

ROUTES

May 1980/\$1.25



TWO TONS O' FUN: BUSTIN' LOOSE

- DAVE PARKER:
MILLION \$ HITTER
- THE WHISPERS:
QUIET STORM

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ROUTES MAGAZINE, A Guide to Black Entertainment...
Cover by Phil Bray

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FREE FOR ALL

EXHIBITIONS

•Thru Jun 1—Not So Bad To Be In Mississippi. Photo exhibit of the country's most ambitious and successful black community development efforts. The Ford Foundation, 320 E. 43rd St. Mon-Fri, noon-5:30 pm. 573-4815

MUSIC CONCERTS

May 3, 2:30 pm—New York Singing Teachers Association. Donnell Library Center, 20 West 53rd St.
May 5, 6 pm—Dennis Kleinman, guitar & Erin Lanston, soprano. Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St.
May 6, 6 pm—Riverside Chamber Players. Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St.
May 7 & 14, 12:30 pm—Jazzmen. Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St.
May 10, 2:30 pm—Musical Revue with Glory Van Scott. New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, 111 Amsterdam Av.
May 10, 2:30 pm—Classical Guitar with Paula Talayco & Ann Rothschild. Allerton Regional Branch, 2740 Barnes Av, Bronx.

WORKSHOPS

Lunchtime Mini Workshops:

- May 6—Work Problems: Understanding and Dealing with the Special Pressures Minority Women Face at Work. Ann Key, Director of Counseling, Consumer Credit Counseling Service.
 - May 13—Blue Collar Jobs for Women. Gloria Burns, Women in Apprenticeship.
 - May 20—Standards for Evaluating Educational Programs in New York City. Panel Discussion.
 - May 27—The Job Interview. Joyce Wilson, Home Life Insurance.
- Two sessions will be held on each of the above dates: 12:10-12:50 pm and 1:10-1:50 pm.

Friday Workshops: Focus on Resume Writing, Effective Interviewing and Job Search Techni-

ques. Sandra Beck, instructor. 10:30 am-1:30 pm.

Career Planning Workshops:

- May 7, 21, 28—Taking Control of Your Career and Personal Life: Bringing the Two Worlds Together. Conducted by Cynthia Cuyjet, Manager, Planning and Development, Avon Products, Inc. Keys to planning your life and work. Three-session workshop to help you clarify personal values, work through moral dilemmas, recognize alternatives and choose among them, develop the ability to act once the choice is made. No registration needed. Sessions held between 5:30-7:30 pm.
- May 14, 5:30-8 pm—Conversations at the Women's Center: An Experiment in Networking. The Women's Center Advisory Council is a group of accomplished businesswomen and educators who welcome the chance to help others in the often lonely climb up the career ladder. This is a chance to meet and talk over career and education problems with Council members from such corporations and institutions as Bankers Trust, IBM, the telephone companies, ITT, CBS, as well as colleges and voluntary agencies. Registration necessary. Women's Center for Education & Career Advancement, a Program of the National Council of Negro Women, Suite 201, 198 Broadway. 964-8934.

HOMEWORK AIDE

Confounded by grammar? Distressed by division? Defeated by current events? Call the "Homework Hotline." A librarian or teacher will be on the other end to help you. Mon-Thu 5-8 pm. For Junior High and High School students. (212)780-7766, (914)682-9759

INDOOR SWIMMING

The City Department of Parks and Recreation maintains several indoor swimming pools, none of which charges an admission fee:

- East 54th St. Recreation Center, 542-8 E. 54th St. 397-3148.
- West 59th St. Recreation Center, Between 10th & 11th Aves. 397-3170.

- Carmine St. Recreation Center, Clarkson St/Seventh Av So. 397-3147.
- 35 W. 134th St. 397-3193.
- St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Av/145th St, Bronx. 822-4682.
- Brownsville Recreation Center, Linden Blvd/Stone Av, Brooklyn. 965-6583.
- St. John Recreation Center, 1251 Prospect Place, Brooklyn. 965-6574.

LECTURES

Record Industry Program Series (7 pm):

- May 6—The Advantages of Working with an Established Publisher. David Nelson Askew, Pres., Get Rich-Stay Rich Publishing. Wayne Garfield, Pres., Arapesh Communications.
- May 13—How You the Artist Can Build Good Relations with a Record Label. Vincent Davis, Ad. Asst., Arista Records.
- May 20—The Role of A & R in Finding New Talent. Marcia King, Win Records.
- May 27—Building An Image: Press and Publicity. Daniel Wynn, Publicity Trainee, Arista Records. Richard Reddick, Publicity Trainee, Record World. 225 E. 118th St, Man. 831-8035.

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PARADES

- May 17, 1:15 pm—Military Order of W.W.s. 5th Av & 26th St to 54th St.
- May 18, 1 pm—Martin Luther King, Jr. 5 Av & 44th St to 86th St.

Highlights



Rod Rodgers Dance Company



Ray, Goodman & Brown



Nancy Wilson



Shirley Bassey



Dionne Warwick



Randy Crawford

The Crusaders and Randy Crawford will perform May 7 at Carnegie Hall.

Shirley Bassey will perform May 8-11 at The Dick Clark Westchester Theatre.

Billy Eckstine will perform thru May 11 at the Grand Finale.

Rod Rodgers Dance Company will perform May 8, 10 & 11 at the Theatre of the Riverside Church.

Earl Klugh will perform May 10 at Avery Fisher Hall.

Dionne Warwick will perform May 13-18 at Westbury Music Fair.

The Spinners and Phyllis Hyman will perform May 9-11 at Westbury Music Fair.

Nancy Wilson and Ray, Goodman and Brown will perform on May 24 at Avery Fisher Hall.

Gil Scott-Heron will perform May 31 at Avery Fisher Hall.

The Studio Museum in Harlem will host a film festival thru May 22.

Tom Jones will perform May 23 thru Jun 1 at Westbury Music Fair.

Routes Response

It was nice to see that you had a full page of letters to the editor in your recent issue. I thought for awhile, that *Routes* didn't want letters from readers because I didn't see any. I thought it was funny, because there is so much in the magazine that I want to comment about. This time, I want to limit myself to one thing that I saw that bothered me. Patrice Campbell wrote this thing about Nichelle Nichols being better than "your average, snobby-nosed Julia." Miss Campbell should get her act and her language together. I don't think that a professional black woman, as Julia was, should be called average. And to call Dianne Carroll's portrayal snobby-nosed is nothing short of snobby-nosed. I hope you will print this, because in all fairness, comments like Miss Campbell's deserve a response.

Warren Green
Brooklyn, NY

Thanks to *Routes* and Walter Raines for a perceptive and wonderful review of the Dance Theatre of Harlem! Of all the reviews I read, I think yours was one of the most interesting, and managed to capture a bit of the spirit that the company left with me and my friends the night we went to City Center. I hope your dance column will be a regular thing. The only thing I would add, is that maybe in the future, your dance column could give us a little bit more critique and single out the really good groups for special attention. Also, there are so many small groups that some of us never hear about that should be covered in the pages of *Routes*.

G.C. Burch
Yonkers, NY

I stumbled across your magazine in a doctor's office recently. I didn't know that such a publication even existed in New York. I'm from the South, and our choice of entertainment publications is limited. I think you should try to penetrate the southern states because there is a sort of cultural wasteland as far as magazines go. And you offer such an informative look at what's happening not only in New York, but how it affects the rest of the country. Since you see the newest cultural happenings first, it would be good for us to get a piece of that action. By the time the groups and

artists get to our area, we can be informed.

Frances Busby
Savannah, GA

I have been a *Routes* subscriber for almost two years and I intend to remain a loyal supporter for a long time. I am very pleased to see all the new things happening, which I am sure will make *Routes* the biggest and baddest publication in New York. The quality of your writers and their vast experience are making *Routes* authoritative. What I can't understand, is how the article on spring fashion got in like that. I read the article several times and still couldn't figure out what to wear once the weather got warm. I finally consulted Gimbels. The pictures that went with the story were also sparse, but not as dull and confusing as the story itself.

Phyllis Dunn
Philadelphia, PA

It is rare indeed that one encounters those who practice what they preach. Too often, and particularly among those of us who struggle to alter the world, there are a

good deal of noble aspirations, and a plethora of good intentions - but, alas, little follow-through. So it is with my deepest appreciation that I thank you and your staff for saying what you will do, and doing what you say you will.

The article on P.A.C.E. in your March 1980 issue is truly the outgrowth of a contact of spiritual brothers. In that first contact (November, 1977, you may recall), I had been responding to the editorial in your initial publication. You had spoken of the responsibility if not the obligation of those who struggle to assist (to the best of their ability) others they might encounter who also push against those forces seeking to destroy humanity. As a newly developed organization striving to pull from the mire of criminality those who identify themselves as moving toward a positive change in their lives, we reached out to you for a helping hand. Circumstances delayed your response to that call, but I would like to let the world know that you and your staff are truly among the few who practice what you preach, and we here at P.A.C.E. salute you!

Karamoko Baye
Executive Director
P.A.C.E.

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DISCO

THE WHISPERS: QUIET STORM



The Whispers have labored in virtual musical anonymity for over a dozen years, crooning soft ballads and conveying messages. Their success?

Perhaps a couple of degrees above mediocrity. Oddly, though, the group had to betray the name, invent a thumping bouncer, "And The Beat Goes On,"

and coax America to the dance floor to see their names in lights. Their latest album, "The Whispers," sold more than 300,000 copies in less than a month



(L-R) Leaveil Degree, Marcus Hutson, Edna Collison, Bill Meehan, Arnie Orleans, Nicholas Caldwell, Bud Dain, Eddie DeJoy, Chuck Thagard

after its December 1979 release.

Their sudden success proved to be nothing short of a miraculous recovery for the group, who could list as their major gig for 1979, a five week tour as the opening act for Evelyn "Champagne" King, a newcomer who hasn't made waves for quite some time.

"Without a doubt," explains Walter Scott, half of the twin duo in the group, "this album is the high point for the Whispers. It gives us a sense of the worth of that adage 'hanging in there.'" Scott's enthusiasm is understandable. It took the labor and love of twelve previous albums to bring the group to the point of being an "overnight success."

With an album destined to go platinum under their belts, the Whispers have now embarked on a nation-wide tour that will carry them to over 70 cities where they hope to reach an estimated 500,000 fans. "When this tour is over, America will really know the Whispers," beams mentor Dick Griffey, president of Solar Records, who, along with Leon Sylvers, produced the Whispers.

Wallace "Scotty" Scott, who balances the Libran scale of his twin brother interjects, "When you've paid the dues we've paid, you're sort of preparing for the possibility of good things happening. So we're ready to roll with the success punches the way we've rolled with adversity." The other group members, Nicholas Caldwell, Marcus Hutson and Leaveil Degree, all concur. Nicholas adds, "It's great having a hit, because it will enable us to do our thing in front of that many more people. We've always striven for wider recognition. Now it looks like we've got it."

Not all the recognition has been positive. The group, which espouses clean living and doesn't use alcohol or drugs, was probably more than embarrassed when last March group member Leaveil Degree was arrested on a stolen goods rap, which is still in litigation in a Los Angeles court. Degree pleaded "not guilty" and posted a \$35,000 bond, which enabled him to rejoin the group on tour. He has the support of his fellow Whispers and as

Nicholas says, "We can't walk out or turn our backs on people if they make a mistake. Loyalty is important."

Even though the disco single helped to open new doors for the group, it cannot be given all the credit for the album's current success. With the ballads on the LP, they have once again demonstrated their ability to put a special signature on any song style.

"For us to really be the best we have to prove that we can get into all contemporary music," explains Marcus. Scotty adds, "We do a little bit of everything—jazz, pop and funk. We don't have any one particular style." Keenly aware of the dancing and get-up-and-clap mood their hit single has created, the Whispers have changed their show to include the rousing numbers that the audiences, who know them only from their latest hit, will want to hear. But it can hardly be said that the group has abandoned its original intentions.

The ballad, in fact, was the group's bread and butter over the years. That they should score with a disco-oriented hit is a strange twist indeed. Walter explains that the Whispers were basically a message-oriented group that was "interested in the ballad that told a story."

One ballad that adequately fits their image is *A Song for Donny*, a ballad dedicated to the memory of the late Donny Hathaway, considered to have been one of contemporary music's great creators. The Whispers, along with Griffey, have started the Donny Hathaway Scholarship Fund. The idea was born last October as the Whispers were preparing a Christmas album. Scotty, who shares lead with his brother, was rehearsing a mellowed version of Donny's tune "The Christmas Song," when the group decided they had to do something befitting Hathaway's musical memory. The melody was given new lyrics by singer/writer Carrie Lucas. The Whispers donated \$25,000 to Hathaway's wife and children and announced that the proceeds from the sale of the single version would go to a scholarship fund for underprivileged children.

Hathaway, who died last year, had

worked with the Whispers and they shared mutual admiration.

Only a choice few music experts are aware that the Whispers have long since paid their dues. They toiled in musical limbo for many years. They appeared to fit that category of groups that either had a limited audience or a more regional following. But they did manage to warm the stage for many of the most prominent black singers. Those many years in the wings gave the Whispers a polish and finesse that is now helping them cope with being at the top.


The Whispers complement their vocal chemistry with smooth and oftentimes cleverly coordinated choreography by Nicholas, who also sings second tenor. Nicholas boasts that all the guys in the group "can really dance well."

The Whispers' flair for dance can be traced back to the twins, who started tap dancing when they were four years old.

The "dynamic duo," Walter and Scott, grew up in Los Angeles and found themselves looking up to such groups of the day as the Four Freshmen and the Hi-Low's. They learned a lot about entertaining from an uncle who taught them the highs and lows of harmony, one of the trademarks of the Whispers' sound. When the two got their act together, they brought in Marcus, Nicholas and Gordie Harmon to form the Whispers. Seven years ago, Harmon was replaced by Degree. "At first," notes Marcus, "we were really just singing as a hobby. But after we got out of school, we decided to quit our jobs and really go all the way." Easier said than done, of course. They encountered all the problems that aspiring acts face: unscrupulous promoters, no gigs, or engagements at low pay and a path of broken promises.

However, the group feels that things took a turn for the better when they joined forces with Griffey. But it still took seven years for success to knock at their door.

At least now, they think they are ready. "There's no relaxation when you have a hit record," says Walter. "We know what it takes to make it. We are mentally prepared, but it's physically trying at times." At least the group isn't complacent—not by a long shot. They already have their own production company and want more than anything for their fans to realize how grateful they are for the years of support.

"It's nice to have a hit, but I doubt that we'll start wearing bigger hats because of it," says Walter. True or not, for the moment, I'm taking my hat off to the Whispers. They deserve it. 

—Michael George

DISCO

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574-5615

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486-1566

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674-9177

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Sun 9 pm
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Melon's
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777-8106

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MUSIC

TWO TONS O' FUN: BUSTIN' LOOSE



Martha Wash, Sylvester and Izora Rhodes-Armstead

If "thin is in," then "fat's where it's at." This popular cliché has found a permanent home in Izora Rhodes-Armstead and Martha Wash—better known as the "Two Tons O' Fun."

The "Tons" have been around for quite some time, but they first became visible a few years back as the backup singers for Sylvester, whose overtly gay presence raised eyebrows throughout the 50 states.

Certainly Sylvester's act was *unusual*. But what happens when you put two *large* women with such an act? Nothing short of mayhem. The young, stocky kid who used to run around San Francisco's Castro Street with a tambourine, begging to sing for anybody who would listen, coupled with two rousing gospelists, gave character and personality to the rather one-dimensional medium called disco. But the public had seen but the tip of an emotional and rousing iceberg that could sink any old Titanic

that happened to steam along. There was a lot more personality, feeling and motion waiting for the moment to break loose. It broke loose, finally, this year when a little tune called *You Are My Friend* began to blast from portable radios throughout the streets of America. For the record, the song was attributed to Sylvester, but the people who were making it happen, as was obvious to the most rudimentary musical ear, were Martha and Izora. It was Izora, who virtually stopped the music to growl to the high heavens that she'd "been around." And it was Martha whose lyric soprano beckoned you to her side, with the angelic flirt that she knew you had been there all the time.

The Two Tons had arrived. No. They had been there all the time. *We* had arrived.

The Tons took New York by storm last month when they appeared with Sylvester in front of SRO audiences at

the Felt Forum. They scored not only with the Sylvester hit, but began to make waves of their own with two singles from their debut album—*Just Us*, and *I Got The Feeling*.

The night before their premier, Martha, Izora and I were sitting in a hotel room talking about the loves, likes and frustrations of being Two Tons O' Fun. Much to my amazement, it blossomed into quite a *heavy* rap session.

It turns out that Martha and Izora, who both weigh in at over 200 pounds, used to be slim, trim, little ladies. "Before I got married," announces Izora, "I could not get over 100 pounds. I couldn't give a damn what I ate. You should see some of my old pictures." But somewhere between her first and seventh child, she put on all those extra pounds. "I have been up to 370 pounds and I have come down to 225 pounds and then shot back up," she continues. "When I'm on the road, I can control

my weight. But when I'm at home, I'm with a husband who's no help." Izora Rhodes recently married Frank Armstead and changed her name. "When I'm home," she admits, "he's constantly cooking and I'm constantly eating. And I can't refuse the food. It's just so good!"

Izora, however, is quite happy with her size. "I play football, basketball, baseball, everything with my six boys. I move and everything and I feel good about myself. Part of Izora's professional philosophy is the desire to project a positive image for all large women to follow. "But I'm tired of sewing two colored sheets together to make an outfit. If they'd only make two sheets that would look cute!"

Martha says she jumped "from 117 to over 200 pounds and never knew why." She feels she can't afford to remain a "Ton" for too much longer. "I have to lose weight. First of all, I'm too tall for short and too short for tall. I have tiny feet. I have problems with my leg. The doctors have told me to lose weight. I need to lose 75 pounds or so."

Her weight problem has added a rather peculiar twist to their stage act. "I take off my shoes in the show. I can only wear high heels for so long. Then the circulation gets bad in my legs. So I just take off my shoes. That's become my trademark. Sylvester sometimes begs, 'please don't take off your shoes,' but I tell him, 'honey, when my feet start hurting, I'm gonna take those girls off!'"



Martha Wash

Izora cracks up at the remark and says, "Child, I have seen people get up and say, 'all right, honey. Take off your shoes. They gonna get down now!'"

I can't help but ask a rather dumb question amidst all the hysteria that has broken out in the room. Do people take the Two Tons as a joke or are you for real?

"You mean like the fat lady in the circus?" Izora asks me, still giggling. "No. Because once we start singing and carrying on, the people know we are serious. We aren't jiving. It's two big women singing." But why then the big thing about being big? "I love the pun on the weight," Izora continues, "because it grabs people's attention. If we were out there just as Izora and Martha, we'd be out there like Sylvester or any other singer with just a name. With the Tonnage as a title of the act, the people will say, 'let's go down and check this out. Are they really big? Are they really huge? What in hell can those two big women do?'"

It was Sylvester who coined the phrase, "These Women Can Sing."

Martha, the soaring soprano of the bouncy duo, once studied opera, which enables her to glide past three octaves with ease. "I studied arias with a private teacher for almost a year," she informs me. Martha says she took music in high school but flunked harmony and "changed over to business. I kept going to choir classes. I had piano lessons as a child, but I would always play by ear. I took lessons with two different teachers and they both told me to quit wasting my money."

