

ENTERTAINMENT

HAPPENINGS

ENTERTAINMENT



AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH TAJ MAHAL

Exclusive - By Lanita Duke

Grassroots News, N.W. - When one thinks of the Blues, names like B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Billie Holiday and Taj Mahal comes to mind. The latter of this group, Taj Mahal, was in Portland for a one-night concert, and *Grassroots News* was there for an exclusive interview. Taj gave this rundown of his background in music.

Taj: My music background started out by being raised during the 20s, 30s, and 40s era by two separate cultures. My mother's influence was the rural American south, and my father's was West Indian.

Duke: Blues, like all Black music, seems to get a lot from the soul of the Black church. Did the Black church influence your music in any way?

Taj: Quite a bit. My father was into a form of metaphysics and my mother was into the Baptist church. Although my father didn't go to church on a regular basis, we went whenever my mother sang. As a result, we went to various types of churches and ended up where the singing was good. Being a part of the culture I was never told I couldn't, so I absorbed everything.

Duke: The way the music industry works is to label an artist and then market their product. How would you label yourself?

Taj: It's very difficult to do that. Personally I feel myself as a Black

Duke: How do you feel at a concert when you're performing a subsection of Black culture to an audience that's mostly white?

Taj: Hey, it's going to be that way. First of all, because they inherited the business. Also, the basis of Black American music is so strong in pop that you can't get away from it. Once they didn't want folks to listen to jungle music, thus creating a heavy hand on the American rock trip; only allowing certain things to get through which made way for people like the *Rolling Stones* and the *Beatles* and all those English people who were listening to what they thought was American music. And then you must remember that the English were one of the largest colonizers of Black and Third World people, so right away they would know the real traditional sound because they colonized so many people from so many parts of the world.



TAJ MAHAL

historian using music as a vehicle to keep alive the energy of the past and give ourselves something to move into the future. I keep myself up with what's happening. People seem to think that if you're into blues that you don't know what's up; are you kidding me? Music is dependent upon the pop industry to define, so that you could get over, but once they did that you no longer got over, they got over!

Duke: The sentiments that are reflected in the Blues certainly hit home in the Black community, yet when it comes to supporting Blues as a music form, the community doesn't do it. Why is that?

Taj: I think the Blues has borne the weight of bad times. Since we have been without history of what Blues players were doing, we lost contact with what their message was. The main thing that happened was that the Blues was a popular form of Black music, not handled by Black people. When it was thought to have run its gambit, it was taken off the market for your pop music type. All the grapevine energy was taken out by folks when they signed record contracts. It was no longer handled by us and became an industry, and the music got further and further away.



TAJ MAHAL

That's why when Blues and Jazz was happening in the U.S., it wasn't happening anywhere else in the world. It became something new to the English. Their whole society had lost all of its colonies and they needed something to give them some excitement. For Black people it's drained down that there is no one left to learn anything from.

Duke: What advice could you give our readers?

Taj: Study your history, and it's not going to come easy. It's not out there on a silver platter. I don't know why we don't keep tabs on our music. You can't take it for granted that it's going to be there. It seems like when everybody went out of the ghetto they never came home again.



REGGAE STAR BOB MARLEY INSPIRES STREET TALK-- Playing a string of sold-out dates through Germany recently to support his new album *Uprising*, superstar Bob Marley was the talk of every town he visited. But such fame didn't stop Marley from chatting with a German local as he prepared to board his tour bus for the trip to yet another concert. It's not known just what Marley and guitarist Junior Marvin discussed with the gentleman, but wherever Marley goes, he remains close to the people of the street.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Jazz Ensemble Concert: Sunday, February 22, 1981, Mago Hunt Center recital hall, University of Portland, 5000 N. Willamette Blvd. Free and open to the public.

P & J's TIPPIN INN

Tavern
NOW OPEN
838 N. Killingsworth



283-2221

Come in and enjoy the Super bowl game on January 25th.

Open 9 am till...
Parking in rear.
Falstaff Beer
35¢ a GLASS
Miller Beer
45¢ a GLASS

ACT-SO ORIENTATION KICK-OFF



ACT-SO, the Afro-Academic Cultural Technological Scientific Olympics will be holding its annual scholarship orientation luncheon, Saturday, January 24, 1981 at the **Matt Dishman Community Center** from noon until 3 p.m. This is an opportunity for all high school students, parents, teachers and counselors to become informed about the ACT-SO program. Special guest speaker will be Mr. James De Priest, new conductor of the Oregon Symphony. The ACT-SO program is partially funded by a \$3,000 United States National Bank challenge grant.



BOB MARLEY OBSERVES LOCAL CUSTOMS-- Reggae superstar Bob Marley pauses while reading his daily paper to pass through Danish Customs on his recent sold-out European tour. Marley's troupe of "dreads" (Jamaicans with their hair fixed in the traditional Rastafarian "dreadlocks") drew attention wherever they went, not only because of their unique appearance, but because Marley's fame seemed to have preceded him at every border. Marley's European tour, by the way, broke records established by the *Beatles*, the *Rolling Stones* and *Led Zeppelin*. Marley's current LP is *Uprising*.

(503) 287-4029
1006 N.E. Broadway, Portland, Oregon 97232
Classic Studios

For Funeral Insurance Information Call
C. Don Vann at
281-2836

POWERFUL!!—HUMOROUS!!—HEARTRENDING!!
YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS

"Sizwe Bansi is Dead"

an outstanding

Oregon Shakespearian Festival Production

January 24 and 25, 1981
7:00 P.M.

BUCKLEY CENTER AUDITORIUM
UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND

Tickets Available:

Meier & Frank downtown ticket office
H.C. Plummer and Co. Real Estate,
317 N.E. Killingsworth
and at Door

Sponsored by Black Colleges Conference Committee
for Scholarship Fund

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER AND HOUSE OF SOUNDS
2201 N. Killingsworth • 283-2487
1844 N. Williams • 287-1900

TOP 10

GOSPEL LP ★ SOUL 45's ★ SOUL LP

SOUL LP

1. *The Whispers* - Imagination
2. *Bobby "Blue" Bland* - Sweet Vibrations
3. *Sky* - Skyyport
4. *Stevie Wonder* - Hotter Than July
5. *Shalamar* - Three For Love
6. *Wilton Felder* - Inherit The Wind
7. *Tierra* - City Nights
8. *Con Funk Shun* - Touch
9. *Gap Band III*
10. *James Brown* - Soul Syndrome



SOUL 45

1. *Heartbreak Hotel* - The Jacksons
2. *Full of Fire* - Shalamar
3. *Too Tight* - Con-Funk-Shun
4. *Freak to Freak* - Sweet Band
5. *Make The World Stand Still* - Roberta Flack and Peabo Bryson
6. *Boogie Body Land* - Barkeys
7. *Burn Rubber* - Gap Band
8. *Inherit Wind* - Wilton Felder
9. *Full of Fire* - Shalamar
10. *8th Wonder* - The Sugar Hill Gang



GOSPEL LP

1. *Walter Hawkins* - The Hawkins Family
2. *Inez Andrews* - The Remarkable
3. *Rance Allen Group* - I feel like going on
4. *James Cleveland Presents* - Henry Jackson
5. *Tramaine Hawkins* - Tramaine
6. *Kristie* - I Can't Let Go
7. *The Original Soul Stirrers* - Nobody's Child
8. *James Cleveland Sings* with the greatest choirs
9. *Al Green* - The Lord Will Make A Way
10. *Billy Preston* - Universal Love

