

# ENTERTAINMENT

## BROADWAY BOUND REPORT



by Garland Lee Thompson

The works of poet Langston Hughes were honored in the 16th Annual Portland Poetry Festival, held this past week (August 11-14). The four day event, the City of Portland's largest and most popular public literary event, was dedicated to Hughes and emphasized ethnic poetry locally and around the country. Remember, theatre fans, the first Annual Black Arts Festival in Atlanta, Georgia, just ended (August 7th, 1988). So from "here to Atlanta," is about as "coast to coast," as you can get without sounding down right, "national!"

### LANGSTON WOULD HAVE LOVED IT!

Community performing artists, Nyewusi Askari, Useni Perkins (director of Portland Urban League) and members of the "Simply Heavenly Company (Neal Thomas, Brenda Phillips, Michael Holiday, Raydell Clay and Kirk Green), performed, to an SRO (standing room only) house, the works of Hughes, Thursday night, August 11th, 1988, thereby saving the opening of the Festival from near disaster!

### WHERE WAS HERB CAWTHORNE?

Ex-Portlander, Herb Cawthorne, was scheduled to present his portrayal of the life and work of poet Langston Hughes, with emphasis on the Black author's work as poet, playwright, biographer and novelist, as well as Hughes' influence on young Black writers. The performance was to be at the Interstate Firehouse Center, 5340 N. Interstate Avenue. Cawthorne is former head of the Urban League of Portland and now president of the Urban League of San Diego, CA. His Hughes' interpretation is well known to Portland audiences. His prepaid airline ticket and a "limo" were standby, but Herb was a "no-show." Jane Glazer of the

## Community Artists Opens Portland Poetry Festival

Portland Poetry Festival called actor/producer, Nyewusi Askari; he called me; I called David Hedges (of City Commissioner Bogle's office) and Sue Busby, executive director of IFCC to discuss the problem. And following rehearsals at Lincoln Hall Theatre, PSU, the "Simply" cast arrived at the IFCC in time to present two production songs from the show before the packed house, after Askari and Useni had presented an exciting hour and fifteen minutes of Hughes' poems and pieces. This was the first time that a preview of any of the music from Langston Hughes' hit musical, "Simply Heavenly," has ever been heard in the Portland community. The response was great and indeed, Langston would have loved it! Our "hats off" to our local community artists who did come through with a good show on short notice! "Write On!"

The festival also included readings by popular national and regional poets, including Pulitzer Prize poet, W. S. Merwin, William Stafford, Oregon's Poet Laureate and Ishmael Reed, a noted Black poet and novelist ("Yellow Back Radio Broke Down" and "Mumbo Jumbo") from Tennessee and California.

### A FULL SEASON OF BLACK THEATRE SHAPES UP LOCALLY

This could prove to be the Black "season to remember," with the opening of "Simply Heavenly," rescheduled for August 25th, 1988, 8:00 p.m., at PSU, running Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and 3:00 p.m. on Sundays through September 11th; "Zooman and the Sign," by Charles Fuller, at the Storefront Theatre in October; The Actors Cooperative production of "Othello," at the IFCC, opening September 16th, through October 16th. The second IFCC season offering will be "The Colored Museum," by George Wolfe, scheduled for January 27th, through February 19th and at the Winningstad Theatre, February 21st - 25th, 1989. "Death and The King's Horseman," by Nobel Prize African playwright, Wole Soyinka, is scheduled for March 3th - 26th, 1989, produced by the New Rose Theatre at the Winningstad. Also there is talk of Rosemary Allen reactivating the Portland Black Repertory with Charles Fuller's Pulitzer Prize play, "A Soldier's Play," this season. Is this the future? We shall see. "Write On!"

The Casting Corner: actor/singer, Paul Jones, has assumed the role of "Hopkins," the bartender in "Simply Heavenly," after the "first cut" on the "Simple" team following the third week of rehearsals at PSU. Understudies are being sought for several roles in the musical for both singing and non-singing parts. For further information call producer, Nina Lowry's office at PSU, 464-4452. Send or deliver photos and resumes to the Educational Activities office of PSU, Smith Memorial Center, Room 446, P.O. Box 751, Portland, Oregon 97207.

## Ebony/JET Headliners

The vocally gifted Pointer Sisters, actress Helen Martin from "227" and singers Eddie Kendricks and David Ruffin from the original Temptations take center stage on EBONY/JET SHOWCASE the Weekend of August 19th-21st (consult your local listing for date and time).

