

Black theater owner wants better opportunity

Special Report by Jim Rogers

Harvey L. Garnett, the enterprising, young owner of Portland's only Black owned movie theater, the Alameda, 300 N.E. Alberta, in an exclusive interview with this reporter for THE PORTLAND OBSERVER, charged the major film distributors releasing films in Oregon have not given him the opportunities and understanding of the specific problems of being a Black theater owner.

Mr. Garnett said that in "nearly every instance in which a first-rate Black film, with Black directors and Black actors is released in Portland, that the film distributors refused to allow me to have first-run privileges, but instead, gave the film to white-owned theaters in the downtown area or even to drive-ins."

Garnett said that the white film distributing companies justify their policies by arguing that "we gave you second and third run rights, but Black people don't support you." Also the main interest of the distributors is to make a profit and they state that money is the "Name of the game". Also they state that "whoever can offer the highest bid gets the first run film."

Blacks want to see first run movies and will not wait for the film to come to the Alameda, preferring to go downtown or to the Drive-In to see the first run movies. It is difficult for a Black man to make a profit on the leavings -- second and third runs.

It is apparent to this reporter that at a time when 35% of the movie-going public are Black Americans, the movie distributors in Portland have acted unfairly to exclude



HARRY GARNETT

a Black theater owner from fairly profiting in the work and creations of Black actors, writers and directors.

Garnett added that when he first opened the Alameda, nearly five years ago, "many whites would attend regularly when they did not know that it was a Black theater; but, possible because of the new awareness that the theater was Black owned, many whites began to stay away."

When I asked him about the charge by white critics in THE OREGONIAN and the OREGON JOURNAL, that many of the new Black films were racist and exploitive, Mr. Garnett responded that if Black actors and directors "were ever to achieve the financial freedom and professional experience to produce really good movies for the Black community, then in the infant stage, as they learn the rudiments of the trade, they would make many mistakes and some bad films. White film producers have been making bad films for decades. Why are the critics attacking Black film-makers and actors. I try to show the best... what else can I do?"

This report is in complete agreement with Harvey Garnett. For, in the first two weeks in October, his theater will show the important new film THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X, a classic depiction of one of the great Black leaders of our time. Garnett said that he "intends to say in business as long as possible because he feels that it gives a real service to both the white and Black community in understanding and communication

between the races."

Garnett said that he would like to open Black theaters in Eugene and Salem; and that he would like to expand the Alameda to include facilities for Black dramatic and musical talent, "hopefully to get some of our young Black people off the streets of Portland and into the creative arts."

Garnett, a former business administration major at both Portland State and Oregon Tech., said that he is presently taking film-editing courses in the hope of entering the film-making field in the near future.

Harvey L. Garnett impressed this reporter as a young Black businessman struggling against racist elements in Portland to grow in his profession and to extend an important service to the Black community. I think it is in the interest of the Black community to support him.

The following is a list of Black-oriented films released since 1970, that Harvey Garnett has either shown or can obtain with your support:

Angel Levine, Angela Davis: Portrait of a Revolutionary, Black Jesus, Brother John, Bus Is Coming, Cool Breeze, Cotton Comes to Harlem, Final Comedown, George, Georgia, Halls of Anger, Honky, Legend of Nigger Charley, Liberation of L.B. Jones, Malcolm X, Man and Boy, Melinda, Organization, Plze Called Today, Shaft, Shaft's Big Score, Skin Game, Slaughter, Soul Soldier, Soul to Soul, Sounder, Super Fly, Sweet Sweetback's BadAsses Song, The Call Me Mister Tibbs, Watermelon Man.

Book review

By Lenwood G. Davis

BLACK RESISTANCE/WHITE LAW: A HISTORY OF CONSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN AMERICA. Mary Frances Berry. New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, 1971, pp. 268.

BLACK RESISTANCE/WHITE LAW describes and analyzes constitutionally sanctioned violence against Black people in the United States and overt violent suppression on the part of the American government from 1619 with the introduction of the system of slavery to present. The author contends that historically the government's policy toward Blacks was and is based on essentially racism and not on legal or constitutional grounds.

