

Director Dusts off cultural film

Movie depicts the struggle of the African-American experience

By Stacie Hakel
Staff Reporter

The beat of a drum and the sound of field cries echo as dust sifts through the hands of an African-American.

After winning the 1989 Jury Prize for the Best Film of the Decade with "Illusions," Julie Dash is at it again with "Daughters of the Dust."

Dash brings out the problems that the Gullah people face on the eve of their migration to the north.

The film shows the conflict that the women of the Gullah family must endure as they hold on to the traditions and beliefs that they are accustomed to, although they seek new culture and education from the mainland.

The film focuses on the Pezant family with Nana Pezant (Cora Lee

Day) as the matriarch. Being an elderly woman, Nana tries to convince the family to stay with her and stick to their traditional way of living.

The pregnant Eula Pezant (Alva Rogers), granddaughter to Nana, carries the "Unborn Child" (Kai-Lynn Warren) in her womb. Eula sticks close to tradition while the rest of the family drifts off in the excitement of the migration.

The members of the family experience visions of the Unborn Child when Yellow Mary Pezant (Barbara-O) and Viola Pezant (Cheryl Lynn Bruce) return home from the mainland, bringing with them new traditions and ideas.

Unborn Child symbolizes the duality that African-Americans experience in the United States, as it has one foot in this world and one foot in

another.

Set in 1902, in the sea islands of the south, Dash has captured the beauty of the beach with its dark, sensual colors. The ritualistic beat of the tribal chants helps to set the mood for this film.

Dash, having her own Gullah heritage from her father's side, gave her the incentive to write "Daughters of the Dust."

"I'd never thought about it that much until I went to college," said Dash.

"Then I started learning about the Sea Islands, and the West African culture that's still prevalent there, and I realized things like why my father had a particular accent... the stories from my childhood began to make

See DUST on 10



James Mehling/DN

Pro wrestling is family fun

I was seated in an uncomfortable folding metal chair, had my \$2 Dixie cup of Cherry Coke in my hand, a \$3 saucer of nachos covered with a teaspoon of cheese on my lap and was surrounded by a couple thousand people screaming at the top of their lungs for no apparent reason.

I knew it was a night for professional wrestling at the Omaha Civic Auditorium.

Gerry Beltz

the quantity of alcohol or nicotine the person consumed.

Of course, there were exceptions to this. Several parents had brought their youngsters here because this was quality family entertainment.

Serving alcoholic beverages at a place with "quality family entertainment." Hmmmm....

The lights dimmed. My colleague Todd, a storehouse of professional wrestling information, returned from playing video games. The crowd started screaming even louder.

"Here we go," I thought.

Most males in the arena were impressed with the way it started. A leggy, salon-baked blonde woman was the announcer for the evening. She stepped into the ring amid a cornucopia of whistles and catcalls. For those that weren't too close to the ring, she probably looked very attractive.

How does one audition or apply for a job like that? I can just picture it in my mind:

Applicant: "The alphabet? All of it?"

Interviewer: "She's hired."

She announced some rules for the evening. No smoking in the arena, no pictures may be taken for reproduction that would result in a profit and we couldn't throw anything in or towards the ring. There were probably some other rules that she stated, but I was laughing too hard to hear them.

We listened to the national anthem, looked at a beat-up (yet awe-inspiring) American flag and the lights dimmed down some more.

"Okay," I thought, "now it's REALLY going to start."

This time I was right.

There were a total of seven matches that evening, but it would be asinine to describe them all (there were a lot of similarities in the matches). Instead, I'll try to hit on some of the highlights and interesting points of the evening.

Possibly the most heartbreaking

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