

HAPPENINGS

Keep on "Pipin"

GRASSROOTS NEWS, N.W. — Thirty years of musical talent, choreographic masterpieces and true hope-to-die love ballads exploded on the stage last weekend in Portland, in the form of Gladys Knight and the Pips. Their ability to survive in an industry that churns out talents like an assembly line, according to Pip William Guest, is unity. "We have a common respect for one another and the same goal. We want to be the best group in the world. In our thirtieth year we plan to expand ourselves individually and as a group."

Their ability to expand is centered around their longevity as a singing group. This unit has passed the test of time, especially in the 1970's, when a couple of their hits, "Neither One of Us" and "The Way We Were," went number one with a bullet. In the mid-seventies the rumor mill had a baby over the break-up of Gladys from the Pips. "First of all," Guest begins, "We have never in our life broken up. During the time this rumor was spread we were with Buddah Records. Gladys left Buddah Records because of non-payment and signed a contract with Columbia Records. This prevented Gladys Knight and the Pips from recording together for three years. During this period we had to think of something that would keep us alive as a group because in three years people forget you quick. The Pips signed with Casablanca Records and kept singing just to keep the name alive. People had never seen Gladys Knight and the Pips do anything separate. So someone just took it upon themselves to spread the rumor that Gladys Knight and the Pips had broken up. And you would be surprised how some people like bad news. We were performing in Ohio when someone came up to us and said, 'It's really too bad you guys are breaking up,' I had to ask him, 'Did you just come out of the concert?' He said he had, but it was still too bad that we were breaking up."



GLADYS KNIGHT AND THE PIPS

"The majority of people do not know that Gladys Knight, Bubba Knight, Edward Patten and William Guest are some very talented musicians. But I guess God just moves in mysterious ways. The talents we haven't had a chance to show people will be the very thing that will keep us living for another thirty years."

(William Guest, a member of the Pips)

In their thirty years of creating good quality music, the Pips have noticed the music of today tends to be trendy and faddish. "Every four months the music trend changes because that is the life of 45's. But black musicians are flexible and we've been singing all types of music ever since we started singing. It's just that the industry will brand us with something like R&B to keep us in one place. Insofar as that relates to Gladys Knight and the Pips we have tried to maintain ourselves. We are so happy about our new album, 'Visions.' There are teenagers today who know who Gladys Knight and the Pips are from their parents. But for some reason we haven't captured this new set of teenagers. We are going after them now, although we haven't really changed our sounds. It is a very dangerous thing changing with trends. Because trends come and go but Gladys Knight and the Pips will be around for a long time to come."

Guest says that the disco trend affected original groups like Gladys Knight and the Pips. "The disco trend hurt a lot of people. But there was a balance because it gave a lot of new people a chance. And we found out if you are old and good you will be around. We try and maintain ourselves with, at least, one hit every decade."

You can say many things about Gladys Knight and the Pips but the one item that ought to lead all their other fine qualities is the way they deal with the romance in everyday life. "I think that writers who write for Gladys Knight and the Pips will coin a song in a certain style for us. I think it is the way that Gladys sings. But people are funny. They will come up to me and ask, 'What kind of problems is Gladys having now?' They believe the songs because they can relate to them because they are in that same thing."

Gladys Knight and the Pips, like so many groups who have been around for 3 and 4 decades, are certainly not overdrawn when it comes to their dues paying account. They have seen their fellow Afro-American artists coin a tune for a nominal fee only to be picked up by a pop or a rock and roll artist who will make a mint from the very same song. "Of course, this is not fair, but it happens all the time. With Gladys' version of 'The Way We Were,' it had to go through all the R&B charts before it was picked up by the pop charts. A lot of black artists will never be heard because of that. This is a complaint white artists have, as well as black artists. I know from personal experience, there is no color line among artists. It is the people who sit behind the desk. They don't know anything about music. They are business people. They can either make you or break you."

We know the stereotypes and labeling that goes on behind the scenes of the music industry will never dissipate the talents of Gladys Knight and the Pips. After all, they will use their imagination to weather the storm of troubled times. To take us to a place where peaceful water flows and musically give their audience a once in a lifetime thing.

The Mel Brown Quintet kicks off **Your Zoo and all that Jazz 1983** at the Washington Park Zoo. The concert is free with regular zoo admission. For info on parking, shuttle bus, etc. call 226-1561.



