

# ENTERTAINMENT

## BROADWAY BOUND

## REPORT August Wilson Plays Close On Broadway



by Garland Lee Thompson

I received an "ear-full" in a call from New York Amsterdam News drama and film critic, Abiola Sinclair, this past week. First of all, August Wilson's two award-winning plays, "Fences" (Pulitzer Prize and Tony Awards) and "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," have now both closed on Broadway in New York. Actress, L. Scott Caldwell won a Tony Award for the Best Featured Actress in "Joe Turner's Come and Gone." She was wonderful in the role on the night I saw the show this past spring and told her so backstage after the show. This marks the second season in a row that a black actress has won the Tony Award in the Best Featured Actress category.

I was at the opening night of "Fences," on Broadway in New York, starring James Earl Jones, featuring my friend Mary Alice, who won the Tony Award for her moving role as "the wife." I sat in the first row during the performance when a piece of "The Fence" flew off the stage and hit me right below my black bowtie. Like a good old stage manager and theatre person, I quietly placed "the piece of one by three" back on the stage near the apron as the show went on. And to think, I had "a piece" of the show in my lap and I dutifully gave it back. I should have kept

it and had the cast autograph it when I went backstage after the show.

Also, after the show, I went to the cast party with Mary Alice and some friends, at Saudis, Broadway's famous theatre district "watering hole," where they gave Mary Alice a standing ovation on our entrance. After that, I correctly predicted that she would be nominated for a Tony Award along with the show and the rest is history. The play and the director, Lloyd Richards, also won Tony Awards. The same playwright and director teamed up to create "Joe Turner's Come and Gone."

Billy Dee Williams replaced James Earl Jones in the lead in "Fences," last spring and the show has now closed, which now makes it available for other regional productions. Film star, Eddie Murray's company has purchased the film rights for the movie that will star James Earl Jones, of course.

Black or white, as the saying goes, "a playwright can't make a living in theatre, but can make a 'killing!'"

### IT'S LANGSTON HUGHES MONTH

Without a doubt, it is Langston Hughes Month in town this August '88. Addition to the 16th Portland Poetry Festival (August 11th-14th) to laud his works (presented Thursday, August 11th, 1988, 8:00 p.m., at the IFCC Theatre, 5340 N. Interstate) the new book is out ("The Life of Langston Hughes: Volume I, 1902-1941 I, Too, Sing America, by Arnold Rampersad, Oxford University Press), Portland State University is presenting Hughes' most famous musical, "Simply Heavenly," opening Thursday, August 25, 1988 in Lincoln Hall Theatre.

### MT. HOOD IS ROCKING WITH JAZZ

The Annual Summer Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz was "jumping," according to Michael Holiday,

actor/singer, who was rushing back and forth from rehearsals of "Simply Heavenly," and tapings of the show's song, "Did You Ever Hear The Blues," with actress/singer Brenda Phillips, on "NW Faces," KGW-TV, Channel 8 (airs Sunday, August 14th, 1988 at 7:00 a.m.) and back to the Mt. Hood Jazz Festival in Gresham, Oregon. Michael Holiday is also a photographer for the Oregonian Newspaper. Is he busy or what? In this town it seems, if you are an artist, you can't do just one thing, you have to do a lot of things to make it! "Write on!"

### THE FIRST ANNUAL BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL OPENS IN ATLANTA

Also this month of August, the First Annual Black Arts Festival gets underway in Atlanta, Georgia, with such theatre productions as the Negro Ensemble Company of New York presenting Black Pulitzer Prize playwright, Charles Fuller's new play, "Sally," the first of a series by the author on Blacks in slavery in America. So, you would not be wrong to say that from Portland State University, on Broadway, to the shores of Atlanta, Georgia, Black culture is continuing to enrich our lives in America. "Did You Ever Hear The Blues?"

## Popular T.V. Show Expands To Two Hours

Larry Dunham, executive producer of NorthEast Spectrum, a popular community service television show which airs over Channel 38 every Friday night at 7:00 p.m., will be expanded to a live two-hour format for the August 5th show.

In an exclusive interview with the *Portland Observer* in his office at 3075 N.E. Sandy Blvd., Mr. Dunham stated:

"I think we have a responsibility to dispel the notion that the Black community has gone amok and that we are hovering under siege as suggested by the local daily."

Mr. Dunham referred further to the reckless abandon with which the media has sought out and reported every conceivable negative aspect of a group of citizens whose vast majority are hard-working and law abiding.

"The very positive side of Portland was demonstrated by what the community contributed to Jesse Jackson and the real 'Rainbow Coalition'. Further, the creation of the Coalition of Black Men should have sent a special message to the detractors of the Black Community."

The extended Northeast Spectrum will be co-hosted by Gina Wood and Art Alexander, both well-known to the Portland viewing audience. They will be talking to a distinguished panel that is highly regarded by the Black Community and knowledgeable about the series of events that



by Lisa Collins

The tabloids have got it all wrong again: For weeks now a rumor has been circulating that claims "Amen" star Sherman Hemsley wants to cast his stunning blonde 25-year-old girlfriend — Joane Garcia, as his love interest on the series and it's causing an uproar among the show's executives. Further, that executives fear that the viewers won't accept a younger white woman dating an older black man on TV — and they're concerned that the whole thing doesn't suit Hemsley's TV persona of Deacon Frye. Fact is, according to those close to Hemsley, there's no truth to the rumor at all. And it is further reported that Hemsley, who has

transpired recently within the community.

