

ENTERTAINMENT

BEHIND THE SCENES

by Lisa Collins

BEHIND-THE-SCENES

Hollywood Grieves With Beverly Todd: Hearts have gone out to Lean On Me's leading lady, Beverly Todd, and a dear friend of this columnist, with the passing of her teenaged son last weekend. 18 year old Malik Smith, who was in Salt Lake City on a skiing vacation, died at a local hospital from brain injuries just two days after he was beaten into unconsciousness in a teen disco in the Salt Lake City suburb of West Valley City. John Tavo Leota, 18, was arrested and held without bail on suspicion of second-degree homicide, according to West Valley City Police Sgt. Thayne Nielsen. The suspect had a juvenile record and was known for fighting. Said Nielsen, "the real tragedy is the suspect just went around and picked fights and this guy (Smith) just happened to be the target. It was an unprovoked attack." Todd was in New York doing promotion for "Lean On Me", when word of her son's attack came. Condolences from the entertainment community have been numerous, including those from former co-stars Louis Gossett, fellow Lean On Me castmate Robert Guillaume, Whoopi Goldberg (whose arch-nemesis was portrayed by Todd in "Clara's Heart"), and Richard Pryor (with whom Todd co-starred in "Moving"). If you'd like to extend your condolences, just address your card or note to Beverly Todd, c/o CSA, 333 N. Centinela Avenue, Inglewood, CA 90302.

Robert Guillaume To Make Another TV Bow: After nearly a year of waiting, "The Robert Guillaume Show", is finally set to make its TV debut, starting April 5, the show will bow in "Hooperman's" 9:30 slot (Wednesdays) on ABC. Guillaume will star as a divorced marriage counselor who is romancing his white secretary (played by Wendy Phillips), ("Hooperman" is on hiatus).

Bridges Goes To Court: 23 year-old actor Todd Bridges will stand trial on one-count of first-degree premeditated attempted murder in the Feb. 2 shooting of Kenneth Clay. In a preliminary hearing, Clay testified that he and Bridges (high on rock cocaine) argued on the day of the shooting and had almost come to blows, when Bridges left, only to return five minutes later and shoot him eight times. Bridges, who appeared to be almost despondent, has reportedly attempted suicide twice since his incarceration and was said to have been placed in a padded cell.

New Visions For Ray Charles: New Visions Pictures has announced the development of a major motion picture to center on the life story of Ray Charles. The film is slated to be co-produced by Ray Charles, Jr.--son of the R&B legend. Meanwhile, the famed pianist recently helped underwrite a laboratory to develop electronic implants for the deaf. Charles became interested in the deaf a few years back when he developed some minor hearing problems that have since improved.

No Time For Love: Eyes raised when gorgeous, 25 year-old singer Paula Abdul showed up at a recent awards ceremony unescorted. Word in a column had it that Abdul (once romantically linked with Arsenio Hall) was asking friends to set her up, however the former choreographer for the "Laker Girls" says she just hasn't had time. The smashing success of her debut single "Straight Up" caught her offguard. "I hoped for it, but I didn't expect it this soon". Abdul who broke into the industry with her choreography of Janet Jackson's music videos, feels fortunate to have grown behind the scenes. Said Abdul: "I've learned while watching other artists. Now that it's my turn, it's a lot of fun."

Short Takes: Former "Good Times" actor John Amos is winding down work on a prison adventure movie with Sylvester Stallone. Filming for the film, tentatively titled "Maverick, the Escape", has been on location at Rahway Prison in New Jersey...Warner Bros is reportedly developing a feature film version of "I Spy", which will of course star none other than Bill Cosby...In the studio these days working on forthcoming LP's are the Force MD's, Mikki Howard, and Stacey Lattisaw. **Next week:** the controversy surrounding Spike Lee's latest film.