The writer surmises that even before the American Revolution internal control of Blacks by militia and adjunct patrols was a well-established system by the colonists. Furthermore, the maintenance of the system of slavery through the use of force was a primary problem of colonial defense. Therefore, the constitutional convention remedied the question of suppressing insurrections and revolts on the part of slaves by passing the Fugitive Slave Clause and the Militia Act.

Dr. Berry points out that in the period from 1800-1833, the military arm of the United States proved its reliability to

the southern slavery interests in the Prosser, Andry, Vasey and Turner revolts. Moreover, during these years, the proslavery provisions of the United States Constitution were reinforced by a body of tradition and practice; federal responsibility for the defense of slavery became more deeply entrenched in national policy, perhaps even beyond the possibility of reversal.

Even though the book is primarily concerned with Black resistance, it does have two chapters on the Seminole Indians and the First and Second Seminole Wars. The writer discusses the history of the United States in its relations with the Indians in the First and Second Seminole Wars. The government clearly illustrated that it would use military power to support slavery at any cost even to the violation of the Indians' rights. Hence, the Indian removal policy was thought necessary. The enforcement of that policy was a major concern of the federal army for twenty years, and by the end of the war, military costs alone were well over twenty million dollars. As William Jay said in 1839, it was a war which had the primary objective of saving Florida for slavery.

The national proslavery policies demonstrated in the Seminole Wars found further

reinforcement during the pre-Civil War years as the federal army was consistently used to suppress the increasing activities of the abolitionists. The proslavery forces in the national government gained momentum in the 1840's and 1850's with the extension of slavery in Texas and the Fugitive Slave Law of the Compromise of 1850.

The incident at Harper's Ferry that was led by the abolitionist John Brown in 1857, culminated a tradition dating from 1790 in which national troops were used to defend slavery and suppress those who would attack or subvert it.

The coming of the Civil War revealed that the national government had no intention of withdrawing its protection of slavery. However, it was secession on the part of the southern states that precipitated emancipation and an end to federal support of slavery. Therefore, the South left federal protection out of the fear of losing slavery; the federal government did not, however, abandon the institution of slavery.

Even after the southern states returned to the Union, the military was still required to keep order under the Reconstruction Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment along with several statutes were relegated into oblivion with the Hayes Compromise of 1877. This agreement assured the South that federal troops would not be called upon for civil duty in the South, which was a reconciliation made by the white population at the expense of the Blacks. Although the military had delivered the Black vote to the Republican party for a short time, it had done little to protect Blacks from violence by whites. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments left the Domestic Violence Clause of the Constitution virtually untouched; there was no will to invoke the Constitution to aid the Blacks. Federal troops still had to be requested by local authorities; and, needless to say, local authorities were bent on suppressing, not protecting, the Black people in the United States.

Professor Berry contends that the debilitated state of law enforcement and the violence that dominated race relations in the United States between 1877 and 1900 could not establish precedence over the concurrent national issues - the Indians, the new industrialism, the labor movement, agrarian reform movements, the silver and tariff issues, the waves of immigrants, and the new role of the United States as an imperialist power - cap (Please turn to p. 8 col. 4)



OSSIE DAVIS



SAMMY DAVIS

"Heavy Organ" combines Bach and psychedelics

"Heavy Organ", the latest and greatest in "total" musical experience, is billed for Portland's Civic Auditorium on Sunday, Oct. 1, at 8:00 p.m. Starring the incredible organist, Virgil Fox, and Revelation Lights in an incomparable and awe-inspiring evening, "Heavy Organ" provides a new experience in combining the magnificent music of J.S. Bach with the hypnotics of psychedelic light.

