

ENTERTAINMENT

BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

BEHIND THE SCENES



by Garland Lee Thompson

WORLD PREMIERE OF "YUKI ONNA (THE SNOW WOMAN)"

The premieres of "Yuki Onna (The Snow Woman), the classic Japanese ghost story adapted by "fusion theatre creator," Ric Young, with choreography by Elizabeth Abts, music by Lucia Hwang and "Line of Kanzashi," choreographed by Mariko Takayasu, appears at the Intermediate Theatre.

On Saturday night (9/10/88), the Abts American Dance Theatre Company presented these two new works at the Portland Center for the Performing Arts, along with presentations of the Fuji-nami Kai Dance Company's traditional kabuki dances (classic Japanese dance and theatre form).

"YUKI ONNA," A MONSTER OF A STORY

A blizzard is raging in the mountains. Two woodcutters, one young and handsome, the other old and grizzled, struggle toward their village, and safety. They take shelter in a rickety shed part of the way home.

In the middle of the night the young man is awakened by a frigid blast of wind. The shed door opens and in comes a beautiful woman, as white as snow. She bends over the old man and blows in his face. In a few moments he has frozen to death. She approaches the young man, who shrinks back in terror. She looks deep into his eyes, then speaks ...

"You are so handsome that I will spare you now, but in return you must never speak of what you have seen tonight. If you do, I will appear and freeze you on the spot."

She was Yuki Onna, the spirit of cold and snow, a chilly folk tale passed orally from generation to generation in the central mountains of Japan and finally recorded in the 19th century by Lafcadio Hearn, an American living in Japan.

The company's blending of the arts of Japan and the West (ballet,

modern dance, costumes, music and elements of the "buyo," classical Japanese dance) do create a new bizarre fantasy world of dance, moving screen scenery and powerful puppetry, such as with the riveting use of a real skeleton in "the ghost and final death" scenes. Yes, "Yuki Onna," was "monster" of a piece!

Under the banner title, "Odori," a dance presentation, co-founder and executive director, Chisao Hata, brought fourth this alluring evening into the new 1988-89 performing arts season. She, her partner Elizabeth Abts and Rick Young had everything it seemed, but hey worried if they had an audience, when Ms. Hata spoke to me the day before the show. "Art-quake," with Miriam Makeba, (Portland's Weekend-long arts celebration) had been like the Broadway play, "Joe Turner's Come and Gone." Langston Hughes was "Simply Heavenly," according to the great cast headed by Brenda Phillips, Michael Holiday and audiences at the Lincoln Hall Theatre, Portland State University (thru Sunday, Sept. 11th). How could "Odori," fill the new 900 seat house or at least be respectfully attended in Portland town?

Well, they did pretty good, from what I could see from the house orchestra seats, for it was a respectable turnout. And as for the show, I just love "moving scenery," kubuki-style mystery dance theatre. I know we will see more of this new eight-part ballet rendition of a famous Japanese ghost story, in a remarkable artistic collaboration that fuses Eastern and Western forms of theatre and dance. I was "chilled to the bone!" Write on, Chisao, Ric and Betsy!

THE NORTHWEST PLAYWRIGHTS GUILD MEETS

The Northwest Playwrights Guild met Tuesday, Sept. 13th, 1988, at the Storefront Theatre on Third and Burnside. The Guild has an Oregon chapter based in Portland, with members in other towns in the state. I spoke with playwrights Dan Duling (recently moved to Welches, Or. from Calif.), Michael Whelan and Sha-

ron Whitney, of the board of directors, about the new membership drive and their planned "New Works Festival," at the Storefront Theatre in November/December, 1988.

Let's come out and support this worthy new project for developing playwrights and their new works. This is where every great playwright and new play starts, in workshop and showcase, such as this been planned for the Storefront Theatre.

As a playwright, director and the founder of the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop, now in its sixteenth season in New York, I am particularly interested in how local playwrights work, develop their craft, get their play produced and marketed. For further information contact Michael Whelan at (503) 244-1606.

If you have never seen a play or not for a long time, its time to check it out and Support your local theatre and artists. Write or call or write to us at the Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208, (503) 228-0033. We will steer you "write on!"

IFCC Exhibits The Works Of Sculptor Al Goldsby

Metal sculptor, Al Goldsby, returns to the IFCC to present his most recent body of arc welded bronze sculptures.

Goldsby's exciting exhibition of dark bronzes shows the breadth of his technique. Semi-abstract to realistic sculptures comprise this show of landscapes, face shapes, turtles, wall and free standing pieces.

Working for 26 years in the Portland area, Goldsby's sculptures can be seen frequently throughout the Pacific Northwest. He has been awarded several public commissions, such as the one at the Lloyd Center and the Washington Park Zoo. His work is also included in several private and corporate collections.

The IFCC invites the public to attend an open reception honoring the artist on Thursday, Sept. 29, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

by Lisa Collins

Mary Wilson gets sued:

Ahrgus Juilliard, co-author of "Dreamgirl: My Life As A Supreme," is seeking \$300,000 in an LA County Superior Court suit, charging that she is owed back royalties and should share in any profits from any resulting film or TV treatments. Juilliard contends their '84 agreement calls for her receiving 30% of the book's net profits. She also charged that Wilson's list of book expenses totaling \$88,541 (and including her wardrobe) be taken out of royalties were abnormally and unjustifiably high. Meanwhile, just last week, Wilson signed a deal with Lorimar Pictures for a film based upon the book. When asked if she would star in the movie, Wilson replied: "Oh, no, it's apparent that the three girls are much younger, and there's so many beautiful talented girls around. We'll find three great Supremes." Wilson's own participation will be limited to that of film consultant. Of the flak from the book, she says "I wasn't out there to get approval but to tell a story, and to share what happened, so it really didn't matter what people think." Currently touring, she is also at work on a second book that will pick up where the first left off. She hopes to publish it sometime next year.