ON THE MONEY

Eric Johnson Making Headway At Helm of Johnson Products: Last year marked the changing of the guard at Johnson Products, one of America's oldest and largest black-owned firms, as 37 year old Eric Johnson took over as chief operating officer at Johnson Products the maker of Ultra Sheen and Classy Curls, and the company founded by his father, George Johnson--now 61, in 1954. A week before he'd taken over, the company had announced a third quarter loss of \$308,000. Fact is, Johnson Products profits had been sliding for some time. In 1984, the company posted sales of \$41.5 million. In 1988, that figure was down to \$33 million, and the company that had long ranked among the nation's top five black-owned companies is presently ranked 19th. The younger Johnson has put his hopes into Celex, a new line of hair-care products, targeting a much broader consumer base than just blacks. (Next week, we'll have an update on how it's doing).

Jackson Puts His Money Where His Love Is: Former baseball great Reggie Jackson recently shelled out a cool \$1 million for 30 rare automobiles, to replace the 34 collector's cars he lost in a warehouse fire last year. The transaction brings Jackson's personal car collection to a total of 150. Jackson began collecting rare automobiles while playing for the New York Yankees. Jackson's love for cars also makes for good business, as he operates four California car dealerships, all of different makes--namely Chevrolet, Nissan, Volkswagen, and Ford-Mercury.

Emerge Takes Hold Of New Financing: According to a recent report published in the Wall Street Journal, Emmerge founder Wilmer Ames is close to getting the financing he needs to launch the upscale black monthly that was scheduled to hit the stands last fall. Indeed, talks with District Cablevision (a Washington D.C. cable operator) for additional financing, have been confirmed, but according to a company executive, the deal has not yet closed. Meanwhile, Time Inc. is standing by its pledge to invest \$1.5 million for 19% interest in the new publication. However, experts agree that competition will be stiff for the proposed magazine. At present, there are just four nationally distributed black magazines--Essence, Ebony, Jet, and Black Enterprise.

Fact is, **Ebony, Essence, & Jet, have the highest percentages of black readers in the magazine industry,** according to a recent marketing research study. For the record, other general-interest magazines attracting black readers in significant numbers include Gentlemen's Quarterly (where blacks account for 25.6% of the magazine's readership), Washington Post Magazine (21.3% black), Working Mother (18.5%), Esquire (18.2%) and Soap Opera Digest (17.6%).

Well-deserved Break MacDonald's Corp. Extended To Minority Suppliers Pays Off: Just three years ago, Mac Donald's was looking to expand its minority supplier program. Executives approached two Miller Brewing Co managers--George Johnson, 41 and David Moore, 33 with a plan to start a business making croutons for the firm's new salad line. With MacDonald's backing, they secured a bank loan of \$1.6 million, and a lease on an old pork-processing plant. Just seven months later, sales were exceeding \$3 million, and in 1988 the firm posted revenues of over \$4

BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

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By Garland Lee Thompson

LOFTEN MITCHELL: PLAYWRIGHT & BLACK THEATRE PIONEER TO PSU

Some happy spring news from the Black Studies Department of Portland State University: Loften Mitchell, playwright, historian and author of the Broadway musical hit, "Bubblin' Brown Sugar," just wrote to me regarding our new 10 week course, "African-American Playwrights, their Craft and legacy." (Loften Mitchell, Author of the book, "Black Drama," is a pioneer of the original American Negro Theatre, the Federal Theatre, author of the Broadway plays, "Land Beyond the River," "Bubblin' Brown Sugar," etc., and a retired professor from New York State University at Binghamton.)

March 22, 1989

Dear Garland:

Thank you very much for writing to me. I am pleased with the work you are doing. Thank you very much for considering me in your plans. I have no problems with availability (to appear and speak during the 10 week course, scheduled to begin on Wednesday evenings, March 29th, 1989, 6:40PM to 9:20PM, Lincoln Hall, Rm #319). I have an engagement on April 16, but after that, my schedule is clear.

I am quite willing to appear there as per your schedule and to follow your program. I shall be willing to address a large audience, workshop, class - and to follow through on any plans you have for me. So - please let me know. Meantime, I congratulate you on your class, your proposal, etc. It all looks very exciting.

I was delighted to receive your column for the Portland Observer. Beautiful work!

I am rushing this off to you. More Later.

I hope you and your loved ones are well. Thanks again for writing to me and for thinking of me.

