

311, Sugar Ray entertain small Coliseum crowd

NIKKI LA ROCQUE Viewpoints Editor

Despite the overkill mainstream radio gives to bands Sugar Ray and 311, these two groups managed to put on a decent concert Tuesday night at the Carolina Coliseum.

But that was it — decent. Nothing exceptional was given to the audience, and even some cheese was supplied in the form of contrived background banners and screens and "cool" lighting effects.

It's as if the focus of the show was not "Let's see how energetic we can get" but, "Let's see if we can mess with the heads of the kids who are tripping."

Sugar Ray opened up to a rather empty floor and stands. The lead singer, who must think wearing trashy sleeveless white undershirts is somehow sexy, jumped off the stage and ran around in the crowd in an effort to get them pumped. It worked... for about 15 minutes. The people who have made Sugar Ray the financial success they are were there and gladly welcomed the attempt.

In other words, the young girls screamed with repressed pre-pubescent pleasure, and the high school boys who thought they were real alternative by wearing their American Eagle baseball caps backwards would start random, half-hearted pits.

As for Sugar Ray itself, at least they attempted to do what any opening act is supposed to do — get the crowd riled up. They performed songs from their latest CD, *Floored*, as well as obscure tracks from their earlier material.

Even though no one seemed to be familiar with their older songs, Sugar Ray pleased the crowd. They ripped through their set list quickly and effi-

ciently, waiting until the end, of course, to give the crowd what they wanted, "Fly." Suddenly, everybody was happy.

But the happy quotient was raised considerably by the time 311 jumped on stage. Of course, they played songs off their fairly new release *Transistor*, like the album's title song, "Beautiful Disaster" and "Prisoner."

They did a slightly mellow version of "Down" and "All Mixed Up" from their self-titled album. Any 311 concert without those two songs would be slightly incomplete.

The songs they chose from *Grassroots* were a little disappointing, not because "Silver" and "Homebrew" aren't great — they're boisterous and fun to get down and funky to — but the band played them just a touch too slow, just enough so the pits didn't get too excited. They'd start, but when the guys realized the tempo wasn't as fast as usual, they would quietly die out, which was uncool.

That same mellow attitude seemed to pervade the whole show. Things kind of picked up to the fast pace 311 should have been at the entire show with "Feels," but unfortunately that was the last song before the encores, and so was just too late.

311 doesn't belong at a large venue like the Coliseum. Without the comfort of a small, tightly packed side-street venue, 311 loses some of their raw energy and genuine feeling, which is key to a great show.

If one can just roll one's eyes at the commercialism surrounding 311, and the too-young crowds that generally end up at their shows, a sweaty, aching fun time can be had. But, if mainstream music is not your thing, don't even bother.

The best and worst in 1997 hip-hop

DEREK K. SCOTT Staff Writer

There's no doubt that Wu-Tang's *Wu-Tang Forever* was the best hip-hop album in 1997. What may be in doubt are the rest of the winners of the 1997 Hip-Hop All-Star Awards.

May I have the envelope please:

- 1. Best Group:** Wu-Tang. No one in the rap world has dominated hip-hop like the 36 chamber brothers from Shaloin.
- 2. Best Solo Artist:** Wyclef Jean. The Refugee Camp production of "Guantanamera" says it all.
- 3. Dopest Verse of the Year:** Ghostface on the song "Impossible" — don't sleep.
- 4. Producers of the Year:** The RZA and Puff Daddy. The RZA definitely has beats galore, while Puff Daddy is still making hits.
- 5. Best Phrase:** "Bout it, Bout it" by Master P. This "NO LIMIT SOLDIER" from New Orleans has gotten everybody to dance around like wild monkeys, and "My stuff is more John Blaze than that" from The Notorious B.I.G.'s *Life After Death*.
- 6. Hip-Hop's Favorite Singer:** Erykah Badu. For a long time this honor went to Mary J. Blige. Now, Ms. Badu has got everybody desiring a cup of tea.
- 7. The Why Did You Comeback Award?:** Nice-N-Smooth. The only thing "Blazing Hot" about this duo's newest release is the CD in my mom's fireplace.
- 8. My Mom Still Writes My Lyrics Award:** Will Smith. Between "Just

Crusin'" and "Getting Jiggy With It," it's obvious to the world that this "MIB" flat-out sucks.

9. Newcomer of the Year: Cannibus. Possibly the most raw MC since Rakim, evident on the Lost Boyz's "Beast From The East."