Izora, on the other hand, had scholarships to various music schools in the Bay Area, majoring in piano, a craft which she still shows off onstage. Unlike Izora's husky pipes, Martha's voice is very delicate. "When my teacher heard that I sing gospel, she didn't want me to do it because it's a hard, driving type of music. Hard and heavy. In opera, you sing from the diaphragm." However, as a Walkure of pop music, Martha has to belt from the throat. "I'm trying to sing strong over my strained vocal chords. So that's not good for my voice. I can sing anything from a hard song to a very light soprano tune. It wreaks havoc on my throat sometimes, but I've done it." Martha even *growls* sometimes. But the real growler is Izora, whose bravura voice will knock visitors in the last row out of their seats. When she lets loose, crowds go berserk—"as in church," Izora blurts out.

"Growling never hurts me. I guess because I do it so naturally. You can always growl when you can't do

anything else. Even when you are hoarse. I think it's a natural way of expressing the way you feel." Izora says she doesn't growl all the time. Only on special occasions. "When I get intensely into a song, and there's a certain feeling. Like when I'm trying to get a point across."

There are, in fact, times when Izora is not in the mood to growl. The Tons and Sylvester are under immense pressures of all kinds, including the most uncomfortable of hearing rumors that Sylvester is treating the Tons like Diana Ross allegedly treated her Supremes.

"To me," Izora says straightforwardly, "that's just a type of envy. We are a unit. There could be truth in it and then there couldn't. But I don't look at it that way. I'm looking at what's making me happy. If I enjoy singing in a unit with Sylvester, then it's because I want to. I'm the one who has to be happy when I go out on that stage. What's the use of singing how happy I am when I'm about ready to explode. If I keep constant turmoil around me, I can't relate that on stage. People are paying their hard-earned money to see a good show and not to look at my turmoils."

I can't help but get the feeling that Izora is answering my question with a question. Martha sits on the bed and says nothing at all.

The Tons were thrust into the limelight by Harvey Fuqua, the musical dynamo who produced Sylvester after having groomed the countless Motown acts that had risen to fame since 1960. Harvey, along with Marvin Gaye, was originally a member of the Moonglows.

Fuqua realized the great potential of Izora and Martha and signed them to exclusive contracts with Fantasy Records, the Berkeley-based record company that markets a truckload of jazz artists and tried unsuccessfully to resurrect Martha Reeves of Vandellas fame.

Both Martha Wash and Izora Rhodes-Armstead sing hymns of praise for Fuqua. "I like his personality," Izora declares. "I like the way he treats people. We are not machines and he treats us like human beings." True to his reputation in the music business, Fuqua has carefully honed his latest discovery, working endlessly to perfect voice and technique. "But he does it in a way that you don't resent it or hate him."

Yes, Martha, admits, Fuqua pushes them. "He'll make me do a song over and over again, until he feels he has two or three different composites. And out of those three he'll pick the best one. And each time, I'll do it a little bit better."

Izora kids a lot about him. "I'm lazy

and he knows it. He knows that there are certain ranges that I can sing. But I'll say, 'I can't sing them. I can't sing high. I want to *sing low*. I don't feel like exerting that little inch of strength and energy to get that one note.' But Harvey manages to coax it out of her anyway, witness her spine-tingling vocals on *I Got The Feeling*. Since the Tons come out of a solid gospel tradition, I can't help but pop the obvious question. What do your God-fearing, fundamentalist brethren think of you singing with a gay person?

The answer, at first, is quite surprising.

"We don't get that much flak because we are associated with him. We get hassled because we are singing secular music," Izora explains. "You sing in church all your life, serve God, and then all of a sudden, here you are praising the devil."

Martha adds, "My mother has always been on my case because she wishes that I'd continue singing gospel. And I have told her on many occasions that I have not stopped. I am just doing other tunes now."

But the ladies are sometimes confronted with the gay question. "The three of us were on television once," Izora recalls. "And this person said, 'I looked and there were three ladies up there. And I asked which one was Sylvester. He's pretty.' It tickled us."

"He's happy, not us," Izora lays it on the line. "That's his life. I cannot live his life. If he's happy about his life, then I'm ecstatic about it."

Martha, however gets a bit more philosophical. "People should be happy for us. I like what I'm doing. They (those who criticize her singing with Sylvester) are not taking care of me. They are not going to stand in judgement of what I have done. The Lord said, 'go into the vineyard and work.' And whatever you reap, the Lord will pay you. Not you. Not *Izora*. Not *anybody* else down here. So, what I'm waiting for is to get paid."

Getting heavier into the topic, Izora volunteers, "I came up around gay people. They called them *happy*. I don't like using the word gay, homosexual or lesbian. I came up around people, period. So Sylvester's lifestyle doesn't even bother me."

Says Martha: "There are a lot of different lifestyles that I am not fond of, but that's none of my business. You can be what you want, and I don't have to be involved. The business doesn't care anyway," she insists. "You can swing from a chandelier and sing if it'll make money."

Both ladies agree, however, that their tours across the country have helped to undo some of the harm done by the bigotry of the Anita Bryants.

Sylvester's personal manager enters the room and insists that the question of Sylvester's homosexuality never comes up unless "the press" brings it up in interviews. The Tons disagree ever so politely. "We *do* encounter that. It happened to us in Alabama," Izora corrects. "The kids laughed because they had been programmed a certain way." Martha wholeheartedly agrees. "The kids don't know. They hear it from other people."

Izora, with a gleam on her face adds, "We have heard these things and we have been confronted with that. But once people have seen and heard us sing, they come away with a better attitude—including those down-home church folks."

"We were in Tulsa, Oklahoma," Martha announces. "Oral Roberts Country." I tell her she's talking about my home town.

"You can *have* your home town!" Martha snaps sarcastically. "They weren't ready for us. We were with War and the Commodores." The incident rekindles in Izora's memory also. "They looked at us *real strange*. When we first started singing, there was a very slight response. We are so used to the large responses when we get on the stage. So me and Sylvester and Martha were whispering to each other, 'O-o-o-o-h, this is str-a-a-a-nge.' We said, 'well, let's forget it. We'll get off on our own energy. Then, after they looked us over and deciphered that one is long, short, brown, and green, they joined in with us. We won them over. But we knew we were in the Bible Belt. All we wanted to do was get out!'"

Three hours have passed since I first met Izora and Martha. We have laughed, giggled and at times almost cried our way through a maze of jokes, anecdotes and personal thoughts. But the question of their future with or without Sylvester still hangs in the air. "We can't predict the future," Izora says. "We might be with Sylvester and we might not be. We have to see where the record's going—the way the public accepts us." What if you were offered a lot of money to part company with Sylvester, I ask. "Well," Izora says, "it depends on what they are offering. I want other things besides just straight out money. I want some peace of mind. I don't mind singing and I don't mind working. I'm doing all these things now and I'm not getting paid."

I look around the hotel room and ask



Izora Rhodes-Armstead

whose it is and does the other Ton sleep next door. After all, these are really big ladies and the room's kinda small. No, I am told. This is it. A room at the Holiday Inn on 10th Avenue. Sylvester and his entourage, meanwhile, are staying at the classy St. Moritz along fashionable Central Park South. Is this any way to treat a lady, I wonder? The Tons don't complain. They just shrug.

The next night, I'm at the Felt Forum to watch the Two Tons O' Fun "world solo debut." After two songs it was all over. That was not the only disappointment. It was hard to spot them—Sylvester dominated center stage.

Not too long ago, Sylvester, Izora and Martha all shared the spotlight center stage—One Ton on each side of Sylvester. They *looked* like a unit. Now, at the Forum, Martha and Izora were pushed off to the far left side of the stage and none of the numbers worked right. Not even *You Are My Friend*. Someone had changed the chemistry. The act *looked* disjointed. The "family" had fallen apart. It was a visual letdown. Have the Tons been pushed into the background? Have massive egos ruined what was once a unique musical and visual feast? Whatever the problem, one thing is certain—like Mt. St. Helens in Washington, nothing can stop Izora and Martha. They are "bustin' loose"—And it's only the beginning. *id.*

—Amadeo Richardson

Music Review

Classical Corner

Robert Shaw was in town with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus to perform the Verdi, Berlioz and Brahms Requiems for the Easter season. Not being the most ardent pedestrian—as the transit system was out—I was able to only see the Verdi.

The first subtle tones from the orchestra brought a sense of great expectations, which one could feel permeate the audience. The *Requiem* and *Kyrie* and the following *Dies Irae* seemed to fulfill those expectations, but the following sections—there are seven in all—didn't quite measure up to the intensity and passion the *Dies Irae* left us with.

Any conductor will have a problem with Verdi's *Requiem*. How do you give blood and thunder to the *Dies Irae* without having what follows appear anti-climactic. One solution is to have dramatic and full-throated soloists. This he did not have, with the exception of **Elizabeth Mannion**, mezzo-soprano, whose rich, dramatic voice, though muffled in the medium range, was the best suited to carry the opulence of the *Requiem* to a just conclusion. The soprano, **Phyllis Bryn-Julson** had the most free and natural sound, but her sense of urgency and fire, especially in the closing *Libera me*, was just not there. **Seth McCoy**, tenor, and **John Cheek**, bass—both newcomers to the Metropolitan Opera—sounded more like extensions of each other. They both sang as though they mutually clamped a mini-vice around their vocal chords, closing off the throat and losing half the resonance.

The 300-voice chorus, though rousing in the *Dies Irae*, also fizzle. Again, Shaw had the problem of balancing the power of all those voices against the comparative delicacy of the soloists, not to mention the weight and power of a full, passionate and beautiful symphony orchestra.

Shaw has always been a very musical and sincere conductor and this performance was well articulated, executed and overall enjoyable. It just needed more spice and less nice and a better strategy to keep the intensity from sagging. But you can't have everything. Or can you? *—Laetitia Smedley*

On Stage

Known in musical circles as nothing short of "divine," **Sarah Vaughan**, in

her return to the New York nightclub scene, filled the Grand Finale to capacity every night of her recent two-week engagement. Her stage presence remains a combination of natural ease and a wonderful sense of humor that delighted her adoring audience. Backed by a jazz trio (including noted drummer Grady Tate), Vaughan's voice is luxuriously smooth with the ability to hit every anticipated note and draw it out into a thrilling scat crescendo. From the slowed down version of *I've Got It Bad*, to Jon Lucien's *Gingy*, to the definitive rendition of *Send In The Clowns*, Sarah Vaughan proved that she is still a jazz vocalist in a category all her own. Her engagement was such a stunning success that she is due to return to this West Side niter in late July. Don't miss this rare treat.

Three days before Studio 54 closed its doors to the public, the legendary **James Brown** presented his mesmerizing stage show in a special midnight concert. Although suffering from the loss of its liquor license, Studio 54 was packed with a lively group of rock and rollers, who came to witness the one and only "Godfather of Soul" in action.

On one hand, the 1960s soul revue formula of Brown's stage act is dated, tacky and pretentious—yet at the same time Brown himself is classic, ageless and as outrageous as ever. To set the landscape of contrasts, Brown's band opened the show with instrumental versions of Alpert and Mangione hits that came across decidedly like M-O-R muzak. Next, Brown's two back-up ladies came out to a dull reworking of *I Will Survive*. Finally, after an obnoxious M.C. incited the crowd to shout praises for the star, Brown himself emerged. When the man is engulfed in his classics like *It's Too Funky In Here*, *It's a Man's World* or *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag*, time literally stands still. When the M.C. comes out and twice places deifying velvet robes around Brown's shoulders and demands we chant "James Brown, James Brown," the magic wears thin. But then again, it's the same outlandish attitude that has made "The Sex Machine" unique. As wild and crazy as ever, James Brown is James Brown and still a one-of-a-kind thrill to experience in concert.

In a musical revue entitled "Off The Coast Of Me," **August Darnell's** latest musical incarnation known as **Kid Creole and The Cocoanuts**, has taken a newly christened rock club, The 80s, and the disco Magique, by storm. August, as you remember, is one of the members of

Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band—the group that four years ago revolutionized the concept of disco in an exotic fusion of 40s big band be-bop sounds and distinctively danceable rhythms.


Kid Creole is in reality Darnell, and along with Savannah alumnus "Sugar Coated" Andy Hernandez on vibes is accompanied by a four-piece band, a mysterious female vocalist dressed as a hooded executioner, and two lovely back-up ladies known as The Cocoanuts (dressed as Wilma Flintstone and Betty Rubble). Sounds bizarre? Well, Kid Creole and his Cocoanuts are—and very successfully so. Singing a stylized blend of disco and reggae, as well as the Darnell-produced hit, *Deputy of Love*, this wild rain forest vaudeville act is a hot new group to be on the lookout for. *—Mark Bego*

...March 12 marked the 25th anniversary of Charlie "Yardbird" Parker's death. The eminent altman's contributions were feted at the Tin Palace, a funky Bowery jazz club that specializes in pure, virginal jazz improvisation. Tenorman **Bill Saxton**, pianist **Kenny Barron**, bassist **Bobby Cunningham** and drummer **Payton Crossley**, all virtuosos in their own right, flowed through a compilation of Parker classics, working well within the seemingly submerged Barron structures, to create an unforgettable bop performance...

...**Sandi "Saundra" Hewitt**, the highly talented vocalist-wife of **Teruo Nakamura**, recently made her comeback into the jazz-cabaret circuit in front of a rather sparse Seventh Avenue South audience. Sandi, who has toured with *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, and who is somewhat of a household name in Japan, seems to be ready for the finicky tastes of the sophisticated New York jazz crowd...

...New York's "high society" got a taste of jazz recently, as pianist **George Shearing** appeared at the posh, ritzy Cafe Carlyle. Shearing's unventuresome renditions of standards were enough to keep the patrons subdued. The blind London-born pianist can deliver the goods whether in a posh club or a West Village be-bop hothouse...

...Bang! Boom! and a little bit of Bossa Nova just to be sure, and what do you get? The six shooting, heavy-handed drumming of **Chico Hamilton**. The legend in his own time appeared at the opening of a new Wednesday's-only jazz club, Ipanema's, which most may recall as being a Latin disco. Hamilton, who

has been a survivor of the trends in jazz, totally awed the star-studded crowd with his rapid-fire, high-hat techniques and his ability to safely lead a young, ambitious group into the jungles of improvisation and then bring them back—intact. Hamilton fuses the rudimentary elements of funk with the easy listening melodies of bossa nova, to come out with a unique sound all his own. The only major flaw was the female vocalist who never really sings a word, and chose instead to blend with the reedman's tenor...

—Darryle Alvin Hawes

Records

Smokey Robinson's latest album, "Warm Thoughts" looks to be out of season. With everyone's mind on the beach, the poet par excellence chooses to pose in fur coat amidst a cold wintry landscape. But, as they say, it's what's in the groove that counts. Smokey has realized that ballads are what people want from him. Therefore, he has followed up his smash single *Cruisin'* with a fine collection of ballads in the same vein. The album glides along sweet melodies and subtle harmonies. The standout cut here is Smokey's composition, *Wine, Women and Song*, which features his wife Claudette, whom I haven't heard croon since the early 1960s. Claudette's voice is smooth, easy and warm and perfectly compliments her husband's. It's as if the two have been singing together for 20 years, which I presume, in their home at least, they have.

Smokey Robinson: *Warm Thoughts*—Tamla T8-367M1

It is no big secret that **Roberta Flack's** career has been floundering. Her latest production, featuring the late **Donny Hathaway** has broken the spell. After several listenings, it has become obvious that it is Donny's voice that makes this album come together. The once dynamic duo glide through Stevie Wonder's *You Are My Heaven* with all the conviction befitting a sincere relationship. Equally believable is Mtume's *Back Together Again*.

Most of the other tunes on the album are less inspired. I had high hopes for *God Don't Like Ugly*, but the supposed gospel flavor is more Anglican than southern Baptist. Roberta never really gets off the ground and her vocals are beginning to sound somewhat bored. This album's worth it if only for Donny Hathaway's memory.




Roberta Flack: *Featuring Donny Hathaway*—Atlantic SD 16013

With everyone proclaiming disco's demise, it's fun to listen to **Dan Hartman** on his adventurous outing, "Relight My Fire."

Dan is seeking to give disco a little more than standard boom-boom, and has invited Stevie Wonder to assist, which the musical genius ably does, running away with his harmonica on *Hands Down*. This one might be labeled disco/rock, but whatever the label, it is an innovative look at a oftentimes mediocre medium. Hats off to John Luongo and Michael Barbiero, the mixers. They have redeemed their souls after putting out that horrible disco concoction, "Ten Years Too Soon"—the disco Sly Stone.

As for Hartman, his voice is nothing to write home about and he should thank the Lord every night for sending him the buxom and fiery Loleatta Holloway to tear up the album's title song.

Dan Hartman: *Relight My Fire*—Blue Sky JZ 36302 

—Amadeo Richardson

Equally high in quality is "The Best of **Dexter Gordon**," part of a "Best Of" series just released by Columbia. The selections are culled from many of his previous albums, including, "LTD," "Body and Soul," and "The Moon-trane." The personnel on this collection are also veterans: Woody Shaw, Louis Hayes, Frank Wess, Benny Bailey, Goerges Cables. You can't help but love the way Dexter curls notes around his

horn or unfurles them, and chisels each phrase like a master jeweller. Like all things beautiful, his music is never dated.

Dexter Gordon: *The Best of Dexter Gordon*—Columbia JC 36356


If you've got a case of the blahs, there's nothing like a sizzling platter of mouth-watering, nitty-gritty blues served up by the one and only **B.B. King**—this time on an album recorded live at the University of Mississippi. King is joined by an impressive retinue of musicians, arrangers, mixers and engineers. Laddled on the blues are heaping spoonfuls of B.B.'s mellow rap—pure molasses. Lucille and the King groove all the way from *Rock Me Baby* to *The Thrill Is Gone*. Included in the musical feast are some Crusaders tunes. The audience roars its approval. B.B. King is an institution and a wonderful one at that.

B.B. King: *Now Appearing at Ole Miss*—MCA 2-8016

La Sonora Poncena is a great Latin band from Puerto Rico. Machito has called the musical director, Papo Lucca, the "daddy of them all," although this daddy is barely thirty-three. This band bombs you with a ton of musical pellets. *Ahora si* starts with a trio of "bata," the sacred Yoruba drums which nobody has used in a jazz context before. Then the rumba jumps out of the groove, unleashing metals, skins and fire. Papo Lucca also tackles *Night In Tunisia*, not jazzy but "tipico," as traditional Cuban music is called in Spanish—with a strong "clave" phrasing. Because of the abundant cross-pollination between jazz and Latin, jazz lovers should feel at home with this record. Its arrangements are a rich source of inspiration.

Sonora Poncena: *New Heights*—Inca JMIS 1074

Singer/percussionist **Jose Mangual**, has released another fine salsa album. The personnel includes the fine flower of Latin studiomens. While less original than La Sonora Poncena's album, Mangual's production makes for perfect dancing as well as listening. If you are not familiar with Mangual Jr., you might want to listen to his previous effort, "Tribute to Chano Pozo." It has a jazzier feeling and features delightful samba. Latin, of course, is giving fusion a run for its money. Mangual will give you an edge on the game.

