

ENTERTAINMENT

# HAPPENINGS

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## "Annie" Premiere!

On June 3rd, Oregon Public Broadcasting is bringing the motion picture "Annie" to Portland. The event, to be held at the Fox Theatre, will mark the Portland premiere of this musical extravaganza. Sponsored in part by Columbia Pictures, the premiere will benefit Oregon Public Broadcasting.

The film stars Albert Finney, Carol Burnett, Bernadette Peters and Aileen Quinn as Annie.

The festivities will begin at 8 p.m. with the movie debut, and will culminate with a special "Daddy Warbucks Open House" at the Portland Hilton International Club.



The Street Corner Singers

## We Got The Sound

If you're looking for that sound, those harmonious du-op-du-wahs delivered a *cappella*, you'll have your chance on Friday, May 28, at 9:30 p.m. at Chuck's (823 S.W. Front), when Portland's own STREET CORNER SINGERS present an exclusive engagement. This promises to be an event you won't want to miss!

The STREET CORNER SINGERS of Everybody's Records fame, appear in the popular commercial by the Film Loft. The group follows up a smash engagement at The Last Hurrah, with another at Chuck's, kicking off the Memorial Day weekend.



## Deniece "Miracle Worker" Williams

Columbia recording artist Deniece Williams has embarked on a 14-day, 8-city cross-country promotional tour, with stops scheduled in Miami, Charlotte, Boston, New York, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans. In addition to meeting radio and the media, a series of in-store autograph signings at five major department stores along the way has been coordinated with Flori Roberts, Inc., the black cosmetics firm.

The tour coincides with news that *Niecy*, her sixth Columbia album, has made its bulleted debuts across-the-board this week on the country's Pop and Soul charts. *Niecy* represents the second collaboration by co-producers/co-songwriters Thom Bell and Deniece Williams. Their first LP together, *My Melody*, was certified RIAA gold following a half-year run on the charts by its classic single, "Silly."

"It's Gonna Take a Miracle," the first single from *Niecy*, bulleted onto the Soul charts last month and crossed-over to the Pop singles charts within two weeks. The LaBelle/Laura Nyro chestnut, written by Teddy Randazzo and first recorded by the Royales, is one of Deniece's fastest-breaking singles ever. It bulleted inside the top 20 on the Soul charts this week, the label's highest-charted Soul single.



## Richard Simmons Never Say Diet

Each week, an estimated five million daytime television viewers stretch, bend and lift to the enthusiastic encouragements of exercise/fitness guru Richard Simmons. Seekers of well-being have likewise made his 1980 book *Never Say Diet* a Number One bestseller. In magazine articles, television guest spots and personal appearances across the country, Simmons has been spreading his gospel of fitness through exercise, proper eating habits and positive attitude to ever-increasing numbers.

With *Reach*, his very first album, Simmons takes his crusade to the recording medium. The 10-song LP, released in May '82 by Elektra/Asylum Records, differs from other exercise records in that it features Simmons singing original songs, co-written with hit songwriters Bruce Roberts and Alee Willis, also the LP's executive producers.

Simmons sees the album as filling a definite need. "I thought that other exercise records weren't fun and weren't motivating," he says. "I wanted to make one you could sing along to and really get into. Every song on *Reach* has an uplifting meaning and a great beat."

Standing at a diminutive 5'7" and weighing in at a lithe 137 pounds, Simmons is a living testament to his "Live-It" program (as opposed to "diet" program: "Look at the first syllable of diet—now, is that any way to inspire anyone?!"). Such was not always the case, however-born 33 years ago in the epicurean wonderland of New Orleans, Simmons tipped the scales at 200 pounds by the tender age of 15.

While in Italy some years later as an art student, his great girth (which peaked at 268) made him perfect for Fellini movies (he appears in *Satyricon*'s banquet scenes) and Italian commercials (portraying singing meatballs and dancing tires, among other products).

Then, in 1968, he found a note from an anonymous friend on his car windshield in Rome: "Dear Richard: Fat people die young. Please don't die." The concern of another prompted Simmons to crash-diet and lose 130 pounds in two-and-a-half months, leading to his extensive research into health, nutrition and *safe* ways to lose weight.

"The Richard Simmons Show" debuted in October 1980 in 30 markets, mushrooming rapidly to its present penetration of nearly 200. Infusing the staid TV exercise format with his own mirth-with-a-message approach ("If I can keep my huffing pupils in hysterics so much the better. If we're going to have healthy bodies, let's have fun getting there!"), Simmons show has become the most-watched fitness program in years. "The center of his appeal is the sincerity he projects," wrote Steve Gelman in the September 19, 1982 edition of *TV Guide*. "He lets people know that if he could trim down, so can they."

With the success of his television program and *Never Say Diet*, Simmons was ready to find a new means of reaching people. "Going out on the road made me realize that most people don't have the money to join a health spa," he says. "I thought, 'If you go to a disco to dance, why not extend that to the exercise world through music?' Inspired, he decided to record an album of specially-designed material.

Before entering the studio in January, 1982, Simmons studied voice under the tutelage of Cantor Nate Lam (singing coach to Rod Stewart, Richard Harris and Burt Reynolds, among others). The *Reach* sessions found Simmons vocally strong and expressive. "I had some very emotional moments in the studio," he recalls. "When I started to sing, 'You Can Do It' (the ballad closing Side One), I started crying—I poured out so much feeling doing it that I had to be driven home!"

Richard Simmons wants your body—and, with the help of *Reach*, you'll get it back in much better shape.

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