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## THE MIX

## THEY SAID IT

JOHN BARTLETT: "I have gathered a posse of other men's flowers, and nothing but the thread that binds them is mine own."

## The Performing

## arts

## Play asks who owns a story



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Left: Characters Robert and Libby come to life in a play. Right: The relationship between Robert and Libby is retold in the memoir.

## 'Bee-Luther-Hatchee' looks at race, license

BY RACHEL BEATTY  
THE GAMECOCK

Walking past Longstreet Theater, you might notice signs for the upcoming play "Bee-Luther-Hatchee" and say,

"Interesting name, but what's it about?"

The play delves into a variety of topics while centering on a straightforward plot. It's the story of Sheila Burns, a black literary editor, and her struggle to decipher the fine line between truth and imagination. Burns has made a career out of publishing the memoirs of ordinary, overlooked black women.

## If you're going

WHEN: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
WHERE: Longstreet Theatre  
COST: \$10, \$8, \$6

For more ticket information, call Longstreet Theatre ticket box at 777-2551.

The play focuses on the memoir of Libby Price, a woman Burns never actually met. The book becomes a best seller and draws attention to Price, and it's soon revealed that she is not the person she claims to be. This causes Burns to doubt all she has worked for throughout her career.

Stemming from this doubt are the issues of ownership, creative license and race.

USC Artistic Director Jim O'Connor said: "Many people think this script is among the best for its treatment of race. I agree. ... The plot deals with the South in earlier days and explores who owns the rights to the Southern African-American experience. It also addresses the concept of allegiance and where it belongs ... with one's job, pro-

fession, race, et cetera. It is fresh and exciting."

The play is the latest work from Thomas Gibbons, now a resident playwright at InterAct Theatre in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Council on the Arts has awarded him three writing fellowships, and the Fund for New American Plays awarded him the Roger L. Stevens Award for his play "Axis Sally." Gibbons' other works include "Black Russian," "Pretending to America," "Homer" and "The Exhibition."

Gibbons' inspiration for "Bee-Luther-Hatchee" came from a 1997 newspaper article about an Australian book. Published as an autobiography of an 80-year-old Aborigine woman, the award-winning book turned out to be a work of fiction by a middle-aged white man.

From this story, the play tackles the concept of experience and who can pass that experience off as her own. Does a person have the right to tell the story of an event, feeling or life that she hasn't experienced herself?

The play raises questions, and the answers are difficult to peg down and usually lead only to

## "Hopefully, the audience will leave fighting."

STEPHEN CONE  
CAST MEMBER

more exploration or very strong opinions.

"Our intention is that the audience won't agree when the play is over," said Stephen Cone, a senior theater student who plays the interviewer, Brian Clark, in the play. "Hopefully, the audience will leave fighting."

Performances of USC's "Bee-Luther-Hatchee" will be at 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$12 for the public; \$10 for USC faculty and staff, senior citizens and military; and \$9 for students. A discount will be offered during opening weekend, when tickets will be \$10, \$8 and \$6. Tickets are available at the Longstreet Theatre box office or by calling 803-777-2551. The box office will open at noon on Feb. 4.

Comments on this story? E-mail [gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com)

## 'Little Red' isn't just kids' stuff

BY PEKKY MARQUEZ  
THE GAMECOCK

How many small children love to sit down and watch an opera? Not many, but USC's opera program is out to change that.

Opera In Schools is a program run by Opera at USC that creates and adapts short operas for children. Those operas are performed in Columbia-area schools to expose children to the genre.

The latest installment in the series is "Little Red Riding Hood." Directed by Diana Diaz, a graduate student in opera stage directing, the opera will star Jennifer Gagnon as Little Red Riding Hood, Kevin Eckerd as the Wolf and Jami Rhodes as Mother and Grandmother.

"It is a way to show children that this is an opera, but it can be fun," Gagnon said.

Diaz said the program's aim is "to educate kids about opera and to open their minds to the enjoyment of it." She warns, however, that "Little Red Riding Hood" isn't like any other opera.

"The fact that kids know the story will make it easy for them to understand," she said. "It's in English and is written entirely in poetic verse. This isn't really much like what you would think of as opera. It's more like a mini Broadway musical. ... The morals of the story are still important for children: Don't talk to strangers. Mother knows best."

Gagnon, a music student working toward certification in vocal performance, is enthusiastic about the play, especially because this is her first time with performing with Opera In Schools.

"This is a children's opera with a lot of rhymes, but the adults who bring the kids won't be bored either," she said. She thinks this is a great experience because it will allow her to interact with children. She expects to "have fun and really enjoy the experience. I love music and performing, and I want to do it for the rest of my life."

Diaz shares that excitement. For her, directing opera is exciting because "you learn as you go what works and what doesn't. You have to be willing to take suggestions from your performers about what they would like to present, too."

This isn't Diaz's first time in this role. Last year, she co-directed Mozart's "Bastien et Bastienne" with fellow student Damien Baer. Directing "Little Red Riding Hood" means a lot to her because it's her first solo directing project.

"I think it will always be close to my heart because of that," she said. "It was a big confidence builder to be given a budget to work within, overcome production obstacles with grace and try to unify unique individuals toward the common goal of performing the opera."

With an enthusiastic crew, talented performers and an entertaining story, "Little Red Riding Hood" promises great things for all ages. Opera In Schools will take the production to Keels Elementary School this afternoon, and there will be a public performance tonight at 7:30 p.m. in the School of Music Recital Hall.

