

PORTLAND OBSERVER

Entertainment



Cabaret singer Liza Minnelli in the kitchen of her rooming house in the Allied Artists release "Cabaret", the film version of the hit Broadway musical. The film version authentically recalls the synthetic gaiety and decadence of Germany in the early 1930's when human values were drastically changing and the Nazis were coming into popularity.

Black Drama

Part 2

A brief analysis of two presentations shows how various playwrights go about "heightening the consciousness." "The Black Terror" is a no-holds-barred look at revolution. Wesley, a 26-year old who graduated from Howard University at the dawn of its black student activist movement, said he was inspired to write the play in 1970, after the police raids on Black Panther Party headquarters in Los Angeles and Chicago. "The Man" in "Ain't Supposed to Die" is not only the brutal cop; he is a white symbol above the stage, who pulls the strings over the black ghetto as if the residents were puppets.

While the surge of black drama is welcomed by blacks, many criticize what they consider an emphasis on the negative. "Jet" magazine critic Peter Bailey, for example, praised "Ain't Supposed to Die" and "Black Terror." But he added, "Even if just for novelty's sake, it would be great to see a play where black folks move and groove together to accomplish a desired goal." This feeling was echoed even by some of the cast of "Black Terror."

Such a presentation would be "The Psychic Pretenders," in which all ends well, with united and learned blacks moving forward. Wesley maintains that "Black Terror" is positive, inasmuch as the deposed revolutionary survives and already has vowed to engage in tedious community organization.

But whether the drama is "negative" or "positive," today's black in the theatre—regardless of his age—feels that his primary target is the black audience. This is true of veterans like Earl Sydnor, who portrays a black middle-class

Uncle Tom in "Black Terror," and "Inner City's" Paulette Ellen Jones, a relative newcomer. Ed Bullins said this is because, "unlike the cracker culture, we have something to work for—nation building." Some say that though they accept lucrative roles "downtown," they would prefer—and feel their basic responsibility is—working in black theatres "uptown."

But several also feel they have a message for whites—as well as well-heeled blacks. They have different ways of doing this. The blacks in "Inner City," for example, convey the message mainly by injecting their black personalities into their roles. Miss Jones, ad libbing, sometimes will demand the audience's attention while she talks about a black domestic "Cinderella" whose story ends in despair.

A striking example is Minnie Gentry's "Put a Curse on You," the chilling finale to "Ain't Supposed to Die." Following the rape of a black woman by two policemen and the police slaying of a fleeing theft suspect, a superstitious old woman (Miss Gentry) "casts a spell" on the audience. Often she confronts front-row customers almost eye-to-eye. The "curse" is the same ill of the ghetto visited on the affluent who allow the conditions to continue.

"That's the way I personally feel," she explained backstage recently. "From the very beginning, when I move on to the stage at the opening parade, this is building from each situation and each incident. It's building with me, personally; the character is me. And finally, at the end, I mean that. I think it is valid, and I believe it."

Have Your Birthday party free at Geneva's



Katie Lipscomb celebrates her birthday party with her sister, Myrtle Dinkens, at Geneva's.

Photo by Paul Knauts

Earth Day Art show set

The Oregon Environmental Council announced that an environmental art exhibit, "Earth Treasure Hunt," will be held at the downtown Multnomah County Library on Earth Day, April 22. Open to all, the show will be an opportunity for concerned persons to express their ideas and feelings about the environment using the many mediums of art—photography, music, collage, sculpture, poetry, painting, display, film, etc.

"What on Earth do You Treasure and what Endangers it?" is the theme of the show. The OEC intends to exhibit all entries received and, after the show, to use many of the contributions for permanent displays, traveling exhibits, and gifts to environmental groups. Entries or announcements of

intent to enter must be sent to the OEC office (4315 S.W. Corbett, Portland, Oregon 97201) by April 1.