Greatest living virtuoso of the organ, Virgil Fox has involved an entirely new audience with this extraordinary sight and sound experience. His instrument is the fantastic Rodgers touring organ, a mighty 56-rand electronic organ amplified by 144 speakers. Revelation Lights,

an integral part of "Heavy Organ", is the product of Joshua White, creator of the original Joshua Light Show. Launched in 1970 at New York's Citadel of Rock, Fillmore East, "Heavy Organ" has made musical history ever since. Thundering ovations, sold-out house, return engagements and three best-selling albums document this phenomenon. Because of his unique charisma and charm, Virgil Fox becomes the only classical artist to succeed in such a revolutionary venture. Not only a part of the surging interest among the young in classical music, he may well be its principal maker.

Tickets for "Heavy Organ" are on sale now at Celebrity Attractions, 1010 S.W. Morrison in Portland.

"Be Somebody" draws stars

Many top stars have donated their time and talents to the first annual OIC Day, October 11, a day to focus national attention on the need for job training. In 40 cities OIC Day will be observed by a closed-circuit telecast that will be held, with the help of the local Coca-Cola bottler, to raise a million dollars for OIC's job training.

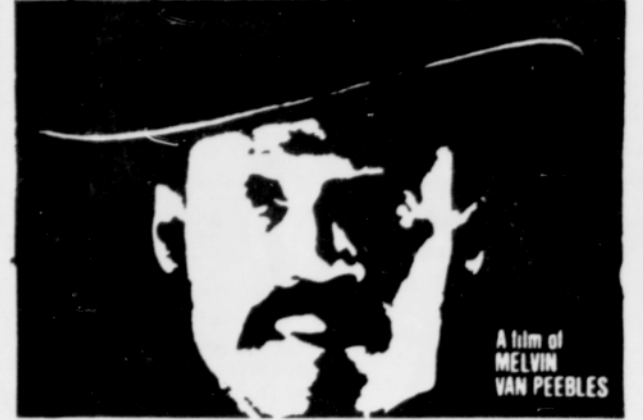
The Portland showing will be held at the Coliseum on October 11 at 7:00 p.m. Tickets, ranging in price from \$1.00 to \$10.00 are available at the Coliseum, Lloyd Center,

Meier and Frank, and Portland OIC.

Among the stars who will appear are Sammy Davis, Aretha Franklin, Nancy Wilson, Dick Gregory, Duke Ellington, Sonny and Cher, The Fifth Dimension, the Dance Theater of Harlem, Inc., and many more.

The theme "Be Somebody" has been voiced since the founding of America by the leaders of the poor and the black -- Paul Coffey as early as 1816, Marcus Garvey in the 1920's, Martin Luther King in the '60s, Jesse Jackson today.

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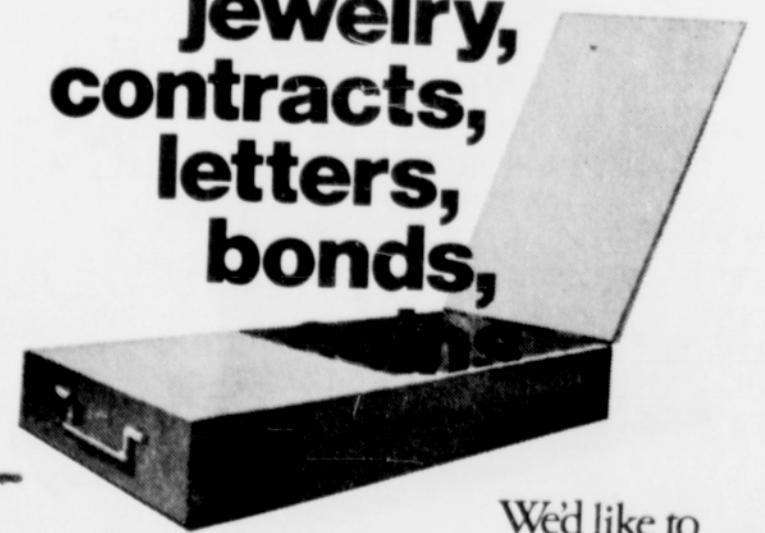
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