Mrs. Rogers C. B. Morton, wife of the Secretary of the Interior, is shown with three of the 400 or more District of Columbia school children who recently attended their first legitimate theater performance -- "Godspell", which has been a major hit at Ford's Theater in the Nation's Capital.

"Theater in the Summertime" is part of the "summer in the parks" program of the Interior Department's National Park Service. The NPS is custodian of Ford's Theater, the historic site where President Abraham Lincoln was shot. It was reopened as a theater a few years ago.

Mrs. Morton often serves as hostess to the groups of school children who attend special matinee performances at Ford's during the summer months.

Temptations release 'All Directions'

The Temptations have just released a new album on Gordy Records entitled "All Directions."

The new effort, which follows the Tempts' current best-selling LP, "Solid Rock," is just what the title implies. Produced by Motown's Norman Whitfield, with arrangments by Paul Riser, the new release runs the gamut in musical directions.

In addition to "Funky Music Sho Nuff Turns Me On" and "Mother Nature," the Tempts' current double-sided hit single, "All Directions" includes the Whitfield-Strong hit "Papa Was A Rolling Stone" and "Run Charlie Run," a new composition by Maurice King and Jan Forman.

The combined talents of Melvin Franklin, Dennis Edwards, Otis Williams, Damon Harris and Richard Street are equally well showcased on "I Ain't Got Nothing" and "Love Woke Me Up This Morning," and the Isaac Hayes' original "Do Your Thing" takes on a new look via the group's unique rendition.

The Temptations' "All Directions" will be available throughout the country next week.

Yellow Pearl released

A volunteer group of young Asian Americans has published "Yellow Pearl." The publication expresses the new consciousness of young Asians in America.

"Yellow Pearl" is a boxed package containing 59 original songs and poetry with graphics in an 11" x 11" format. Included are the music and lyrics of singers/composers Joanne Miyamoto and Chris Iijima and Charlie Chin. It is available at $2.50 per copy at the Basement Workshop, 54 Elizabeth St., Chinatown, N.Y. 10013 (include 50¢ extra for mail orders). Designed as an art portfolio display, "Yellow Pearl" is being sold at production cost to make the works of these Asian Americans as widely available as possible.

"Yellow Pearl" is the first project of the American Creative Arts program of the Basement Workshop, Inc., a non-profit organization located in New York City's Chinatown. The program aims to present and encourage the creative talents of Asian Americans.

The aim of the Basement Workshop, Inc. is to serve the Asian American communities by promoting cultural expression and community action. To continue, tax-deductible donations to the Workshop are urgently needed.

PCC drama classes teach fundamentals

The opening of the new Communications building at Portland Community College this fall will add something new to the school's drama program--a "real" stage. In the past, PCC drama students have had to rely upon their creativity and imagination to transform a lecture hall into a theatre, but new facilities will mean a regular stage, theatrical lighting with a dimmer board, dressing and make-up rooms.

There are three segments to the PCC drama program which is aimed at preparing the college transfer student for his junior and senior year at a four-year institution, and providing a creative outlet for the two-year student who is interested in drama.

In "Fundamentals of Acting" students use improvisational techniques to practice acting out situations both in pantomime and spontaneous dialogue. They learn skills in body movement, facial expression, and voice projection as well as gain poise and confidence in their performing skills.

"I cannot produce trained actors in one year," says Rod Stave, PCC drama instructor, "that takes many years. But, I can give students a firm foundation on which to build. As a matter of fact, I recommend the course to all students for physical and personality development."

"Projects in Theatre" is for students who have had some theatrical training or experience. All facets of play production are covered climaxing with an "on-stage" presentation by students who learn to look at a play from a point of view other than that of the actor. Stave looks forward to a major public production each term.

"Appreciation of Drama" is for everyone who enjoys drama.

Jeff Beck gives Portland concert

Jeff Beck, a legendary figure in rock music widely acclaimed as one of the world's truly great guitarists, comes to Portland for two performances on Friday, August 18 at the Paramount Theater. Shows will be at 7:00 and 10:30 p.m. Also appearing will be ARGENT, who's current hit record is "Hold Your Head Up"; and FOGHAT, a new and vital English group featuring three former members of Savoy Brown.

Jeff Beck burst onto the international rock scene in 1967 as lead guitarist for the Yardbirds at a time when the technical expertise of many virtuoso rock guitarists was the subject of constant comparison. Ultimately three stood out from the crowd, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix and Jeff Beck.