Jane Lyle, of the OEC Education Committee, commented: "Earth Treasure Hunt will feature artworks by people who don't usually consider themselves as artists but who have strong feelings about the environmental crisis. Entries can focus on broad issues ('clean air versus the car') or on narrower ones (a rural neighborhood versus a housing development). They can be simple (a snapshot, for example) or elaborate (a film), constructed from found materials or with the usual artists' supplies. An informational poster is available in small or large quantities from the OEC office (222-5369).

Black Opera star gains success

In his native Chicago, Edward Pierson attended DuSable High School and graduated from Roosevelt University. In the span of time between DuSable and Roosevelt he attended Savannah (Ga.) State College. It was there that he first started serious singing, though his college basketball coach did not approve of a recipient of an athletic scholarship going in for such a time

consuming hobby. Nevertheless, Ed played basketball and football and was a member of the Choir and president of the Glee Club. Serious vocal lessons did not begin, however, until after he obtained his BA and started teaching in the Chicago public schools.

It was also in Chicago that Edward Pierson got his operatic start, first singing principal roles with small companies and then making his debut in "Don Carlo" with the Chicago Lyric Opera in 1964.

His rich and expressive bass-baritone was noticed by many and he has been heard widely with such orchestras as the Chicago Symphony, the Hollywood Bowl Symphony, the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, the Grant Park Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the Chicago NBC Orchestra. Presently under contract with the Lincoln Center New York City Opera, Edward Pierson moved east with his family in 1966 and made his debut at the New York City Opera in "Don Rodrigo." Since then, he has sung there such roles as Creon in Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex," Don Magnifico in "Cenerentola," Boris in "Katerina Ismailova," Scarpia in "Tosca," Bartolo in "The Barber of Seville," Monterone in "Rigoletto," Don Julian in "Don Rodrigo," and the title role in "Prince Igor." His repertoire consists now of over thirty roles.

Edward Pierson was also selected for the leading baritone role in the American premiere of Britten's "Burning Fiery Furnace" and for the role of the Ferryman in the same composer's "Curlew River" at the Caramoor Festival. He sang the title role in the Washington Opera's American premiere of Delius' "Koananga."

Being tall and good looking with a charming personality, Edward Pierson has also found success in musicals, notably in the role of Joe in "Show Boat" which he has sung more than 200 times. In the 1966 Lincoln Center production of that work he replaced William Warfield, with the City Center Gilbert and Sullivan Company he made his debut in the role of the Mikado.

The recipient of a Martia Baird Rockefeller Grant in 1967 for the study of German and Wagnerian roles, he received another Rockefeller award in 1968 for the study of Italian.

In addition to his activities at the New York City Opera, Edward Pierson has toured with the New York Pro Musica in the plays of "Daniel" and "Herod," and has performed at Carnegie and Philharmonic Halls.

Shakespearean seminar set

PORTLAND, ORE., -- The Oregon Shakespeare Festival's fifth annual "Bard's Prologue" lectures series for Portland area residents has been scheduled to begin March 16 and will run for five consecutive weeks, with an "epilogue" session scheduled after the summer season.

The annual seminar series will again be conducted by Dr. James S. Hart, of Portland State University's English faculty, Thursday mornings beginning at 10:30 in the home of Festival Association Board member, Mrs. Lamar Tooze, Jr.

The seminar, which is titled "The Range of Comedy" will include: Uncle Vanya, March 16; Taming of the Shrew, March 23; Love's Labour's Lost, March 30; Henry the

Fourth, Part Two, April 6; and Troilus and Cressida, April 13. A critical review session is planned after the Festival's summer season, as part of the lecture series.

Dr. Hart has been a guest lecturer at the Festival's Institute of Renaissance Studies in Ashland and gives fresh insight to provide a better understanding of the plays being produced during this season's Festival/STAGE II and the regular summer Shakespearean Festival.

Portland area residents interested in reserving space for this Spring series should contact: Mrs. Lamar Tooze, Jr., 5500 S.W. Hewett Blvd., Portland or call (503) 292-1886.



Portland Community College's Community Orchestra presented a concert at West Moreland Union Manor. The orchestra is made up of thirty musicians, ranging in age from 18 to 80.

"The Bus is Coming"

The new, black-made motion picture, "The Bus is Coming," is a film every member of the family can see and, according to certain critics, "should see."

