



THE ENTERTAINMENT SEEN

Something For Everyone

This weekend we are privileged once again to share an evening with not two but three leading national acts. Other cities are fortunate enough to be offered these three- and four-act concerts two to four times a month. Unfortunately, we in the Pacific Northwest have neither the population nor the mediums to support hard-core R&B concerts of this magnitude that often.

This week we want to discourage the rumors surrounding this weekend's activities, such as, the concert is on a college campus, therefore, it's a kids concert, but that is not true. This concert truly has "something for everyone". We encourage all avid (enthusiastic) and non-avid concert goers to attend and bring the whole family.



Najee

His name is simply Najee. Yet, his musical experience and appreciation—ranging from be-bop to beat-box is anything but simplistic. His debut album, "Najee's Theme", on EMI America, masterfully melds the intricacies of jazz with the colorful and melodic flavorings of his own compositions. Working with producers, Rahni Harris and Charles Elgart, Najee covers and captures the spirit of Anita Baker's "Sweet Love" as well as Earth, Wind & Fire's "Can't Hide Love." Together with such original highlights as, "Feels So Good To Me" and "For The Love Of You," "Najee's Theme" is an exquisite blend of serious, but accessible jazz-oriented music.

Luckily, growing up there were few musical idioms Najee missed. His home provided a fertile incubator for his talents. "Before his death, my father was a classical violinist for the New York Philharmonic," says Najee. "My mother was also very supportive and gave me my first saxophone at 14."

His formal post high school training was done at the New England Con-

servatory of Music. While studying saxophone and arranging, he also began to do session work and had his first experience leading a local jazz band. Today his cumulative experience includes stints with such big bands as Chaka Khan and Meli'sa Morgan; and recording sessions with Melba Moore, Kashif, Lillo Thomas and George Benson.

His session work brought him to the attention of Hush Productions. There he was given the opportunity to record his first album. Confident about his future and the future of instrumental music, Najee states, "I'm on a mission of my own. I'd like to bring instrumentals back to the common ear; a lot of people miss it."



Ray, Goodman & Brown

Clearing the air of all that funk; black pop has finally returned to its roots—lyricism, full-bodied arrangements, and singing so finely meshed it evokes a deep response. Ray, Goodman & Brown, together for 19 years have never left it. It takes exceptional talent and not changing styles to suit the whims of music fashion. Over the years there's been no hard-rock, punky, funky or disco Ray, Goodman & Brown. "We're a bonafide singing group," says lead vocalist Harry Ray. On any record of theirs, you can always expect sophisticated seduction, and for them to strike an emotional affinity with the listener that transcends time.

Al Goodman and Billy Brown were in an outfit called the Broadways; Harry Ray fronted the Establishments. "Though we competed against each other from time to time, we were all friends," says Ray. So when the Broadways—signed to Sugarhill Records and renamed the Moments—lost their third member, he was called upon to be a three week replacement. Laughing, Ray calls his tenure "a long three weeks." But between 1982 and 1984, Harry Ray went on his own. These were the wonder years, as Harry, Al and Billy wondered what would become of them. Ray didn't establish himself as a solo act, and his replacement in the group couldn't recreate the smooth magic of the Moments. Their careers in disarray, Harry soon rejoined his childhood buddies. Together they took to the stages of Europe and the Far East, striking a familiar chord with a mixture of comedy and synchronized showmanship.

Meanwhile the old tunes were being resurrected at basement jams. Like young Frankensteins, street kids breathed new life into the same songs their parents and older siblings may have fallen in love to.

The performing longevity is remarkable, but check the singles this group, formerly the Moments, has collected. Ever since 1969's "Not On the Outside But Inside Strong," they have charted consistently with classics

like "Look At Me I'm In Love," "Love On A Two Way Street" (covered by Stacy Lattisaw), "With You," "Happy Anniversary," and "Special Lady," one of A.S.C.A.P.'s most performed songs of 1980. More are on the way via their new LP "Take It To The Limit." Catch their magic live on stage as they prepare the way for the dynamic Freddie Jackson.



Freddie Jackson

Freddie Jackson is the first to admit that he's a romantic: "They say I have bedroom eyes—and I work them as much as I can!" But it was undoubtedly the voice that made a platinum-certified hit of the very first Freddie Jackson album, the Grammy-nominated "Rock Me Tonight." And that masterful voice recaptures all the thrill of last year's introduction on his second Capitol album, "Just Like The First Time."

"Ballads live," notes Jackson. "They have longevity and they put you in the circuit for longevity as a performer. Even in the church choir, they always gave me slow songs to sing." But the technique, rightly admired, is really an extension of the message, according to Freddie. "I love giving romance and being romanced. I like pretty things, nice things, women who are beautiful on the inside as well as the outside. Sharing things like fine restaurants, giving flowers, drinking fine wine and champagne—it's nice. I'm a gentleman; a real lady should be treated gently, and I don't seem to lose anything by doing that."

An overriding concern with communicating honestly has guided Jackson through all his dues-paying years and through his skyrocketing first-time success.

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