After his stint with the Yardbirds, Beck formed the original Jeff Beck Group and brought to prominence singer Rod Stewart and bass player Ron Wood. Beck's ability to find dynamic talent to incorporate into his group has been subsequently demonstrated on several occasions. The current group features pianist Max Middleton, Clive Chamon on bass, singer Bob Tench and drummer Cozy Powell and has proved to be a powerful musical unit with their album, "Jeff Beck Group." Earlier Beck albums include the rock classic "Beck-Ola."

ARGENT, the goup preceding Jeff Beck in the concert, recently produced a hit album, "All Together Now," from which their fast selling single is taken. Prior to that they initiated the song "Liar" which Three Dog Night made into a million seller. The group is led by Rod Argent, formerly of the Zombies.

FOGHAT is a blues oriented rock group that has enjoyed critical success with their first album, entitled, "Foghat."

Book review: I Know Why a Caged Bird Sings

By James (Doc) Rogers

I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou, Bantam Books, $1.25

In 1926, during the midst of the Harlem Literary Renaissance on the East coast, Langston Hughes, the emminent Black poet and author, postulated his vision of the duties and responsibilities of the Black literary artist in a now classical essay entitled: "The Negro and The Racial Mountain." Essentially, Langston Hughes believed that Black literature of the Twenties and Thirties should not only be concerned with mastery of aesthetics, social content and execution; but that in addition Black literary artists must be governed by a moral integrity that demands an honest and accurate depiction of the Black experience in American life. Thus, the Black artist as literary dissiminator of Black cultural ethos joins the ranks of the liberating vanguard in our community as both social commentator and interpreter without fear or favor for either "negro" or white critics. The Black artist's twofold responsibility is directed toward both himself and his community. Thus Hughes could write: "Let Paul Robeson, singing "Water Boy," and Rudolph Fisher, writing about the streets of Harlem, (I intend to write a novel about the Albina district) and Jean Toomer, holding the heart of Georgia in his hands, and Aaron Douglas, drawing strange black fantasies, cause the smug Negro middle class to turn from their white, respectable, ordinary books and papers to catch a glimmer of their own beauty. We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it does not matter! If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves."

For the younger readers of the Observer I would like to repeat one remarkable phrase from Hughes essay: ". . . to catch a glimmer of their (our) own beauty." That is what you must see, know and understand. Not the rhetoric of Black and Beautiful . . . but rather its essence and meaning.

Which is a round-about-way of launching my favorite categorical imperative. Which is simply this. The singular important body of literature produced in America today, is that written by Black playwrights, poets and novelists. That is: Ed Bullins, John Williams, Nikki Giovanni, Robert Hayden, Leroi Jones (Imamu Baraka), James Baldwin, James Mcpherson, William Melvin Kelly, Sonia Sanchez and many others. Black writers are rapidly becoming the dominant force on the American literary scene. This can not be debated!

One brilliant illustration is Maya Angelou's I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings.

The title of the book is taken from a brief, satirical poem of the 19th century Black poet, Paul Lawrence Dunbar; and is autobiographical with flashes of fictional allusions. Yet, this unique work is a painful revelation of the personal, yet universal, experience of Black women in White Nationalist American society. For it contains both elements of the typical and atypical incidents in Ms. Angelou's troubled childhood; a childhood that often scars and tramatizes the young minds and memories of so many of our youth - especially Black females. In Caged Bird . . . Maya recalls how, at a very impressionable age, she was sent to live with her protective and loving grandmother, a remarkably determined and resilent women who operated a General Store for the Black community in Stamps, Arkansas, (much like the Black woman who operates the store across from the Elks Club on Tillamook), in opposition to the hostility of the majority of local whites in that small, provincial Southern town. One day the store is invaded by a "gaggle . . . of po-white trash" that lived on her mother's farm land behind the school. The white children taunt, imitate and mock the Black girl's parents until she shakes with tears and suppressed rage: ". . . the dirty little (white) children. . . threw their orders around the Store like lashes from a cat-o'nine-tails . . . I suppose my lifelong paranoia was born in those cold, molasses-slow minutes . . . those scruffy children caused me the most painful and confusing experience I had ever had . . . They came finally to stand on the ground in front of Momma. At first they pretended seriousness. Then one of them wrapped her right arm in the crook of her left, pushed out her mouth and started to hum. I realized she was aping my grandmother . . . then she lifted her chest, folded her arms and mocked that strange carriage that was Annie Henderson. Another laughed, 'Naw, you can't do it. Your mouth ain't pooched out enough. It's like this.' "

It is at this moment that Maya Angelou, like too many young Black people, begins to regard herself as physically unattractive. And throughout this apocalyptic narrative we are privy to a harrowing series of similar episodes.