10. Best Underground Artist: O.C. His second release *Jewelz* was dope, but only six people heard it.

17. The Did Not Deserve A Hip-Hop Quotable Award: L.L. Cool J.

18. Best Beats But NO Lyrics Award/Artist: Camp Lo/Producer: Timbaland

19. Best "Big Girl" Award: Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliot and Mia X.

20. The Moses Award: KRS-ONE. Still dope at the age of 85.

21. The Please Drop Your Squad Award: Nas. The Firm didn't win many cases in 1997.

22. The Best White Performing Rap Artist: Coolio. Keeping it real?

23. Mix-Tape Award: DJ Clue. Move over Funkmaster Flex.

24. Most underrated MC: Common. "I could've sampled Diana Ross a long time ago," and Cee-Lo from the Goodie Mob, "If you a God then save your own, don't mentally enslave your own."

25. Most overrated MC: Mase and those ugly plastic suits. Somebody please light a match.

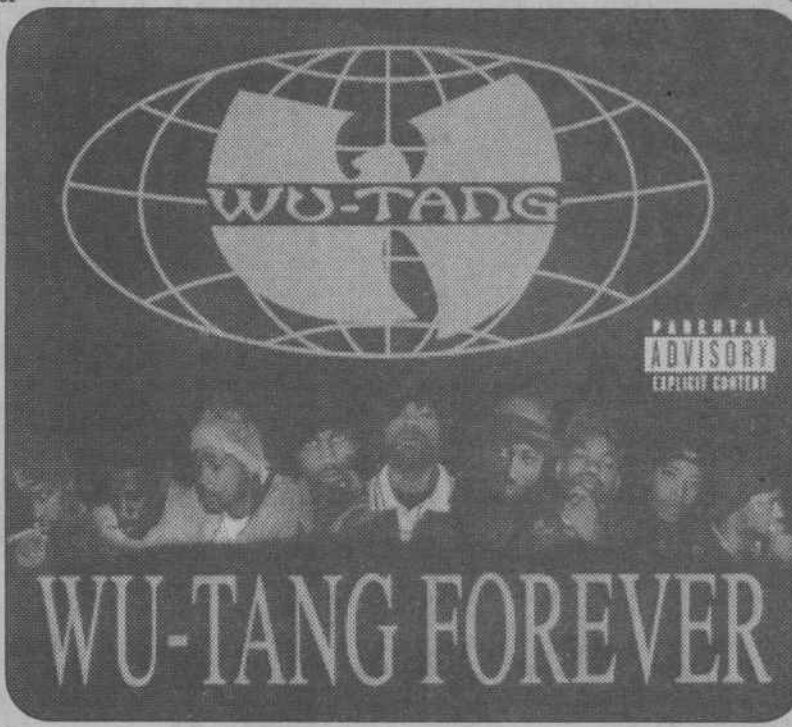
26. The Bandwagon Award: Big Mike. You changed your style and still suck.

27. The HBO Hip-Hop Hooker At The Point Award: Lil Kim.

28. The Damn We Miss Dr. Dre Award: Death Row Records. Snoop sucks, and Suge is in jail.

29. The Best Hip-Hop Movie: "I'm Bout It" by Master P.

30. The Gone But Not Forgotten Award: The Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac Shakur. Hip-hop will never be the same.



Site of the Day



CONCERT CALENDAR

- The Verna Cannon, TBA, Saturday, Dottie's (Atlanta, Ga.)
- Dayroom w/ Antheneum, 11 p.m., Saturday, Rockafellas'
- Stereolab, TBA, Saturday, Cat's Cradle (Carrboro, N.C.)
- Scofflaws, 11 p.m., Sunday, Rockafellas'
- The Rolling Stones, TBA, Tuesday, Georgia Dome (Atlanta, Ga.)
- Atari Teenage Riot, TBA, Dec. 18, Masquerade (Atlanta, Ga.)
- Grand Funk Railroad, 7:30 p.m., Jan. 21, Owens Auditorium (Charlotte, N.C.)
- Aerosmith w/ Talk Show, 7:30 p.m., Jan. 29, Carolina Coliseum

ETC. BRIEFS

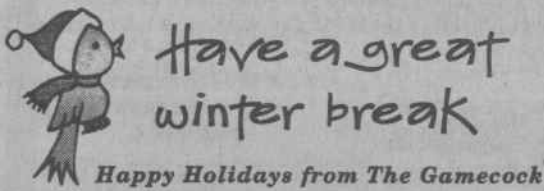
USC String Project to hold free concerts Saturday and Monday

More than 150 Richland and Lexington county students in USC's String Project will take the stage Saturday and Monday to give free holiday concerts.