Best as always,

Loften Mitchell

(The course will run through the spring term at PSU. The exact date of Prof. Loftan Mitchell's appearance will be announced or call for more information and to enroll, 464-3472.)

NEW BLACK WRITERS GUILD PLANS FIRST PUBLICATION

The newly formed African American Writers Guild, under Useni Eugene Perkins of the Portland Urban League, is planning its first publication: "Our Voices Are Beautiful: Anthology of Writings," by African American writers, will represent the literacy works of members of the Guild.

The anthology will be a diversified collection that includes poetry, short stories, essays, schools, churches, community organizations and is open to other cultural and literacy groups. This type of distribution will help to introduce the African American Writers

Guild to the broad community and be an incentive to inspire other writers of African American descent. In addition, a series of public readings will be scheduled so the writers can discuss their works.

The editor for the anthology will be Useni Eugene Perkins, the group's convener and published author, poet and playwright. Other prominent writers of African American descent who will be advisors of this project, include Garland Lee Thompson, founder of the nationally acclaimed Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop of New York and Michael Grice, educator and commissioner of the Oregon Arts Commission.

The Urban League of Portland will provide in-kind administrative support to ensure that the above is accomplished. Also, it is anticipated that Useni Perkins and Thompson will appear on various TV talk shows to discuss the Writers' forums and the new anthology. The Guild meets bi-monthly on Sundays, 3 - 5 PM, 10 N. Russell Street, 280-2600.

BLACK ACTORS STAR IN PORTLAND CENTER STAGE'S 1ST SHAKESPEARE PLAY

The closing production of the Portland Center Stage's 1st season in the Portland Performing Arts Center, "Pericles Prince of Tyre," by William Shakespeare, featured black actors, J.P. Phillips and Derrick Lee Weeden (the young "Pericles"). Phillips, who has children and grandchildren here in Portland, is a veteran actor and currently, a member of the Ashland Oregon Shakespeare Festival's company. Playing what is called, "non-traditional casting" roles, he appeared as the narrator, "Gower," "Simonides," and "Lysimachus," Slipping in and out of different characters, such as the young "Pericles' father-in-law, a ship deckhand, and he winds up the son-in-law of old "Pericles" and his wife, "Thaisa" (played well by Kathleen Turco-Lyon). This is the great romance sea "Soap-opera" of the Shakespearean age theatre "that people were fairly flocking to see in that day. A rarely done work, "Pericles," an epic sea "Odyssey" of on board shipwrecks and disasters to child birth at sea; was last done by Ashland 22 years ago. So I was definitely interested to see it done well by this world-class Shakespearean company, now fifty years old and in town for the first time. The costume design budget was \$10,000 and the moveable ship's set with sail, wheel, line-rigging against a great color-changing cyc (cyclorama), and splashing seasounds, took me on "this great long sea voyage," that is believed to be a "reported" Shakespearean text, reconstructed from memory by an actor (or actors) who once played a role in it. Who really wrote this "crazy game of whisper-down-the-line that resulted in a text that is often unreliable -- sometimes downright chaotic -- in its approximation of Shakespeare's original?" Write on, to the real playwright.

AUDITION NOTICE!!!

PassinArt: A Theatre Company will hold auditions for its summer production "Long Time Since Yesterday" by P.J. Gibson, April 11 and April 12, 1989 at the Portland Community College Cascade Campus Auditorium between 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Six Black females in their late twenties or thirties are needed, and two Black females ages 11-12.

The play centers around the reunion of former college mates, now in their

thirties. These women are prosperous, professional, middle-class Black women who have gone through the turbulence of the sixties and have come out on top in the eighties.

Contact PassinArt: A Theatre Company to schedule an audition time at 284-4108 or Connie Carley at 282-0003 (w).

million. Today, Johnson and Moore are looking to extend their clientele, but while other customers presently include Pizza Hut, United Airlines, and Kraft Foods, McDonald's still accounts for 90% of their sales. If you're interested in information on McDonald's minority supplier program, contact David McDuffie, c/o McDonald's Corporation, 1 McDonald Plaza, Oakbrook, IL 60521--(312) 575-7412.

