

ENTERTAINMENT

BROADWAY BOUND REPORT



by Garland Lee Thompson

Musical Director and pianist, Janice Scroggins performed fully with jazz saxman, Bobby Bryant Jr. and blues singer Curtis Salgado at the weekend Cathedral Park Jazz Festival, while "bicycling" back and forth to rehearsals of "Simply Heavenly." The Broadway musical by Langston Hughes, opens Thursday, August 18th, 1988, 8:00 p.m. at Lincoln Hall Theatre, Portland State University. Scroggins is coaching the singers and musicians for the show, such as Neal Thomas, in the title role, "Simple," with Denise Williams, as his girlfriend, "Joyce," and Jeanett Russell Brown, as "Zarita," his "other woman."

"Simply Heavenly," runs Thursday through Saturday, 8:00 p.m., Sunday, 3:00 p.m., until September 4th, 1988. The box office at PSU is 464-4440.

NEW YORK BLACK THEATRE DIRECTOR, DUANE JONES, DIES

The Artistic Director of the Richard Allen Center for Culture and Art of New York City, died last Friday, July 22nd, 1988. Jones, also an actor and teacher as well as having been the former executive director for the Black Theatre Alliance of New York (now defunct) before becoming the Artistic Director for the Richard Allen Center (RACCA), where he directed among others, an Audelco Award-winning production of "Simply Heavenly," a few seasons ago in New York.

At his death, Jones was directing a production of Kathleen Collins' new play, "The Brothers," (postponed) at the Westbeth Theatre Center, for RACCA in New York. It is a great loss for the theatre and myself, a friend of his, while I founded and was Director of the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop for thirteen years, a member-company of the BTA in New York. "Ciao," Duane, we'll miss you. RACCA is looking for his successor, joining the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop, which is also seeking a new Executive Director for the 1988-89 season. It's a new era now!

POETRY FESTIVAL DEDICATED TO LANGSTON HUGHES

The 1988 Portland Poetry Festival, August 11th-14th, will be highlighted with a dramatic portrayal of the life and works of Langston Hughes and readings by nationally-prominent poets. Thursday, August 11th, Herb Cawthorne, former head of the Urban League of Portland, will appear as "Langston Hughes," weaving the Harlem Renaissance writer's poems and other writings into a narrative at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, 5340 N. Interstate.

The Friday, August 12th readings at Anne Hughes Coffee Room at Powell's Book Store,

1005 W. Burnside, features Native American poets, Dian Million and Elizabeth Woody of Portland, P.Y. Minthorn of Cayuse, on the Umatilla Reservation, and Chrystos of Bainbridge Island, Wash., author of "Not Vanishing."

A reading by Oregon's Poet Laureate, William Stafford of Lake Oswego, will complete the evening. Other readings will be held at the Northwest Service Center, 1819 N.W. Everett, featuring W.S. Merwin, August 13th, at 8:00 p.m. The Festival's final event, August 14th, is scheduled for Noon to 4:30 p.m. in the Washington Park Amphitheatre, featuring Naomi Shihab Nye, Yusef Khomeyda, Olga Broumas and Ishmael Reed, all nationally-acclaimed poets.

WHAT ABOUT THE SEASON, 1987-88?

I opened the season with "Ishi," in "Wild Indian," at the IFCC Theatre and the black South African play, "Homeland," followed. Shabaka, the black actor, starred in the "The Life of Galileo" (New Rose Theatre), after "Woza Albert," the powerful South African two-character play with actors Rick Jones and Anthony Armstrong, packed the Winningsstad Theatre at the Performing Art Center. We had "Tea," at the IFCC, a play about Japanese war-brides, by Velina Houston, an Afro-Asian woman playwright from Los Angeles, Ca. All of this and the impressive and "Joe Turner's Come and Gone", "Sarafina," the black South African musical, and "Checkmates," by Ron Milner, due to open Thursday, August 4th, 1988, on Broadway at the 46th Street Theatre in New York (starring Ruby Dee, Denzel Washington and Paul Winfield).

