

Entertainment

The Batte Center brings South Africa to Wingate

By LEAH HARRISON

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After a successful programming experiment last season, a new series punctuates Wingate University's Batte Center 2013-14 season.

Nine departments will collaborate to present The Connected Campus: CREATED EQUAL, a series of performances, exhibits, films and symposiums marking the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, Equal Pay Act and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech.

The Connected Campus series grew out of a month-long festival last year titled Exploring the Himalayas: A view from the top of the world, which itself grew out of a spreading campus interest in one department's event.

When Director of Cultural Events Laura Kratt heard that student ministries were having Tibetan monks on campus, she began organizing events that celebrated or illuminated Himalayan culture, including a community mandala sand painting and Tibetan sacred music and dance.

"When we started this," Kratt said, "I hoped to get two or three other departments involved. By the time we were done, everyone was so excited about it, we had eight different departments participating. It was fabulous."

Thus far, the same number have signed up to assist The Batte Center with CREATED EQUAL: history and political science; student life; international studies; English; music; gym; friends of the library; athletics; and The

Batte Center.

For instance, the athletics department is a partner in presenting "Jackie Robinson: A Game Apart." In conjunction with the play, athletics will host a symposium exploring race in sports.

Other CREATED EQUAL events include the Grammy Award-winning Sweet Honey in the Rock, a vocal group whose music is grounded in peace and social justice. Founder Bernice Johnson Reagon was a member of The Freedom Singers in the 1960s. An exhibit focusing on the journey from apartheid to multi-racial democracy in South Africa will be mounted in February, borrowed from The Levine Museum of the New South and the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg. In March, a combined choral concert will feature The Wingate Choir, Firebird Alliance and 10 area choirs with a guest conductor from South Africa, and songwriter, dancer and anthropologist Johnny Clegg will bring his band to perform cross-cultural music. Kratt also expects other events to materialize.

In addition to this specialized series, The Batte Center's season opens with bluegrass band The Gibson Brothers in September and includes writer David Sedaris in October, Povich Comedy Pet Theater in January and comedian Paula Poundstone in April. For a full list of events: battecenter.org.

This article is part of the Charlotte Arts Journalism Alliance, a consortium of local media dedicated to writing about the arts.