

Black Studies inspires sense of destiny

By Nathaniel Scott

Portland State University's Black Studies program is headed by William "Bill" Little, Ph.D. His field is Political Science. Prior to teaching he worked in construction and served five years in the U.S. Marines.

Dr. Little is chairman of the Regional Ten Council of Black Studies. Following are his responses to questions posed by the *Portland Observer* during an interview.

Observer: What is the difference between Black culture and Black studies?

Little: Let me deal with the question of definition, because I think we have to deal with that before I can begin to answer your question. The problem arises when we began to talk about Black culture. Black is a color, it's not a race of people. When we talk about Black and white, it evolves out of the European mentality that tends to define things by color as opposed to ancestry. Basically what you are talking about when you say Black culture is African culture. Culture and studies are not inseparable; they are defined parts of the same thing, but because we live in an European dominated society, we have sort of separated these functions and there arises the maze. When people talk about culture, they are talking about history, art and the music. They aren't talking about culture in terms of politics and culture in terms of social relationships, yet, those are cultural things as well. Because a person says he is interested in Black culture doesn't mean he is interested in understanding the interactions and decisions and the behavior of Black people.

Observer: What does Black culture entail?

Little: Black studies entails a total examination of the totality of the African and the African diaspora. Basically the Europeans have designed and developed notions that places Blacks in an inferior position. A position that's not reasonable or desirable. In fact, it's inaccurate. So



WILLIAM "BILL" LITTLE

to a large extent, we have to create an accurate picture of the African past and present, which will provide a stronger identity of self. We are trying to get rid of the distortions and the omissions that whites have perpetuated against people of African descent.

Observer: What are your views about education, grade and college level?

Little: Education is a process of learning, developing, becoming aware of facts and events of the past

and understanding what your potentials are. That is the process that education is suppose to do. But, when you began to look at the process of education in America for people of African descent, the education here is basically designed to facilitate a strong emotional attachment to the American society whether you are racist or not. In other words, the education here is basically a propaganda sort of thing to ensure that the people have some sort of love attachment identification to the established society, where that society is just or unjust. But to carry it further, education

serves that function in all societies. We realize that examinations that test IQ's, which are designed around and modeled after cultural bias of the European, are not designed around the cultural experiences of Black people or people of African descent. The educational process here is a negative one.

Observer: What do you feel is the importance of a Black National Holiday?

Little: A Black national holiday would be useful, but I don't think it's as significant as people make it out to be. My reason for saying that is, there are some other fundamental things that need to be done that are much more important.

Observer: Martin Luther King's Birthday...?

Little: It's alright, but there are much greater men in our history than Martin Luther King. For example, one can look at DuBoise; one can look at Garvey; one can look at T.T. Thomas Fortune and quite a few others that have made substantial contributions that are much greater in their ideas and philosophies. On the other hand, Martin Luther King is a present day hero, so it's alright to look at him because people, white and Black respect that. Malcom X is probably a more significant individual to recognize, not so much because he evolved out of the lower class, but because the philosophies that Malcom had will be the basis of Black liberation in this country.

Observer: What are some needed changes within the Black community?

Little: The biggest problem that Black people have in this country is their welfare mentality. When I say welfare mentality, I don't mean that people have to be on welfare. It's just like the notion that I have to have someone do it for me. Black people have to get a sense of themselves. A sense of people. A sense of responsibility for our own destiny. And until we take control of our destiny in the sense of building relationships, networks, support bases, and take mutually beneficial action among ourselves, we will continue to be in a deprived sort of condition.



After completing a two-week West Coast tour with Cameo, Fantasy recording group Pleasure visited radio station KGFJ in L.A. to promote their latest album, "Special Things," and their new single, "Now You Choose Me."

Pictured from L. to R. are: Sherman Davis and Donald Hepburn of Pleasure; Robert Stoffel, KIIS music librarian; Mike Wagner, KIIS program director; Ted Higashioka, California Records promotion; Michael Hepburn and Nathaniel Phillips of Pleasure; KIIS musical director Danny Lenon; Quincy McCoy, Fantasy national promotion director.

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Nov. 9-10-11 JAMES DE PREIST, conductor; AARON ROSAND, violinist. Lees: Passacaglia, Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto, Beethoven/Symphony No. 5.

Nov. 30-Dec. 1-2 LAWRENCE SMITH, guest conductor; MICHAEL FOXMAN, violinist; DONALD MCINNES, violist. Schumann: Overture, Scherzo & Finale; Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante, Copland: Symphony No. 3.

Jan. 11-12-13 GUNTHER SCHULLER, guest conductor; LILI KRAUS, pianist. Grieg: In Autumn, Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 20, Schuller: Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee, Wagner: Overture to Tannhaeuser.

Jan. 25-26-27 JAMES DE PREIST, conductor; FRANCO GULLI, violinist. Mozart: Symphony No. 5, Brahms: Violin Concerto, Bartok: Concerto for Orchestra.

Feb. 15-16-17 JAMES DE PREIST, conductor; SHIRLEY VERRETT, soprano. Strauss: Salome's Dance, Wagner: Wesendonck Songs, Strauss: Ein Heldenleben.

Mar. 15-16-17 NORMAN LEYDEN, conductor; JANOS STARKER, cellist. Brahms: Haydn Variations, Bloch: Schelomo, Haydn: Cello Concerto in D, Rimsky-Korsakov: Capriccio Espagnol.

Mar. 29-30-31 RAINER MIEDEL, guest conductor; JAIME LAREDO, violinist. Barber: Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance, Dvorak: Violin Concerto, Stravinsky: Petrouchka.

Apr. 12-13-14 NORMAN LEYDEN, conductor; GARRICK OHLSSON, pianist. Foote: Suite for Strings, Hanson: Symphony No. 2, Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 1.

Apr. 26-27-28 MURRY SIDLIN, guest conductor; SYLVIA MARCOVICI, violinist. Husa: Music for Prague, 1968; Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1, Elgar: Enigma Variations.

May 10-11-12 JAMES DE PREIST, conductor. Haydn: Symphony No. 88, Ravel: Daphnis and Chloe, Nielsen: Symphony No. 3.

May 31 June 1-2 JAMES DE PREIST, conductor; IRENE GUBRUD, soprano; HILDA HARRIS, mezzo-soprano; PORTLAND SYMPHONIC CHOIR, Bruce Browne, director. Mahler: Symphony No. 2 (Resurrection).

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