

ENTERTAINMENT

HAPPENINGS

ENTERTAINMENT



Black Repertory Company Devises a New Singing, Swinging Revue!

Dancing, singing and humor are all a part of a new revue called PO TOLO, which is making its debut now at the Long Goodbye Playback Theatre, 300 NW 10th and Everett. The show will run through March 22nd, on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm.

The Black Repertory Company created and devised the show which features company members: Rose Washington, Cheryl Wilson, Ruby Burns, Rosemary Allen, Hank Brumfield and Vernon Ambus. Vocalists Gypsy Hopkins, Gail King and Brenda Phillips sing songs from the old Martha Reeves and the Vandellas vintage to the new sounds of the Emotions.

The music is provided by top jazz musician and bandleader Thara Memory with Janice Scroggins on piano; Obo Addy, percussion; John Mazack, bass guitar; and Don Mumford on drums. Rosemary Allen directs and choreography is by Ruby Burns.

Highlights of the ninety minute show include a "Saturday night" nightclub scene complete with music and dance, a Saturday night church scene with a peculiar congregation and a strange space scene with Black beings from the planet PO TOLO.

For reservations call 228-1008 at the Long Goodbye, Playback Theatre.

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Keeping it all in the family

Students of the heredity versus environment debate will find it difficult to separate the genes from the hearthstone in the case of Ralph, Arthur "Pooch," Antone "Chubby," Feliciano "Butch" and Perry Lee "Tiny" Tavares.

Their father, a multi-talented musician with a passion for Wes Montgomery and Jimmy McGriff, played guitar and sang in small clubs in the Tavares' hometown of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Their oldest brother, John, kindled his siblings' interest in the tight, fluid singing of R&B harmony groups such as The Cadillacs, The Penguins and The Moonglows and personal tastes filled in any existing gaps with, among others, Mary Wells, Gladys Knight and The Pips and Etta James. But whatever the magical, musical combination, the balance was, and is, just right.

Since the group signed with Capitol in 1973, nary a year has passed without one or two and often three Tavares hits running the family name up the charts. "Check It Out," "She's Gone," "It Only Takes a Minute," "Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel," "Whodunnit," "More Than A Woman" and "Never Had A Love Like This Before" are only a few of the songs that have made R&B and Pop-charted hits a Tavares tradition.

Of Cape Verdian descent, the five grew up in a close-knit family of ten children. Each took to the family avocation of singing at an early age, blending voices whenever and wherever they could. In 1964 they made their first professional appearance at the Blue Flame in Onset, Massachusetts, and as they continued to perform in small clubs in the New Bedford-Boston-New York area both their reputation and their audience grew.

It had been John's idea to form a group (originally called the Del Rios) in 1962 with Ralph, Pooch and Chubby. When John dropped out, Butch joined and when Pooch had a minor operation, Tiny replaced him. After Pooch returned to the group, the brothers couldn't tell Tiny to leave, so they turned their quartet into a quintet, changed their name to Chubby and the Turnpikes and soon to just The Turnpikes.

"In '71 we got a chance to do a nine-week tour of Italy as the support act for Lola Falana," recalls Ralph, now the oldest in the group and its spokesman. "We reckoned the Italians could never pronounce 'Turnpikes' so we called ourselves Tavares. When we got back, we just stuck with that name."

TAVARES



Chubby Butch Ralph Pooch Tiny

After they returned from the tour, the troupe spent two more years on the small club circuit before Brian Panella (now their manager) brought them to the attention of Capitol Records.

Check It Out (1974), their first album, was produced by Johnny Bristol. An extraordinary debut LP, it lodged in the R&B Top 20, hit the Pop charts and contained the group's first hit single in its title track.

On *Hard Core Poetry* (1974) and *In The City* (1975), Tavares worked with the writer-producer team of Lambert and Potter. The result was a series of hit ballads, including "Remember What I Told You To Forget," "It Only Takes A Minute" and the group's first No. 1 R&B hit "She's Gone."

Next came a series of hit LPs and singles produced by Freddie Perren. *Sky-High!* (1976), the group's fourth album, yielded hits in "Don't Take Away The Music" and in the Gold single "Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel." *Love Storm*, containing the popular "Whodunnit" and "Goodnight My Love," and *The Best Of Tavares* followed in quick, chart-storming succession in 1977. In April '78, Tavares released their seventh LP, *Future Bound*, which contained the smash hit "More Than A Woman" and the popular "The Ghost Of Love" and, in 1979, Tavares continued the string of hits with "Never Had A Love Like This Before" from the Bobby Martin-produced *Madam Butterfly*.

It's no wonder the rich and mellow voices of Ralph and Butch (both first and second tenors), Chubby (tenor and falsetto) and Pooch and Tiny (baritones) blend so well; this is one performing unit that does indeed, keep it all in the family.

"We all get together and decide if a song sounds like us—if it sounds like something we would do," explains Ralph. "We listen to a lot of material before we go in to cut. We try to put ourselves in the place of the audience. If we feel comfortable with a song, then it's going to make the audience feel comfortable."

"It's the same when we're deciding who's going to sing lead," Tiny adds, "because we all sing lead. We'll say 'That sounds like Pooch, let him try it' or 'That sounds like Butch.' But we know who can handle what and it usually works the way we figure it."

"We like to do good music, happy music," Ralph continues. "Our music reflects exactly what we do in everyday living—think positively."

Thinking positively also means Tavares is one group that is never content to rest on its laurels: "Bad Times," the first single from their latest album, *Supercharged*, is a Pop and Soul hit.

One of their strongest albums to date, *Supercharged* matches the Tavares' voices with the talents of three outstanding producers—David Foster, Benjamin Wright, Jr. and Capitol's own Bobby Colomby—and eight tracks of soul-infused ballads, funk and uptempo tunes.

The hard times, when Ralph held down a full-time mechanics job in an aircraft plant, contributing his share of the group's professional earnings to the family kitty, and Tiny attended trade school in case his singing career failed, are long gone—but the group's drive for perfection, vitality and pure enjoyment in singing remain as fresh as when they first started out.

"You know when you're a kid you always figure you're going to be 'discovered'?" smiles Ralph. "Well, it never happened. That's in the movies. We beat on doors for nine years before we got our first recording contract. We used to come to New York and take different floors of an office building, knocking on doors to see if people were looking for groups. Most would say 'No.' When somebody would say 'Yeah, let me hear you,' guys would be running all through the building trying to find the rest of the group. We would audition right there, but they would always say we were too modern. We'd go home disappointed, but we'd still keep on singing."

They say their mother taught them tenacity. It's a good thing, all around, that the members of Tavares listened to what she had to say.

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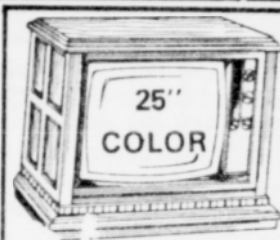
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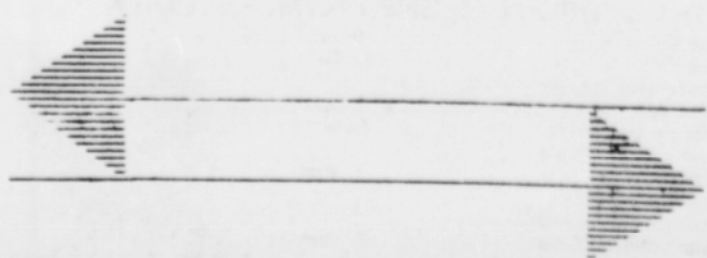
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