

# Roaring return

## Fantasia fans pack stadium

By David Nivens  
STAFF WRITER

Fantasia finally got her High Point parade Saturday and her fans got a free stadium concert.

As many as 5,000 people

### High Point

came to  
A.J.  
Simeon

Stadium for the event to promote AIDS awareness. But once the High Point native arrived, there was no keeping Fantasia from her fans.

Fantasia, who has dropped her family Barrino name, arrived in a white stretch limousine that took a parade lap around the stadium so fans could see their "American Idol." Standing so fans could see her through a roof port, she pointed to people she remembered from her High Point childhood.

"These are all my people," Fantasia said as she left the stage about an hour later. "These are my classmates and my church people."

The energetic performer soon left the stage after starting her performance and gave sideline concerts to fans in the

bleachers.

Fantasia, 20, crossed the field several times as she sang songs she made famous on her "American Idol" appearances. Obviously moved by the outpouring of love and support, she added "North Carolina, I thank you," and "I love you" to the lyrics.

She then invited her fans down to the field. Hundreds of mostly young people streamed down to the stage to be close to Fantasia for the remainder of the concert.

Event organizer and Guilford County Commissioner Bruce Davis touted the event as Fantasia's homecoming to the city. Fantasia was given a large bouquet of flowers before she started her performance.

"The Barrino family is a legend in our time," Davis told the crowd.

Davis and his Friends of Fantasia organized American Idol watch parties that attracted 10,000 people.

"I want to thank you for coming to those parties," Davis said. "You are the friends of Fantasia."

Businessman Bill Millis donated \$10,000 to fund the Saturday event Davis organized.

Davis has been eager to give



Fantasia a parade for months.

In June, City Council erected signs at entrances to the city alerting visitors that High Point is the hometown of "American Idol 3" winner Fantasia.

Since Fantasia won the title in May, she has traveled the country on concert tours.

"Most recently she has been in Florida," said Perry Barrino, Fantasia's uncle. "She is all over the country. One day she is here, and the next she is talking to Jay Leno."

The Barrino Brothers, a group that has been singing for decades, performed for the crowd before Fantasia arrived. Other entertainment included rock 'n' roll,

Latin music bands and the Andrews High School

(See IDOL on 2A)



Staff photos by David Holston

**Fantasia wowed a huge crowd Saturday at Simeon Stadium during a charity benefit performance**

# **IDOL:**

## **Fantasia helps local endeavor**

**(FROM 1A)**

Marching Band.

The band escorted Fantasia's limo to the stadium field and saluted her just after she took the stage.

The world is getting much bigger for Fantasia, Barrino said.

"I don't know yet if she knows what all this entails," Barrino said.

Fantasia's "Idol" victory has spawned other opportunities, including a role on an upcoming episode of NBC's "American Dreams" as Aretha Franklin — the legend to whom she was compared by "Idol" judges.

Fantasia's single "I Believe" debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 in June.

Her "Free Yourself" album is set for release on Nov. 23.

David Nivens can be contacted at 888-3626 or [dnivens@hpe.com](mailto:dnivens@hpe.com)