Black Voices of Inspiration Spring Concert: “Down Through the Years”

Juanita Crider, Editor

The Black Voices of Inspiration (BVOI) will be featured in their annual spring concert on Sunday March 29, 2015 at 3:00 pm in Loeb Playhouse, Stewart Center. The ensemble is currently under the direction of Jonathon Turner and Lance Mosely. Turner and Mosely have guided the choir through the transition of a national search for a new director, who will begin in June. Kimberly Graves, student coordinator for BVOI describes rehearsing for the show this way, “Preparing for the concert has been a lot of work but we are also having fun while doing so.” Turner concurs adding that “the ensemble as a whole has felt the pressure [of preparing for a concert] since the beginning of the semester. However, BVOI has risen to the occasion and has committed to presenting with excellence!

The concert theme is “Down Through The Years.” This common phrase accurately represents the journey musical journey the choir will invite the audience to journey with them during the show. In assembling the repertoire choir members were asked to submit 2-3 songs. Afterwards Turner and Mosely reviewed the songs and narrowed the list down to fifteen songs which best fit the theme and vocal talents of the ensemble in a variety of ways. The concert includes music from some of the greatest African American composers, writers, arrangers, musicians and producers from the 1980s to present day. Attendees will enjoy music from artists such as Ricky Dillard, Kirk Franklin, Moses Hogan, and Patrick Lundy just to name a few. Graves sums it up this way “Be prepared for a fantastic show!” Mosely and Turner believe it is important to remind readers that “this concert’s success cannot be attributed to one person but the combined efforts of all who support the vision and desire of BVOI to always strive to reach new levels of excellence.”

Tickets are available at Loeb box office. Costs are $5 for Purdue students and $7 for the general public.
Participate in Purdue’s Day of Giving...

WHAT IS PURDUE DAY OF GIVING?
A 24- hour online event supporting higher education at the highest proven value.

WHERE DOES MY GIFT GO?
You can choose to give to the Black Cultural Center in several specific areas, for example for scholarships. The Cultural Arts Series, or Research Tours.

WHY GIVE ON APRIL 29?
A one-day-only bonus program and hourly challenges mean more dollars for BCC programs.

Last year, thanks to your incredible generosity, the first ever Purdue Day of Giving raised an astounding $7.5 million in just 24 hours, granting countless opportunities for our community.

This year, join us as we continue to grant opportunities and create lasting impact.

dayofgiving.purdue.edu
Ensemble Spring Productions...

People will crowd into the Black Cultural Center to hear moving words performed during Haraka Fest on April 10 and April 11 at 7 pm. Haraka Writers will perform their poetry through expressions of their individual personalities during the free show. The poetry is as varied as its members. Poems will be risky, humorous, and assertive and feature picturesque language.

The show titled, “Hue-manity: Live & In Color,” will feature members engaging their thoughts, feelings and experiences surrounding a spectrum of colors. 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.-9:30 p.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.

The newest BCC ensemble, The Gordon Parks Fine Arts Ensemble, will premier, an exhibition of their photography, “A Retrospective: Exploring Purdue Life Through a Black Lens.” This exhibition will be on display at the BCC from April 8 – 22. The goal of the exhibit is to contrast themes of perception vs. reality in portraits of blackness on campus.

On April 17 and April 18 at 7 pm New Directional Players (NDP) spring production is the play, Split Second by Dennis McIntyre. The play tells the story of an African American policeman’s tragic encounter with a white car thief. Although written in the early 19080s, the play’s issues of race and policing are very relevant in our contemporary moment. The play is being directed by Purdue alum and former New Directional Player, Rufus Burns. Burns received his undergraduate degree in theater from Purdue and also earned an MFA in acting from University of Missouri, Kansas City. Burns is featured in the independent film, Terrible Love. Terrible Love tells the story of an Iraq War veteran suffering from PTSD. The feature received the audience award at the 2014 Austin, Texas Film Festival. The production is will be at the BCC and is free.