DOC ROGERS

Ms. Angelou learns at a very early age that because she was Black, and "thick-lipped and her head was covered with black, steel wool," that she was ugly, unlovable, and the butt of her playmates' jests. She thus fantasizes whiteness. That one day "she would wake up out of her black ugly dream, and my real hair, which would then be long and blond, would take the place of my kinky mass that Momma wouldn't let me straighten." Right on for Momma!

Later she is raped while visiting relatives in St. Louis. She has a child out of wedlock. (Thanks to my good friends in Black Women's Liberation an unwed mother no longer carries the irrational stigma of past years.) Thus, repeatedly, throughout Caged Bird . . . we are witness to the survival strategems of a strong-willed Black woman who is victim of social pressures and racist experiences which, as James Baldwin says, "intent is to maim and kill her.' (And, may I add, so many Black women like her.) Yet Ms. Maya Angelou, like unheralded legions of Black women in American history, survives this labyrinth of self-hate and painful encounters. (We all know about the trials and tribulations of Angela Davis or Mrs. Martin Luther King . . . but what do we know about Sister Sadie down the block . . . and what she endures to survive. Think about it!) Somehow Maya manages to salvage a measure of self-respect and hope, not a romanticized Disney-land optimism; but, rather a semblance of self-awareness that so many Black people draw from that translucent realm which lies between American myth and reality. Ms. Maya Angelou becomes a novelist, poet, movie-script writer and political activist with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference among other enviable contributions to the Black community.

I have no intention here of completely plotting the book for you in this brief review. Suffice it to say . . . that Caged Bird in the words of Jimmy Baldwin is . . . "a testimony from a Black sister marking the beginning of a new era in the minds and hearts of all Black men and women. . ."

Amen, Baldwin.

And take care. As Dick Gregory says: "We gon' be allll-right! "

"Doc"

'Hair' performs here

America's most popular musical "HAIR," now on a nationwide farewell tour, returns to Portland for five performances August 25 through 27 in the Portland Auditorium. Evening performances may be seen Friday at 8:30 p.m., Saturday at 6:00 and 10:00 p.m., and Sunday at 8:00 p.m. The Sunday matinee will be at 2:30 p.m.

The "Venus Company" of America's famed tribal love-rock musical offers Portland it's final opportunity to witness what many feel is the most exciting and relevant experience in the history of the theatre.

The exuberance of the cast, their belief in the show's message of love, and songs like "Aquarius," "Let the Sun Shine In," "Hair," "One is the Loneliest Number," and "Good Morning Starshine," are all reasons why "HAIR" is seen by many people two and even three times.

Worldwide, "HAIR" has played more cities and been seen by more people than any other musical in history.

In Portland, this limited engagement is presented by Northwest Releasing. Tickets are available at the Meier & Frank Ticket Office, Stevens & Sons Jewelers, Lincoln Savings offices in Beaverton, Hillsboro and Tigard, and the Auditorium Box Office.

Walt Frazier best dressed

Walt Frazier has been named "Best Dressed Jack" in Esquire magazine's August issue. The New York Knicks' superstar heads the list of ten most fashionable athletes selected by a panel of leading authorities in the world of sports. The panel included Jim Brown, Michael Burke, Frank Gifford, Joe Namath and Billy Talbert, who were assisted by Esquire's Fashion Editor. NBA All-Star, Frazier, was the only sportsman to win unanimous endorsement of the five-man panel. "It is not for nothing that he is known as Clyde," says the magazine, "a name bespeaking dash, dicty and an unpredictability that one day decrees a free-for-all version of a business suit and the next a dashiki."

The comic strip gang from "Peanuts" will come alive when the Portland State University Summer Stock Company stages the hit musical staged during the Coaster's four-year summer season. Performances Wednesday through Sunday evenings begin at 8:30 p.m. Additional Saturday matinees at 2:30 p.m. August 12 and 19 have been scheduled.

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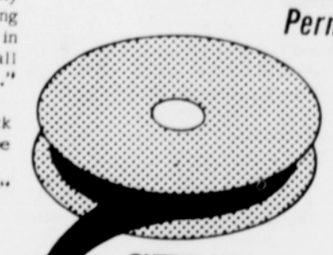

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