Produced by Horace Jackson, directed by Wendell James Franklin for their K-Calb Productions firm, "Bus" is a multi-faceted movie, a story of black life in small-town, U.S.A., a movie for today.

The story revolves around the brutal police murder of a militant, young black man. The murder sets the people of the town at odds with each other. Angered black militants are ready to burn the town down.

But a returning Vietnam war veteran wants to give the "system" a chance.

During its journey from beginning to end, "The Bus is Coming" examines and appraises black and white alike in the intense pressure-cooker of inflamed racial relationships.

But it is also a movie which encompasses a warm love story between handsome, young stars Mike Sims and Stephanie Faulkner. This is not a love affair, however, that does not know moments of tension and conflict.

Miss Faulkner portrays the sister of the leader of the militant Black Fist group (Burl Bullock). She loves Sims, who on first returning from Vietnam to find his brother brutally murdered, is moderate. She is torn between her loyalty to her brother and her love for Sims.

One of the most interesting characters in the movie is "Miss Nickerson," played by the talented, attractive Sandra Reed.

Although she is young and black, Miss Nickerson is a conservative school teacher—and, moreover, the mistress of a bigoted, white cop.

It's a demanding dramatic role. But Miss Reed handles it expertly.

Esquires schedule fashion show, dance

On Sunday afternoon, March 26, 1972, between the hours of 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The Royal Esquire Club will present its Annual Fashion Show and Dance. This years theme will feature your choice of colors.

A complete sport scene will be featured with Peyton Storli's Leather Look, including skirts, caps, pants, coats, swim suits as well as belts, purses and saddle bags. Most of Mr. Storli's work has been to private individuals, made to order. He is expanding his work to the general public at 7824 S.W. 5th Ave.

Also being featured will be men's wear from the Bolden

Bear, Nudelman Brothers, and Womens Wear from and LaRue's.

Lucius C. Williams, Chairman of this years show, promises a better show than ever before, featuring Bobby Jo Washington, Grace Baldwin, Nathan Reddi, Vashti McKenzie and other models you will enjoy. A dance will follow the show with James Allen furnishing the music. This affair will be held at the Town Hall, 3425 N. Montana. Tickets are available at the House of Sound or from your favorite Esquire. Mark this date on your Calendar and plan to attend.

Weiskopf Memorial Heart Concert

Mezzo soprano Joann Grillo and tenor Giuseppe Campora will return to Portland June 11 to take part in the Weiskopf Heart Concert at the Civic Auditorium. Along with numerous other singers and instrumentalists they will donate their time and talents to establish a research fund in the name of the late Maestro Herbert Weiskopf for the Oregon Heart Association.

Miss Grillo, leading mezzo with the Metropolitan Opera Company, sings also with the largest opera houses of Europe. This season she appeared as the heroines in three of the most demanding French operas -- "Werther" with the Paris Opera Comique; "Carmen" in Gelsenkirchen, and "Samson and Delilah" in Rouen, France. She recently was heard as Maddalena in the Saturday afternoon broadcast of "Rigoletto" from the Met.

Giuseppe Campora, who is so popular with Portland audiences due to his appearances here in "La Boheme," "Lucia di Lammermoor," and "La Rondine," makes his home in Italy, where he sings regularly with La Scala in Milan. For many years on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera, he sings throughout the United States, Canada and South America.

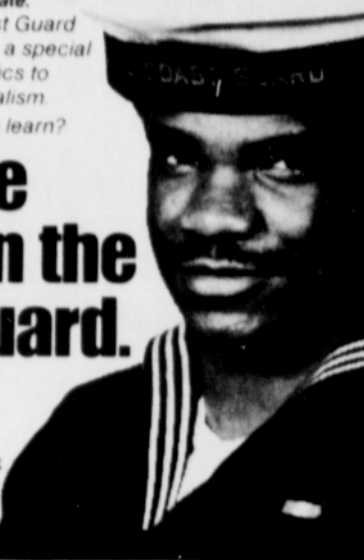
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