

ENTERTAINMENT

BEHIND THE SCENES

by Lisa Collins

Caught Up In Christmas Crush: Motown's new wonder group, "The Boys" were almost caught up in the Christmas crush, when fighting broke out while they were performing in a California mall over the holidays. Things got a little tense as some of the stage equipment came tumbling down. The Boys, who were understandably a little shaky, stiff managed to retain their composure. Gangs were said to be at the root of the near riot, and the entire mall was shut down for a few hours until calm could be restored. Speaking of the Boys, it appears NBC has given a green light to begin development on a cartoon series that will feature the new hit group.

In other holiday happenings, actress Beverly Todd of Clara's Heart soon-to-be-released "Lean On Me," had a few people over on Christmas Eve. Among those who turned up were Natalie Cole and Sheryl Lee Ralph ... **And Shaunice Wilson's** version of "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer" was a smash hit as Radioscope's Christmas Caravan Concert held annually at the Watts Willowbrook Center. Backing her up were her mother, Crystal and aunt Penny who are themselves scouting about for a record label under the name of Crystal Penny. It seems talent runs in the family.

A New Day For Jasmine Guy At A Different World: Jasmine Guy is finding her work much more exciting this year. She even likes her own character more. "When I first read for the role," said Guy, "I thought Whitley was too mean and too southern for people to accept. This year, she's more human." She attributes most of the show's newfound success to the contributions Debbie Allen has made as producer. "Debbie has brought so much energy to the show, and I don't think that she is afraid. Last year, I believe the show's producers were scared to touch some of the issues that were relevant to

today's youth. This year, for me, is more fun and relevant to the times."

As to her sexy image, Guy says she'll leave that to her TV viewers to decide. "I'm just being me. I've always gotten a lot of attention from men." Yet, it is undoubtedly an image she dresses to suit, and hopes one day to parlay into a successful recording career. She's already recorded a demo, but for now no one is biting.

Arsenio Hall Struts His Stuff: The long-awaited hour-long talk show starring comedian-actor Arsenio Hall will debut this week, with a lineup that boasts Brooke Shields, Victoria Principal, Luther Vandross, Whoopi Goldberg, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Robert Downey and singer Bobby Brown. Now that's drawing power.

Richard Pryor Faces Paternity Suit: Geraldine Mason, a 28-year old actress who had a small part in Richard Pryor's 1986 feature "Jo Dancer, Your Life Is Calling," has filed a paternity suit against the actor-comedian and is seeking \$10,745 a month in support. By all accounts, Pryor is not denying that he fathered Franklin Matthew Pryor, now close to two years old, and has reportedly been paying \$1,000 a month. A hearing has been set for January 19th. In the meantime, Mason's lawyer Marvin Mitchelson is hopeful that the two will come to terms out of court.

Did She Or Didn't She: Only 30-year old Walter Bridgeforth knows for sure, but according to the Detroit Free Press R&B superstar **Anita Baker** married Bridgeforth, her steady of two years on Christmas Eve in Detroit. The \$1,500 wedding dress was reportedly bought at Jacobson's in Gross Pointe. Baker recently purchased a home in Gross Pointe. Both bride and groom are Detroit natives. There had been much speculation that it was only a matter of time until the couple tied and knot, and even that Baker was pregnant. Baker denied the rumor, stating to Radioscope, a nationally syndicated radio program that "I am just fat and happy."



THE NAACP'S RECENT THIRD GREAT BLACK AMERICAN ARTISTS AWARD GALA honored Jacob Lawrence, the great American painter, humanist, historian and teacher. A member of the American Academy of Arts & Letters, Mr. Lawrence is a past winner of the NAACP's coveted Spingarn Medal (1970). Mr. Lawrence was raised in Harlem and recently retired as a professor at the University of Washington. Pictured at the Gala were (left to right) Granville L. Stevens, Senior Counsel for Revlon, Inc. and a member of the Benefit Urban League Guild; Gwendolyn (Mrs. Jacob) Lawrence; and Jacob Lawrence.



CORETTA SCOTT KING PRESENTS John H. Bryan, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of Sara Lee Corporation, with a commemorative plaque of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous speech, "I Have a Dream."

Metropolitan Human Relations Commission Announces Awards Luncheon

The 15th Annual Metropolitan Human Relations Commission Awards Luncheon will be held at Noon, Friday, Jan. 13, 1989 at the Red Lion

(Inn, Lloyd Center in the Multnomah Room. U.S. Congressman Les AuCoin will be the keynote speaker.

The luncheon is \$12.50 and open to the public. Reservations are requested by January 6 and may be made by calling the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, 796-5136, during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The facility is wheelchair accessible and the program will be signed for the hearing impaired and deaf. For more information about accessibility, call Jan Campbell, Disability Project Coordinator, Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, 796-5210. The TDD number is 796-5393.

The luncheon is held each year in commemoration of the spirit and work of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and is scheduled two days prior to his birthday. Several awards will be presented. The Russell A. Peyton Award, named for the first executive director of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, is presented to an individual who makes outstanding achievements in the areas of human and civil rights. The Sonja Hilton Award is presented for advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities. A Special Recognition Award will be given, and students who have written competitively superior essays on the subject of improving intergroup relations will be recognized with a Harriet Tubman Essay Award.

BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

by Garland Lee Thompson

For those of us who are Charles Fuller fans ("Zooman and the Sign"), the latest of his works just opened at the Negro Ensemble Company's Theatre Four in New York City. This time, it is a two-part series of American Civil War plays entitled, "WE," with Part I, called "Sally" and "Prince," is the title of Part II.

