Fellow for 2014-15 at her undergraduate alma mater, Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.