Jose Mangual: *Jose Mangual*—Velvet 3009 

—Isabelle Leymarie-Ortiz

MUSIC

LISTINGS

CONCERTS

*Jazz

Barry Harris & His Trio
May 11
Manna House
Workshops Inc.
338 East 106 St
722-8223

Elliot Sharpe
May 3
Dave Burrell
May 9
Sirone
May 10
Jimmy Lyons
May 16
Raphe Malik
May 17
Tatsuya Nakamura
May 23
Peter Ponzol
Silvia Zehn
Coco Arregui
May 24
Jlm Sauter
Don Dietrich
Donald Miller
Brian Doherty
Brad Graves
Ralph Blauvelt
May 31
Soundscape
500 W. 52nd St
581-7032

*Pop

Billy Eckstine
Thru May 11
Grand Finale
210 W. 70th St
362-6079

Earl Klugh
May 10
Nancy Wilson
May 24, 8:30 pm
Gil Scott-Heron
May 31, 8:30 pm
Avery Fisher Hall
Lincoln Center
65 St/Broadway
580-9830

The Crusaders & Randy Crawford
May 7, 7 & 10 pm
Carnegie Hall
881 Seventh Av
398-8750

Donna Warwick
May 13-18
Tom Jones
May 23-Jun 1
Westbury Music Fair
Brush Hollow Road
Westbury
(516)333-0533

Shirley Bassey
May 8-11
The Dick Clark
Westchester Theatre
800 White Plains Rd
Tarrytown
(914)631-9100

Woody Shaw

May 16, 8 pm
Festival of Drums
Jarome Cooper
Djalma Correa & Belafro/The Saramaka & Djuka Musicians of Surinam
May 17, 8 pm
Symphony Space
95th St/Broadway
865-2557

Rick James
Prince
May 2 & 3, 8 pm
Spyro Gyra
May 17, 8 pm
Beacon Theatre
74th St/B'way
874-1718

JAZZ

Hazel Scott
Tu-Sat
Tony Reynolds
Sun-Mon
Ali Baba
First Av/59th St
688-4710

Della Griffin
Th-Sun
Blue Book
710 St Nicholas Av
694-9465

Heath Brothers
May 2
The Bottom Line
15 West 4th St
228-6300

Nellie Lutchter
Thru May 31
Dardanella
Sun only thru May 4
Carol Sloan
Sun only May 11-31
The Cookery
21 University Pl
874-4450

Art Pepper
Thru May 3
Sam Rivers
May 6-10
Chico Freeman
May 13-17
Gerry Mulligan
May 20-24
Bonnie Kassel & Herb Ellis
May 27-31
Fat Tuesday's
190 Third Av
533-7902

Loumell Morgan
Mon-Sat,
7 pm-10 pm
Attila Zoller
Mon, 10 pm-3 am
Chuck Wayne Trio
Tu, 10 pm-3 am
Joe Puma Trio
Wed-Sun
Gregory's
1149 First Av
371-2220

Lynn Oliver
Mon

Vince Giordano
Tu
The Stan Ruben Swing Band
Wed
Sol Yaged
Th
John Booker
Fri
Bob Cantwell
Sat
Sol Yaged Quartet
Sun brunch
Sol Yaged
Sun
Red Blazer Too
Third Av/88th St
876-0440

Max Krimnsky
Sun-Tu
Roy Eldridge
Wed-Sat
Jimmy Ryans
154 W. 54th St
664-9700

Arthur Prysock
Thru May 3
Anita O'Day
May 5-24
Mel Torme
May 26-Jun 14
Marty's
Third Av/73rd St
249-4100

Bunky Green
Thru May 3
Mickey Bass
May 11 & 12
Sonny Fortune
May 13 & 17
George Braith
May 18 & 19
Charlie Rouse/ Lonnelle Hillier Quintet
May 20-24
Malachai Thompson
May 25 & 26
Sweet Basil
88 Seventh Av So
242-1785

Syncopation
15 Waverly Place
228-8032

Village Gate
Bleecker and
Thompson Sts
GR5-5120

The Red Rooney & John Sullivan
May 6
Mel Lewis & His Orchestra
May 12
Elvin Jones
May 13-18
Bobby Hutcherson
May 20-25
Mel Lewis & His Orchestra
May 26
Bill Evans & His Trio
May 27-Jun 8
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THEATRE



"Broadway does not want our blackness, wasn't designed or intended for it, definitely doesn't want any strange new forms inspired by that very blackness. She is a contented, fat, white cow. If you can slip in and milk her for a minute—well, then, more power to you, brother. But we're telling you—it's a weird price she's asking. She wants you to be a singing hyena, dancing on the graves of yourself and everyone you know."

These words were written ten years ago by Woodie King and Ron Milner in their Introduction to *Black Drama Anthology*, May 1970. We might express them differently now, maybe use a more sophisticated tone for the 1980s. But the message is the same. Fact is—in the past 25 years, there have been only three commercially successful black dramas on Broadway: "Raisin in the Sun," "The River Niger," and "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf."

This excludes musicals and revivals of plays with all-black casts. But overall, for some depth in history and experiences of Black America, one must look elsewhere.

However, we don't have to go far. There are several off and off-off Broadway theatres around the city, sometimes, in places where you'd least expect them. They live up to the ideal of producing high quality and meaningful shows reflecting the many realities of black life, black theatre and black art.

"These theatres open the doors to teach aspiring young people of all ethnic backgrounds and give them an area to experiment under workshop conditions," says Rosetta LeNoire, director of the AMAS Repertory Theatre, Inc. at

1 East 104th Street. It was at her theatre, now housed in an old school building, that the hit musical "Bubbling Brown Sugar" was first conceived. Such small companies are the stepping stones, the training and grooming grounds for skill, experience and exposure to someday make it in the "big time." But that does not compromise the quality or professionalism of the plays because many of the shows that go on to Broadway were born in off-Broadway theatres. In theatres like these you could see the works before the Broadway theatres—"Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope," "For Colored Girls..." "Mighty Gents," and "The River Niger."

Douglas Turner Ward, artistic director of the Negro Ensemble Company, (NEC) at the St. Marks Playhouse, 133 Second Avenue, says, "We wouldn't be here today if it hadn't been for what happened in the streets in the 60s. Black theatre sprung up with the rise and explosion of black peoples' struggles and insistence on equality in all areas of life, for their rights and liberation from their past of slavery and servitude."

Among the many off-Broadway outlets is the Richard Allen Center for

Culture and Art (RACCA) at 36 West 62nd Street. Their recent season included a stunning production of "Antigone," the classic drama by the Greek writer and philosopher, Sophocles. Why a Greek play for a black theatre company? Manager Ty Collins explains. "We are moving into the realm of multi-cultural experiences for wide audiences. We do one of the classics every season."

"Antigone" brought together Trazana Beverly, the Tony Award winning Lady in Red from "For Colored Girls..." as Antigone, and Arthur Burghardt from television's "One Life to Live" as Creon, the King of Thebes.

The Richard Allen Center also produced last year's first Black Theatre Festival, USA, which brought together dance and theatre companies, choirs, musicians and singers from across the country for a month-long celebration at Lincoln Center. The second festival is set for this spring and will include the Nigerian National Theatre, the Jamaican National Dance Theatre and others.

The Frank Silvera Writers Workshop (FSWW) is nurturing plays, mostly by black playwrights. Twice a week, the manuscripts of established, as well as the

works of promising newcomers are read by professional actors at the workshop loft at 317 West 125th Street. Richard Wesley's "The Mighty Gents" and A. Marcus Hemphill's innovative "Innocent Black and the Five Brothers" were read at the FSWW before moving on to other theatres across the country.

The Black Spectrum Theatre at 205-21 Linden Boulevard, St. Albans, reminds us once again that Queens is not the cultural desert it is often thought to be. One of their latest productions has been "Precious Lee," set in pre-Civil War America, which deals with the life of a black family and also examines the indignity and trauma of rape that was so often imposed on slave women.

The AUDELCO award winner, "Deadwood Dick or That Went Thataway" was born here.

This year, the National Black Theatre

will celebrate its 11th anniversary with a production of the new musical, "Whirlwind," written and developed by Executive Producer Barbara Ann Teer. The musical focuses on the career of a black woman and her special relationship with a highly volatile political activist.

Most of these theatres make it their business to steer clear of the "theatre of despair,"—those plays that tell stories we know all too well—of the wino, the dope dealer, the prostitute, and the pimp.

But the dark cloud hanging over the future of a bright and ambitious black theatre is one that threatens to rain on most of us: lack of money and support. That accounts for the small casts, sparse sets and meager salaries if any at all. It's no picnic, we are told, to compete for audiences when Broadway and indepen-

dent producers can afford to shell out \$60,000 for one television commercial, while the smaller theatres have little more to go on but private support and mercifully meager federal grants.

But all of off-Broadway's actors, producers, directors and stage hands agree that there is a cultural gold mine to be found. And you'll walk away from many a performance a much richer person (with a pocketbook not as strained as on the Great White Way). You might well see the next Broadway smash hit for \$3—with the same cast!

Woodie King and Ron Milner had a point to make. But talented and ambitious theatre people are taking past problems into account only to look optimistically into the future. *R*

—Sharon Y. Lopez

Theatre Review

...**Sherman Hemsley** of the television hit series, "The Jeffersons," returns to Broadway May 8 in Carl Reiner's "The Roast," at the Winter Garden Theatre. Hemsley, a New York stage veteran, was last seen in "Purlie."...

... "Swing," the big band musical that was supposedly Broadway bound, closed out-of-town before its scheduled mid April opening in New York. The show bowed out March 30 after having suffered poor notices in Washington and Wilmington, Delaware. We are told that the four black lead parts were "omitted" from the script due to changes in "creative staging." The show was directed by Stuart Ostrow, who previously produced the Broadway smash, "Pippin."...

...For those who wondered what happened to Ruth Cooke, the female lead in "Reggae," the former Miss Jamaica was fired from the show during its preview run at the Biltmore Theatre...

... "Censored Scenes from King Kong," the Broadway import from England, opened and quickly closed after receiving unanimous pans in late March. **Edward Love**, who has performed in "A Chorus Line," "Dancin'," and "The Wiz," was featured in the cast as a bi-sexual Dooley Wilson-type character...

...Moving off Broadway, noted choreographer **Otis Salid** and director **Lucia Victor** lent their talents to yet another musical fable—This time about present day city life, entitled "The More

You Get The More You Want." **Dan Owens** wrote the show, which is currently running at the Black Theatre Alliance through May 11. It showcases the talents of **Ben Harney**, the tinman in "The Wiz," **Charles Lavont Williams**, the scarecrow from the same musical, and **Pat Lundy**, who was last seen in "Miss Truth."...

...While on the street life subject, "Dementos," a musical documentary, had its March opening at off-Broadway's Downstairs at City Center postponed because of budget problems... *R*

—Raymond Patterson

"In the beginning was the rhythm," we were told in "Reggae," which as soon as it opened, waged a battle for its very life. The likes of Jackie O didn't know if they would tell friends to go see the performance the next week, thinking it would be dead by then.

Perhaps it is because the staid, middle-class, middle-aged community of critics could not connect with it on any level, and thus dismissed it on most. "Reggae" is far from a masterpiece, but it is enchanting, lilting, and as flavorful as planter's punch.

The script repeats the often-told tale of the successful young woman who returns to her roots and finds no communication (As in "Mahogany," remember?). She has drifted away from the one she loved. She is a stranger in a strange land—much like the biblical pro-

phet son, only here it's a daughter, Faith Brown, who seeks to learn her native reggae traditions in order to fill the coffers of an American record company.

The dreary plot aside, the show, directed by Glenda Dickerson, comes alive in the musical segments that are mercifully numerous. Seven people wrote the music and lyrics to the show's songs, alternately driving and very Broadway, even though there is not a lot of diversity within these two categories.

But the music is performed so well that, taken as individual units, it provides enough excitement to make you want to get up and move—which the audience does at the end of the show. The rousing finale appears to be a trademark of producer Michael Butler, who also ended the legendary musical "Hair" with a bang. It's as if Butler can't produce a show without turning it into a bash. But this one's a party you won't want to miss.

The vocals are for the most part fine. **Philip Michael Thomas**, one of God's greatest examples of manhood, displays a musical talent many people weren't really aware of. If occasionally he gets "the spirit" too much, it is compensated by his clear delivery, magnetic movements and earnestness.

Sheryl Lee Ralph as Faith, has watched too much Diana Ross, but still, she's beautiful and gives the role the old school try. She may not make it as an actress, but for this party, or any other,

she's great.

The standout in this cast is undoubtedly **Obba Babatundé**, as Rockets, the villain. He makes the season's most convincing—and sympathetic—bad guy, and both he and **Martin Vidnovic** of "Oklahoma!" should be remembered come Tony time. Babatundé is electrifying and surpasses anything he has done, including "Timbuktu" and his stint with **Liza Minelli**.

In the event that "Reggae" should continue its run and get more convoluted than it should to tell its simple tale, let it. Music, as is its wont, will rescue. *—Curt Davis*

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...Spring has swept away the last remnants of winter to make way for the greening of Gotham. Dance rehearsal studios all over town are packed with ballerinas and their partners as they sharpen their technique, practice turns and leaps—all in preparation for the big spring dance season in New York City. This year's spring brings to New York some of the most important dance companies to be found anywhere in the United States. Where but in New York can you see the American Ballet Theatre, the Alvin Ailey dancers and the New York City Ballet all within the same month!...

...The New York City Ballet returns to the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center for what promises to be a glorious two-month engagement April 29-June 29.

...The City Dance Center remains alive with the best in contemporary American dance. The Paul Taylor Dance Company has been in residence since the middle of April and will be followed by the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, which opens a three-week engagement May 7. For those who missed their last season, the company remains a one-of-a-kind troupe, with stars like **Judith Jamison**, **Donna Wood**, **Dudley Williams** and **Clive Thompson**, along with newcomer **Daniel Clark** and Dance Theatre of Harlem alumnus, **Roman Brooks**. The Ailey team recently completed a cross-country and Canadian tour, and it will be fun to welcome them back...

...All eyes are awaiting the season opener of the American Ballet Theatre at the Met next month. A who's who of the dance and theatre world will be on hand to welcome back the cream of American dancers, who recently settled their strike against the ABT management. We'll expect to see great things from **Anne Benna Sims**, the ABT's only black ballerina who kept in shape during the strike, walking the picket line and performing with the Puerto Rican Dance Theatre. The ABT will premier at the Met May 5. The company will be in residence through July 12, Mon-Sat evenings and matinees on Saturday...

LISTINGS

ON BROADWAY

A Chorus Line
Shubert Theatre
225 W. 44th St
246-5990

Ain't Misbehavin'
Plymouth Theatre
236 W. 45th St
730-1760

Annie
Alvin Theatre
250 W. 52nd St
757-8646

Barnum
St. James Theatre
44th St W. of B'Way
398-0280

Bent
New Apollo Theatre
234 W. 43rd St
921-8558

Betrayal
Trafalgar Theatre
41st St W. of B'way
921-8000

Children of a Lesser God
Longacre Theatre
220 West 48th St
248-5839

Dancin'
Broadhurst Theatre
235 W. 44th St
247-4636

Deathtrap
Music Box Theatre
239 W. 45th St
246-4636

Evita
Broadway Theatre
1681 Broadway
247-3600

Gemini
Little Theatre
240 W. 44th St
221-6425

Goodbye Fidel
Ambassador Theatre
215 W. 49th St
541-6490

Grease
Majestic Theatre
247 W. 44th St
246-0730

Happy New Year
Morosco Theatre
217 W. 45th St
246-6230

Home
Cort Theatre
138 W. 48th St
488-6392
Opens May 7.

I Ought To Be In Pictures
Eugene O'Neill Theatre
220 West 49th St
246-0220

Mummenschanz
Bijou Theatre
209 W. 45th St
221-8500

Oh! Calcutta!
Edison Theatre

240 W. 47th St
757-7164

Oklahoma!
Palace Theatre
1564 Broadway
757-2626

On Golden Pond
Century Theatre
235 W. 46th St
354-6644

Oklahoma!
Palace Theatre
1564 Broadway
757-2626

Past Tense
Circle in the Square
50th St W. of B'Way
977-9020

Peter Pan
Lunt-Fontanne Theatre
46th St W. of B'way
586-5555

Radio City Music Hall
50th St/Av of the Americas
246-4600

Romantic Comedy
Barrymore
243 W. 47th St
246-0390

Strider
Helen Hayes Theatre
210 W. 46th St
246-6380

Sugar Babies
Mark Hellinger Theatre
51st St W. of B'way
239-7177

Sweeney Todd
Uris Theatre
51st St W. of B'way
586-6510

T Alley's Folly
Brooks Atkinson Theatre
256 West 47th St
245-3430

The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas
46th St Theatre
226 W. 46th St
246-0246

The Elephant Man
Booth Theatre
222 W. 45th St
246-5969

They're Playing Our Song
Imperial Theatre
45th St/West of B'way
285-4311

West Side Story
Minskoff Theatre
45 St/B'way
869-0550

Whose Life Is It Anyway?
Royale Theatre
242 W. 45th St
245-5760

OFF BROADWAY

An Evening with Josephina Baker
Leonard Davis Center
in Aaron Davis Hall
W. 134th St/Convent Av

662-8463
Thru May 18.

Black Broadway
Town Hall
123 W. 43rd St
Thru May 24
840-2824

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B'Way/73rd St
246-8484
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FOB (Fresh Off the Boat)
Martinson Hall
Opens May 27
Sunday Runners in the Rain
Anspacher Theatre
Mother Courage
Newman Theatre
The Music Lessons
Tu-Sun, 8 pm
Sat, Sun Mat, 3 pm
Scenes From The Everyday Life
Other Stage
Opens May 6.
The Public Theatre
425 Lafayette St
598-7150

The Interview
Nat Horne Theatre
440 W. 42nd St
362-0470 Thru May 4.
Tambourines To Glory
Billie Holiday Theatre
1368 Fulton St.
636-0919
Previews May 1. Opens
May 16.

DANCE

Bertram Ross Dance Co.
May 1, 2, 3 & 4, 8 pm
Ibrahim Farrah Near East Dance Group
May 7, 9, 8 pm
May 11, 2 pm
Rod Rodgers Dance Co.
May 8, 10 & 11 at 8 pm
Barbara Roan/Parades and Dances
May 14, 16 & 18 at 8 pm.
Bill Evans Dance Company
May 15 & 17 at 8 pm
May 18 at 2 pm
Claude Kipnis Mime Theatre
May 21 & 23 at 8 pm
May 25 at 2 pm
Cohan/Suzeeau
May 22, 24 & 25 at 8 pm
The Bernhard Ballet
May 28, 29, 30 & 31 at 8 pm
Theatre of the
Riverside Church
120th St/Riverside Dr
864-2929

Paul Taylor Dance Co.
May 4
Alvin Ailey Dance Co.
May 7-May 25
City Center
131 W. 55th St
246-8989

MEDIA

LAWANDA PAGE: ESTHER AND THE SNAKE



LaWanda Page

Someone once told me that a man at a hamburger stand somewhere near St. Louis, knew that LaWanda Page used to be a snake dancer before she took on the role of Aunt Esther, Redd Foxx's punching bag in the television hit series "Sanford and Son."