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CNN’s Black In America series visits Purdue. In this picture from right left to right: Renee Thomas, Dr. Julianna Malveaux, Chuck D, Dr. Venetria Patton, Soledad O’Brien, Dr. Christine Taylor and Lowell Kane. Malveaux, Rapper Chuck D, and Dr. Venetria Patton served on the panel taking questions, from Soledad O’Brien and the audience. Damon Johns, from Shark Tank and founder of FUBU also Skyped in as part of the presentation and dialogue.

Dr. Angela Davis, world reknown scholar and activist visited Purdue on February 25, 2015. In addition to Purdue students the audience was filled with visitors from other universities and also community members. Afterwards, Davis dedicated time to sign books, and take pictures with audience members. As you can see from the picture her presence on campus was met with great enthusiasm!

Dr. Leonard Harris, Purdue professor of philosophy, meets with Dr., Davis prior to her presentation. Harris and Davis are colleagues in the field of philosophy and have known each other for years. They both write about the philosophy of liberation.
Margaret Burroughs: African American Renaissance Woman

The 2015 National Women’s History Month theme is “Weaving the Stories of Women’s Lives.” In celebration of the theme this brief would like to introduce the story of famed African American artist Margret Burroughs whose art is woven throughout the Black Cultural Center and whose life work is felt throughout Chicago, U.S. and internationally. Burroughs was a poet, artist, teacher, activist and significant contributor to the African American museum movement.

Born in Louisiana Burroughs, a participant of the Great Migration, moved with her parents to Chicago on 1922 at the age of five. She attended Chicago public schools and earned her undergraduate degree from Chicago Normal College (now known as Chicago State University). Later she received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. By this time Burroughs was a successful artist whose reputation was growing in Chicago and the rest of the country. At this same time Burroughs wrote for the Chicago Defender, taught at DuSable High School and collaborated with local black artists on African American cultural events in the city, particularly on the “Southside” of Chicago which was known as a thriving black community. It was in this atmosphere that Burroughs helped to establish the Southside Community Arts Center, which a Federal Arts Project was promoted by the Works Progress Administration. The community center was a major location of the Chicago Renaissance where artists like Gwendolyn Brooks and Paul Robeson spent time.

Burroughs also served as secretary of the National Negro Museum and Historical Foundation based in Chicago. She and her husband Charles were also very active members of the African American Heritage Association. It was through her work in these organizations that her vision to create a museum which would promote and honor black history, culture and thought was ignited. She and her husband began what is now known as the DuSable Museum of African American History in their home. The DuSable has served the Chicago area since 1961 and is still a premiere museum and cultural institution.

Burroughs primary artistic medium was printmaking. The BCC Margaret Burroughs collection consists of 14 pieces. Come to view the collection in person or visit our virtual museum at http://purduebcc.omeka.net/items/browse?collection=2. In her autobiography Burroughs describes art as having “the power to change the lives of people for the better … in fact, to be a whole person one should be able to express oneself creatively on a regular basis.”

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Recommended Reading

*The Grasp That Reaches beyond the Grave: The Ancestral Call in Black Women’s Texts* by Venetria Patton

Patton is Professor of English and Director of the African American Studies and Research Center at Purdue University.

*The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public* by Susan Schweik
Championing Equality

Purdue University LGBTQ Center in partnership with the Black Cultural Center, Intercollegiate Athletics, Purdue 360, Student Government, NCAA, GO Athletes!, and Campus Pride invite the campus and local community to join them at the event “Championing Equality: LGBTQ Athletes & Allies” on March 30th, 2015 at 6:00 pm in Fowler Hall. According to Lowell Kane, director of Purdue’s LGBTQ “national data indicates that LGBTQ students continue to perceive high rates of homophobic language and behaviors on college campuses, which inhibits the ability of many students to come out, connect to critical resources, and ultimately persist and succeed on campus.” While many universities have implemented programs and initiatives designed to improve campus climate for diversity overall, the current state of affairs for LGBTQ students nationwide requires us to pay attention to the challenging data, uncomfortable realities, often limited resources, and difficult truths.

The speakers for this event will focus on the recent inclusion of serious dialogues around improving the experience of LGBTQ student-athletes which has fostered new opportunities for communication and collaboration between student-leaders, student-athletes, athletics staff, and the broader campus community.

