

ENTERTAINMENT



BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

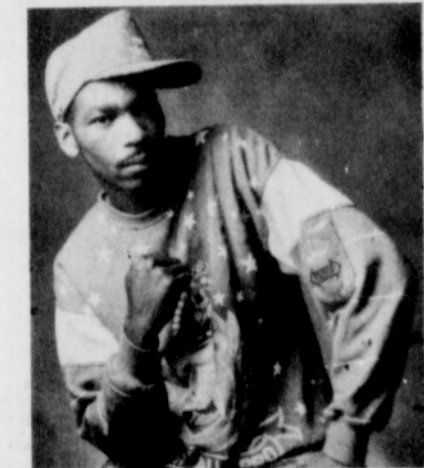
by Garland Lee Thompson

"ZOOMAN" IS BAD
"ZOOMAN" IS BAD!

"Zooman" says, "I carry a gun and a knife. A gun in this pocket—and ole' MAGIC in this one!" Yes, "Zooman is bad!" It was "bad" when I saw the original Negro Ensemble Company production at the Theatre Four in New York (1980). Why not, it's a Charles Fuller play, who later won a Pulitzer Prize for "A Soldier's Play," also at NEC. Fuller is a founding member of the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop in New York.

"Zooman and the Sign," was one of the hits of the 1980 season for NEC, under Artistic Director and co-founder, Douglas Turner Ward.

"Zooman," this "Slow Dance on the Killing Ground-type character", played here at the Wingstad Theatre (PCPA) by young actor, Brian Dance, has "a dream entrance." An actor's delight. He climbs down a metal ladder onto stage and the neat set (by Jeff Seats) in the currently running production of the Storefront Theatre (Oct. 29th - Nov. 30th). Rick Jones, who appeared in the



Brian Dance As "Zooman"

New Freedom Theatre's production of "Zooman," in Philadelphia, a few years back, directed this Portland premiere. "The spider-man dance" by Dance; the young Black actor, a long and lean dude, is "Write on!"

WITH HIS SWITCHBLADE AND GUN
At one point "Zooman," appeared out of the dark (lighting by Jeff Forbes, costumes by Palette, Colleen Frederick and Charlie Harakawa). He was sitting right next to me in the house, "running a long rap" about "holding up" in a porno moviehouse, when the police arrived (sound design by Bill Reinhardt).

The Black family of an ex-boxer, (played strongly by Anthony P. Armstrong), his wife (Wanda Walden), his uncle (Al Jamison), his son (Eugene Hughes Jr.) and a cousin (Brenda Phillips), suffer the outrage of their twelve year old daughter accidentally being killed by a stray bullet in a teenager gang fight in Philly. Does this sound familiar right here in "River City?" "Zooman" did it and the father put a sign on the front of the house. "The sign" indicts the entire block and community for not coming forward to catch "the killer." "Zooman" knows it's just a matter of time before "the Big Blues" will get him and the audience is "sucked right into his world of hard reality and hellish fantasy," by him and a solid cast and direction.

Everybody wants "a piece of Zooman," but the neighbors, played by Rita Bankhead Leduff, Michael Winbush, Nyewusi Askari (alternating with Nathaniel Haynes on different nights), DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED. That is the primary point of Fuller's play; community involvement to break "the cycle of terror" in our streets and neighborhoods. Right where we all live, "Zooman lives!" "Write on," Gary O'Brien and the Storefront Theatre.

AFSC To Hold Fundraising Art Exhibition

On Monday, Nov. 14, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) will open an art exhibition fundraiser at the U.S. Bankcorp Tower & Plaza Lobby, 111 S.W. 5th Ave. The art exhibition will close on Dec. 2. It will provide a wonderful opportunity to search for that special gift for Christmas while contributing to a good cause.

A reception with contributing artists will be held on Saturday, Nov. 19, from 2-4 p.m. at Cafe Vivo, located at the Bankcorp Tower & Plaza. Reservations to attend this reception can be phoned in to 230-9427.

This fundraising event will benefit an Oregon Hispanic Youth Delegation scheduled to leave for Central America during Christmas school break.

Over 25 artists from Portland, Seattle and around the West Coast have donated their art work to be sold through this one of a kind exhibition.

Martin Gonzalez, AFSC's Central America Program Director, stated "The aim of this project is to give Hispanic youth the opportunity to participate in cultural, educational, community health, and agricultural efforts with their peers in El Salvador and Nicaragua." Gonzalez added, "Upon return, the delegation will share their experiences with the community in hopes of fostering greater awareness of the ways in which the two communities can cooperate with one another."