For anyone who has watched her perform, it has become quite obvious that she is not just another sit-com personality, but, in fact, a character actress. But snake dancer, that was a new one.

Actresses like LaWanda Page move in and out of television and film with a quiet ease, bringing a ready-made persona with them to every project. And throughout their career they perform variations on that particular characterization.

For the most part, they are supporting players orbiting around a star, giving help or hell.

LaWanda Page, of course, has brought a lot of "hell" to the screen through her strong presence and a truckload of talent so well honed that she bursts out of the constraints of the character to become a star in her own right.

After Aunt Esther arrived in the cramped and over-crowded living room of Fred Sanford, she took advantage of so many moments, giving us such fire and brimstone, it made one wonder—whose show is this anyway?

Which brings us to the question: Who is *LaWanda Page* anyway?

Her story begins in Cleveland, Ohio, where she was born October 19, 1920. As far back as she can remember, LaWanda "was entertaining people," although it was not as a comedienne.

"I was always dancing then," she told *Routes*. "Just dancing away. Me and four other children used to dance on street corners during the Depression for a nickel or dime. I would dream about being in show business. Like I was Cinderella in a story book. I thought I'd reach it through dancing."

When the family moved to St. Louis in the late 1940s, LaWanda's career as a professional entertainer began to take shape. "I only danced at first, but as time went on I had to add more to my act. Customers would come back and they didn't wanna see the same old thing."

So to be different, LaWanda, actually would pull out a long, clinging boa constrictor and let the awesome creature crawl around her body as she danced. So the man at the hamburger stand was right after all. But he apparently only knew half the story.

Always searching for something new to attract paying customers, she decided to stuff flaming, oil-dipped sticks down her throat—the age old circus fire eating trick.

One night while on tour in Australia, LaWanda, somewhat bored with the regular routine of fire one night and snake the next, decided, for a little variety, to eat fire with the Boa wrapped around her neck. Oh! Bad move.

"The boa didn't like the fire and bit me!" she exclaimed. "So I decided that was the end of that and I killed that sucker right there in Melbourne, Australia. You better believe that, honey!"

A trip to Los Angeles, around 1952, brought her to the Brass Rail, a famous West Coast stop on the Chitlin' Circuit, where black entertainers such as Redd Foxx would make regular visits. LaWanda met Redd there and also the comedy team of Skillet and Leroy. Both relationships would turn into fruitful associations.

At first, her stint at the Brass Rail was limited to dancing, until the day the club owner noticed how LaWanda was cracking up the professional comics backstage with her earthy, dry, sense of humor. So, as was to be expected, the owner made her add a stand-up comedy routine to her role as a member of the chorus line, and also demanded a dance solo spot—all for \$125 a week.

"That money was for working seven nights a week. From 9 pm til 2 am and a matinee on Sunday. I worked there for 15 years and I earned every penny of that money. The Brass Rail is gone now," she noted with a tone whose ambiguity left you guessing was it "ah" or "good riddance." "Got burned down in the 1967 Watts riot."

In retrospect, having been shoved into the comedy spot was the best thing that could have happened to LaWanda. "I was nervous when I first started, but soon I felt very comfortable doing it. I teamed up with Skillet and Leroy, playing a character very similar to Aunt Esther."

It was during those years with the popular comedy duo that she developed the timing and physical actions that made Aunt Esther an irresistible riot.

LaWanda admitted that Aunt Esther is really her, but she made a clear distinction. "Aunt Esther is a religious fanatic. LaWanda Page is deeply religious. I'm a Baptist and believe deeply in God. My late brother Sam Johnson (a bit player on the old Dean Martin show) was a Baptist minister. But Esther is just an exaggeration of that feeling. She reminds you of a lot of people, just taken a bit further."

There are a number of stories that have sought to explain how LaWanda, the snake dancer, became Aunt Esther, the religious protagonist, on "Sanford and Son." NBC's version, contained in a press release circa 1974, claimed that producer Aaron Russo was uncertain about casting LaWanda even though Foxx had recommended her for the part. However, says NBC, when Russo saw LaWanda's act at a Los Angeles club, he found her to be "perfect" for the role.

LaWanda, however, tells a slightly different story. "Redd definitely recommended me, but he did more than that. When some of the producers weren't sure about using me, Redd said he would quit the show if I didn't get the part. (A tactic he used often to get his way with the NBC brass). He put that show on the line for me and I'll never forget him for it."

Regardless of which story you want to believe, fact is that with LaWanda as part of the Sanford household, the show was number one or close to it for almost all of its five-and-a-half-year run on NBC. The happy marriage ended, due in part, perhaps to the swelled heads that the Nielsen ratings had helped to create among the folks at the junk store. Foxx decided to try his hand at a variety show for ABC, which he quickly found to have been a big mistake. Demond Wilson did not help matters much when he asked for more money, per episode, than NBC was ready to pay. Wilson later met his Waterloo on CBS in the short-lived sit-com, "Baby, I'm Back."

LaWanda, apparently the only one loyal to the make-believe family living among the rusted "antiques" of Sanford's Watts establishment, tried to keep the chemistry going on the spin-off series, "Sanford Arms." But even her inspired irascibility couldn't hold things together.

No one, however, should feel sorry for LaWanda Page. With a unique bundle of talent like hers, she'll always find work. Most recently, she was part of a team of comic lawyers and amateur



detectives in the series "Detective School." She has also guested on many television shows, including the Bob Newhart Special and on a charity celebrity roast of Steve Allen. "I never lived better in my life than I do now," LaWanda explained. "I used to make \$125 a week. Now I spend that much in one day."

She's just released an album on the Laff label, entitled, "Sane Advice." LaWanda described it as "a religious comedy album. It's clean, but fun, with facts about welfare mothers and other things like that. My writer, Mel Chase, wrote it so that the material can be edited for use in churches, school rooms and night clubs." What LaWanda doesn't mention, although it is hinted in the reference to "clean," is that there are a few people who have a copy of an album of not so clean religious material which is said to have been recorded by LaWanda Page. But then again, we all know, and some of us even have, those dirty little albums of Redd Foxx's that our parents carried home in plain brown wrappers. But who talks about that anymore?

The big thing in LaWanda's life now is a possible CBS comedy series, entitled "Rejoice." Not surprisingly it's to be a religious comedy with Linda Hopkins as co-star. "I can't say when it will be

scheduled. That's all still being negotiated," a coy Miss Page said. Meanwhile, she'll just sit it out in her Los Angeles home, which she says is located in "Beverly Watts."

New show or not, LaWanda, who has been widowed three times and has two daughters, one of them adopted, can't well escape the image of herself that has been embedded in the minds of millions of television viewers. Even as the clumsy sleuth in the "Detective School," one would sit and wonder when she would pull out her bible and preach.

"I tell you baby," she explained, "I don't have a private life anymore. People are always coming up and calling me Aunt Esther. Just the other day I was in the bank taking care of some business and this woman just had to have my autograph. Now I don't mind signing, but not when I'm in the bank. I was nice about it though, but I sure had to bite my tongue at the time."

Oh, LaWanda, I know better than that. Now just who was it that once said, "I don't mind being asked for autographs. It's when they don't ask anymore that I get worried." LaWanda can still count herself among the fortunate. And most importantly, we haven't heard the last of this lady.

—Nelson George

MEDIA

TELEVISION

Specials:

•Channel 2

May 6, 9 pm: Like Mom, Like Me
May 7, 8 pm: The Memory of Evra Ryker
May 8, 8 pm: National Collegiate Cheerleader Championships
May 17, 9 pm: Wild Wild West Revisited
May 20, 9 pm: See How She Runs
May 21, 8 pm: Bugs Bunny's Busling Out All Over
May 21, 9 pm: The Grass is Always Greener Over the Septic Tank
May 22, 8 pm: A Decade of the Waltons
May 24, 8 pm: Snoopy Come Home
May 27, 9 pm: The Henderson Monster
May 28, 8 pm: The Incredible Journey of Dr. McLaurel

•Channel 5

May 3, 3 pm: America's Athletes 1980
May 3, 4 pm: Black Swan
May 3, 8 pm: Star Tracks
May 4, 9 pm: Olympiad
May 7, 8 pm: Wolfman Jack Special
May 7, 9 pm: National Geographic
May 18, 5 pm: That's Entertainment: Pink Panther Special
May 21, 8 pm: David Susskind - Male Strippers, Female Wrestlers
May 24, 4 pm: Captain From Castille
May 28, 8 pm: Hawaii

•Channel 7

May 2, 9 pm: Bloom in Love
May 3, 9:30 pm: Ann Margaret Special
May 4, 8 pm: Battle of the Network Stars
May 4, 10 pm: John Ritter
May 5, 9 pm: The Minnesota Strip
May 9, 9 pm: The Love Tapes
May 11, 7 pm: The Return of the King
May 11, 9 pm: Angel on My Shoulder
May 14, 8 pm: Mysteries of the Sea
May 18, 9 pm: Looking for Mr. Goodbar
May 19, 10 pm: Barry Manilow Special

•Channel 9

May 5, 12, 19 26, 8 pm: Hollywood - The Silent Film Era
May 12, 9 pm: The Ice Man Cometh, Part I
May 19, 9 pm: The Ice Man Cometh, Part II
May 26, 8 pm: St. Jude Telethon

•Channel 11

May 4, 9 pm: The Presidents: 80 Years on Camera, Part I
May 4, 5 pm: Dallas Open Tennis Tournament
May 8, 9 pm: Highlights of the Frederick Douglass Awards Dinner
May 12, 8 pm: The Dream Merchants, P. I
May 19, 8 pm: The Dream Merchants, P. II
May 29, 8 pm: Miss America Pageant

•Channel 13

Dick Cavett 7 pm:
May 6: Jorge Louis - "Borges" Poet & Author
May 7: Dorothy Loudon, Actress
May 8: Ed Asner, Actor

LISTINGS

May 9, George B. Schiller, Sales Biologist
May 12-16, Pauline Kael, Critic - Five part interview
May 19, William Styron, Author, P. I
May 20, William Styron, P. II
May 21, Les Ballets Trocadero, P. I
May 22, Les Ballets Trocadero, P. II & Diana Rigg, Actress
May 23, John Kenneth Galbraith, Author, Economist

Odyssey:

May 4, The Incas
May 11, Ongka's Big Moka
May 18, Other People's Garbage
May 25, Maasai Women

Non-Fiction Television

May 2, 9, 16: On Company Business
May 23: Alaska—Technology and Time
May 30: Plea Bargaining

RADIO

WINS-AM 1010

May 4, 3 pm—Dionne Warwick Interview

FILMS

Studio Museum in Harlem Film Festival
Harlem State Office Building
125th St/Adam Clayton Powell Blvd
For information: 427-5959.

Media Review

...A decade ago this month, some 10,000 documents belonging to the late Marcus Garvey, founder of modern Pan African nationalism, were found in an abandoned building in Harlem. Garvey came to this country in the 1930s to organize black Americans into a "Back to Africa" movement. Many black Americans continue to strengthen the emotional ties to Africa. A book to be included as a collector's item of African history is "Unity And Struggle," speeches and writings by **Amilcar Cabral**, (Monthly Press, 298pp, \$16.60 hardcover). Cabral, assassinated in 1973, was the leader who launched a movement that liberated Guinea-Bissau from Portuguese colonialism...

...Back on the Western front, we have "I'm Alive," an autobiography by **Cecil Williams**. (Harper & Row, 214 pp, \$10 hardcover). Williams shares with the reader his extraordinary life written as an historical-spiritual journey through his modern American experiences...

...To all the moms and mother's-to-be, Happy Mothers Day! The Women's Resource and Action Center in Iowa City, Iowa has published a book of photographs entitled, "Mothers: A

Photography Exhibit of Our Own" (\$4.50). Copies can be obtained from Mothers, Inc., 823 Ronalds Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52240....

...A look at women during the Revolutionary War is offered in "Clio Was A Woman: Studies in the History of American Women," edited by **Mabel E. Deutrich** and **Virginia C. Purdy**. (Howard University Press, 360pp, \$19.95 cloth). This book examines the Woman's Land Army, black women, Indian women, female abolitionists, and provides information on where to find out more about women in American history...

...A collection of short stories chosen to reflect the efforts of black women to liberate themselves is contained in "Midnight Birds, Stories of Contemporary Black Women Writers," edited and with an introduction by **Mary Helen Washington** (Anchor Press/Doubleday, 304pp, \$4.50 paperback). This publication takes a positive look at an always topical subject...

...An in-depth look at the life of an American Indian woman is offered in "Spirit Woman, The Diaries and Paintings of Bonita Wa Wa Calachaw

Nunez." "This diary is an incisive description of the life of an American Indian feminist, lecturer on Indian rights, spiritualist, and self-taught artist. She died in 1972 at the age of 84...

...Howard University Press Book Publishing Institute will offer a five-week intensive course to acquaint students with the basics of book publishing. The course will run from May 27 through July 2. For information write to Program Director, Howard University Press Book Publishing Institute, 2900 Van Ness Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008...

—Amanda Anderson

LITTLE DARLINGS—Paramount Pictures—Stephen Friedman, producer—Ronald Maxwell, director.

"Little Darlings" is not about little darlings. It's really about a summer camp full of mischievous "bad girls" who bet their summer allowances on who will lose their virginity first.

The two contestants are Angel Bright, the poor street kid from the projects, superbly played by Kristy McNichol,

cont. (Page 26)

ART



"New Orleans Storyville: Ragtime Preparations" (1912) by Romare Bearden

For thirty-four years, the Metropolitan Museum has been collecting works by black artists—paintings, sculptures, watercolors, drawings, prints and photographs that span three centuries and are distributed among several curatorial departments. In the Museum's American Paintings and Sculpture collection are works by 18th and 19th Century black artists such as the portrait, "Edward and Sarah Rutter," by Joshua Johnson (1765-1830), who was active in the Baltimore area around 1789-1825; "Landscape with Cow Watering in Stream" and "Landscape with Shepard" by Robert Duncanson (1817-1872), who was a prominent participant in the art scene centered in Cincinnati and Detroit during the last century; and "The Sabot Maker," a gouache by the expatriate Henry O. Tanner (1859-1937), who acquired an international reputation and was the first American artist to be included in the collection of the Palais Luxembourg in Paris.

The Department of Prints and Photographs houses works by Charles Alston, Peter Bradley, Preston Phillips, Frederick Floy, and James Van Der Zee. The last two names point to the range of the reputations of the black artists such



"Johnny's Gone" (1912) by Richard Yarde

as Van Der Zee to younger artists such as Floyd who have not become established within the art world but who are producing work of note. The greater part of the Museum's collection is housed in the Department of Twentieth Century Art. These represent a variety of modernist tendencies, from the naive vision of Horace Pippin's "Victorian Interior" to the lyrical abstraction of Thomas Sill's "Dance."

The first two works by black artists to enter the Museum's collection were "Boxer," by Richmond Barthe and "Pool Parlor" by Jacob Lawrence. Both were awarded purchase prizes from the *Artists for Victory* exhibition which was held at the Museum in 1942. The following year, the WPA presented to the Museum a large gift of paintings, sculptures, and prints by artists employed by the Easel Section of the Federal Art Project in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. These included "Blind Beggars" by Jacob Lawrence, "Barn and Tree" by Charles Alston, and two watercolors, "Girl in Blue Dress" and "Self-Portrait" by Samuel Joseph Brown.

During the 1940s, the Museum began to seriously collect works by living American artists; "Showmaker," by Lawrence was purchased in 1946 and in 1949 the Department of American Art was established—given the mandate to acquire and exhibit especially in the "controversial contemporary field."

With regard to the American art collection, it was agreed that it should be "national in scope, that evident gaps in it be filled, that certain advanced trends not then represented should be included, and that better works by artists poorly represented should be acquired." (H. Geldzahler, *American Painting in the 20th Century*). In order to achieve this goal, a series of national competitions were held: 1950 (paintings), 1951

THE METROPOLITAN: COLLECTING BLACK ART



"Black Valhalla" (1943) by Noah Jemison

(sculpture), and 1953 (drawings and watercolors). Cash prizes were awarded to winners, and works were purchased for the Museum's collection from these exhibitions. Charles Alson's abstract work, "Painting," was purchased through this competition.

Since these initial acquisitions, works by black artists have come to the Museum through purchases, (i.e. photographs by Frederick Floyd,

Preston Phillips, and paintings by Alma Thomas, Jack Whitten, and Palmer Hayden, and a sculpture by Richard Hunt) and through generous gifts from the donors, including the artists themselves (such as photographs from James Van Der Zee, Gordon Parks, paintings by Avel de Knight, Horace Pippin, James Denmark, Thomas Sills, and a drawing by Barbara Chase Riboud).

The Department of 20th Century Art has acquired works by seven black American artists over the last two years: "Leah's Renoir" by Sam Gilliam, "Johnny's Gone" by Richard Yarde, "Black Valhalla" by Noah Jemison, two untitled works on paper by Howardena Pindell, "Figure" by Hale Woodruff, and "Genesis" by Frederick Brown.

Since museums function as repositories of cultural heritage, the number of black artists on exhibit at the Met is still far too small, and the scope of contributions by black Americans to the visual heritage of this country must be rectified. Museum collections, from their inception, have reflected primarily the interests and needs of the individuals who have founded the collections, and obviously few blacks were initially involved in this process. There has never been an equitable credentialization of the work by black artists through adequate exhibition, collection, and critical assessment. Therefore, their historical position has yet to be affirmed. The market value for their work still lags far behind that of other artists, and opportunities to market their work are still scarce. The few galleries and specialized museums are only beginning to solve the problem. Suggestions for solutions are as numerous as the problems, but it is clear that there is a need for an "art interest lobby" for black artists by black people. The resources exist. The nuclei of important collections of art by black and white artists have already begun to develop in black universities such as Atlanta University, whose collection was started by Hale Woodruff, and that of Howard University, so carefully nurtured by James Porter.

In Detroit, the African Art Gallery Committee has been a vital force at the Art Institute, raising money for the purchase of African Art and works by black Americans over the last 18 years. A purchase fund for works by black American artists has recently been established at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. To date, institutions such as the Met have already taken steps to recognize black artists. Now their commitment should be encouraged, and its sustenance insured.

—Lowery Sims

Art Review

...Art aficionados were dismayed that the **Black Elders** exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery was taken down before it had scarcely been up! Organized in conjunction with the National Conference of Artists annual meeting in Washington, April 2-5 by Barbara Hudson, the exhibition featured work by Hale Woodruff, Romare Bearden, Ernest Chrichlow, Lois Jones Pierre-Noel, Jake Lawrence, and Charles White...

...**Vincent Smith's** work is included in the annual exhibition of the National Audubon Society...

...**Clarence Morgan's** work is included in the juried exhibition "Mixmaster," which is touring Kentucky and the southeastern states over the next 18 months...

...Randall Galleries, 823 Madison Avenue, will open an exhibition of work by the late **Charles Alston** on April 30...

...Don't miss the "Treasures of Ancient Nigeria," which will be at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco April 28 - June 29 and then at the Metropolitan

Museum of Art in New York from August 11 - October 12...