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## MCs battle for studio time, cash in hip-hop contest finals



PHOTO BY REGINA GOODWIN

WUSC's DJ Shekeese spins at Non-Stop Hip-Hop Live Battle of the MCs last Wednesday night. Winners were Slug and Open Mic.

BY WILLIAM MILLS  
THE GAMECOCK

For the past four weeks, hip-hop has been seeping through the doors of New Brookland Tavern every Wednesday night.

Along with featured artists, local MCs have been competing against each other once a week in Non-Stop Hip-Hop Live's Battle of the MCs. These lyrical masters have been battling it out for a chance to compete against each other Saturday night in the final battle.

Finals contestants will be Lyrikal Buddah, Fat Rat, October, Slug and Open Mic. Both Lyrikal and Fat Rat are veterans of the Columbia hip-hop scene, while October is a new artist.

Saturday's battle is going to be "freestyle unplugged." The

artists aren't going to use turntables. Instead, live musicians on bass, guitar and drums will provide the beat. Musicians from Six 10 Split, Confederate Fagg and Cosmic Fame will play riffs varying from Black Sabbath to Led Zeppelin, and the MCs will freestyle over the music.

The night's most creative and talented artist will walk away with a huge gift package. The victor will get cash, four hours of studio time at The Jam Room, 40 CDs with a label design package, a show on WUSC, and more.

This contest's conclusion won't be the end of hip-hop nights in Columbia. New Brookland Tavern will continue to have the best underground MCs every Wednesday with Non-Stop Hip-Hop Live.

The man behind the Battle of the MCs is WUSC's DJ Shekeese. He plays host to Non-Stop Hip-Hop Live's radio counterpart Thursday nights from 10 p.m. until 12 a.m.

"The turnout started weak because of the shift from the Elbow Room to New Brookland, but as long as there are people coming out, I'm happy," Shekeese said.

Shekeese said hip-hop culture in Columbia is "here, but it's underground. These artists just don't get enough exposure."

The Battle of the MCs Finals will start around 10 p.m. Doors will open at 9 p.m. The New Brookland Tavern is located at 122 State St. There is a \$5 cover charge.

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## One on one with Jewel

BY NEKESA MUMBI MOODY  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - It's almost a cliché when a star complains about being a celebrity. But you get a sense that Jewel is genuine when she talks about her disdain for the fame game, even if her attitude is a bit contradictory.

For example, the 27-year-old singer-songwriter said in a recent interview that she doesn't like doing interviews: "I don't think it's healthy to talk about yourself all day. ... You can get a little carried away with yourself."

Jewel, whose full name is Jewel Kilcher, has had to deal with being a celebrity since her 1996 debut, "Pieces of You," which included the hits "You Were Meant for Me" and "Who Will Save Your Soul."

She followed up her multiplatinum effort with 1998's "Spirit." She published "A Night Without Armor: Poems" that year, and made her acting debut in Ang Lee's "Ride With the Devil" in 1999. But she tired of being in the glare of the spotlight. It took three years to release her latest album, "This Way."

"I was dead tired, and I was unhappy," she explained. "I couldn't do my job effectively anymore."

She refreshed herself by spending time in Texas, working with the cattle and doing other chores on Murray's ranch.

"It's just nice to be able to access myself the way I did growing up: just to go out and be alone, get on a horse and look at the sky and just be alone, be able to write," she said.

She's also written the book "Chasing Down the Dawn." Her new CD, which was released last November, has already gone platinum.

## WAS IT HARD TO WAIT THREE YEARS BETWEEN ALBUMS?

I didn't know if I'd come back ... because ... there's this whole seductive rhythm of like, 'Have another hit, be more sensational, be more over the top.' So every time you come out, you look more and more like a cartoon of yourself. It's really hard to hold on to what makes you an authentic artist. And it takes stepping back from it.

## WHAT MADE YOU SO TIRED AND FRUSTRATED?

I just toured from age 18 to age 25 without ever having had a holiday, practically. Just constant work. And I'm a songwriter, and never ever once having had time to get away, being outdoors, where I write best—that's like never feeding yourself for six years. I think that was a big part of it. I found it artistically draining, and if my art isn't happy, I'm not really happy, my spirit isn't really happy. I think the other part of it was just, you know, playing catch-up to how much my life had changed. Just dealing with this completely new life circumstance.

## ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE ALBUM'S COMMERCIAL SUCCESS?

I think when you do something out of your own love for it, it strengthens your position. The only way I know how to go about things is from the inside out. I can't look at a song and go, "That's what's a hit." ... I just do the song first and worry about radio later.

## DO YOU THINK PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR MORE SERIOUS MUSIC IN THE WAKE OF THE SEPT. 11 TERRORIST ATTACKS?

I don't think people want to be brought down. I think people will be looking for substance. I think it's definitely kind of shocked culture — you can only afford decadence when there's affluence. ... When a crisis like this happens, it reminds you that you can't afford to be just frivolous your entire life; there's stuff you have to take care of, there are issues that we all have to take care of and address at some point. And I think that's been a positive thing.

## YOU'VE GOT A BIG RING ON YOUR FINGER. DO YOU HAVE SOME MARRIAGE PLANS?

No — wrong finger! ... I'd like a family probably one day, but ... I don't feel like an adult quite yet.