Dr. Sue Rankin, Senior research Associate in the Center for Higher Education and Associate Professor Emeritus of Education at The Pennsylvania University, is the featured keynote speaker. Dr. Rankin has published and presented widely on the impact of sexism, racism and heterosexism in the academy and intercollegiate athletics. Following Rankin’s address will be a responding panel of athletes and scholars. The panel will consist of: current student athlete Bree Horrocks (women’s basketball), former Purdue student athletes, Dorien Bryant (football) and Ryan Dafforn (swimming), as well as the first known openly transgender Ironman triathlete, Chris Mosier.

Moderating the panel will be Purdue alumna, Dr. Heidi Lewis, Assistant Professor of Feminist and Gender Studies at Colorado College. Lewis was the first Scholar-in Residence of BCC ensemble the Black Thought Collective while pursuing her doctoral degree in American Studies. Dr. Lewis’s teaching and research focuses on feminist theory, gender and sexuality, Black Studies, Critical Media Studies, Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies, social justice, and activism. She is currently in the process of completing articles that examine Rihanna’s “Pour It Up” and FX’s The Shield, as well as a full-length book manuscript that examines Black popular culture. Learn more by following her on Twitter at @therealphdmommy and by visiting her Fem-Geniuses website.

Dr. Heidi Lewis
Disability Awareness Month: Disability and Race

March is National Disability Awareness Month. According to Ian Langtree, writing for the web site, Disabled World, “people with disabilities are the nation’s largest minority and the only one that any person can join at any time” (http://www.disabled-world.com/disability/diversity.php). Communities of people with disabilities include all racial and ethnic identities. However, there are many scholars who argue that race and ethnicity is often missing from discourses on disability. Including a deeper examination of disability is essential for a greater understanding of racial discrimination in the United States and throughout the African diaspora. Why, because racism affects perceptions of ability for many ethnic groups in combination with negative stereotypes concerning race. This often results in marginal representation within the Disability Rights movement.

How do we define disability? The Americans with Disability Act (ADA), established in 1990, defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Specifically, a qualified individual with a disability is someone who can perform the essential functions of a job with or without reasonable accommodation. Unfortunately unemployment rates for disabled persons of color are high. Some reasons are:

- There is disparity in rehabilitation services provided to minority persons with disabilities.
- Inadequate transportation and housing in disadvantaged communities intensify employment barriers for people of color with disabilities.
- Cultural differences are too often not clearly understood by individuals or organizations designing programs to support employment of disabled people of color (ibid).

As the field of disability studies continues to grow more and more research is being conducted that examines correlations between race and disability. Additionally it is important that disabled people of color are represented at the tables where policy is being made.

At Purdue University The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is located in Young Hall, Rm 830. Their purpose is to facilitate services for qualified students with disabilities as they matriculate through campus. If students have any questions or feel they need the services of the center they should make an appointment by calling (765) 494-1247.

Monday March 30th 6:00-7:00 pm for a special Open House at the Center for Career Opportunities (CCO) for Purdue students with disabilities. The Disability Resource Center will provide pizza, drinks, and cookies and representatives from the CCO will share ways that we can help students with disabilities in their career development. We will offer tours of the CCO and a short discussion on disclosing your disability in the hiring process.
Spring is just around the corner and I have been thinking of kites. Kites were invented in China sometime in the fifth century AD and were historically made from silk. China also had a steady supply of bamboo to construct a light but strong frame. By 2015 kites have come a long way from their origins. They are made of many materials, come in a plethora of shapes and have recreational as well as practical & military uses. There is even a National Kite Month (April) which is sponsored by the American Kitefliers Association. I enjoy seeing kites flying in the sky. To me they represent uninhibited beauty. I haven’t flown a kite in many, many years. However, I plan to change that soon.

As the final weeks of spring semester are moving along I encourage you to think of an activity that you enjoyed but have not participated in for a while and consider trying it again. Think of it as an opportunity for renewal. Often in the midst of papers, projects, applications for employment, internships and graduate school the stress increases exponentially. There are several events at Purdue that offer time for fun, relaxation and renewal. Please remember it is important to take some time for you!

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