...**Beverly Buchanan** recently had a sculpture dedicated in Macon, Georgia...

...**Kolawole (Lawrence Compton)** recently had an exhibit of his paintings, mobiles and graphics at the Kunstzentrum in Munich, West Germany...

...**Mavis Pusey's** work was exhibited at the New School from April 8 - 30...

...New York Times photographer, **Chester Higgins**, was featured during Photography Week at the Queens College Student Union in late April...

...**Idaherma Williams** will exhibit woodblock prints at the University City Science Center Gallery, 3624 Market Street in Philadelphia through May 9...

...Don't miss the Studio Museum's Third Film Festival through May 22. Contact Danny Dawson at (212) 427-5959. The Studio Museum is planning a memorial exhibition in tribute to the late **Charles White** who passed away recently...

...Also at the Studio Museum, **Cathy Chance Connors**, my former colleague

at the Metropolitan Museum, is now a consultant for development and membership. Ran into **Barbara Tate**, another Studio Museum alumna at the Henry Street Settlement where she is directing the Visual Arts program for the Center for Living Arts... Oh, where, oh, where has **Billy Day** gone? Oh, where, oh where can he be?...

...**Phyllis Thompson** of Cornell University is alive and well and on leave at the Art Institute of Chicago...

...**Margo Viscusi** and **Janet Carter** hosted receptions for Senegalese artist **Iba N'Diaye** during his recent visit to New York...

...Everyone in the art world is agog at **Michael Kendall's** claim to be the reincarnation of **Edmonia Lewis**...

...Last but not least, the Congressional Black Caucus sent observers to the National Conference of Artists sessions to ascertain a role for the caucus in promoting the arts. This was a most appropriate step as the theme of the conference was "Political and Economic Development for the African-American Artist."... **Lowery Sims**

Media Review p. 23

and Ferris Whitney, the rich kid, appropriately played by Tatum O'Neal. Baited by the evil vixen, Cindy (Krista Erickson), the two girls enter into this bizarre competition purely to show their contempt for each other.

This inventive script has been transformed into a hilariously endearing film about adolescent discovery and that inevitable "first time."

The praiseworthy performances by the film's young gifted actresses, rise above some uneven directing and distracting lights. The dialogue seems purposely awkward and unadult, giving that strange sense that one is actually peeking in on the unrehearsed and candid mischief.

THE CHANGELING—Associated Film—**Michaels and Garth Draginsky**, producers—**Peter Medak**, director.

Halfway through "The Changeling," I succumbed to a distinct feeling of *deja vu*. Those high-pitched, swirling oohhs and aahhs, that pounding symphony score said, "yes, yes, it's 'The Omen' reborn."

George C. Scott plays a depressed composer who moves to Seattle to get over the death of his family. Unknown-



"Little Darlings"

"The Changeling"

ingly, he rents a haunted mansion that's inhabited by the ghost of a young boy seeking revenge for his premature demise. Lonely nights with doors mysteriously opening and slamming, thundering thumps, eerie whispers—it was enough to drive anybody crazy. Of course, the composer joins the ghost's one man army of retribution. Anything for a night's sleep!

The film relies largely on the repetition of simple effects for tension. The seance scene provides the only innovative moment of terror that is genuinely new.

I haven't eaten pea soup since "The Exorcist" and after seeing "The Tenant," I dreaded going home to an empty apartment—and I wasn't the only one who bought a night light after seeing

Night of the Living Dead. However, having seen "The Changeling," I will go about my usual business, because this one didn't scare the pants off me at all.

...Scheduled for release in June is "Blues Brothers," featuring **John Belushi** and **Dan Aykroyd** of "Saturday Night Live," with special appearances by **Cab Calloway**, **Aretha Franklin**, and **Ray Charles**...

...**Billy Dee Williams** stars with **Sylvester Stallone** in "Hawks," Universal Pictures, with locations shot in New York City...

...Coming from New Yorker Films is "Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith," an Australian film featuring a new discovery, **Tommy Lewis**. Lewis will star in this flick about an Aboriginal's first experience in dealing with a racist culture...

...**Sidney Poitier** is directing a new film. It's still hush-hush...

...**Scatman Caruthers** will appear in two films for Warner Brothers Pictures—"Honeysuckle Rose," with **Willie Nelson**, **Dyan Cannon**, and **Amy Irving**. He's also set to appear in the new **Clint Eastwood** film, "Bronco Billy," starring Eastwood... **Dwight Brown**

ART

MUSEUMS

•Uptown

American Museum of Natural History
79 St/CPW
873-1300
Mon-Sat 10 am-4:45 pm
Wed 10 am-9 pm
Sun & Hol 11 am-5 pm
Exhibitions: Thru Sep 1
—Feather Arts: Beauty, Wealth and Spirit from Five Continents. Thru Sep 1—Papua New Guinea: A Feather in the Cap. **Lectures:** May 14, 7:30 pm, Auditorium—The Weavers of Peru: Forty-Five Centuries of Tradition, May 7, 7 pm.
The People Center
—Howard Norm discusses the dance and songs of the Cree Indians. May 21, 7 pm—John Bierhorst and Richard Lewis read and discuss translations from Mr. Bierhorst's recent book "A Cry from the Earth: Music of the North American Indians." **Dance: The People Center.** Sat & Sun only 1-4:30 pm. Presentations of traditional music, dance, customs, arts and crafts from different countries. **Films:** May 10 & 11, 2-4:30 pm, Auditorium—Insects and Spiders. May 10: Don't, The Evolution of Flight; Ants: Hunters and Gardeners; Come Into My Parlor, Said the Spider; Strategy for Survival: Behavioral Ecology of the Monarch Butterfly; Life on a Silken Thread (Part I). May 11: Now You See Me, Now You Don't; Dr. Lee's World of Insects; Mysterious Castles of Clay; The Beekeeper, Life on a Silken Thread (Part II). May 12 & 19, 7 pm—Visions of Antiquity: A Film Series. **No single admission tickets will be sold:** May 5—Atlantis. May 12—The Night of Counting the Years. May 19—The Ancient Ship of Kyrenia. **Lectures:** Slides. Tu, 2 pm, The People Center—May 6: Textiles of Ancient Peru. May 13, "Digs" in Search of Man's Past. May 20, Forest Trees of New York City Area. May 27, Wild Scrubs and Vines. **Gallery Talks:** Th, 2 pm, Assembling at 1st floor Information Desk—May 1, Marine Mammals. May 8, The Magic of Minerals. May 15, Early

African Empires and Forest States. May 22, Ancient Mexican Cities. May 29, The Age of Dinosaurs. **Highlights and History Tours:** 10:15 & 10:30 am, 1 & 1:30 pm, 2 & 2:30 pm; Wed 6:30 pm; Sat, Sun, and Hols 11 am & 1 pm—Inquire at 2nd floor Info Desk.
Hayden Planetarium
Mon-Fri 2 & 3:30 pm, Sat & Sun 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 pm. Thru Sep 7—The Beginning: This program examines discoveries and the most recent theories of the origin of the universe. Wed, 7:30 pm—Worlds in Space: Explores the solar system. Sat 11 am—Saturday Morning Live Sky Show for Young People: Discussion of such topics as why the sky is blue, why the moon appears to change shape in the sky, etc. **Laserium**
Concerts: Wed, 8:45 pm, Fri, Sat, Sun, 7:30 pm—Laserium Starship: Takes its audience on a journey of sound and light through the cosmos using new laser effects and evocative "space" music. Fri, & Sat 9 & 10:30 pm, Sun 9 pm—Light Years: Combines dazzling new laser effects with hit songs from the past.

Asia House
112 E. 64th St
PL 1-3210
Mon-Sat 10 am-5 pm
Th 10 am-8:30 pm
Sun 1-5 pm
Thru June 22
—Treasures from the Reitberg Museum, Zurich.

Center for Inter-American Relations
680 Park Av/68th St
249-8950
Tu-Sun 12-6 pm
May 14-Jul 27—Northwest Coast Indian Art. May 11-Jul 27—Objects of Bright Pride, N.W. Coast Indians

Cooper-Hewitt Museum
Fifth Av/91 St
860-6868
Thru Jun
1—Spectacular Spaces. Thru Jul 27—Close Observation: The Oil Sketches of Frederic Edwin Church.

Frick Collection
1 E. 70th St
288-0700
Tues-Sat 10-6 pm
Sun 1-6 pm

Thru Jun 29—Vincennes and Sevres Porcelain.

Guggenheim Museum
Fifth Av/89 St
860-1313
Tu 11 am-8 pm
Wed-Sun 11 am-5 pm
Thru May 20—Eduardo Chillida-60 works dating from 1951 to 1979 by the prominent Spanish sculptor. Thru May 11—New Images from Spain. May 23-Aug 17—The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Collection: 1900-1980. May 16-Jun 7—Kinetics Around a Fountain: Pol Bury.

International Center of Photography
Fifth Av/94 St
860-1777
Daily 11 am-5 pm, except Mon
Thru May 18—Robert Flaherty: Photographer/Film Maker. Thru May 18—Sights/Insights.

Japan House
333 E. 47th St.
832-1155
Daily and weekends
11 am-5 pm; Fri to 7:30 pm
Thru Jun 1—Japanese Drawings of 18 & 19 Centuries.

National Black American Historical Museum
10 West 139 St
283-9189
Exhibits and artifacts illustrating Blacks in American history.

Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fifth Av/82 St
535-7710
Tue 10 am-8:45 pm, Wed-Sat 10 am-4:45 pm, Sun 11 am-4:45 pm. On exhibit indefinitely—The Norbert Schimmel Amarna Reliefs. Thru Summer 1980: Fashions of the Hapsburg Era: Austria-Hungary. Thru May 18—The Bull Master: An African Artist of the Nineteenth Century. Thru June 1—The Horses of San Marco. Thru Jul 9—The Great Bronze Age of China: An Exhibition from the People's Republic of China.

El Museo del Barrio
1230 Fifth Av
831-7272
Tue-Fri 10:30 am-4:30 pm, Sat-Sun 11 am-4 pm. Thru Jun 1—John Betancourt. Thru May—Collective

LISTINGS

Woman Installations.

Museum of the American Indian
Broadway/155th St
283-2420
Tu-Sat 10-5 pm
Sun 1-5 pm
Closed Mon & Hols
Thru May 10—Honor Moccasins of the Teton Sioux.

Museum of the City of New York
Fifth Av/103 St
534-1672
Tu-Sat 10 am-5 pm
May 8-Sep 8—Street Play: Photographs. Thru Sep 1 Hundreds of Dolls. Thru the summer—Life With Father. Thru the summer—Elegant 80s. On exhibit indefinitely—The Big Apple.

National Black American Historical Museum
10 W. 139 St
283-9189
Tue-Sun 11 am-5 pm. Exhibits and artifacts of blacks in American history.

Studio Museum in Harlem
2033 Fifth Av/126 St
427-5959
Tue-Fri 10-6 pm
Sat-Sun 1-6 pm.
Thru Jun 29—Betty Saarr Exhibit.

Whitney Museum of American Art
75th St/Madison Av
794-0663
Thru May 13—American Folk Painters of Three Centuries. Thru Jun 15—American Sculpture. Thru Jun 22—John Sloan: Concentration. May 27-Sep 14—Louise Nevelson: Atmosphere and Environments.

El Taller Boricua
1 East 104 St
Mon-Fri 11am-4pm
831-4333

•Midtown

African American Institute
833 U.N. Plaza/47 St
949-5666
Mon-Fri 9 am-5 pm
Sat 11 am-5 pm
Thru May 24—Art of Cameroon.

American Craft Museum
44 W. 53 St
397-0600
Mon-Sat 10 am-5 pm
Sun 1 pm-5 pm
Thru May 25—Art for Use: Handmade objects used by Americans

working in fiber, clay, wood and metal.

American Museum of Immigration
Statue of Liberty National Monument
Liberty Island
732-1236
Circle Line-Statue of Liberty. Ferry leaves Battery Park 9-4 pm daily.

Museum of American Folk Art
49 W. 53 St
LT1-2474
Tu-Sun 10:30 am-5:30 pm
Th 10:30 am-8 pm
Thru May 4—John Blunt: The Man, The Artist and His Times. May 16-Aug 31—English Naive Painting.

Black Fashion Museum
155-57 W 126 St
666-1320
Thru Oct 15—Costumes from Black Theatre.

•Downtown

Federal Hall National Museum
26 Wall St
264-8711
Daily 9 am-4:30 pm

Fire Department Museum
104 Duane St
570-4230
Mon-Fri 9 am-4 pm

Fraunces Tavern Museum
Pearl & Broad Sts
425-1778
Mon-Fri 10-4 pm

Museum of Holography
11 Mercer St
925-0526
First museum of its kind featuring Holograms; pictures developed by laser light creating 3 dimensional images.

New Museum
65 Fifth Av/14th St
741-8962
Mon-Fri 12-6 pm
Wed 12-9 pm, Sat 12-5 pm

South Street Seaport Museum
Fulton and Front Sts
766-9062
Mon-Sun 11 am-6 pm
Collection of shops and galleries recalling 19th Century of N.Y.C.

Whitney Museum of American Art
55 Water St
794-0633
Fri 11 am-3 pm
Thru May 28—The Working Woman, 1840-1945.

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October 1977

Articles: Th: Curtains Up. Mu: New York Community Choir Expresses Itself. En: Reaching Back and Coming Forward. Di: Casa Storica. At: Museums of Special Interest. Tr: En Route to Paris. Kd: The Doctor Says. Md: Black News Personalities. Sp: The Games People Play—Squash. RR: Billie Holiday

December 1977

Articles: Th: Black Theatre in the Rough. Mu: Black Opera Ebony in New York City. En: The Listening Ear. Di: Horn of Plenty—A Food Celebration. At: the Giving of Art. Tr: Guadeloupe. Kd: The Christmas Vacation. Md: Super Sidney Poitier. Sp: Backgammon, It's Your Move. RR: Bill Bojangles.

January 1978

Articles: Th: Dyann & Gregg: Moving Ahead. Mu: The Descendants of Mike & Phoebe. Mu: Are the Blues All Washed Up? Di/Disco: Disco Scene. At: Discovering Art From Ethiopia to Harlem. Tr: Atlanta Georgia. Kd: The Natural Wonders. Md: Which Way is Up? Sp: The New York Knicks: Young & Running. Fa: The Designers Touch. RR: Joe Louis.

February 1978

Articles: Th: Theatre in the Streets. Mu: There's Music in the Air Mardi Gras: The New Orleans Carnival. Di: Carnival Foods. At: James Van Der Zee. Tr: Carnival Time in Trinidad. Kd: Children's Dance Theatre. Md: A Disco Star is Born. Sp: Watch, Wager, Enjoy: Jai Alai. RR: Dorothy Dandridge.

April 1978

Articles: Th: Timbuktu. Th: Eartha Kitt: I Am Here. Mu: Carlos Santana. En: Turntables. Di: Main Street. At: Architecture: Visual Pleasures. Tr: Sevilla. Kd: The Junior Museum. Md: The Boys in Company C. Sp: New York is Jumping Double Dutch. RR: Hattie Mc Daniel.

May 1978

Articles: Th: Richard Wesley A Mighty Playwright. Mu: The Unveiling of Melba. The Temptations: "Movin' On Up." En: "Show Time!" The Apollo Theatre. Di: Jewel. At: Nigeria: Art in Everyday Life. Tr: 'Goin Home'—Senegal's Surprises. Kd: Children's Theatre: "The Play's the Thing". Md: "American Hot Wax". Sp: Baseball Forecast '78. RR: Katherine Dunham.

June 1978

Articles: Th: The Black Theatre Alliance. Mu: The Harlettes. En: Entertaining with Wines. Di: Poletti's. At: Jam, Studio Museum & King Tut. Tr: Going South for the Summer. Kd: Summer Activities for Kids. RR: Fats Waller

July 1978

Articles: Th: Ain't Misbehavin'. Cecil Alonzo—Brooklyn's Live Soap. Mu: Jazz Fusion. Jazz, Jazz & More Jazz. Di: Under the Stairs. At: Images of the Caribbean, 1880-1910. Tr: Montreux, Switzerland. Kd: the Bronx Zoo's Wild Asia. Md: Black News. Sp: Water Skiing. RR: Duke Ellington.

August 1978

Articles: Th: Ed Love Seizes the Time. Dr: Johnson, Keeper of Roots. Mu: Teddy Pendergrass, The Fatback Band. Di: The Peachtree: Soulful Dining. At: African Grass & Fiber Arts. Tr: Quebec, Canada. Kd: Summer Festival for Kids. Md: WRVR, Jazz Radio. Alma John: 25 years in Broadcasting. Sp: Tennis: First Serve. RR: Mahalia Jackson.

October 1978

Articles: Th: Billy & Judy—The Mime Team. Mu: Roberta Flack Interviewed. Di: Once Upon a Stove. At: Nubian Art Exhibit. Tr: Virgins in the Caribbean. Kd: Open Sesame. Md: Sitcoms: Sick Cons. Buckwheat Thomas Movin' On. Sp: The Fight Game. Dis: Tribeca—The

Downtown Beat. Fa: Fur Fashion '78. RR: Marian Anderson.

December 1978

Articles: Th: Audelco: Keeping Black Theatre Alive. Hines, Hines and No Dad. Mu: Carol Douglas: Burnin' & Cookin. Di: Leoni Au Coin D'Haiti—A Dream Come True. At: Trim You Tree with Toothpicks. Tr: Africa—A Journey to Northern Mali. Kd: Plant That Learning Tree In Your Home. Md: Hollywood's Holiday Offering. Sp: The Jets' Marvin Powell: Young & Hungry. Fa: Yves St. Laurent. RR: Leadbelly.

May 1979

Articles: Th: Ashton Springer-Producer. Mu: Marilyn Mc Coo & Billy Davis. Di: Midnight Dining. At: Brooklyn's New Muse. Tr: Luggage, Bags & Headaches. Kd: K Rated Movies. Md: Disco Television. Sp: Now The Home Teams. Fa: "The Atchison Look", "The Jerry's Den Look", "The Keyes West Look". RR: Eubie Blake & Nobel Sissle.

Abbreviations: Th—Theatre, Mu—Music, En—Entertainment, Di—Dining, Dis—Disco, At—Art, Tr—Travel, Kd—Kids, Md—Media, Sp—Sports, Fa—Fashion, RR—Routes Roots.

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KIDS

RUSSELL BROWN: CLOWNING AROUND



Russell The Clown

Everyone loves to clown around once in a while. Some do it better than others. Some do it well enough to make a living. Russell Brown has been doing just that—clowning around for a living for about the last 12 years. His reason for becoming a professional clown has to do with his concern for the proper molding of children's minds. It all started a while back, when Brown and his wife took in a few foster children. Most of them had lived tragic lives, had lost their parents or were abandoned.

"That," Russell declares, "taught me that children need something to laugh at."

According to Russell, clowning "is different and it's rewarding. It gives a message and it's entertaining—not many things have a message and are entertaining." Russell can't very well answer how to get started as a clown because he himself didn't quite know when he had set out to make it a life's goal. Actually,

he first donned a clown suit while volunteering as a Cub Scout leader in California. "When we would try to find entertainment for our parties and award ceremonies, the top entertainers—the white clowns—wouldn't come. So to fulfill my kids' needs, I ended up doing it myself."