49-day tour

Julianne Johnson accumulated a lot of credits while studying at the University of Portland. But not just academic ones.

A May graduate with a bachelor of arts in theater and psychology, she recently received the second place award at a national acting competition, and is scheduled to soon leave for a South Pacific tour as a cast member of U. of P.'s production of "The Fantastiks."

A leading actress while at the university, Johnson placed second at the American College Theater Festival held in Washington, D.C. Before traveling to the April contest, Johnson competed with 67 other students at the regional level to win first prize and the \$750 Irene Ryan Scholarship for acting. At the national competition the 22-year-old actress received employment offers from CBS, ABC and NBC. She has tentatively accepted CBS's offer, and plans to move to New York in late September or December. However, Johnson has quite a bit more traveling to do before then.

University of Portland's production of "The Fantastiks" was chosen by the Armed Forces Professional Entertainment Department for a performing tour of Japan, Korea, Okinawa and Hawaii. The 10-member cast and faculty advisor will leave June 21 for a 49-day tour. According to Air Force Personnel Officer Major Bagby Daniel, only two or three university theater groups in the nations are chosen each year for an armed forces tour.

While at the University of Portland, Johnson served as president of Alpha Tau Omega theater fraternity, and of Theta Tau Delta service sorority, and was listed in "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges." She is the daughter of Robert and Margaret Isaacs, 6327 NE 32nd.

"Deep and Weird Dance Concert"

Since their debut in April at the late, lamented Luis' La Bamba, Le Bon has been hailed in the press and on the street as one of Portland's hottest new bands, and a breath of fresh air in the city's semi-stagnant rock scene. Conceived by writer/percussionist Rick Mitchell, Le Bon (which means "The Good" in French) includes several of Portland's finest musicians; Carlton Jackson on drums, Dave Captein on bass, Dan Balmer on guitar, John Jensen on trumpet, Jim Pribbenow on sax and Billy Kennedy on vocals.

On Sunday, June 19, at the Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Le Bon will present a "Deep and Weird Dance Concert" focusing on the jazz/new music side of their repertoire not fully revealed in local club dates. In addition to the band's originals, the concert will consist of classic compositions by jazz innovators such as Ornette Coleman, Miles Davis, and Albert Ayler. Those who come to dance should not be dismayed, however, as these instrumentals will be balanced by a healthy selection of "future funk" dance music featuring the unique vocals of Billy K.

Opening for Le Bon is a band of musical free spirits called Freezer Burn. A spin-off from the Portland Improvisors and Composers Association, Freezer Burn is a showcase for the original, often humorous, avant-garde jazz compositions of percussionist David Storrs. Other members include Mike Curtis on reeds, Tom Hill on trombone, Del Bialosotosky on guitar, Dave Leslie on keyboards and Captein and Jensen from Le Bon. In sum, a combination of talents deserving wider recognition.

The concert begins at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$3.00. Full bar. 21 and over.

For more information, call 288-2977.

The 4th Annual African Cultural Night will be presented by the Association of African Students on Saturday, June 18, 1983 at the PSU Ballroom-Smith Center, 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. The program includes: food from various countries, traditional songs and dances, fashion show, drumming & artifacts and guest speakers. Participating organizations include Black Studies and the Black Cultural Affairs Board. Admission is \$3.00 for students and \$5.00 general. For more information call 296-1936 or 229-3472.

Portland sculptor's work shown

In 1976, Carlton Bell was awarded an American Revolution Bicentennial Administration grant to produce 5 sculpture panels depicting black historical past. His commissions have included works for more than 200 private collectors, and in 1975 he was selected as the first in a series of Oregon artists to be honored by Gov. Robert Straub.

Bell has taught in the John Adams High School and was "artist in residence" at Portland Community College in 1971-74.

Some of Bell's work can be seen in the offices of:

- Donald E. Pollock Investments
- Zellerbach Paper Co.
- Aetna Insurance
- Pacific Metals
- Quimby Welding
- John Adams High School
- Duniway Elementary School
- Franklin, Madison, and Marshall High Schools
- Waverly Children's Home
- The Garden Home Elementary School, and
- The South Bay Trade School in San Diego.

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