

ENTERTAINMENT

# HAPPENINGS

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*Grassroot News, N.W.*—Twirling, whirling, moving and swaying to Donald Byrd, Pharoah Sanders and Max Roach, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater moved on Portland. For a dancer, Alvin Ailey is the tops.

One former resident of the Northwest, Stanley Perryman, achieved this dream. "I always wanted to dance with this dance group and New York was a long way from Seattle. So I just worked my way up. I started in L.A. and danced with Donald McKayle, the Dance Theatre of Harlem and appeared on Broadway. I received a lot of my early training from Black Arts West in Seattle."



## The Ailey Dance Theater

by Lanita Duke  
Grassroot News Service

"I've always liked to dance and when I joined A.A. my whole approach to dance changed. It put me on a different level because of the professionalism.

When you watch the movements of A.A. you see the fusion of jazz and ballet movement. "It's a spiritual thing that we bring across to our audience. When we first join, Alvin knows we have a technique. Once inside the group he tries to get our personal talents on the stage."



AILEY DANCER STANLEY PERRYMAN (Photo by Richard J. Brown)

Alvin Ailey was born in Texas and began his career with Lester Horton. His own company started in 1958 with 7 members. Now it's a complex repertory company with a cast of 29. Perryman states, "We are not all a Black thing but we are in the spiritualness of the whole third world."

Perryman believes that with the budget on the bottom for cultural outlets that the community will fill the gap by sponsoring local dance troupes with a community spirit (like our Hereo).

Donna Woods, a nine-year veteran of A.A., says, "Hopefully, the government will continue to support the arts. But it seems that Reagan doesn't want to go that way. Things will be cut and we won't be able to put it on TV and our tours might be lengthened."

The cutting of our arts just reflects how little this country cares about the arts. But I guess when you could buy a tank, why would you want to see or hear something about peace?



ALVIN AILEY DANCER DONNA WOODS (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Still, it's the European relatives of America who can't do enough for our artists, Donna explains. "They are very warm people and they want the arts to come over. You just have to say that in Europe they are very supportive of their arts."

Donna feels that although the future support of the dance theatre may come from large corporations and rich individuals, the direction of the company won't change. "The direction doesn't always come from Alvin but from the choreographer."

In watching their performance you could see the non-verbal thought pass from dancer to dancer. The flow is smooth; the ballet buffs complained that the music was too jazzy and the jazz buffs cried that it wasn't up enough. But to sit back with an open mind you could get right into their movement with the same ease and grace. Alvin Ailey is just Alvin Ailey. If the dictionary were to pick up on him they would say, "Alvin Ailey: Third World movements with spirit."



## Natalie Cole *Happy Love*

One of the most sensitive and beloved song interpreters of our day is the lovely Natalie Cole, who has been a consistent public and critical favorite since she stepped into the limelight with *Inseparable*, her debut recording, in 1975. *Inseparable* garnered her a golden album award and a Grammy for "Best New Artist" that year, while its smash hit "This Will Be" earned her a second Grammy for "Best Female R&B Vocal Performance."

Since then Natalie and success have been virtually inseparable; she has reaped five more gold LP certifications—*Natalie*, *Unpredictable*, *Thankful*, *Natalie... Live*, and *I Love You So*—and two platinum awards—*Unpredictable* and *Thankful*. She has also been the recipient of a host more kudos, including a third Grammy in 1976 for "Best Female R&B Vocal Performance" once again.

Natalie has also made several significant television appearances, both as a performer and charming interview subject, and she hosted her own variety special for the CBS network.

Natalie spent the early part of 1981 filming television commercials for Posner Cosmetics and Ford Motor Company, yet somehow found time to chair the American Cancer Society-sponsored Great American Smokeout before entering the studio to record her new album, *Happy Love* (September 1981).

*Happy Love* is an apropos title for this magnificent LP. Natalie is in her element, singing optimistic songs of love and togetherness with a flair all her own and the result is a sweet soul blend of pulsating rhythm and blues. Natalie's warm, full-bodied vocals are complemented perfectly by a tight band and light string ensemble under the direction of producer/arranger George Tobin.

Natalie's new association with Tobin, in fact, represents the first time in nine albums that she has worked with a new producer. And Tobin, fresh from producing the smash hit "Bein' With You" for Smokey Robinson, was fit for the task. He showcases Natalie in warm tones and polished arrangements, emphasizing her rich vocal timbre.

With the changes in the production company came changes in the creative team, and new songwriters were recruited to bring fresh material to the *Happy Love* project. Lead guitarist Mike Piccirillo collaborated with Tobin Productions director Gary Goetzman to come up with the LP's first hit single, "You Were Right Girl," and Bill Amesbury penned the explosive follow-up smash "Nothin' But A Fool."

Natalie herself contributed three tunes, proving herself as more than just a stellar performer, but a songwriter who can write in several styles. She penned "Love And Kisses" and co-wrote "The Joke Is On You" and "Across The Nation."

The album also features updated versions of two old chestnuts, Percy Sledges' No. 1 "When A Man Loves A Woman" and the Guess Who's pop masterpiece, "These Eyes."

All of the tunes have one thing in common, however. Natalie Cole's very happy love.

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## Welcome Home Concert

Peggy Houston Shivers, (soprano), in concert, Sunday, October 18, 1981, at 4 pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1624 N.E. Hancock. Tickets on sale at G.I. Joe's, 8900 N. Vancouver; Stevens & Son Jewelers, Lloyd Center. Ticket cost: \$10 per person.

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