His scouts egged him on to audition for a well-known circus. He was told that black clowns weren't funny. "That struck me as being so odd. Here we're supposed to be one of the funniest people in the world, but we weren't funny professionally. And I said, 'something's wrong there. How come there aren't any black clowns?' So I began to do a lot of research. The ones I found were Moms Mabley, Pigmaat, Redd Foxx, Richard Pryor, Flip Wilson...they're considered clowns. But they're not *children's* clowns. In other words, what do black boys and girls have to make them laugh. Batman, Superman, the Three Stooges?...nothing for the little kids

three to six years old..."

Russell pressed on. While researching the business of clowning around, he bumped into an organization called the Clowns of America, a trade union with over 1,000 clown members. Brown became the first black to be admitted to the organization, whose president at the time was Red Skelton.

Soon after, he also met Count "Popo," one of the oldest and most popular clowns on the West Coast.

"On the West Coast," Russell says, "there were plenty of professional clowns, like Howdy Doody, Bozo," but none of them were black.

Russell asked Count Popo where he learned the tricks of the trade. "He told me that as a kid he used to watch Burt Williams. Burt was a black clown, but he was a minstrel and wore white-face. But here, a white clown copied off of him," he notes with a touch of irony.

Russell has won several awards for his escapades. He took first prize in an international clown contest at the Puerto Rico Clown Festival. He has appeared in several films, including "Cotton Comes To Harlem," "Across 110th Street," and "Shaft's Big Score." He has also written and directed several plays.

Russell has since retired from circus life and has returned to the East Coast where he entertains children at birthday parties. When he moved east to entertain kids, he recalls, "I'd come to their home in Bed Stuy, and they could laugh in their own homes. Of course, it didn't pay off, because most were poor. So a lot of times I'd go in for free."

His entertainment is quite different from the standard circus clowning. When he goes to entertain children, he brings with him a message. In his favorite learning trick, he uses a small piece of green paper which he tells everyone is the symbol of money. "If they want to get rich, they will have to go to work." He then puts the paper in his mouth and out comes 12 feet of multi-colored paper, which means, "Whatever you say, let beautiful words come out."

Russell Brown still entertains for private parties and children's programs. He can be contacted at (212) 924-5451 or (212) 272-1322. *RP*

—Gerrie E. Summers

KIDS

LEARNING CENTERS

American Museum of Natural History

Central Park West/79th St
879-1300

The Discovery Room: Sat-Sun 12 Noon-4:30 pm—Thru the use of touchable specimens and imaginative "Discovery Boxes," this area is especially designed for young people to enjoy a personal learning experience in natural science and anthropology. Youngsters must be 5 years old and accompanied by an adult. Starting at 11:45 am, free tickets are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis at the first floor information desk. *Alexander M. White Natural Science Center*: Tu-Fri, 2-4:30 pm, Sat-Sun 1-4:30 pm—This center introduces young people to the plants, animals and rocks of New York City. A staff member is always present to assist and explain. See Art Listing for additional activities.

Children's Art Carnival

62 Hamilton Terrace, Man
234-4093

Free: This program for children includes photography, sewing, filmmaking, figure drawing, painting, reading and career training (4-18 years).

Cooper-Hewitt Museum

2 E. 91st St
860-6868

See Art Listing for activities.

Harlem School of the Arts

409 W. 141st St, Man
926-4100

Instruction and performance in piano (group and private), guitar, flute, clarinet, cello, violin, viola, drama and art.

Metropolitan Museum of Art Junior Museum

Fifth Av/82nd St
879-5500

Tuesday(5:30)/Wednesday afternoon (3:45)/evening programs for families: *Workshop I*—5:30-6:30 pm. Ages: 5-12. Hour sessions in drawing, painting, sculpture or construction, based on discussions, of original works of art in the museums collections. Reservations accepted by phone on the day of class. Limited to 30. Tickets \$1 (materials provided). Meet in the Junior Museum Library. May 6, An Impressionist Still Life; May 7, Oriental Rubbings; May 13, Architectural Constructions; May 14, Sketching in the Medieval Tapestry Hall; May 20, Paper Reliefs; May 21, Islamic Mosaics; May 27, Landscape Collages; May 28, Silhouettes. *Gallery Talk*—7-8 pm. Each week a different Museum collection is discussed. Meet at the information desk in the Great Hall. May 6, Claude Monet; May 13, Venice; May 20, Art in Silver; May 27, Fountains. Weekend activities: *Looking/Sketching*—Sat, 11 am in the Junior Museum Library. Age: 5-15. A slide show presentation and discussion of art and artists in the museum's collections. Then participants look for,

find and sketch from the original works of art in the museum's galleries. May 3, The Impressionists; May 4, Sea Monsters; May 10, Egyptian Mythology; May 11, A Family Celebration; May 17, Jewelry; May 18, Georges de La Tour; May 24, Parks & Fountains; May 25, Dutch Painters; May 31, Carved Ivory. *Art Tells A Story*—Sat and Sun 1 & 2:30 pm in the Junior Museum Library. Age: 5-15. A slide show presentation and discussion of why and how artists have illustrated certain stories. Using a prepared map, they find the stories in original works of art in the museum's galleries. *Gallery Walk*—Sat-Sun, 1:30 & 3 pm. Finding, sketching and discussing works of art on the day's theme. Sketching materials provided. *Films*: 12-1 pm. May 10, Ancient Games; Illustrations from the Odyssey; The Francois Vase. May 17, Discovering the Music of the Middle Ages; The Point of View Movie; Blinky Blank; Calder's Circus. May 24, The Artist's Horse; Merry-Go-Round in the Jungle; Ballet by Degas; Sandcastle; Powers of Ten. May 31, The Cathedral of Chartres; Enameling; Tales from a Book of Kings.

•Brooklyn

Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corp.

Center for Art and Culture
1360 Fulton St
636-7891

Thru May 12—Washington Heights Art Show Exhibition. May 12-22—Banner Making Contest for pre-schoolers and Senior Citizens. Awards ceremony May 22, 1 pm.

Brooklyn Museum

188 Eastern Pkwy
638-5000

Wed-Sat 10 am-5 pm
Sun 12-5 pm, Hol 1-5 pm
A free year-round program for first through sixth graders that takes place in the museum's galleries. Participants learn about a different collection each time they attend. Classes consist of story telling and art-making, using simple materials.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden

1000 Washington Av
622-4433

New Muse

1530 Bedford Av
774-2900

Classes in ethnic drums, trumpets, trombone, art, dance, drama and other subjects. May 2—Third Annual Black Brooklynite Awards Dinner Dance.

•Bronx

Bronx Zoo

Fordham Rd & Southern Blvd
220-5100
May 3—Wild Asia.

•Staten Island

Institute of Arts and Sciences

75 Stuyvesant Pl/Wall St
727-1135
Tu-Sat 10 am-5 pm
Sun 2-5 pm.

LISTINGS

SHOWS AND EXHIBITS

General Motors Exhibit

GM Building
Fifth Av/59th St
486-4518

Research, auto, appliance, engineering and future development exhibits.

J.C. Penney Company

1301 Av of the Americas
957-4840

Daily 9:30 am & 2 pm. Free guided tours of corporate headquarters, visits to merchandise testing center, displays and exhibits.

Nautical Outings

Day Line cruises leave from Pier 81 (at the foot of West 41st St/12th Ave) at 10 am each day for Bear Mountain, West Point and Poughkeepsie.

The New York Experience

McGraw-Hill Bldg(Lower Plaza)
Av of the Americas

896-0345

Mon-Th, 11 am-7 pm; Fri & Sat, 11 am-8 pm; Sun, Noon-8 pm. Sixteen screens, 45 projectors, 68 special effects present the story of N.Y.C. past and present. Shows hourly.

The Ringling Bros.

Barnum & Bailey Circus
Madison Square Garden

33rd St/8th Av
564-4400

Thru Jun 1

•Brooklyn

Brooklyn Botanic Garden

1000 Washington Ave.

Henry St. Settlement

Urban Life Center
265 Henry St

766-9200

New York Aquarium

W. 8th St & Surf Av
Coney Island, Brooklyn

Daily 10 am. Giant sharks, whales, electric eels, dolphins, penguins and many other varieties of sea animals.

Prospect Park Zoo

Flatbush Av and Empire Blvd

The Animal Nursery

1317 Surf Av.
373-2211

•Queens

Queens Zoo & Children's Zoo

111 St & 56 Av
Flushing Meadows Park

•Nassau

Jones Beach State Park

(516)785-1600

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SPORTS

DAVE PARKER: MILLION \$ HITTER

Dave "the Cobra" Parker is not a venomous creature as his nickname suggests. He's a radiant professional baseball player who always produces on the field. He'll hit the game-winning home run, chase down a fly ball and target a herculean throw from the deepest corner of right field to home plate.

Since he entered the major leagues in 1974, he has been named Most Valuable Player and has been selected Player of the Month several times. He was team MVP in 1977, league MVP in 1978, captured the MVP award at last year's All-Star game, and was the driving force that clinched the World Series crown for the Pittsburgh Pirates last year.

Parker's \$1.7 million salary is often criticized by those who envy him or seek to belittle his value as a ball player. But his earnings should not be the sole gauge. It is important, also, to recognize what Parker's productive abilities are worth to an owner willing and able to pay him such a phenomenal amount of money.

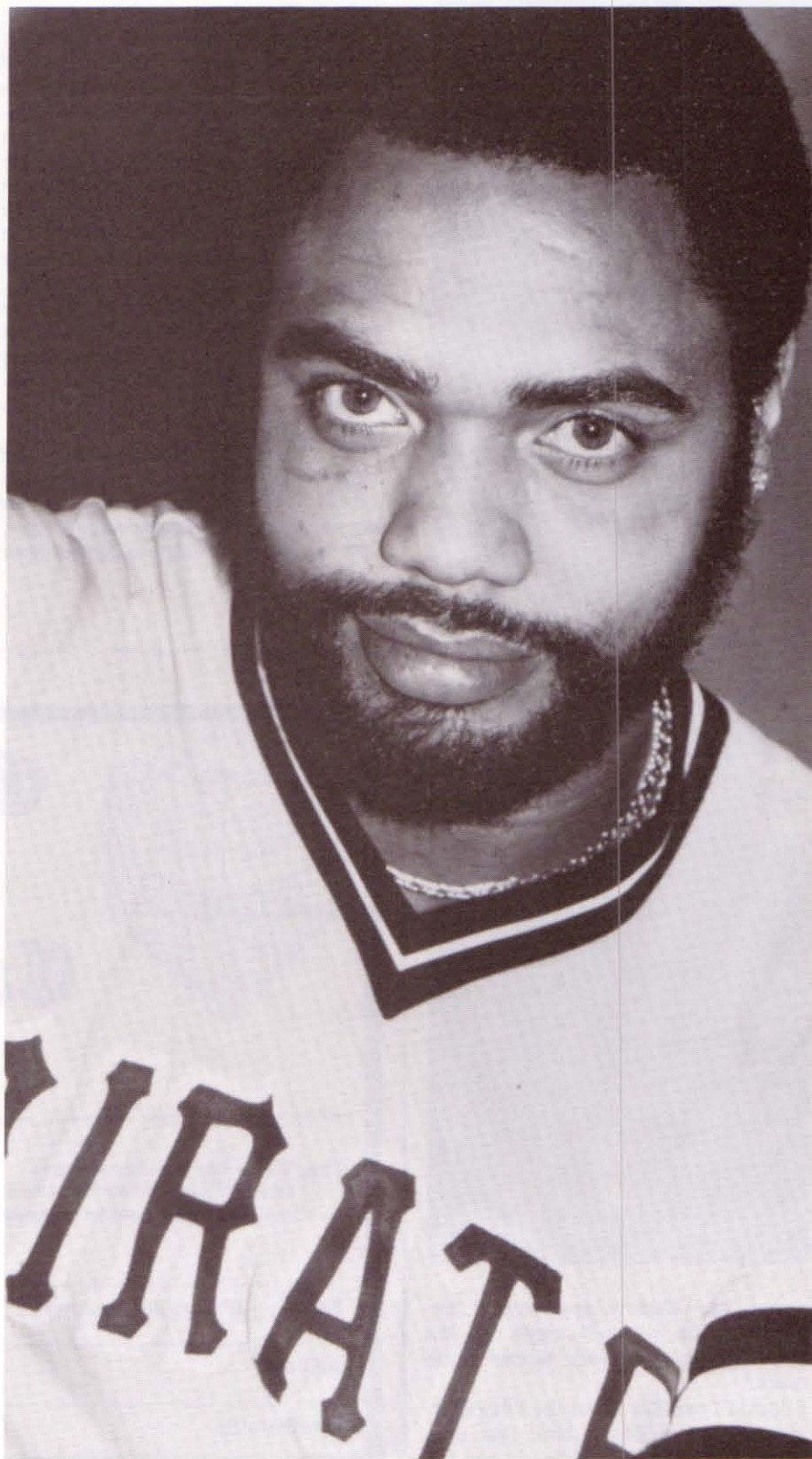
As a champion, Parker is one of the more outspoken black athletes of the day. Spring is here, and with it comes the baseball season. I couldn't have chosen a better time to talk to the "Cobra" for the readers of *Routes*.

Routes: Talking about your salary. Do you think that your \$1.7 million compares to what owners make from TV contracts, ticket sales, vending operations, etc.?

Parker—Frankly, I think all major league salaries are always considered tax write-offs for a ball club. Every baseball salary is a write-off. I think the Pirates are the third highest paid ball club in baseball.

How do you feel when an owner comes out and says management's got to raise ticket prices because players' salaries are too high?

That's poisoning the public's mind toward the player—trying to portray the player as a money hungry individual who doesn't care about anything but money. That's how they try to portray us. Getting the money and running. That's probably why my car got cut up and why people tried to vandalize my house.



Dave Parker



Are you blaming management for projecting a negative image of the players especially if they happen to be black?

I couldn't say that about the Pittsburgh organization. I don't think that they would influence the public against the

black player because, hell, that's what we have. Three-fourths of the ball club is black. I think that management controls the press. They can dictate how a player is portrayed. Because they run it. They said that they wanted to make me a household name. Therefore, the media's attitude toward me is positive.

We're definitely worth something. Take me for instance. I'm 75 percent of everything that happens in the Pittsburgh club; offensively, defensively, including leadership qualities. All these things revolve around me because I play the game very well. I play well enough to even add a little yeast, where I could be flashy. But as far as the value of the black player—without them I don't think baseball would be what it is today. The value of the black ball player is remarkable. I don't know what it is, but you know black ball players always feature speed, leaping ability and throwing arms. Ah, we *are* sports. There's no way to get around it.

What do you think about Pete Rose and what he said about you in a Playboy article last year? He made some comments about whom advertisers would prefer, between the two of you, to endorse their

pizza product.

I can't knock Pete Rose. He was very instrumental in making it possible for me to be the first \$1 million paid ball player in baseball history. So how can I knock him? For ten consecutive years, he has collected at least 200 hits each year. That's amazing. He roasted me in Cincinnati. We're both from Cincinnati. He told me the reason I put the diamond ring in my ear was to make my head look bigger. Then he went on to say that Dave Parker is the best player in all of baseball. The man is a positive thinker. People regard me as a cocky individual. I really feel that if I didn't believe that I was one of the better players in all of baseball, then who else would? I definitely believe that if you got a cannon, shoot it. And I've got a cannon!

Pete Rose has got a cannon. That is what has made Pete one of the most visible players in baseball. He's a little more controversial than I am. If I chose to be controversial, I would be in a situation like Reggie is in at the present time in New York.

What do you think of Reggie Jackson and his ordeal with Billy Martin?



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I think that Billy should have concentrated on putting a winner on the field instead of creating animosity in his ranks, because when you got that conflict with your key player, that tears down the inner structure of the team. And Reggie is a key player. Of course, they are always going to stick with management because management basically runs the press. That's why when large baseball salaries came about, baseball players were portrayed as money-hungry individuals and it's not that at all. A player's career goes from ten to fifteen years. Therefore, he's got to be concerned with the welfare of his family beyond those ten or fifteen years. That's why players go all out to get what they can while they can. I think Reggie was in a very awkward situation; I think in some cases he could have possibly brought it on himself because he is an outspoken individual.

What about Pete, you, and the commercials, though?

Black players really have not broken the endorsement field yet. Hey, I could put some Foamy on my face, stick a pencil in it and shave my face. I could do things like that as well as anyone. If you could put Pete Rose in a magazine with

jockey shorts on, I know damn well, with me having an Adonis stature, that you could put me there. I can stand on TV and scream about Gillette, I drink Pepsi, I can jump up and say Seven-Up. There's a market!

I know white kids—some of their various heroes are black ball players, boxers, track stars, and basketball players. I think a kid grows up being unbiased towards race from the beginning, unless the parents' background is total bigotry. I believe that a kid starts out with a straight head, having the option of making his own choice and evaluation of people. I lost a contract with a shoe company, but I won't mention any names. They turned me down because they said I was single. They said I didn't portray the image that they wanted to promote to kids. Hell, that's discrimination against single people! I'm one of the biggest superstars in baseball today and you're gonna tell me that I can't sell your product because I'm not married?

I said that's just another excuse for telling me, nigger, we don't want you endorsing our product. They were offering peanuts. I think it was \$62,000 for a three-year thing. That ain't no money.

Do you think athletes can play a role in knocking down some of the walls that divide people?

Without a doubt. I think that should be indicated to the public more—especially with the Pirates' theme of being a family. The 25 guys in our ball club are genuinely concerned with the welfare of the individual and his family. When a player has a problem and needs some advice, or a pat on the back, I think that each individual on the team understands and is willing to share. I made a statement during the World Series last year that "60 Minutes" should do a special on us. I think it is something the whole world could learn from. We've got 25 guys. You know every individual is different, and we have combined to make one; everybody is together for one goal and there's a lot of love shown in our club house, from day one to the end of the season. I think it could definitely help society today—kind of pull people together.