After 15 years as one of America's favorite pop groups, the Pointer Sisters have decided to seriously pursue Black fans. The result is "Serious Slammin'," their latest album, which they say sounds "funkier" and "blacker" and, as June Pointer says, is "there in your face." "The Black direction is something that's mandatory," explains Anita Pointer. No matter what their music style, the three sisters say they're in the music business to stay. "As long as I can stand or sit, I'll be singing," vows Ruth Pointer.

Helen Martin's role as Pearl Shay on the TV show, "227" is the continuation of her 40-year acting career. Martin swears she was born to be a star, recalling that, at birth, when the doctor delivered her, "I cried, and a star was born."

## BEHIND-THE-SCENES



by Lisa Collins

Little Richard and Phillip Bailey team up? Earth, Wind & Fire's Phillip Bailey and the infamous Little Richard, are indeed an odd couple. But odd couple or not, Bailey and Richard recently teamed up to record a tune called, "Sweat". Bailey who came across the tune, said "the song had Little Richard written all over it". Little Richard who jumped at the opportunity to do it, having been a long-time fan of EWF, said he liked the message the song was sharing. "To let young people know that all you have to know is to be willing to sweat and your dreams will come to pass". Certainly it's a witness Johnny Mathis, now celebrating his 32nd year in records, can attest to. His new LP, "Once In A While", brings the number of album's he recorded to close to 100.

Oprah's still beating Phil: The latest national TV syndication standings still show Oprah Winfrey in the Number 3 slot, well ahead of Phil Donahue (No. 9). But these days Winfrey's got more on her mind than the ratings. She's excited about her latest dramatic attempt—a lead role in "The Women of Brewster Place". It is based on a novel by Gloria Naylor that spans the decades in the lives of seven tenement women. The three-hour ABC-TV movie, boasts one of the most talented cast of black women ever assembled on network TV, what with Cicely Tyson, Robin Givens

(Tyson), Olivia Cole, "A Different World's" Mary Alice, Lonette McKee, and "227's" Jackee, all sharing co-starring credits. Winfrey herself, doubles as co-executive producer for the telepic, which is slated to be aired sometime this fall.

No More Misbehavin' for Brenda Richie: Turns out, Brenda Richie, the 35-year-old wife of pop superstar Lionel Richie, won't be prosecuted after all, as both Lionel Richie and dancer Diane Alexander refused to cooperate with the Beverly Hills police investigation, regarding her assault on Alexander. Needless to say, without their cooperation, criminal charges won't stick. Both Lionel and Brenda Richie, along with Ms. Alexander, however, will appear at a private hearing August 15 in the L.A. County DA's office to settle their differences. Brenda's high-powered attorney stated that none of the parties felt criminal prosecution should be avoided, stating that "emotions ran high on both ends." According to Weitzman, it was, in fact, mutual combat. The hearing is however, conditional. Should Brenda misbehave, the DA's office would still have the option to prosecute.

Ella breaks a leg: Ella Fitzgerald fell and injured a leg while performing onstage at the Hollywood Bowl. As her backup trio rushed to rescue, she said "I'm okay, I'll just sing from here". She finished the song and then took a short break. During the break she was

treated by her doctors who happened to be in the audience. Fitzgerald returned to the stage and remain seated for the rest of her performance. Later this week, the 70-year-old jazz singer said she was still a little stiff, but otherwise fine.

Smokey Robinson linked romantically to soap star: In another tabloid story, Smokey Robinson has been linked to Andrea Evans, the infamous "Tina" of "One Life to Live" fame. What is known is that the singer, said to be a devoted fan of the show, extended invitations to case members to a party he threw in New York some time ago. Evans, was one of a few who turned out. Adding fuel to the rumors was the mention of Robinson on an episode of the show some months ago. When on-screen ex-boyfriend Max Holden, held out a ring box as he proposed marriage. When she gasped, "what's this, his reply was: "well ... it's not an autographed photo of Smokey Robinson". But, as it turns out, Evans, a divorcee, is just as great a fan of Smokey Robinson, as he is of "One Life to Live". Speaking of soaps, Laura Carrington who plays Dr. Simone Harvey on General Hospital gave birth to a 7-lb., 7-oz. baby girl named Danica, earlier this summer. Carrington, who is involved on-screen in an interracial marriage, expects to be officially back at work on the set any day. Next week: Find out whether or not Kool & The Gang are splitting up?

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