In light of the recent disaster caused by hurricane Joan, funds raised beyond what is required for the delegation will be donated for hurricane relief in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast.



by Lisa Collins

Smokey Robinson—Man of the Month: Smokey Robinson will be honored by the entertainment community when Retinitis Pigmentosa International, presents him with a musical tribute Nov. 30 in Beverly Hills. Berry Gordy will chair the event with Dick Clark, while Ed McMahon will serve as master of ceremonies. Robinson was featured in a video of the song "Forgotten Eyes," written especially for RPI. In addition to Robinson, the video featured Bob Hope, Dionne Warwick, Herbie Hancock, Marilyn McCoo, Angie Dickinson, Sammy Davis Jr., and others. Meanwhile, just last week, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers honored the singer with a star-studded reception at the exclusive Chasen's restaurant in Los Angeles. Robinson received the prestigious Founders Award. Among those well wishers on hand were Berry Gordy, top model Beverly Johnson, Sheryl Lee Ralph, Mary Wells, famed songwriter Sammy Cahn, Knots Landing's Lynne Moody, and Natalie Cole, who is in the studios working on her latest LP. Tentatively titled "Glad To Be Back," the LP is not due out until March. Meanwhile, Cole will tour Europe in December and is working out a deal where she and Dionne Warwick will headline at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas on New Year's Eve.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Is Pebbles pregnant? Rumor has it that MCA recording star "Pebbles" is with child. Pebbles, who earlier this year reportedly separated from her husband, was seen out and about with The Deele's Antonio Reid, alias LA of the talented producing team, "LA & Babyface." Still, there is no confirmation on this rumor, and official word is that she is still very much married.

Halloween Delight: It was big fun once again when the Kwanza Foundation hosted its annual fundraiser in Los Angeles. Kwanza, composed of 27 Black actresses (including Jayne Kennedy, Marla Gibbs, Beverly Todd, Sheryl Lee Ralph, Telma Hopkins, Esther Rolle, Marilyn McCoo, to name a few) dedicated to giving back to the community. Natalie Cole and Lou Gossett hosted the costume ball, the proceeds of which went to benefit the Jenesse Center, which houses victims of domestic violence. Lou Gossett, whose wife Cyndi James Reese-Gossett is a Kwanza member, came as the Phantom of The Opera. Married life seems to agree with Lou who is sporting a few extra pounds around the middle lately. Natalie Cole was a flapper, as was Bernie Casey's wife, Paula, while Beverly Todd, Whoopi Goldberg's arch-nemesis in Clara's Heart, came as an angel. Raymond St. Jacques won an award for his original costume. (He came as a Zulu warrior).

Whatever happened to the Fifth Dimension: "We are a group known for our recordings, and because we haven't been recording, people think we've broken up, but we haven't," said Florence LaRue, who is tired of being told of her remarkable resemblance to Diana Ross these days. LaRue added that the group has been doing a lot of touring, particularly cruises. "It's like a paid vacation," LaRue smiled.

Robeson Remembered: The Shubert Theater in New York was the setting "A Celebration of Paul Robeson" last Sunday night. The tribute came 12 years after his death and 45 years after he gave his first legendary performance on the very same stage in Shakespeare's "Othello". The tribute featured recordings of the sonnets he read along with spirituals he sang. Plus, there were songs, readings, and dance from some of his well-known admirers, including Bill Cosby, Morgan Freeman, Ruby Dee, and the Dance Theater of Harlem. Proceeds from the benefit have been earmarked to the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The Harlem-based center has a vast collection of films, recordings and photographs documenting the life of Robeson, a celebrated actor, singer, athlete, scholar and humanitarian. **Next week: hear from Midnight Star, the group with one of the hottest hits in the country.**

Saluting



Rick Jones, Actor/Director "Zooman and the Sign"

The Portland Observer salutes Mr. Rick Jones for his efforts to highlight the talents and excellence of African-American actors/actresses from Portland's Black community. Keep up the good work Rick!



Three Black writers recently received national prominence when they were announced 1988 McDonald's Literary Achievement Awards winners at an awards program, which featured a celebrity reading of their works. The program was hosted by Phylicia Rashad, of "The Cosby Show," and Denzel Washington, current star of the Broadway comedy, "Checkmates." Seated above (left to right) are John Henry Redwood of East Orange, N.J., Doris Harris of Seattle, and Frank B. Wilderson, III, of Minneapolis, the winners in playwrighting, poetry and fiction writing, respectively. Standing (left to right) are Mike Gordon, director of public relations for McDonald's Corporation, Washington, Rashad, writer Maya Angelou, for whom the fiction award was named, and Douglas Turner Ward, president and co-founder of the Negro Ensemble Company (NEC). The awards are presented in conjunction with the NEC, a New York-based organization known for developing Black talent.



McDonald's home office director, David Dandurand, presents international track star Jackie Joyner-Kersey with a "gold" medal to announce a new agreement between her and McDonald's Corporation. Following the Olympics, the McDonald's Dream Machine featuring Joyner-Kersey will visit cities to give motivational speeches and track clinics for young people. The McDonald's Dream Machine also will feature Bob Kersee, (right) Jackie's husband and coach.

ZOOMAN AND THE SIGN

"I carry a gun and a knife.
A gun in this pocket - and ole' MAGIC in this one!"

- ZOOMAN -

A community is outraged when a young girl is accidentally killed by a stray bullet in a teenage gang fight. Storefront Theatre presents the Northwest Premiere of this explosive drama, written by Charles Fuller, author of "A Soldier's Story." "Zooman" is sponsored by Nature's Fresh Northwest, Neil Kelly Remodeling and KBOO Radio. "Zooman" runs October 29 through November 20 for tickets phone Storefront Theatre at 224-4001.

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