Another tenant at "227": This fall, the cast of NBC's "227" will welcome a pint-size newcomer. She's 10-year-old Countess Vaughn from Idabel, Okla. She comes to the show with six wins as a junior vocalist on Star Search to her credit. She'll play an intellectually precocious student who moves in with the Jenkins. Meanwhile, another hit NBC series, "Amen," is looking to add a new pint-sized character to its cast of regulars. The talent search centers on a boy, aged 5-19, 13-16, or a teenaged female, 12-16.

George Benson to portray Wes Montgomery: In January, singer-musician-jazz guitarist George Benson, starts filming "The Boss Guitar," in which he'll play jazz great West Montgomery. Benson, 45, now touring, is getting a lot of flak for singing too much. Seems

Benson has a vocal on every track of his latest LP, "Twice The Love," while keeping his guitar playing at a minimum. This, has some of his fans upset. But the 45-year old musician, who maintains that finding non-vocal music is very difficult, wants people to remember that he got his start singing.

"Women Of Brewster Place" to compete with world series? Plans have not yet been finalized as to the airing of three-hour ABC telepic, "The Women of Brewster Place," starring Oprah Winfrey, (who also serves as co-executive producer of the project), but there was talk of it airing opposite the world series, to be broadcast by NBC.

So fine! Harper's Bazaar tagged Phyllicia Rashad and Robin Givens among the most beautiful women in the U.S. Others to be named included Brooke Shields, Farrah Fawcett and Rosanna Arquette.

Vesta does it again? 1988 may well be the year for recording artist Vesta Williams, who many thought was lost in the shadow of Janet Jackson and A&M Records. Next month marks the release of her second LP, and industry experts have called her a natural, and the LP a winner. Of course, with a voice like the talented songstress, one can't help but be heard. Yet it is not what she sings, but what she says that so often gets Vesta Williams into trouble. Like the comment she made at a national meeting of Hawking it in D.C.: Producers were in D.C. last week scouting locations and preparing for work on a Spenser For Hire spinoff, starring Avery Brooks as "Hawk." ABC has put in a 13-episode order, and according to a co-executive producer, the show could air as early as January.

black radio announcers last month about Tracy Chapman. Chapman's hair she said ap-

peared as a head of little black nipples. "And that she must have borrowed nipples from everyone in her family." Williams, who's had comedic inspirations and as part of her act does impersonations, says it was all in jest. "I don't understand why everyone gets bent out of shape. If these artists weren't doing anything, I wouldn't put them in the show. The funny thing is people come up to me afterwards and whisper, "that really was funny, Vesta."

Briefs: Jody Watley is in the studio, with boyfriend Andre Cymone, putting finishing touches on her new LP for release by the end of the year.

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Arthur Mitchell, founder of the famed Dance Theatre of Harlem is pictured with members of his troupe near St. Nicholas Cathedral during their historic tour of the Russia.

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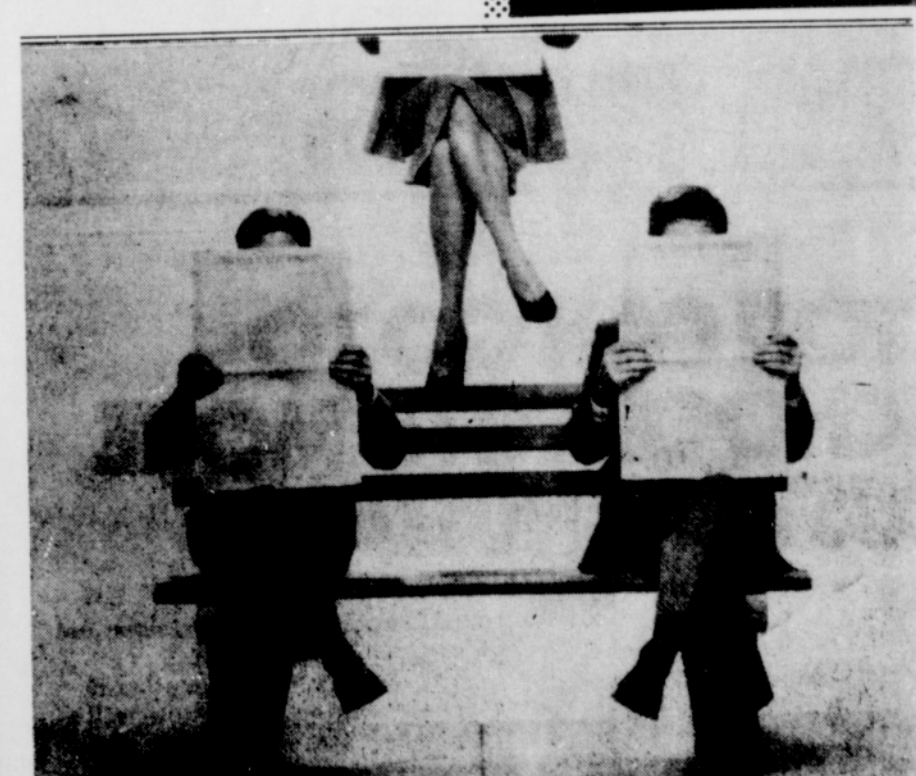
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