Saturday's concert will take place at 1:30 p.m. in Richland Fashion Mall's food court. It will feature the Intermediate Orchestra, directed by USC graduate student Megan Creenan, and the Advanced Orchestra, directed by USC graduate student Chris Selby.

Monday's concert will begin at 7 p.m. and will be held in the Koger Center for the Arts. It will feature the winners of the biannual USC String Project Koger Solo Competition.

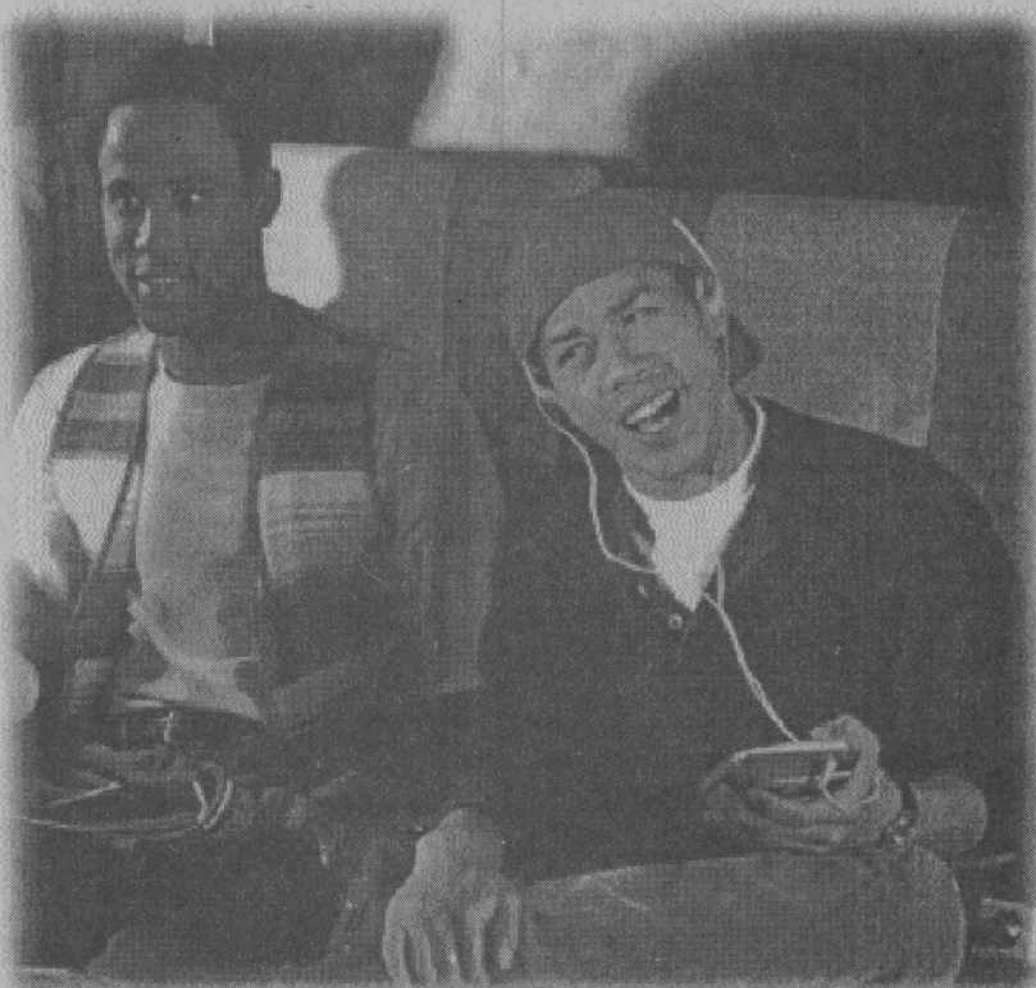
Call Gail Barnes at 803-777-3389 for more information.



STUDENT DISCOUNTS MAY APPLY

If you're a *math whiz*, you'll know it's a *great deal*.
(If you're not, well, you can come along, too.)

Hey, we all know that college students don't have a lot of money to throw around. That's where Amtrak® can help. We can get you home for the holidays to see family and friends with low fares and special student discounts. Student Advantage members save 15% on our already low fares. To see how much you can save call your travel agent or 1-800-USA-RAIL. Trains depart from the Amtrak station at 850 Pulaski St., Columbia, SC.



15% OFF
To Student
Advantage Members



1-800-96-AMTRAK

*Fares shown are one way, apply to coach travel only and are subject to availability. Reservations are required. No multiple discounts. Fares, schedules and restrictions are subject to change without notice.

