

Mathis picketed after refusal to apologize

by Bob Lothian

Sixty demonstrators picketed and chanted "Johnny sold his soul for South African gold," in front of the Civic Auditorium Sunday night as Johnny Mathis appeared inside.

They were protesting the Black singer's appearances in South Africa, where apartheid segregates Blacks by law.

Avel Mayfield, spokeswoman for Portlanders Organized for Southern Africa Freedom and co-director of the American Friends Service Committee's Southern Africa Program, said that some of the 3,000 concert goers who paid up to \$18 for a ticket to the sell-out concert appeared reluctant to go in after reading material handed to them by demonstrators.

"For us it was an opportunity to do some education and inform the public about the UN cultural boycott," she said. She described the demonstration by the diverse group of Blacks, whites, young and old as "a very positive sign that there is awareness across the board and it is something we can build on."

Portlanders Organized for Southern Africa Freedom is part of a nationwide movement organized



Protesters picket in front of the Civic Auditorium Sunday to educate concert goers about apartheid. (Photo: Kris Altucher)

in response to the United Nations 1983 announcement of a cultural boycott of performing artists and athletes who appear in South Africa.

Included on the UN's boycott list of 235 athletes and performers are Mathis, Frank Sinatra, The Beach Boys, Glenn Campbell, Eartha Kitt, The Osmonds and Tina Turner.

South Africa, trying to improve

its image, lures the entertainers with huge sums. Frank Sinatra reportedly received \$1.8 million for his appearance at the South African gambling resort of Sun City.

Those who apologize for their past appearances and refuse to return are taken off the list. Stephanie Mills, according to Mayfield, apologized and agreed not to return and then organized a benefit concert; the proceeds of which were donated to the Southern Africa liberation movement.

Mayfield said that POSAF was

unsuccessful in negotiating with Mathis for an apology and a refusal to return. At a press conference last week, POSAF spokesman Lenny Edwards said that "Mathis' concert supports apartheid indirectly." Mathis' manager, Skip Heinecke, replied that Mathis "has never supported and will never support apartheid." According to Heinecke, Mathis was the first entertainer to stipulate in his contract that he would only appear in front of racially mixed audiences in South Africa. Edwards pointed out the difference between appearing before a "salt and pepper audience" and actively refusing to support the apartheid regime.

POSAF is planning to picket the July 2nd appearance of Tina Turner at the Memorial Coliseum, although "We are hoping to be successful in negotiating for an apology and agreement that she not return to South Africa," said Mayfield.

POSAF has received over 50 organizational and individual endorsements, she said, including city commissioners Strachan, Lindberg and Jordan, and county commissioner McCoy, and several state legislators. In addition, said Mayfield, KBOO radio has refused to play the work of recording artists on the boycott list, and is challenging other Portland radio stations to do the same.

Black United Fund promotes community self-investment

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — The organized effort for self-investment is the main thrust and by-laws of the national Black United Fund which places itself at the cutting edge of change in the Black communities.

The fund utilizes payroll deductions as its major source to create an economic infrastructure for money, sources and ideas to circulate within the community.

Dana Alston, President of the National Black United Fund, was in Portland, recently, conferring with Mary Anderson, President of the Black United Fund of Oregon.

The fund started in 1968, in Los Angeles, and it did not take long for

atmosphere within the local Black communities."

She called the climate in Oregon promising. "We feel we have attracted some very positive, highly skilled people. That is a key element for growth. Through creative ways of fund raising, I think the fund could raise a significant amount of money, even with a small population base."

"We are working with four organizations and hopefully will be in one by this fall," she added.

Alston said each local fund sets its own priorities but they all center on a number of concerns.

"From economic development, social justice and legal services, arts and culture, health and human services."

The national fund is working toward three objectives. They are creating a revolving loan fund to start new businesses in the Black community, a land development project to maintain and secure urban and rural areas for the benefit of the local populace and building a relationship with the church to encourage it to become more involved in the economic and social change aspects of the community.

"As long as we are dependent on the government, foundations and corporations outside our community for assistance, we will never have control over our destiny," Alston added.

The Black United Fund is also credited with being among the organizations that broke the United Way's monopoly on payroll deductions.

"Although they promote themselves saying, 'One gift works for all,' our research revealed that a small percentage went to Black organizations that are controlled by Black people," she concluded.



DANA ALSTON

a national network for self-investment to establish itself in cities and communities across the country.

Alston said, "The fund takes 3 years to get their foot in the door. It is a long-term developmental fund-raising strategy. How well a fund does depends on a number of factors. The strengths and narrowness of the local United Way, the skills of the organizers and the political



(l-r) Ben Priestly, BUF; Bill Wax, KBOO; Lennie Edwards, POSAF; and Elizabeth Gross, AFSC announce plans to picket Johnny Mathis' Portland performance. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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