

ENTERTAINMENT

"Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper" Profiles One of America's Greatest Poets

The late James Baldwin called Langston Hughes a gentle and gallant man — a weary man too. It is appropriate that Hughes, considered the Black man's poet, is also a dream keeper of sorts. For it was Langston Hughes, poet, essayist, playwright, and author, who chose to give voice to working class Blacks.

During February's Black History Month on public television, the new landmark series on American poetry, "Voices & Visions", offers an intimate and moving look at the work, the influences, and the bountiful life of this great poet in "Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper" airing Tuesday, February 9, 1988, 10:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Check your local listing for times in your area.

The film briefly sketches Hughes' early years in the Midwest, revealing through powerful readings and musical interpretations how the Negro folk blues of his childhood influenced Hughes to give birth to a



What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
— Langston Hughes

whole new and innovative form of poetry — the blues form — a form that is still popular today.

In the 1920s, Harlem lured

Hughes away from the Midwest. It was a young, vibrant place, a cultural center for Black artistic activities. Hughes' rise paralleled the rise of the Harlem Renaissance.

In June 1926 Hughes' literary manifesto, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," was published in Nation magazine. In it he stated, "We younger Negro artists now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame . . . We know we are beautiful. And ugly too . . . We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves."

Through poetry, documentary clips, and personal interviews, the film retraces Hughes' life in Harlem, Paris, and Madrid as well as his travels to Russia and Africa. Hughes seemed to have two constant companions in his journey through life — talent and luck. The film reveals the intriguing ways Hughes managed to continue writ-

ing, and how he dealt with patrons who wanted to control his work in return for their financial support.

Critics of the right and the left took aim at Hughes during his lifetime. Early in his career, Hughes was criticized for writing about the Black working class, critics dubbed him the "writer for the sewer dwellers." During the McCarthy era, he was called before the notorious Subcommittee on Un-American Activities. In the 1960s he was criticized by young Black poets for his lack of militancy.

But Langston Hughes retained his own vision. He saw his role as that of a social poet and worked to give voice to his people. His death, at the age of 65, prompted James Baldwin to reflect, "I think in a sense that loneliness overtook him . . . And that is what makes you weary, that's when you close your eyes."

"Voices & Visions" is closed-captioned for the hearing-impaired.

Ziggy Marley and The Melody Makers



Curiosity about the upcoming album by Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers is high. When Virgin Records threw a private listening session in L.A. for its staff, a host of well-known music insiders showed up as well. They included: Johnny Rotten, Warren Zevon, J.D. Souther, Paula Abdul (choreographer of Janet Jackson's video), Babyface LA (producer of the recent hit that brought The Whispers back to the pop charts) and producer Don Was (of the group Was Not Was).

This is not the first time the Marley and the Melody Makers LP has attracted all-star attention. The album's producers are Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth of Tom Tom Club and the Talking Heads. And guest guitarist on one cut is Keith Richards.

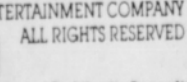
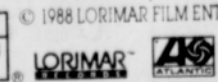
IT'S TIME FOR "ACTION"

NAME: Jericho Jackson.
NICKNAME: "Action."
HOME: Detroit.
PROFESSION: Cop.
EDUCATION: Harvard Law.
HOBBY: Fighting Crime.
WEAPON: You're looking at 'em.



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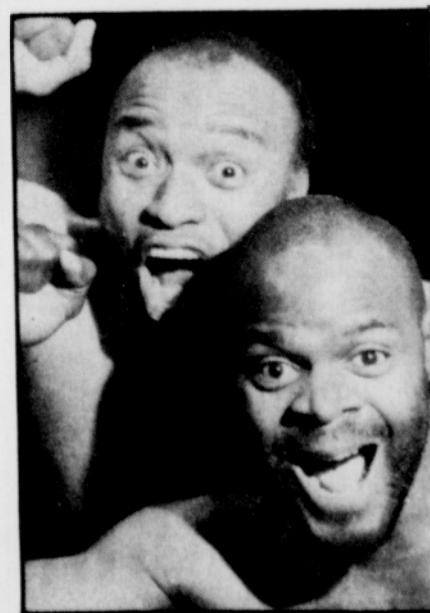
Cissy Houston: Sweet Inspiration



This special, 60-minute program to air on Monday, February 8, 1988, 10:00 p.m. Eastern Time (check local listings for time in your area) on Public Television, charts the singing career of Cissy Houston, mother of singing sensation Whitney Houston. At the age of five, Cissy Houston was belting out quartet gospel with her family group, The Drinkard Singers. In the early 1960s, she "crossed over," and with her nieces Dionne and Dee Dee Warwick, quickly rose to become one of the hottest session singers in New York.

"Cissy Houston: Sweet Inspiration" embarks on a musical roller-coaster from smoky nightclubs to gospel choir rehearsals to trace her impact on both gospel and rhythm and blues music.

Interviews with The Drinkard Singers, Aretha Franklin, Luther Vandross, Dionne Warwick, and Whitney Houston, as well as an intriguing mosaic of archival footage and stills from "The Golden Age of Gospel" and the "Soul Years" highlight this special program.



WOZA ALBERT!

Storefront Theatre presents the Oregon Premiere of WOZA ALBERT! by Barney Simon, Mbongeni Ngema and Percy Mtwa, directed by John Zagone, assistant director, Rick Jones, featuring Anthony P. Armstrong and Rick Jones, February 5-28, 1988, Dolores Winningstad Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets: 224-4001.