

Musical relates black history

ROCHESTER — It was standing room only at St. Bridget's Church on Saturday night, Feb. 24, as a 65-member cast and crew presented "Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow — A Celebration in Three Movements."

Designed as an entertaining way to focus on Black History Month, the musical production consisted of scenes from such plays as "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," "The Color Purple," "Your Arms ... Too Short To Box with God" and "The Wiz."

"In order to know where we as a people

are going, we need to know where we have come from," Donaven Rossette said of presenting these plays during Black History Month. Rossette is minister of music at St. Bridget's and producer/director of the play.

In addition to the theatrical selections, St. Bridget's Concert Choir regaled the toe-tapping, hand-clapping audience with such gospel favorites as "This Little Light of Mine," "Jesus Paid It All," and "His Eyes is on The Sparrow."

The next morning, Rossette and company took their show on the road to St.

Mary's Church in Auburn. The two performances culminated two full months of work, including rehearsals five nights a week throughout.

Rossette sees the show as an opportunity to open doors for parishioners, many of whom have never performed on stage. "This experience gives them a sense of pride and accomplishment in their talents," he said.

Donaven added that plans for a spring concert are already in the works, "for music is the food of love; let there always be music."

— Babette G. Augustin



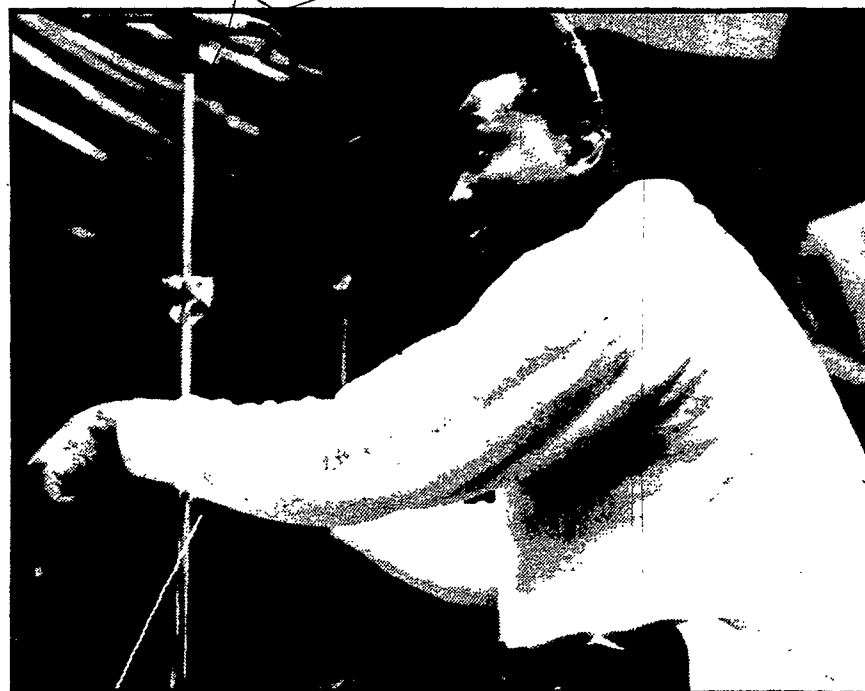
Marilyn Bellamy sings praises to the Lord as an usher in a scene from "Your Arms ... Too Short to Box with God."



Gary Miller (right) as Miss Jane Pittman's son, Jimmie, is killed for his activism.



In "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," the preacher Jimmie (Gary Miller) becomes a leader of his people and eventually sacrifices his life for their needs.



Producer-director Donaven Rossette cues actors during "Yesterday — Today — Tomorrow," a presentation of scenes from various plays about black history.



Anita Danzy as young Ticey waves goodbye to Confederate soldiers in a scene from "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman."

Courier photos by Babette G. Augustin