

Grassroot News, N.W. - The Northwest was treated to a theatrical production with an Eastern tint, *The Wiz*, which is the latest adaptation of L. Frank Baum's classic children's story. In 1971, Ken Harper, the producer, came upon the idea of an urban production using an all-Black cast. Charlie Smalls composed the score and it ran for four years on Broadway with mixed reviews from the critics.

The production which toured the Northwest had as Dorothy, a youthful Martine Girault, 16, whose professional career began in 1979 with the East Coast run of "The Me Nobody Knows." Martine discussed with Grassroot News reporter, Lanita Duke, the various audience reactions to *The Wiz*.

Martine: We've received different kinds of reaction, depending on the location of the production. Color really has nothing to do with it. Sometimes we get an all-Black audience who crack up on everything and sometimes we get an all-white audience who do the same. And sometimes we get an audience that just sits there.

Duke: Theatre, as an art form, will be competing with other forms of entertainment - T.V., music and so forth. What's the future of theatre as far as you're concerned?

Martine: I think for the poor people they will just stay home and watch T.V., and wait for it to air. It costs a lot of money to go to the theatre and I hate to see it become a plaything just for rich people, who might, because of their money, decide what's good and what's not.



RAPPIN WITH THE CAST MEMBERS OF THE WIZ!
By Lanita Duke

The Wiz was directed by Stephanie Terry whose other theatre credits include: *The Great Black Way* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Stephanie talks about her responsibilities as director.

Terry: The role of a director is to plan the production and lead the actors in their intentions on stage. In a traveling production like this one, you sometimes can't have the control that you want but we end up doing what we are out there to do and that's to perform. One thing that's nice in a traveling production is to see how the different cast members grow. Their performance becomes more fulfilling for them and the audience. One thing I've noticed about Martine is that her voice has gotten stronger, more intense, and now has a great deal of body. She has a child-like quality about her that was missing from the *Wiz* movie. People who have never seen *The Wiz* were introduced to a 40 year old Dorothy and this took some of the fantasy away from it because Black people have so little fantasy in their lives. So if you are going to give them a subject on that level, you have to stay with the dream and the dream was a child and now a grown woman.

Duke: Do you consider *The Wiz* a Black theatrical classic?
Terry: It became a classic after it won a Tony Award. It was one of the last large production's on Broadway. It's not just Black people singing and dancing



MARTINE GIRAULT

STEPHANIE TERRY

Terry: It became a classic after it won a Tony Award. It was one of the last large production on Broadway. It's not just Black people singing and dancing; I hate that concept. There are many messages in *The Wiz*. You know more than you think you know. The Scarecrow was searching for brains yet throughout the production he came up with ideas which helped him get along. The Lion speaks for courage, and the Tin Man wants a heart, yet he gives love so freely. All these things makes *The Wiz* what it is and the singing and dancing are just a means to an end.

Duke: What's the future for Black theater?

Terry: Black theater goes in various stages and right now we're out. There was a time when we were in. We had *Raisin* on Broadway and *Ain't Misbehavin'* along with *The Wiz*. We were allowed to do all sorts of things and then it started to filter out. There is just one Black production on Broadway now, "Sophisticated Lady." It's not our time. I think in the next couple of years we'll come back in again. Now once we get in this time we'll find a method to stay instead of letting them filter us out. But there's nothing like live theater - being there with the performers. It's not done in slots like in other mediums. It's done for you all at the same time. If a play is written well and for all audiences it then becomes a classic. Certain plays are written just for Black audiences and it can't go anywhere or make money. Well, we know about these things and we don't need to hear it as badly as the rest of the world needs to.

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Portland's Black Repertory Theatre forced to cancel season

By Nyewusi Askari

It was learned today, that Portland's Black Repertory Theatre, is in danger of having to cancel its Spring, Summer, and Fall, 1981 season, because of lack of support from both the Black community and the City of Portland. According to Rosemary Allen, Director of the Theatre, the problem is three-fold: 1) Lack of monetary support; 2) Unavailability of space to rehearse and 3) No permanent place to perform this season's plays.

"It seems that whenever we think we are close to finding space for rehearsal, the bottom falls out. The owners either demands money for use of their facilities beyond what we are able to pay, or they are only able to allow us to use their space for 2 or 3 days at a time. Having to function under this kind of condition, is not conducive to a professional, productive season. Most people don't realize that our actors and actresses are working people, family people, operating on tight schedules and it is very difficult for them to move from place to place every two or three days. Another problem, and one just as heavy is the lack of monetary support and not having a permanent home to perform.

"Last season we were forced to perform our plays at Catlin Gabel Performing Arts Center because of the unavailability of a Theatre or adequate space within the Black community or the City. This year, we face the same problem. So, if we are unable to get the support we need, the Portland Black Repertory Theatre will cease to exist. The outlook is dark indeed," concluded Ms. Allen.