Following a discussion of the issues, questions will be taken from the audience. Persons in the audience also will be invited to enlarge upon certain aspects of the question that are developed.

Mr. Dunham also will air footage from previous activities within the Black community. Some of this material has never been aired.

Referring again to the media, Mr. Dunham said, "It is very interesting to observe that the local daily had the same information as did the *Portland Observer* with regard to the manner in which young Kalima Shamdin-sin was treated at the Emmanuel Medical Center, after getting shot in the head, but chose to publish it some weeks later. Emmanuel pital has refused to explain their position even though they were offered two opportunities to do so."

Every summer newspapers suffer a dearth of interesting stories. Editors become desperate by the time they have published the last cute little human interest story. Every time news gathering becomes difficult, the "Long Hot Summer" is re-invented. That approach has worked very well for the last twenty years. Problems that have been ignored all year round now become major stories. The Black community in any urban area can be depended upon to give hungry readers something of interest with an exotic touch. It is not surprising that the Northeast Section of Portland has become a cause celebre. It doesn't

been known to be extremely private with his personal business, is upset by all the media attention. Castmate and real-life pastor Clifton Davis was given the American Bible Society's symbolic 5 billionth copy of the scriptures. Davis, who portrays the Rev. Ruben Gregory on NBC's "Amen," says he shares faith behind the scenes, and uses the acting as a secular powerbase "to share a sacred message that Jesus Christ can change your heart." Davis, became a born-again Christian after he says God spared his life and rescued him from drug abuse a little more than eight years ago. "I tried all sorts of things to quit and couldn't. Finally, before it killed me, I tried Christ. And I committed my life to him and sharing that reality."

LA & Babyface picked up this year's top producers' award, from music trade magazine, Black Radio Exclusive. The talented duo, who also make up two-fifths of "The Deele," have produced some of this year's top artists, including Pebbles, Bobby Brown, the MAC Band, and Shenna Easton, while writing and performing top hits like "Two Occasions" on their own LP. Meanwhile "21 Jump Street's Holly Robinson, is set to make her singing debut on Atlantic Records.

Howard Rollins arraignment this week: East Baton Rouge assistant DA said, "there was no basis for dropping any charges." Thus, "In The Heat Of The Night" actor Howard Rollins, will be charged with speeding, driving while intoxicated and cocaine possession. However, it is felt by most that Rollins' completion of a substance-abuse program at a noted Center in Minnesota "will probably get him in good shape if he pleads guilty." Rollins, 37, was arrested in March while on location for the shooting of the series, co-starring Caroll O'Connor, in Louisiana. Police, who clocked his car at more than 100 m.p.h., also found cocaine in it.

It's back to work for Deneice Williams: Just a little more than three months after the birth of third son, Forrest Mathew Westertling, songstress Deneice Williams is back at work. Having shed most of the weight she gained during her last pregnancy, she looked just great as she sang at the LA Greek Theater as part of GospelAmerica. It was her first stint since the birth of her son. And Williams has alot to be excited about, what with her new son and a new album, due to be released by CBS next month.

Bobby DeBarge ordered to live in a residential drug treatment program while awaiting trial for allegedly conspiring to smuggle 2.2 pounds of cocaine to Michigan. DeBarge is admittedly a heavy drug user, having confessed to using every major drug. Confirmation of that came from his mother, who reportedly noted that the singer has had a drug problem since 1980. In January he flunked out of a drug diversion program he was ordered to enter in connection to another federal case. Meanwhile, in Grand Rapids, Jonathon "Chico" DeBarge, pleaded innocent in federal court. Chico, 22, was arraigned on four counts relative to the trafficking of cocaine. He remains free on bail pending a pre-trial conference next week. The DeBarge family aren't the only ones with their share of drug troubles, as musician Ike Turner was sentenced. The ex-husband of R&B/rock superstar Tina Turner was given a one-year sentence in jail for the possession and transporting of cocaine.

Meanwhile, Danny Glover will star as a prison psychiatrist trying to assess a death-row inmate's sanity in "Dead Man Walking," to be released in November. Glover is most remembered for his portrayal of the cold-hearted husband in the "Color Purple." Next week: Smokey Robinson is linked romantically to soap star.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The St. Martin de Porres Court 225 offers a scholarship to a deserving black student from the inner city of Portland for attendance at a Catholic grade or high school.

The Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxilliary Court 225 is a Catholic Service Organization working to improve religious educational opportunities and community outreach.

Applicants will be selected based on acceptance in a Catholic grade/high school and financial need.

Scholarships in the amount of \$200 to \$500 will be awarded for the 1988-89 school year.

A completed application must be submitted by August 26, 1988.

For additional information, contact Teletha Benjamin at 284-0518-evenings.



EVENING AT POPS - 1988 — Trumpet virtuoso Wynton Marsalis and jazz singer Sarah Vaughan (top) shared the spotlight with other jazz and blues greats in an encore presentation of 'Evening at POPS', Saturday, August 6 at 8:00 p.m. on PBS. 'Evening at POPS reprises one of its best-loved programs Saturday, August 13 at 8:00 p.m. with "A Tribute to Nat King Cole" featuring daughter Natalie Cole and singer Johnny Mathis (bottom). 'Evening at POPS' is a joint production of WGBH Boston and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Inc. Photos by Michael Lutch



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