Controversial Movie Attracts Mixed Reactions

NASHVILLE (UMNS)—The scheduled release in late September of a controversial film entitled "The Last Temptation of Christ" has attracted a boycott threat from one United Methodist, and warnings against censorship from denominational communications leaders.

The Rev. Donald Wildmon, Tupelo, Miss., who heads the American Family Association, describes the movie as a "blasphemous evil attack on the church and the cause of Christ." Mr. Wildmon's organization is encouraging opposition to release and showing of the production and, if that is not successful, a boycott of businesses operated by the corporation that owns Universal Studios.

Nelson Price, head of United Methodist Communication's Public Media Division, said he has not seen the film which speculates on the humanity of Jesus and his struggle with his mission as Messiah, but the UMCCom executive called any boycott by United Methodists "premature" and equated such a move with "a call for censorship" which the General Conference has opposed in statements in 1984 and 1988. The Rev. William Fore, a United Methodist who heads the National Council of Churches' communications unit, said the film is "consistent with an important stream of Christian theology" by making Christ's divinity dependent on an act of will.

A Musical Director And Pianist "For All Seasons"

THE IFCC IS AT IT AGAIN!

In collaboration with the University of Portland's Japan Studies Program, the Japanese American Citizen's League (JACL), and the NW Asian American Theatre (NWAAT), the IFCC is presenting "Miss Minidoka 1943," by Gary Iwamoto, directed by Stan Asis, at the Mago Hunt Theatre, University of Portland, on August 26th, 27th and 28th, 1988, Friday, Saturday at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

"Miss Minidoka 1943," searches the confines of a World War II internment camp for "the ideal Japanese-American woman." The contest, a brainchild of camp reporter, Eppie, is first threatened by convincing camp lawyer Shifty and then almost torpedoed by Japanese-culture purist Matsutake man, wild mushroom hunter. But despite everything, justice and fair play prevail as the residents hustle to hold their beauty contest; to create their "own slice of the American pie."

"Miss Minidoka 1943," is a gentle and subtly humorous musical about judging people only at "face value." For information, call Roberta Wong at IFCC, 243-7930.



by Lisa Collins

Back Together Again: "It's fantastic—like a big whirlwind. We are doing it again," were the words of Joyce Vincent-Wilson, excited about the reunion of Tony Orlando & Dawn. It was two months ago that Telma Hopkins, who co-starred with Neil Carter in "Gimme A Break," got a call from Orlando, out of the blue. The two had broken off communication when in 1977, some felt Orlando faked a mental breakdown on stage in Cohasset, Massachusetts in order to dump his famed backup team. (He began appearing solo in Vegas shortly after-

ward). Both Hopkins & Joyce Vincent-Wilson (who make up Dawn), have buried the hatchet with Orlando, and are presently rehearsing for a tour that begins in Atlantic City on July 26, almost 11 years to the day since the group—that garnered a hit TV show and sold in excess of 25 million records, including "Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round The Ole Oak Tree,"—last performed together.

All Burned Out: A recent episode of "Sonny Spoon," united Mario Van Peebles with former Dynasty co-star Troy Beyer (she played Diahann Carroll's daughter), and if you thought you saw sparks, that flame has long since been put out. At least, for her. The two dated on and off for a couple of years ... And while on the subject of dating, Robert DeNiro's No. 1 these days is Toukie Smith, sister of the late black designer Willi Smith.

Prince & Patti together? That's Patti Labelle, and her upcoming album features songs written especially for her by none other than the "Prince" himself. He will also perform on the two tracks, one of which deals with child abuse and the other—a rock/gospel number? And speaking of

gospel, Patti's was tagged for the lead in "The Mahalia Jackson Story," but there's one hitch. MCA's Jheri Busby, who has now taken the reins at Motown, was to be executive producer on the project. Meanwhile, Prince plunked down \$1 million for living quarters in Paris, overlooking the Seine. Talk is he may have it redecorated in purple.

Anita Baker is rushing to finish her latest album in the hopes it will be released by the end of the summer. Others in the studio include Barry White with his second A&M LP, and Teena Marie, who is looking to dump CBS.