I saw "Prince," in preview prior to its official opening on December 18th, 1988. This NEC production of the series is dedicated to the memory of the late great actor, Adolph Caesar, who created the Academy Award nominated film and stage performance of "the Sergeant" in "A Soldier's Play." Fuller won the Pulitzer Prize for that NEC Off Broadway production and was also the first Black writer to be nominated for Academy Award for Best screenplay of the Norman Jewison directed Film, "A Soldier's Story."

COULD THIS BE ANOTHER FILM AFTER IT'S STAGED?

"Prince" (Part II of "WE") takes place in Virginia, in the fall to early winter of 1864. There are several scenes of various out-door and interior locales; work fields, ex-slaves' campsites, a Yankee prison (Where "Prince" who is an ex-slave turned Union Army soldier, is a jailer), religious meeting hallos, etc.

Samuel L. Jackson, powerfully plays "Prince," the black jailer, who finds himself in the juxtaposed position of guarding a new Southern White Confederate spy (Raynor Scheine), who forced to run again now as an escaped ex-slave, turned killer, "Prince" hides among other ex-slaves, played convincingly by Ed Wheeler ("Burner"), Graham Brown ("Stubbs"), Rosanna Carter ("Carrie"), Carl Gordon ("Quash") and Peggy Alston (Quash's wife, "Mary").

Carla Brothers is very interesting as "Tiche," the mulatta ex-slave girl, who offers herself to "Prince," who rejected her as too young. This sets up the scene for Prince's apparent (but maybe not) knife murdering by "Lu," the ex-slave woman, played with great depth by Hattie Winston, who thinks he has tried to rape Tiche while he really spawned her affections. I see this as Fuller's "Black

Soap" scene in the saga and play. STRONG BLACK ACTORS AT NEC

Director of the Two-part Series of plays is NEC co-founder, Douglas Turner Ward, who once again has some of the strongest acting ensemble talent (Black and White) in the country and the world to draw on in one of New York's most famous Black Theatre companies.

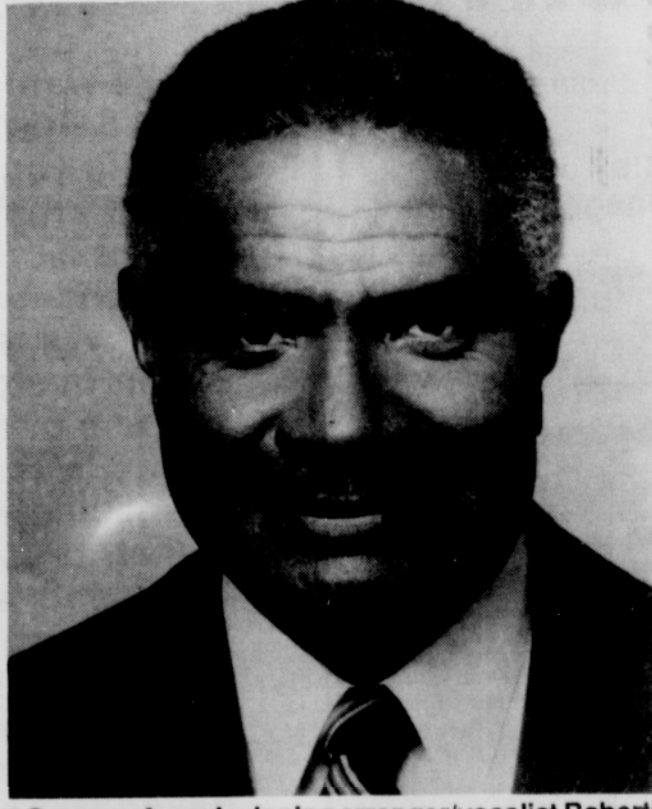
Forever youthful, Alvin Alexis seals the plot line aptly, with his role of "Norman," the young black Union soldier, who immortalizes "Prince's Legend," as he embellishes the tale of the jail killing of the so-called, important Southern spy until it become "the new Soldier's Story" of a Black folk hero. Playwright, Fuller continues to work out his historical Black soldier's "Karma" with this new work as he did with "The Brownville Raid" (Originally read in 1974 at the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop in New York and produced by NEC) and the award-winning, "A Soldier's Play."

A simple one-fits-all, set design by Charles McClennahan, with helpful jail cell pattern and area lighting by Arthur Reese. The correct Civil War period costumes are by Judy Dearing.

I envision another "movie" here for Charles Fuller, who neatly auditions well his pieces at the NEC "class act" for Hollywood and all the world to see, first on stage. Yes, this appears to be this playwright/screenwriter's working device, rather than just submitting to Hollywood another long historical screenplay about Blacks in racists America in the 1860's. Why not show them the concept first, since "LA Land" seems to have such "a short attention span" and "lack of vision when it comes to reading unpublished or produced Black or even White new works for that matter. It usually has to make the best sellers or Broadway hit list first, to receive proper notice from "the movie moguls," to be seriously considered for film production.

"Write on," Charlie, I'll see you at "the movies" after we've first seen your new work on stage at NEC. If "the formula" works, why not? "Write on."

Roberta Flack And Ossie Davis Named 1989 Sony Master Innovators



SONY CORPORATION OF AMERICA has announced that Grammy Award-winning arranger/vocalist Roberta Flack and distinguished actor/director Ossie Davis have joined Sony as Master Innovators for the 1989 Sony Innovators Program. Begun by the company last year, the Program honors up-and-coming Black artists who have demonstrated excellence and creativity in their work.



LARRY NEAL MEMORIAL SEMINAR SERIES with Charles Fuller (left) Pulitzer Prize Winning Playwright and Garland Lee Thompson (right), 1983-84 season.

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