

ENTERTAINMENT

HAPPENINGS

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GETTIN' DOWN WITH REN

There just doesn't seem to be enough time in the day for Ren Woods: the 25-year-old actress/singer who first gained national attention as "Fanta" in the telemovie "Roots" is virtually everywhere in 1982.

Moviegoers can see her now in "Penitentiary II," Jamaa Fanaka's follow-up to the successful "Penitentiary" film. Those who prefer audio entertainment can discover her vocal talents on *Azz Izz*, her recently-released debut album for Elektra/Asylum Records. And, to put the icing on the cake, Woods may be doing a concert tour this summer, if she can get another album in the can first.

The territory Ren Woods has covered up to now is fairly extensive. Born in Chicago in 1957, she grew up in Portland, Oregon. At age nine, she was in a singing group called the Three Little Souls which ended up playing regular dates at a local bar. A local talent manager named Larry Raphael eventually took the band to Los Angeles. As Sunday's Child, the group did specials with Nipsey Russell, Redd Foxx and appearances on "The Jack Benny Show."

Sunday's Child broke up when Ren was 17, but she decided to remain in Los Angeles. She landed the part of "Dorothy" in the Los Angeles theater production of "The Wiz," and during the show's run, she took a break to shoot "Roots." Those roles led to parts in the films "9 to 5," "The Jerk" and "Hair."

Playing the girlfriend of a boxer in "Penitentiary II" was a step in a different direction from those roles. "Jamaa had been talking to me about doing another film called 'The Duke,' but I ran into Leon Isaac Kennedy and he mentioned something about this role. I auditioned for it and got it," she relates.

She wants to do more television in the future, though she's a bit worried about the effect those guest spots have on her overall career. "Those shows always seem to pop up again as re-runs, and when you least expect them," Woods notes. "I don't mean to put down this particular show, but a 'White Shadow' I was in was recently aired again. You're trying hard to impress people with a new record and then here comes this old 'White Shadow' episode!"



Ren Woods

Azz Izz isn't her first album, though it may be the first record buyers are aware of. Ren maintains that her first album, *Out Of The Woods*, released in the late 1970s on ARC/Columbia (Earth, Wind & Fire's label), was a "well-kept secret," adding that she really doesn't mind now because she feels her new *Azz Izz* is much better. "This new one comes from me," she emphasizes. "Also, there are songs by close friends on *Azz Izz*."

Woods only co-wrote one song on the new album, "Lovin' Power," but she hopes to write as many as six for the next. "I'm trying to get Teena Marie to produce it. I think I'll be able to. She's a big fan."

With all her work, Woods still finds time for a personal life. She remains ensconced in her small Los Angeles apartment. "I don't want to get into that big rent mentality," she concedes. Still, she manages to find room for about 30 plants of all kinds, though she admits she hasn't "gotten good at growing flowers yet."

She dates a fellow musician, a drummer, and works out at the trendy Jane Fonda's Workout in Beverly Hills. In fact, it was here that she met one of her songwriters—Pattyce Banks. Fans of trivia may know that Banks, under the name of Chocolate, was the co-lead singer of Graham Central Station. "I met her and she said she had some songs she wanted me to hear. We went to my car and put on the cassette and I said 'Yeah, this is it,'" recalls Woods.

For all her accomplishments, Woods is still awed by those of others. At the Black Filmmakers Hall Of Fame awards show she got to meet veteran singer Cab Calloway and actor Yaphet Kotto. Referring to Calloway, she notes, "He still sounds good singing 'Hi De Ho' at 70. He liked my performance so much he jokingly said I should be ashamed of myself for doing such a good show."

Coming Attractions

"A Touch of Class," South Park Blocks, Fridays, July 9-Aug. 20, 7:00 p.m.

"Big and Little Bands," Laurel-hurst Park, Sundays, July 11-August 1.

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Bob, Dave and Marianne will appear in "Metro Jazz '82" at the Western Forestry Center, June 27th, at 1:00 pm and 8:00 pm. Other participants include Shirley Nanette, Sonny King, Thara Memory, the Mt. Hood CC Jazz Lab Band, and many others. Full bar and hot links 'n ribs by Geneva's will be available.



Among those appearing at "Metro Jazz '82" will be Ellen Wong.

Coming Attractions

The 19th Annual Festival of Arts will be held June 24th through 27th at Lakewood Center (368 S. State St.) in Lake Oswego. Free. 636-3634.

Mt. Hood Community College will hold its Old Fashioned Strawberry Festival on June 26th, 10 am-6 p. Dunk tank, puppet show, arts and crafts, strawberry desserts. 667-7474.

Aszemar Glenn, pianist, will present "Second Phase Concert Engagement" in a benefit for T.H.E. C.R.I.B., June 26th, 7:30 pm at King Center.

Oregon Jam 1982 will be at Autzen Stadium, Eugene, July 25th. Foreigner, Blue Oyster Cult, Joan Jett, Taxi.

Oregon Bach Festival will be held June 28-July 11 at Beall Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene. Afternoon and evening concerts, benefit picnic, master classes. 686-5665.

Eddie Wied and Sky Trio, the Vintage, June 21, 22, 23.

Spend July 2, 3 & 4 at the St. Paul Rodeo. Carnival, fireworks. Night events at 8:00 p.m.

Continuum Band, Saturday Market, west end of Burnside Bridge, June 27.

John Denver concert, Memorial Coliseum, June 28th.

Mt. Hood Community College Festival of Jazz. MHCC, Aug. 6-8.

Theatre: The Man of La Mancha, Portland Civic Theatre, June 25-July 31.

Annie—Civic Auditorium, June 15-July 11.

West Coast Latvian Choral Concert, Civic Auditorium, July 4.

"In the Volcano": Free concert series. Mt. Tabor Park, 7 p.m., every Thursday, June 17-July 29.

O'Bryant Square Concerts. Wednesdays, 11:30 am, June 23-Aug. 25.

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