R

—Zachary Howard

LISTINGS

•Boxing and Wrestling

Madison Square Garden
33rd St/Seventh Av
564-4400

May 2, 23 All Star Boxing
May 19, All Star Wrestling

•Baseball

N.Y. Mets, Shea Stadium
Flushing Queens
672-3000

May 5, 6, 7: vs. Cincinnati
May 20, 21, 22: vs. Houston
May 23, 24, 25: vs. Atlanta

N.Y. Yankees
Yankee Stadium, Bronx
293-6000

May 12, 13, 14: vs. Kansas City
May 16, 17, 18: vs. Texas
May 26, 27, 28: vs. Detroit
May 30, 31: vs. Toronto

•Soccer

Cosmos
Giants Stadium, East Rutherford, N.J.
(212) 265-8600

May 4: vs. Dallas
May 11: vs. Memphis
May 21: vs. England
May 24: vs. Italy
May 26: vs. Vancouver and
England vs. Italy

•Television

Channel 11 (New York Yankees)
May 2, 8:30 pm vs. Minnesota
May 3, 2:15 pm vs. Minnesota
May 4, 2:15 pm vs. Minnesota
May 6, 8:30 pm vs. Milwaukee
May 7, 8:30 pm vs. Milwaukee
May 9, 8 pm vs. Minnesota
May 10, 8 pm vs. Minnesota
May 11, 2 pm vs. Minnesota
May 16, 8 pm vs. Texas
May 17, 8 pm vs. Texas
May 18, 2 pm vs. Texas
May 20, 8 pm vs. Detroit
May 23, 7:30 pm vs. Toronto
May 24, 1:30 pm vs. Toronto
May 25, 1:30 pm vs. Toronto
May 27, 8 pm vs. Detroit
May 30, 8 pm vs. Toronto
May 31, 8 pm vs. Toronto

Channel 9 (Mets)
May 2, 8 pm vs. San Diego
May 3, 2 pm vs. San Diego
May 4, 1 pm vs. San Diego
May 5, 8 pm vs. Cincinnati
May 7, 8 pm vs. Cincinnati
May 10, 1:30 pm vs. Montreal
May 11, 1:30 pm vs. Montreal
May 14, 12:30 pm vs. Cincinnati
May 16, 7:30 pm vs. Atlanta
May 18, 2 pm vs. Atlanta
May 21, 8 pm vs. Houston
May 22, 8 pm vs. Houston
May 23, 8 pm vs. Atlanta
May 24, 2 pm vs. Atlanta
May 25, 2 pm vs. Atlanta
May 26, 2 pm vs. St. Louis
May 30, 7:30 pm vs. Pittsburgh
May 31, 7 pm vs. Pittsburgh



ROLLER SKATING RINKS

•Bronx

Jerome Skating Rink
45 Goble Pl
731-3229

•Brooklyn
Empire Roller Dome
200 Empire Blvd
462-1570

Park Circle Roller Rink
11 Ocean Pkwy
436-1300

Village Skating
15 Waverly Pl
677-9690
Roll-A-Palace
1728 Sheepshead Bay Rd
646-0909

Sweet Ruby's
329 Wycoff Av
456-3300

Utica Skating Rink

635 Utica Av
772-1400

•Manhattan

Busby's
76 E. 13th St
777-7126
High Rollers
617 W. 57th St
247-1530

Melon's
120 E. 16th St
777-8106
Sun, noon-7 pm

Metropolis
241 W. 55th St
586-8188

Wheels
75 Christopher St
675-3913

•Westchester

The Rink
Main St.
New Rochelle, N.Y.
(914) 636-3504

River Roll
312 E. 23rd St
673-0950

Rollerrock
3330 Broadway
368-1492

Roxy
515 W 18th St
675-8300

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999-1313

Belmont Park
641-4700

Giant Stadium
265-8600

Aqueduct Racetrack
641-4700

Meadowlands Results
594-7044

Parks & Recreation News
755-4100

New York State Lottery
999-6868

OTB Results
999-2121

Shea Stadium
672-3000

Time
936-1616

Yankee Stadium
293-4300

Weather
WE 6-1212

Madison Square Garden
564-4400



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TRAVEL

'AT HOME' IN SENEGAL



Tired of the usual tourist vacation, packed with full itineraries and no time to breathe and soak up local color?

Living with a family in a foreign country can be a fascinating event and may be the new experience you are looking for—even if it's your first time abroad and your first time to Africa.

Living with an African family is a richly human affair and more rewarding than taking the usual tours and visiting museums. You will learn the real significance of traditions usually thought of as "colorful." Unlike most ordinary vacations, which, after a time, fade into oblivion, only to be recalled now and then through photographs, this "foreign affair" will remain a living memory.

Who could forget an experience wherein one shares the world, work and pleasures of a family and at the same time provides the host's family with the opportunity to learn about your world?

I was fortunate to have such an "affair" with the Diouf family, who live in a small suburb of Dakar, the capital of Senegal, West Africa.

My hosts, Coumba and Moussa, are the parents of five children: Fatou, the eldest daughter, followed by Anna, Primera, Sakho, and the newest member, born one month after my departure, who to my delight was named

after me—Bintou. That name was given to me by the chief of Juffure (Alex Haley's ancestral village). Others in the household were Pape and his brother Boubacar, a niece, Coumba Aw, and cousin Daba. And then there was Mbalo, the ever-present neighbor.

Each morning during my stay, Coumba insisted I wear one of her grand "boubous," the national dress of Senegalese women. This elegant, flowing gown is made out of an abundance of cloth—which requires a lot of walking and posture practice for those of us used to jeans and skirts. You can get the hang of it, though. Simply gather the sides under your armpits and strut!

When I'd go to town, Coumba would point her finger at me and say, "Bintou, don't be late for lunch." There was good reason for this warning, because Coumba would start preparing lunch almost immediately after breakfast. From her mattress perch, Coumba would supervise the preparation of the food as well as the house cleaning chores which were shared by the other girls. I couldn't help but notice that the two boys did absolutely nothing. They just rose from bed, bathed, had their breakfast and then disappeared until lunchtime. Oh, those lunches! Senegalese love to eat *Tiep Bu Jen*, a mixture of fish, rice, and pungent spices. It takes hours to cook on

small Hibachi-like stoves. Coumba would also prepare my favorite dish, *poulet yassa*, a succulent dish of chicken and onions.

Sharing, I learned, is a characteristic of Senegalese life and applies virtually to all the cultures of Africa. It was not unusual to find several friends and relatives present at meals. The backyard, alive with our laughter as we ate with our hands out of a communal plate, became a delightful dining area.

After a satisfying meal, we would stretch out on straw mats beneath shade trees and exchange stories and anecdotes about life in our different worlds. Senegal is a Moslem country where devotees are required to pray five times a day. It was not surprising to find Coumba praying while the rest of us were busy chatting and laughing.

There were several important kingdoms in Senegal's ancient past. Many were part of the Sudanic empire of Ghana in the 700s to 1000s A.D. Later, in the 1300s, areas were claimed by the Mali empire and in the 1500s the Songhai empire. During the 1700s, a militant Islamic state, Fouta Toro, ruled in the Senegal River Valley.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to land on Senegal's shores, but it came under French control by 1895. In 1960, Senegal became an independent

republic.


Dakar, the capital, is Senegal's, transportation and commercial center. The most important exports are peanuts—and the merchandise is piled high along the docks waiting to be loaded onto ships. Also, the first World Festival of Negro Arts was held in Dakar in 1966.

My hosts were bent on sharing the richness of their native cultures with me. Seydou, another family friend, for example, insisted I learn Wolof, a language often used in Dakar. Seydou would constantly speak to me in Wolof in the hope that sooner or later I would pick it up. However, I quickly found this Arabic-sounding language to have some real tongue twisters! Sakho and Primera, the two younger girls, were particularly endearing in their valiant efforts to teach me Wolof. They would shyly approach me and say in French, "ca c'est kass (cup)," or "ca, c'est jen (fish)." After several earnest attempts, I learned only to remember simple words like *na nga def* (hello) and *magidem* (good-bye).

When Pappa got home from a hard days work, he was never too tired to take us all out for a drive. One afternoon, we all ventured to Joal, located at the end of the Little Coast. This is the birthplace of Leopold Senghor, the President of

Senegal. Fadiouth, a small village in Joal, is virtually an island of sea shells. While watching Coumba bargain over the price of fish at the seashore, amongst the gayly decorated fishing boats drawn up on the sand, I got my first lesson in bartering.

I learned so much more from her and from her entire family—about love, caring, and, of course, sharing. After a while, it was as if I had become a part of the family and what had been only a short visit appeared to have turned into a pleasant eternity. I knew that leaving the family would be like leaving my own kin. But, eventually, I had to say *magidem*. On the day of my departure, it was heartbreaking to see Coumba almost in tears. But I knew one thing—I would return.

If you too would like to experience a vacation with a family abroad, SERVAS provides a list of potential hosts in 82 countries. Write to U.S. SERVAS, 11 John Street, Room 406, New York, NY 10038 or call (212) 267-0252. Also, the Travelers Directory offers a registry of several hundred people who have agreed to host foreign travelers in their home. They can be contacted c/o Tom Linn, 6224 Baynton Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144 or call (215) 438-1369. 

—Estelle Epps

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DINING

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Opinion on what constitutes the ideal slice of pizza in New York is as varied as the innumerable toppings that grace the pies.

Now that the outdoor season is upon us, people will be eating more and more on the run. Thus, pizza lovers will find themselves faced with the agonizing question: Where do I get a good slice?

Though there are hundreds of places to choose from, one can rest assured that New York pizza runs the gamut from the horrendous (mangy mozzarella, with lost-at-sea-sauce) to the sublime (crisp and light, crust, balanced seasonings).

Pizza, originally an Italian dish, reaches into every ethnic nook and cranny of Gotham, and for some has become as indispensable as "Monday Night Football" or "Ryan's Hope" in the afternoon.

Pizza is not, like many have been led to believe, an American invention. But then again, it's only a partially Italian invention, too. Many Italian cities were founded by Greeks. The most famous being Naples—the home of pizza. But original Neapolitan pizza (*pizza napoletana verace*) is different from what you now pick up on Eighth Avenue as "a slice."

Blisted in a wood fired beehive-shaped oven for three minutes, the thin crisp *pizza napoletana verace* was a thin, crisp mini-pie, not the popular wedge we have come to know.

Before World War II, pizza eating was generally limited to southern Italy and it was brought to America by the Italian immigrants who settled in the nation's urban areas. However, the GI's and the post-war tourist boom brought the pizza to these shores in a big way.

Currently, Americans eat \$4 billion worth of the stuff each year. Not surprisingly, pizza is nosing out hot-dogs (street vendors might argue this point), fried chicken and that perennial fast-food winner, the hamburger, as America's favorite fast food. It is undeniably New York's favorite. The

nation's major pizza chains, Pizza Hut and Shakey's, don't stand a chance with the discriminating New York pizza lover. But even without them, pizza is as simple to get in the City as a dirty look from a harried pedestrian. Often the neighborhood pizza parlor is a social gathering place, where people do more eating than socializing. However, the folks who know their stuff often roam like hungry nomads through the hustle and bustle of the city in search of the celestial slice.

Hunting down the ambitious "pizzerian" is worth it—if you know what to look for. Generally, make sure it's a clean establishment. The demeanor of the place may well reflect on the kind of pizza you will get.

Primarily, quality ingredients are important, and although pizza's basic ingredients are simple enough (yeast dough, covered with tomatoes and mozzarella cheese), some slices don't even meet these minimum standards, never-mind appeal to the picky connoisseur. Cheese that you can chew and swallow is only reasonable. A crust that's not too thin or thick, along with a fragrant tasty sauce, in my opinion, is not too much to ask for. Lukewarm pizza unfortunately, is a recurring phenomenon at lousy storefront establishments around town. It is advisable to watch the person behind the counter closely and keep an eye on what they're doing with your slice. Your pizza, if pre-baked, should be put back into the oven long enough to help the crust firm up and prevent it from wilting all over the place. Garnish on your pizza is up to you, but the quality of toppings vary from parlor to parlor.

The chefs at Ray's Pizza (465 Sixth Ave. at 11th Street), place your toppings on the ordered slice, add an extra layer

of cheese and let it all bake into the pie.

With these lessons behind us, let's go out for some pizza. I've taken the time to single out some worthwhile places, and I'm sure I may have missed some. After all, there's only so much of the stuff you can eat. But here are the *Routes* Recommendations:

Mariella's Pizza—225 West 57 St—757-3016

Gino's—275 Eighth Ave at 23rd Street—929-9481

Rocky's Pizza—1109 First Ave—371-4965

Goldberg's Pizzeria—998 Second Ave—593-2172

Pizza Joint—2165 Broadway at 77 Street

Angelo's Pizza—3415 Broadway, Astoria, Queens—728-0430

Sal's Pizzeria—118 Mott Street (They serve the original *pizza napoletana verace*)

Catania's—2316 Arthur Ave, Bronx

Donato's Pizza—1455 St. Nicholas Ave near 181 Street

Jamaica Pizza—166-03 Jamaica Ave, Queens—657-2635

Parson's Pizza—87-82 Parsons Blvd, Queens—523-7579

Pizza Spot—433 DeKalb Ave, Brooklyn—783-9173

My humble apologies to those with good pizza that are not on the list, but not to those who fed me soggy, cold, and flavorless pizza.

At most of these places, you can expect to spend between 50 cents and 80 cents for a slice, and more if you want extra cheese or a particular topping.

The Japanese like their pizza with squid, soybeans, bamboo shoots or strawberries. The French often throw on a raw egg before baking, while Australians go Hawaiian style with a little pineapple. The Brazilians like plums and figs on theirs. And New Yorkers? Well, they like it *SMOGGY*. (Sausage, Mushrooms, Onions, Green peppers). ®

—Michael George

DINING

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cepted.
673-0750

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specialties. L: fr \$3.25;
D: fr \$5.95. AE Accepted.
874-8726

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260-7110

The Jamaican

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Red Rooster

2354 Seventh Av
283-9252

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L: on weekends only.
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\$5.50-\$6.95. AE,MC,V.
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PEOPLE

MONTE IRVIN

Monte Irvin may not be as popular a name in baseball as Jackie Robinson, but he has made baseball history in his own way. Irvin, as special assistant to baseball commissioner, Bowie Kuhn, is the first black athlete ever to hold a high administrative position in baseball. He is still the only black in baseball's administrative hierarchy, following the recent death of Em Ashford, the first black umpire, who was also employed by the commissioner.

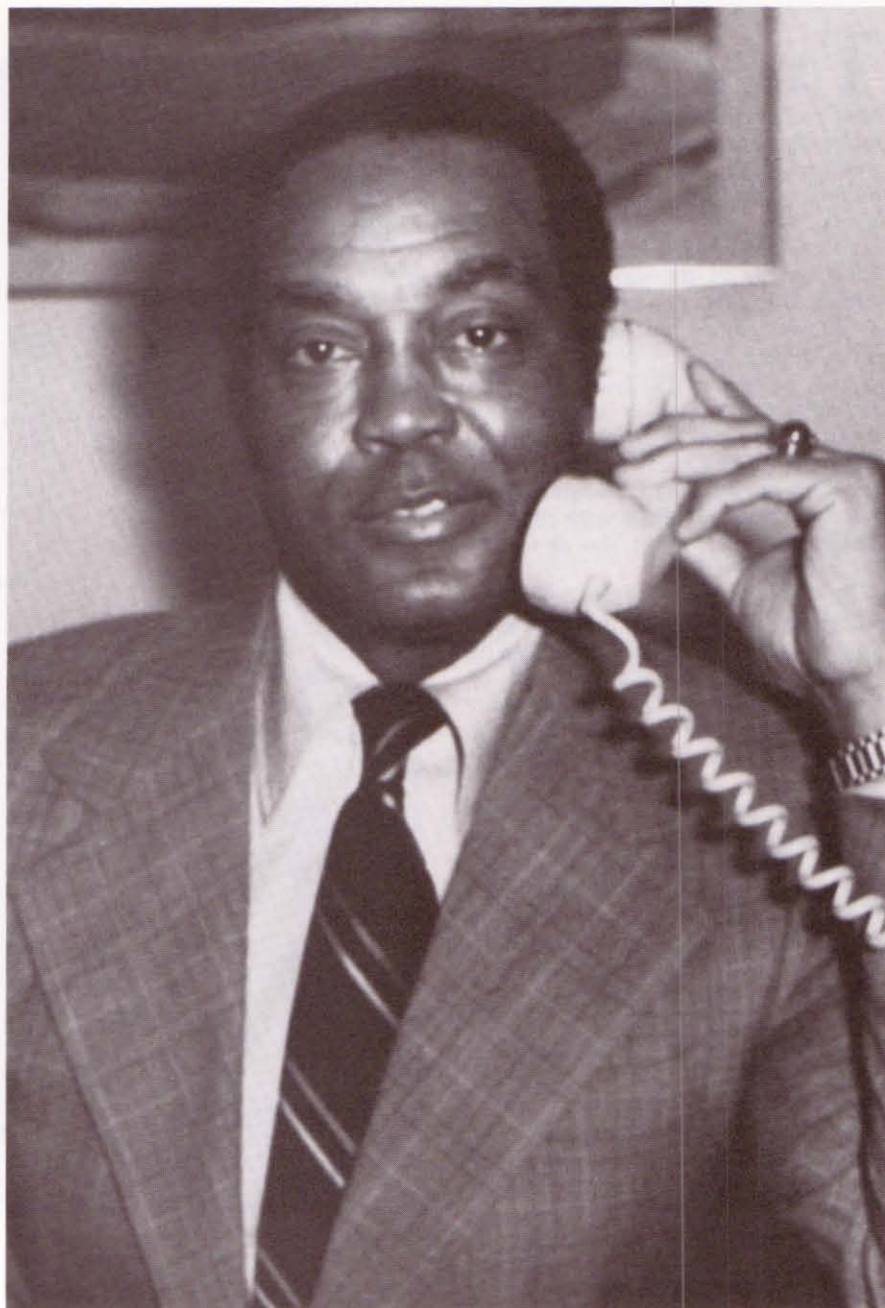
As special assistant, Irvin acts as a representative. His position calls for special skills in public relations and troubleshooting.

He has to explain the commissioner's oftentimes unpopular points of view and actions to those who disagree. Case in point: Hank Aaron refused to show up for a luncheon in his honor because Kuhn was absent from the game where Aaron hit his record-breaking home run. Kuhn had sent Irvin. "Apparently he (Kuhn) thought that was sufficient, but Hank Aaron didn't think so," explained Irvin.

With players like Aaron and Lou Brock speaking out against the absence of blacks in front office, managerial and other pivotal baseball positions, Irvin is often in a tough situation.

He is one of the most respected figures in baseball and a man well-suited for his post. He considered his appointment "A great opportunity. I welcomed the chance to make a contribution, and I have done so." Irvin once said, "If there hadn't been a color line when I got out of high school, I think I could have made the majors at the age of 18." Born in Columbia, Alabama, Irvin got his athletic start in an Orange, New Jersey school. After two years of college, he signed to play professional baseball in the Cuban Winter League, where he was spotted by a New York Giants scout and signed to play in the big leagues. He was a 30-year-old rookie and part of the "Miracle Team" of 1951 that came from 13 games behind to take the pennant away from the Brooklyn Dodgers in a dramatic playoff game. Injuries, however, brought his career to an end in 1956, while with the Chicago Cubs.

Monte Irvin loves baseball. He knows his stuff. He doesn't feel that the free agents, big salaries and superstars are having a negative effect on the game. "Baseball is too great for that. As long



as you have excellent baseball, as long as you have the stars playing the game, it's going to be the number one sport."

Irvin knows what sports means to the youngster who dreams of breaking out of the limited horizons of the sand lot. It bothers him when accomplished athletes don't take the time to inspire the young. "Sportsmen have contributed to the overall struggle for blacks. We know

there is a long way to go. Just like the intellectuals, athletes, too, have contributed.

Monte Irvin will be listened to in the future, learned from and as one of the bright minds in Bowie Kuhn's office, will have some personal input into the solutions of many problems. He's that kind of person.

—Michael George

FASHION

Texans may sneer and snicker, and ol' J.R. Ewing'd curl his lip, but New Yorkers are getting into the western look and, surprisingly, are carrying it off with great style. The Western Look has become a part of cosmopolitan New York, and maitre d's at expensive restaurants no longer even as much as blink an eye at the sight of Stetson-hatted, bolo-tied customers.

