

The man behind Mrs. Jones

In an age when most dreams have all but been abandoned, Philadelphia International Records' Billy Paul has made his own aspirations come true. At the age of 37, Billy had some what most music critics would call impossible. He has launched a new singing career with one of the year's biggest singles, "Me and Mrs. Jones." The song, which deals with the taboo subject of an affair with a married woman, gained Billy a Gold record, and has sold, to date, over one and half million copies.

How does Mr. Paul feel about his "overnight" success? Sitting in one of Philadelphia International's New York offices, an easy-going Billy Paul comments: "I don't think I feel any different about it, 'cause I'm going to be me. I think the basic thing is just dealing with everyday life and what's relevant now. If I'm in Vegas tomorrow and down on the corner the next day, I'm still the same person. And I don't take Vegas over the corner."

"The same show I gave in Vegas I'll give in any small club. I want to reach everybody with my music."

If Billy Paul is a superstar, he certainly doesn't show it. Since beginning his singing career at the age of 12, Philadelphia-born and raised Paul has learned that stardom is something to work for and not merely talk about. "I've played a lot of duets," says Billy. "I came out of the church choir at a very early age and I just started singing on kiddie hours and doing this and that. One thing led to another until I got so involved in music that I began to know different musicians and different singers. I've always felt very close to musicians because paying a lot of dues with a lot of them has opened my eyes. Made me grow up to the realities of the world."

Billy began to record with small Philadelphia-based labels and soon was appearing in concert with such artists as Charlie Parker, Dinah Washington, Nina Simone, Miles Davis, the Impressions and Sammy Davis, Jr. Fame, at the time, was not to fall at Billy's feet.

While most DJ's seem puzzled about the success of the jazz-oriented "Me and Mrs. Jones" and Billy's hit album 360 DEGREES OF BILLY PAUL, the talented Mr. Paul doesn't find it a mystery at all. "Well," he says, "Me and Mrs. Jones fits everybody's life. It's something that everybody can relate to, black or white; there's always going to be a Mrs. Jones in somebody's life. The whole album deals with the basics, a lot of personal things that I really went through. And it



BILLY PAUL

deals with something that a lot of people tend to overlook - lyrics. I've always been a jazz singer. I've tried to be a singer who would emphasize the lyrics of a certain song because it would make the tune more meaningful. And a lot of people today tend to overlook the lyrics when they're listening to a song. But I've always been a big believer that the lyrics play the greatest part of any tune that you do. I guess a lot of people agree."

One of the tunes of 360 DEGREES OF BILLY PAUL, reveals a part of a show business personality not often seen by the public. "I'm a Prisoner" depicts Billy's intense interest in the prisoners of the nation who seldom see the outside world. A constant visitor to prisons, Paul tries not to talk about the subject in a show business manner. "I've had numerous letters from friends in

prison," he comments. "In some cases, I've been able to help some get out. But the reason I visit prisons is really because some of your heaviest people are in prisons and they're no different than anyone. I felt that the messages I was saying from the stage deserved to be said behind the walls. When I go in, I go into the prison not to come off as an intertainer, because I don't want to go to the yard, sit down and rap with the brothers, you know, talk. I feel very much at home although I've never done time; I know it's hard for them in there cause they keep turning over their minds day after day - just to make the time finish. I figure that I'm one of the tools to keep them going, keep them looking; to shorten time for them and keep them thinking. Let them know that somebody still loves them, you know. I dig them. I wouldn't trade them for the world."

Black Expo: successes and failures

By Roy Harris

The first Black Expo ever held in the Pacific Northwest has come and gone. It was an experimental project to see how receptive the idea would be to the thousands of Blacks that reside in the northwest. Not everything went off as scheduled, but the many hundreds of people that attended could certainly say that they enjoyed them-

selves for the small price that they had to pay for admission. One of the main highlights of the event was the performances by several groups from the Portland-Seaside area. "The Beyonds" performed in excellent style leaving the audience wanting more. Their performance was so well received that they got a standing ovation at the end. Another

highlight of the event was Grover and Joe, a local Black ventriloquist, that is performing around town, left hundreds of people filled full of delight as they did a brief comedy performance in the main arena of Gaiser Hall in Clark College. Another Portland group that was only given a short time to perform, due to delayed scheduling, was "The Combinations". These young girls, in their mid-teens, did a fantastic job in early afternoon with their vocal and dance routine performance. From Seattle, two of the most devastating groups were "The Onyx" and "Cold Bold & Together", both contributing their very impressive Black performances near the end of the Expo/Soul Bowl '72.

At mid-evening a group that originated from Portland State College, called "Northwest Black Arts Society" presented several oratorical Black awareness. The group, composed of young Black college students received a standing ovation also, plus the cry of "more-more" from the audience.

Many people thought that the exhibits from various Black businesses and organizations from throughout the northwest was very impressive and interesting. Among the most attention-getting exhibits were from YSOL-Radio, Melody Beauty & Barber Supply, of Portland and Eddie Walker, Classic Hairstyles, Inc., of Seattle.

Winnipeg Ballet plans Portland performance

The brilliant Royal Winnipeg Ballet of Canada will be welcomed by Oregonians when they present two performances at the Portland Civic Auditorium. Returning to this area after their smashing success here in 1971, the company will be seen on January 19 and 20, with curtain time set for 8:15 p.m. both evenings.