It is a tragic situation especially when one realizes that 1980 was the best season ever for the Black Theatre, and already performances are sold out for the April-May performance at Cannon Beach, and for a June performance of the same play (*Fingerpoppin*) at the Willamette Center. The performance at Cannon Beach will be performed as scheduled, but only because the director of the Coaster Theater pledged the necessary monetary support needed by the theatre to present its first showing. However, the June performance scheduled for the Willamette Center is in serious doubt. Anyone wishing to help keep Portland Black Repertory Theatre alive, can do so by contacting Nyewusi Askari, C/O *Portland Observer*, 2201 N. Killingsworth (Portland) or by calling 283-2486.

Community Calendar

Peacock Impulse Fashions Presents: First Annual Pre-Easter Children's Fashion Show, Sunday, April 5, 1981, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm - Northwest Service Center, 1819 N.W. Everett Street. Tickets \$3.50 at door \$4.00. Door prizes. For more information call 284-9394 or 287-9608.

TIMESOUND! The Creative Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Thara Memory, will be in concert May 2, 1981 at 8:00 p.m. at the Civic Auditorium. For more information call 222-1457.

Slide-Talk on Kenya, presented by Kathy Paxton, April 9, 1981 in the Lincoln Cafeteria at 7pm. For more information call 226-3483.

Lucius Williams Memorial Tea, April 5, 1981, in the afternoon, at the Royal Esquire Club at 1708 N.E. Alberta. For more information call 289-9684 or 289-5881.

Nutrition in Cancer Care is the title of a two day conference for nurses, dieticians, physicians, and allied health care professionals to be held April 6 and 7 at the Jantzen Beach Red Lion Inn. For additional information call 225-7338.

Forum for Artists: Friday evening April 10th at 7:30 with a panel discussion "Art As A Political Force," and continue all day Saturday, April 11th at the Mallory Christian Church, 126 n.e. Alberta. For more information call 222-4479.

The NAACP-Eugene Branch will sponsor a Candle Light March on Friday, April 3, as a demonstration against harassment and racism in Eugene and in Lane County. The march will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Lane County courthouse flag pole.

Classes in oil painting, slimnastics, yoga, cooking, crocheting and play reading are being offered this spring at the N.E. YWCA Center, 126 N.E. Alberta. Scholarships are available. For more information call 288-5173.

Free Hearing Screening Workshop sponsored by Infant Hearing Resource on April 30, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., in Good Samaritan Hospital & Medical Center's Third Floor Conference area. To make appointment telephone 229-7526.

Portland School Board. School closures, April 4, 1981, 9:30 a.m., Administration Building, 501 N. Dixon.

Community Organizing Workshop. April 4, 1981 - 10 am to 2 pm, Portland Community College Stadium Center, 1736 S.W. Alder. (First of two sessions). \$7. Call 243-1194 for more information.

City Council. Budget deliberations, April 6, 1981 - 9:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., Room 106, City Hall.

Portland School Board. Budget deliberations, April 6, 1981 - 4 p.m., Administration Building, 501 N. Dixon.

City Council. Budget deliberations, April 7, 1981 - 1:30 p.m., Room 106, City Hall.

Portland School Board. Budget deliberations, April 7, 1981 - 4 p.m., Administration Building, 501 N. Dixon.



Portland's Black United Front, in conjunction with the National Black Front, calls together the Black community and all concerned Portland citizens to participate in

A MARCH AGAINST RACISM

April 4, 1981
Portland, Oregon

Protest:
Racial harassment of Black businesses

Welfare Cuts,
Job Discrimination,
Poor quality education.

The march will start at Alberta Park, NE 19th and Alberta, at 12:00 noon and end at the King Neighborhood Facility, 4815 N.E. 7th Avenue. There will be Speakers, both locally and nationally.

For information Call 249-8601.

SATURDAY - APRIL 4 - 1981

A SOMETHANG SKETCH (for Asmar #40404)

By Nyewusi Askari

Him fire eyed red/mental reflex gettin slow/can't sleep/skin itch from the feel of mornin staleness & he wanna make love to Aretha. Him toss/turn/toss til his last solid emotion is lost in a sea of frustration. Him cry/him diee a little bit more. Him roll over & Outta bed/and head to the shower room & using his last bit of natural energy/he step in & masturbate/be terrible/flesh beatin against flesh/50 strokes of pain/rain/then he come...he come like he ain't never come before/& as he watched the come hit the floor/& work its way into the drain/he cry like he ain't never cried before. **Count Time!**

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3. Gap Band III
4. Shalamar - Three for Love
5. Gil Scott-Heron - Real eyes
6. Eloise Laws
7. The Whispers - Imagination
8. Aretha
9. Millie Jackson - I had to say It
10. Yarbrough & Peoples - The Two of Us



SOUL 45

1. Rapp Payback - James Brown
2. What's Wrong with our love Affair - S.O.S.
3. Watching You - Slave
4. Everything is Cool - T-Connection
5. Thighs High (Grip your hips and move) - Tom Browne
6. Bon Bon Vie - T.S. Monk
7. Here's To You - Skyy
8. Together - Tierra
9. Funkin Around - Rose Royce
10. Little Girl Don't You Worry - Jermaine Jackson



GOSPEL LP

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3. Kristle - I Can't Let Go
4. Beverly Glenn - Take Me Higher
5. Al Green - The Lord Will Make A Way
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