But what, to the urbane New Yorker, is the western look?

"It's romance, it's freedom, it's a feeling," a salesman at the exclusive western shop, McCreedy and Schrieber, reflected. At McCreedy's, the price for beautiful hand-tooled leather boots can run into the four digits and similarly high-priced items move just as fast as less expensive styles.

But the western look is also denim and tri-colored cowboy shirts with yokes (a kind of scalloped cut), snaps instead of buttons, and piping (a thin roll of decorative material). It's the bolo (string) tie, the wide-brimmed hats, the pointy-toed boots, and the perennial blue jeans.

While searching to unravel the mysteries of the western look, one will quickly find that there are two distinct categories: the *gentleman cowboy* and the *ranch hand*. Gentleman cowboy would apply to James Gardner in "Wheeler Dealers" or Larry Hagman in television's "Dallas"—tailored suits with yokes and piping, and arrow stitched pocket corners; lizard-footed, tooled cowboy boots and trim, and light tan Stetson hats and cologne.

Ranch hand, by contrast, is flashy yoked shirts (everything western is yoked), blue jeans, bandanas, and leather jackets.

The demand for western clothes east of Amarillo and Abilene has inspired fashion designers like Ralph Lauren to creat a special line. None other than Bloomingdale's on New York's fashionable East Side, carries the line, which includes a western-oriented men's cologne called "Chaps." Bloomie's houses two Lauren western shops—one for men on the main floor and another for women on the third level.

A salesman on the main floor, wearing a fringed leather jacket and calico print bandana called New York's



Melba Moore

western look customers, "The drugstore cowboys. They come in here and say they want to look like Texans, even though most of them have never been closer to a horse than the ones they see on television.

"Even I've only been on a horse once," he grinned. "It went up and down to music and kept passing a brass ring."

While Lauren offers neophytes such



Reggie Weeks

AMARILLO IN NEW YORK

clothes. But still, nobody seems to have a handle on just what kicked off its popularity in the concrete canyons of New York. Michael, of the Lee Shop in Brooklyn, thinks that it's always been with us.

"If you go out west you'll see people who've been dressing like that all their lives and whose parents probably dressed like that, too. The typical western cut in clothes has been pretty much standardized for the past 30 years. So people pick a boot they like, and a shirt and will keep buying that same style over and over again. It's always available."

Legend has it that snaps on shirts instead of buttons, came about because pioneer women, wielding heavy clothes irons, didn't have time to carefully press around fragile shell buttons, and usually smashed them. Necessity, always being the mother of invention, solved the problem with snaps. The bandana, on the other hand, was designed to be pulled over the nose and mouth to keep out trail dust after women got tired of men ripping up shirts to protect their faces from the rugged outdoor life of early America. Similarly, the cavalry shirt, with its high neck cut, was designed to fight trail dust.

The classic western boot, according to folk tale, was cut so that cowboys jumping on their horses could easily slide their feet into the stirrups. And last but not least, Levi Strauss supposedly designed the, rivetted blue jean because gold miners complained that their threaded pants pockets kept tearing from the weight of the gold ore they stored.

But all of that is a long way from the asphalt of New York, and it could hardly be argued that urbanites are turning to bandanas to keep out big city pollution.

Michael, whose shop specializes in Dan Post western boots (Post also makes Lauren's boots), thinks that in New York, the casual, yet flamboyant western look, grew out of the popularity of the Frye boot in the early 70s. Michael, incidentally, calls New Yorkers in western gear "Brownstone Cowboys."

If you stop and talk to people on the street about the western look, you'll find that many native New Yorkers remember dressing up to play cowboy and cowgirl as kids, when Roy Rodgers and Dale Evans rode off into the sunset on their horses singing *Happy Trails To You*.

If all this has left you dying to get your own western outfit, just remember—it's also a state of mind, so don't *run* to the store, just *ramble*.

—Barbara Silverstone

Reggie Weeks

luxuries as supple suede cavalry shirts for \$3.50, the words of Hollywood dress designer Bob Mackie (designer for Cher, Carol Burnett and Diana Ross) should not be ignored. He feels, quite bluntly, that designer western wear is a ripoff copy of items available at authentic riding and western shops at a mere fraction of the cost.

A lot of celebrities, including Teddy Pendergrass, have popularized western





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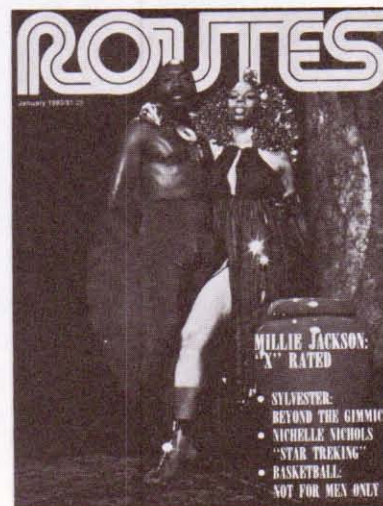
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ROUTES' ROOTS

Otis Redding was only 26 years old when his twin-engine Beechcraft plane crashed into Lake Pomona, Wisconsin on December 10, 1967, sending him to an untimely death.

One could never tell by listening to his memorable recordings such as *Try A Little Tenderness* or *Pain In My Heart*, that he was that young. But there was a quality of universal weariness in his voice that spoke of painful life experiences. If ever a man had sung as if the world were pressing upon his shoulders, it was Otis.

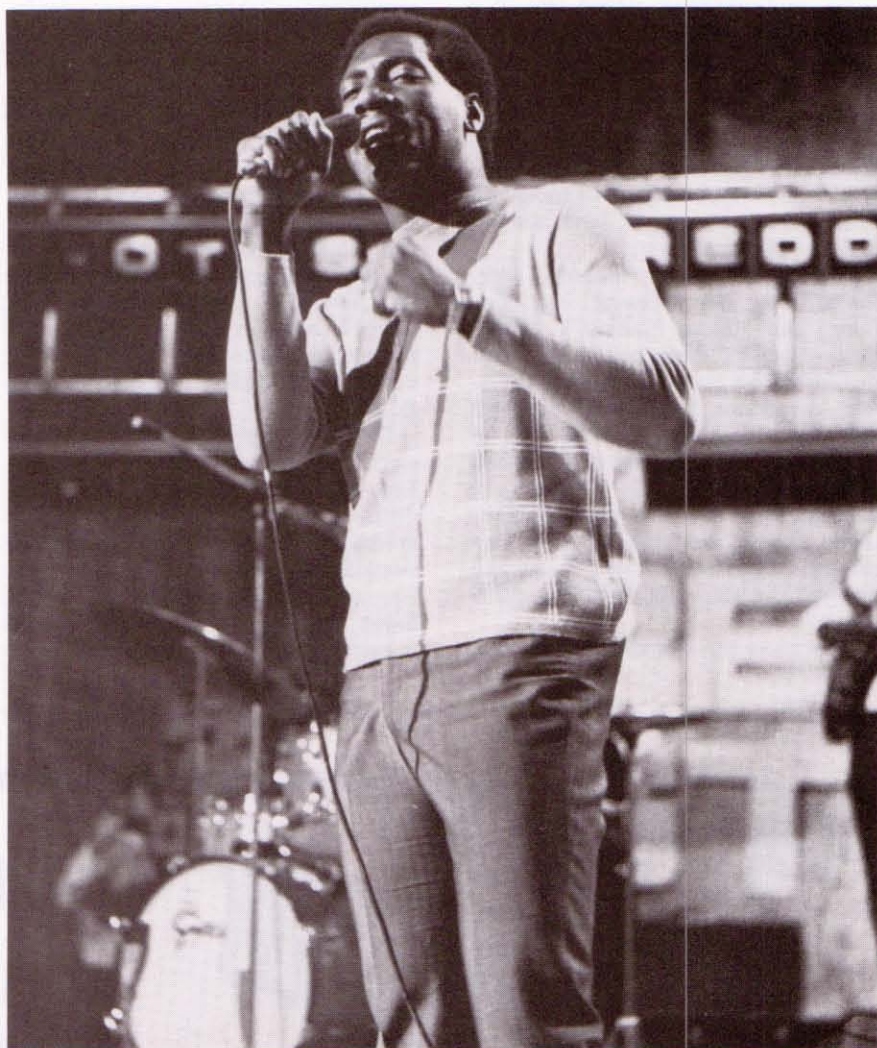
He captured the languid beauty of the rural South with wonderful ease. His version of early rhythm and blues star Solomon Burke's *Down In The Valley*, created a landscape of green grass, warm sun and tranquil surroundings, while remaining true to the song's story line. His voice, in fact, had many of the same qualities as that of Ray Charles, who was born not far from Otis's native soil and who still sings with that hauntingly beautiful worldly timbre.

Otis Redding was born in Dawson, Georgia into a family of eight. His father, a minister, brought the family to Macon when Otis was still a child. Macon was the home town of Little Richard, a singer whose revolutionary rock style would have a profound influence on young Redding. Otis's first singing experience was in his father's church, where he also learned to play a wide range of musical instruments, including the guitar, bass, organ, piano and drums.

Otis started working at odd jobs when he was 15 years old, and before long he joined a band called Johnny Jenkins and the Pinetoppers. He did some singing for them, but his main role as a Pinetopper was to be a chauffeur.

Nonetheless, a determined Otis Redding cut his first record in 1960 on the Bethlehem label. The A-side was an uptempo rocker entitled, *Shout Bamalama*, where his vocals, according to all reports, sounded just like Little Richard's. The record was greeted by a less than enthusiastic public.

A year later, Otis traveled to California, where, for six months, he worked as a cabbie and performed other odd jobs. He managed to cut a couple of singles on the Fine Arts label and another on the



Otis Redding

Alshire label (yet another Little Richard imitation). Both were sales fiascos and it was clear that Otis's admiration for Little Richard was slowing up his own creative development.

As 1962 rolled around, Otis was still driving the Pinetoppers to gigs at colleges and dance halls throughout the South. Although the fellows were making a steady living as a dance band, the Pinetoppers were looking to join a solid recording company and become national attractions.

So, in 1962, the group, along with Otis, their rather shy driver, traveled to Memphis to audition for Jim Stewart, the president of Stax Records. The company was only two years old at the time

and hadn't established itself yet as a major recording center. Stewart, however, was confident about his plan to mold the talents of Memphis musicians and singers and make it pay off.

Throughout the audition, Otis quietly but persistently suggested he be allowed to sing, too—an idea that simply fell on deaf ears. At the end of the session, Stewart finally gave in to Otis's pleas and the young kid from Macon belted out in the best traditions of his musical idol. *Oops*. Stewart all but stopped him dead in his tracks and told him to try his hand at a ballad. Somewhat embarrassed, Otis said he did have a self-composed ballad, *These Arms of Mine* and volunteered to sing it instead. It

B.M.I. Archives

didn't make waves. Stewart felt it was too country-influenced to appeal to the urban market he had targeted. But for some reason, the song was released anyway—even though Stewart said, “no one in the studio flipped over it.”

Otis's new song, however, became almost an immediate success. Stewart, to no one's surprise, signed Otis to a long-term contract with Volt Records, a subsidiary of Stax. Otis wrote and helped to arrange a long list of emotionally fulfilling and creative recordings, aided by Isaac Hayes on piano, the Barkays and the MG's (Booker T. Jones on organ, Steve Cropper on guitar, Duck Dunn on bass and Al Jackson on drums).

His compositions included *Mr. Pitiful*, *I've Been Loving You Too Long*, and Aretha Franklin's famous *Respect*—all of them helped to define the “Memphis Sound.” The late drummer Al Jackson, once recalled having a talk with Otis about life—the kind of earnest yet playful talk close friends sometimes have. “I said, ‘What are you griping about! You're on the road all the time, all you can look for is a little respect when you get home.’” The last line set the stage for Aretha's chart-buster.

Otis wrote most of the horn lines on

his recordings, which some believe explains the smooth interaction between his voice and the instruments. In fact, the horns and reeds on his recordings sound like extensions of his own voice, as he uses them to punctuate emotional passages and give a running commentary on the lyric. His songs, in fact, were created in a collaborative manner similar to the MG's, who worked off each other's riffs rather than follow charts. Otis's ability to improvise was always put to good use during recording sessions. When Stax decided Otis should record the Rolling Stones's *Satisfaction*, the final product was a classic Redding interpretation. The MG's Steve Cropper remembered, “We listened to the (Rolling Stones's) record five minutes before we recorded it. I copied down what I thought the lyrics were and handed the piece of paper to Otis. Before we got through, he threw the paper on the floor.”

During his days at Stax, Otis also started his own publishing company, Redwal Music, and a record label, Jotis, distributed by Stax. He worked to groom several performers. His greatest success was the honing of Arthur Conley, a rough baritone, who recorded *Sweet Soul Music*; Otis's powerhouse tribute to the Memphis Sound.

By 1966, his acceptance among urban and rural blacks rivaled James Brown and many of the Motown acts. While commercial success in America's pop mainstream eluded him for quite some time, he was popular in England and France, where fans honored him as one of their own.

His break into the pop field occurred at the same time and at the same place as it did for Jimi Hendrix—at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967. Otis was on the bill with Janis Joplin, Simon and Garfunkel, Jefferson Airplane and the Who.

This commercial success brought him the long awaited financial rewards—enough to buy a private plane that soon thereafter would fall out of the Wisconsin sky and bring his life to an abrupt end.

Otis's funeral was held in the Macon County Auditorium where 4500 fans flocked to pay final tribute.

Otis Redding has been immortalized on wax. Among the most memorable long playing albums are: “History of Otis Redding”(1967), “Otis Blue”(1965), “In Person At The Whiskey A Go-Go,” and “Otis Redding/Jimi Hendrix At The Monterey Pop Festival.”

—Nelson George



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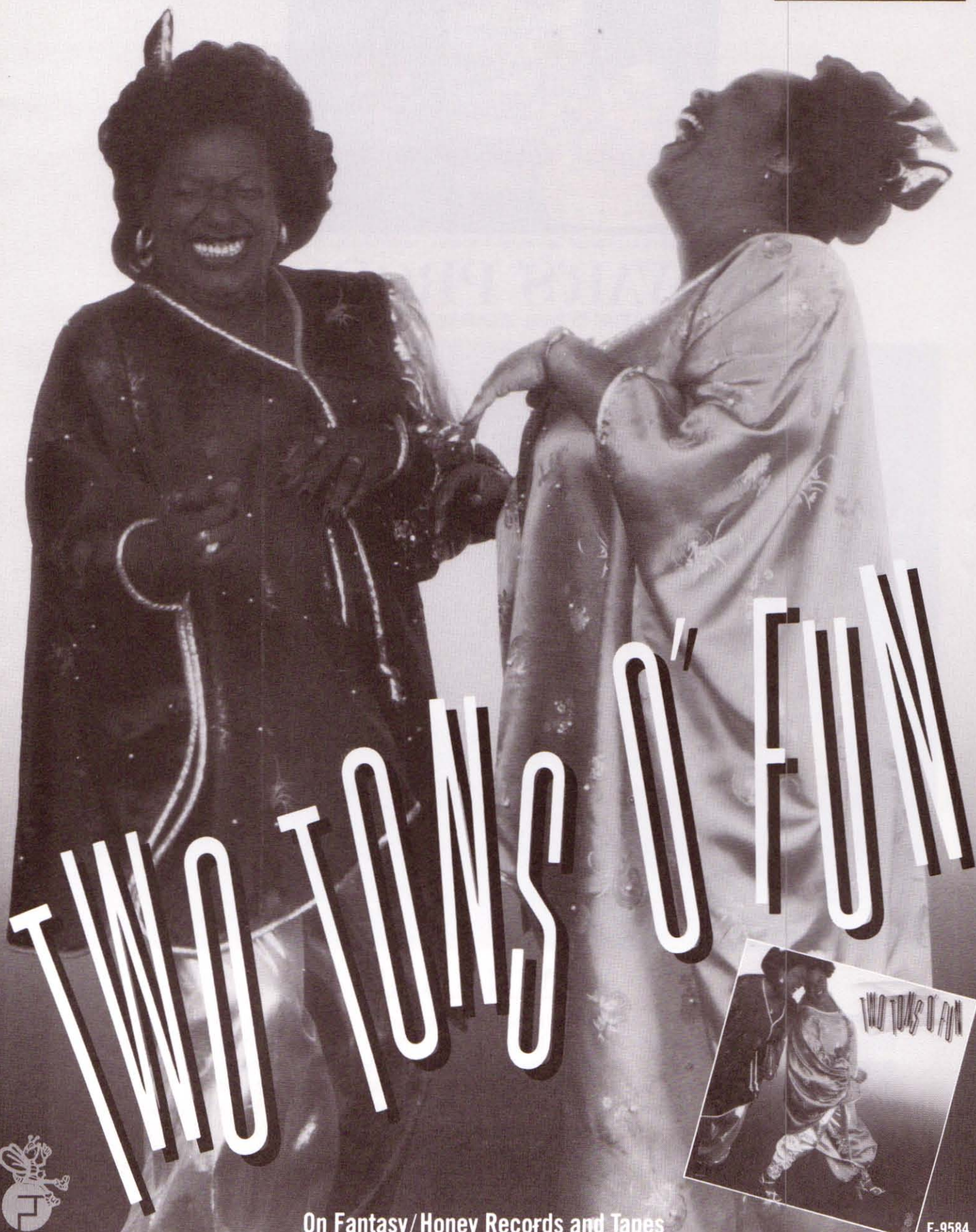
Music Room

On Fri., and Sat.
May 23 and 24

★ **CECILE GRIER** ★

Show times:
10 P.M. and Midnight

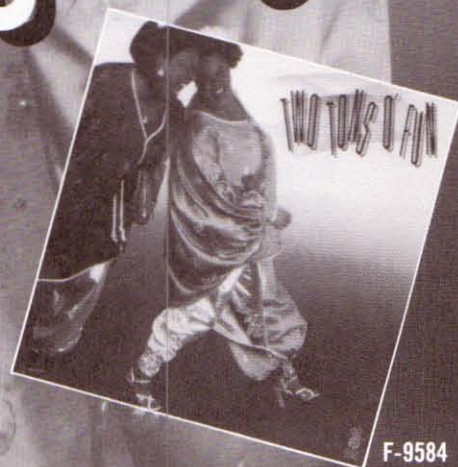
THESE WOMEN CAN SING!



TWO TONS O' FUN



On Fantasy/Honey Records and Tapes



F-9584



BLENDING SCOTCH WHISKY - 86.8 PROOF - © SCHENLEY IMPORTS CO., N.Y., N.Y.

DEWAR'S® PROFILE

A thirst for living...a taste for fine Scotch.



LU WILLARD

PROFESSION: President of Lu Willard Enterprises, custom jewelry designing.

LOCATION: New York, New York.

HOBBIES: Tennis, clock collecting.

LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:

Recipient of the American Heritage and Freedom Award for work with youth.

QUOTE: "I would like to encourage people to take advantage of the opportunities to enter into the mainstream of the economy, rather than accept the fringe benefits that can so often make us victims of chance. My work in jewelry designing has enabled me to enjoy the confidence of all people of all professions."

PROFILE: A person who is dedicated to helping other people because she feels so many people have helped her.

SCOTCH: Dewar's "White Label"®

Lu Willard