The story of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet is a Cinderella tale of a company that has emerged from the grassy Canadian prairie to delight ballet buffs in the world's most sophisticated dance capitals. The high standards of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet are the result of the talents of many artists. Such great choreographic names as Agnes DeMille, George Balanchine, Elliot Feld, Sir Frederick Ashton, John Neumeier and Brian MacDonald have all contributed heavily to the repertoire and have left an indelible imprint. The company's current aim is to make ballet art available to the widest possible range of North American audiences and to be a medium for the contemporary expression of Canadian dancers, choreographers and musicians. How successful this has been is demonstrated by the

fact that eleven European and American companies carry in their repertoire ballets initially created for the Royal Winnipeg.

Young, beautiful and brilliant, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet is a company of highly disciplined dancers, who perform with verve and inspiration. Audiences on four continents have been struck by the powerful, masculine force of the group.

One highlight, if the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's stay here will be the performance of the new multi-media ballet "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe", commissioned by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhoods to mark the 100 anniversary of the signing of treaties with the Canadian government. "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe" most effectively mixes dance, film, acting, singing and orchestra to tell the story of the Indian girl, Rita Joe, who comes to the city from the reservation.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet will appear under the auspices of Celebrity Attractions. Tickets, priced at \$6.50, \$5.50 and \$4.50, are on sale now at Celebrity Attractions, 1010 S.W. Morrison, Portland, Ore. 97205.

Soul Sounds

By Joey Sasso

Moms Mabley, one of the nation's most popular comedians, now appearing for the first time at Jules Podell's Copacabana. On the bill with her for the stunt which includes New Year's Eve is young singing star, Ronnie Dyson. Not only is she popular with the general public but she is a favorite with show-biz personalities who tag her the most unlikely candidate for stardom that ever set foot on a stage. She performs completely toothless, attired in such fetching costumes as a plaid dress with sagging hem, over this a bright flowered smock, knee length wool stockings in a garish checkered pattern, and comfy house shoes several sizes too large. She doesn't have to open her mouth and she gets belly laughs throughout her performance just because of the way she looks. Dyson, who was picked by Moms to be on the bill with her, owes his success to opening the show, "Hair" with the powerful singing of "Aquarius," which

was written expressly for him. He records for Columbia. One of his biggest thrills was doing a Command Performance for Princess Margaret at London's Albert Hall. Ronnie is also in big demand for commercials, the most popular one being song for Pepsi-Cola. . . . Wilt Chamberlain, the Los Angeles Lakers star, all seven feet of him, was at The Press Box with his teammate Happy Hairston. "Let me have a big steak said the Stilt. "You mean you want an 18 inch steak as well as one 18 ounces, added Mike Wayne. . . . Wilt told Mike that he just bought his favorite girl, Chadborun Hosier's newest collection of bodywear for the winter season. . . . And speaking of lawsuits, Flip Wilson, who's still trying to settle Mabel Robinson's paternity suit out of court, has been slapped with a \$500,000 damage suit by another lass who claims Wilson stole her father's brainchild - a comedy skit. The woman, Olivette Miller Darby, is suing Flip, Michael Jackson (of the Jackson Five) and NBC, claiming that the comedy routine Wilson and Jackson performed recently on Flip's show, was one she had tried to sell him but which he refused to buy. . . . Diana Ross's husband just presented her with ODYSSEY, the all-family games you play on your TV set by MAGNAVOX. . . . And, speaking of the new wave of "black films," I predict that Ron O'Neal, who stars in "Super Fly" will become a big star. The movie is great and has come under fire from some of the black groups. But Ron is better than good in the flick. In fact, he gave a case of CROW LIGHT WHISKEY to the crew for being so helpful during the filming of the pix. . . . And, while we're on the subject, Jim Brown has signed with AIP to make a sequel to "Slaughter." But I don't expect Stella Stevens will be co-starring with him in this one. Seems that all those stories and hints of a "romance" that got leaked out to the press while Stella and Jim were making the last one were "a bunch of hogwash," or so Stella told a friend. . . . What with Mark Spitz and Bobby Fischer all over the boob tube and talking high-salaried movie deals, if figures that a certain other sports star would get in on the action. Muhammad Ali, who used to be known to boxing fans as Cassius Clay, and his agents have been talking to the powers at AIP about a big movie deal but - according to my source of information - the champ demands that his movies be "clean movies" and can't contain anything about sex, dope and so forth, and cannot be "black exploitation films." Oh, really? . . .

Globetrotter tips

BOB (SHOWBOAT) HALL ON PASSING

Passing is a very important part of the game. Although the guy that makes the basket usually gets the headlines, if it weren't for someone passing him the ball, the BASKET couldn't be made. Good passing is important because it insures confidence and good team morale. Always try and keep the ball moving, keep it hot. Try and make your passes snappy and sharp, and try to avoid careless passing.

You will find that there is a pass for every situation. I even have a pass for when I am reaching for a glass of water on the bench! Seriously, the basic passes are the chest pass, the bounce pass and the baseball pass.

The two-hand chest pass is a short pass not exceeding over 15 feet. The hands are held on the side and the ball is released with a snap of the wrists.

The bounce pass is used to pass the ball when someone is closely guarding you. On the Globetrotters we use the bounce pass to get the ball to the pivot man, or we use it against a press. The ball should be snapped down, with the bounce coming as close to the man you are passing to as possible.

The baseball pass is probably the hardest of all to complete accurately. It is used to trigger a fast break or to throw the length of the court. The ball is released like a catcher in baseball releases the ball, from behind the ear. This is an effective pass, but it takes a great deal of practice to do it well.



Joe Nelson, former executive director of the Racine (Wis.) Environment Committee, Inc., has been appointed manager of minority affairs for the Jos. Schlitz Brewing Company. He succeeds D.C. Newman who has been named a labor relations associate with Schlitz.

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