A Michael Jackson TV Special thanks to Friday Night Video. Jackson retained total control of the project, containing footage from his current world tour,—both on and offstage. It was aired July 30, at 11:30 p.m. Says co-producer Dick Ebersol, "it's a side of him you don't often see." The singer, currently performing in London, will return to the states in September for the second leg of his USA tour, starting in Pittsburgh. It was announced earlier that proceeds from his Oct. 24, Detroit concert will go to the Motown Museum Historical Foundation located at the company's original studios, called "Hitsville," U.S.A.

September 10th is set as the date for the "Bishop Tutu" World Peace Concert, at the Los Angeles Coliseum. The eleven hour-long concert will star Eddie Murphy, Harry Belafonte, Vanessa Williams, Kool & The Gang, Morris Day, Oprah Winfrey, Steeple Pulse, Morgan Fairchild, Kurtis Blow, and Anita Baker. The show will be televised as well as radio broadcast and will be produced by Mike Mitchell. Mitchell, who coordinated the 1985 success of "Live Aid," will use this project to enlighten its audience to the injustices of apartheid. There is talk of a simultaneous concert at Madison Square Garden.

Mosley Turns A Profit: Magnum P.I. may be cancelled, but Roger Mosley won't be hightailing it back to the states. Fact is, Mosley, who fell in love with Hawaii, after moving there to do the show, opened a lucrative restaurant called "Reni's," and has no plans of giving up his residence in Hawaii.

Useni Perkins Addresses 825 Guests At Urban League Dinner

by Stephen McPherson

The 900 member Urban League of Portland filled the main ballroom at the Jantzen Beach Red Lion Inn for their annual dinner last Thursday. The league, founded in Portland right after the war in 1945 is long experienced in feting such a gala event. Present were representatives of every political, social and financial community of the entire state.

Prior to the dinner the guests mingled in the spacious outer lobby or out on the deck facing the Willamette River where a very clear sky gave a panoramic view of both Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens. An assortment of hors d'oeuvres was complemented by each person's favorite drink.

Once inside the, Ron Steen Trio, featuring Shirley Nanette belted out a set of grand old favorites that tickled the toes and made the heart beat just a little faster. By the time the Street Corner Singers mounted the stage to give a very special rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" the dinners could scan any small segment of the room and know that Black people were marching on to victory in this our adopted country. Each set of dignitaries paid a special tribute to the process, including Mayor Bud Clark's home-spun version of the Declaration of Independence.

Ken Boddie of KOIN-TV narrated a moving pictorial documentary of the progress Black people have made in the struggle for social, political and economic justice.

The hallmark of the evening was the keynote address of Useni

Perkins, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Portland Urban League. Mr. Perkins began his discourse by recognizing the monolithic nature of the Black community in that what affects one Black person in Chicago or New York soon will affect the Black population in Portland. He further observed that there was something fundamentally wrong in a system where Black people are only 1.5% of the population, yet represent 20% of the prison population. "And while Portland accepts great accolades for being one of the nation's most livable cities, it has yet to acknowledge fully the debilitating environmental conditions that exist inside its communities. Instead it begins to become enamored with its Camelot image as things continue to deteriorate slowly."

Mr. Perkins went on to enumerate a number of areas in which the Urban League has taken an active part in bringing about social change and political awareness within the Black community. One aspect of that surge has been the creation of the Coalition of Black Men which has made its presence felt in a number of circles. They are continuing to direct their efforts toward redirecting our youth toward more meaningful and positive activities.

A Black Health coalition has been formed to direct its attention to the special needs of Black people.

The theme of the dinner was "How To Build Community Em-

powerment." He invoked the principle of UJIMA which is a west African expression for collective work and responsibility. A third example of the League's involvement is a collaborative effort with Mercy Corp to provide jobs and homes for the homeless.

The evening ended with a re-sounding group of old spirituals that have kept Black people striving to achieve in this strange new world for more than 300 years. It was quite surprising and a bit sad to this writer to observe how many Black people under the age of 40 were not able to participate when the audience was invited to join in the singing. We lose something special from our own culture when we forget how to "Lift Every Voice and Sing."



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