Next week: A look at the legacy left by Madame C.J. Walker America's first female, as well as black millionaires.

MT. HOOD FESTIVAL OF JAZZ FOUNDATION

PO BOX 696

GRESHAM, OREGON 97030

TELEPHONE (503) 666-3810

GRESHAM, Ore. - Veteran vocalist Lou Rawls and contemporary Kevin Eubanks have been booked to appear at the 8th annual Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz, bringing to six the number of acts signed for the 1989 event, according to Paul Kreider, Festival of Jazz Foundation President.

Already set to perform at the popular Aug. 5-6 Festival are singer Diane Schuur, the Count Basie Orchestra, the Yellowjackets and saxophonist Branford Marsalis. The Festival is held from noon to 11 pm each day outdoors in the Mt. Hood Community College stadium.

Rawls, whose recordings of "Stormy Monday" and "Tobacco Road" brought him fame years ago, is presently in a revitalized career that has seen him back singing jazz and blues after several years in the pop field. His debut jazz LP in the mid 60's coupled Rawls with the top-drawer Les McCann Trio, a successful effort followed by Rawls' recording with the jazz big bands of Benny Carter and Onzy Matthews.

He has had a half-dozen hit singles, including "Natural Man" and "You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine."

Eubanks brings to the Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz a striking and facile guitar style first recorded in 1983's debut album. He is equally as capable in fusion territory as mainstream jazz and his choice of recorded and concert material is nearly as strong as his technical proficiency.

A Rolling Stone Magazine jazz critic said, "Eubanks handles with equal facility solo acoustic pieces, standards and foot-to-the-floor band arrangements."

The annual Festival, this year occurring Saturday and Sunday, August 5 and 6 has for the past few years been a complete sell-out. The Festival also stages the Friday Night Event, a separate concert to be held Friday, August 4.

SEX AND BLACK WOMEN: THE TRUTH-ESSENCE DISPELS THE MYTHS ABOUT BLACK FEMALE SEXUALITY WITH REPORT ON GROUND-BREAKING STUDY

New York, N.Y. -- "Black women are more sexually experienced and learn about sex at a much earlier age than other women." This is just one of many stereotypes dispelled in an Essence report on a ground-breaking study on the sexual socialization and experiences of 248 women from Los Angeles County, of which 126 were Black. "Myths About Black Female Sexuality" by Bebe Moore Campbell, a contributing editor for Essence, the Black women's lifestyle magazine, appears in the April issue.

Research for the study was spearheaded by Gail Elizabeth Wyatt, Ph.D., an associate professor of medical psychology at the University of California at Los Angeles. Wyatt says that her study presents a far more realistic portrait of the sexuality of Black women than did the seminal research by Alfred P. Kinsey, Sc.D., which only included a small sample of Black women in its report on the sexual experiences of American women. According to Wyatt, the Kinsey Report, published in 1958 promoted some of the misconceptions about the sex lives of Black women that still abound today. "The sexuality of Black women is different from that of white women, but there is something

Tickets to the 8th annual Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz go on sale in June.

Sponsors of the Festival of Jazz are the Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce and Mt. Hood Community College Foundation. Corporate sponsors are Maletis Beverage/Seagram's Coolers, Portland Bottling/7 Up, KINK FM 102, KGW-TV 8, G.I. Joe's and Portland Area Volvo Dealers.

Additional information may be obtained from the Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz office by phoning 503-666-3810.

FACTS
WHAT 8TH ANNUAL MT. HOOD FESTIVAL OF JAZZ

WHEN SATURDAY-SUNDAY, AUGUST 5-6
FRIDAY NIGHT EVENT, FRIDAY, AUGUST 4

WHERE MT. HOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE, GRESHAM, ORE

WHO MAJOR JAZZ STARS: New Bookings Are: Lou Rawls, Singer Kevin Eubanks, Guitarist

Already Signed: Diane Schuur, Singer Count Basie Orchestra Branford Marsalis, Saxophone Yellowjackets MORE TO COME

TICKETS ON SALE IN JUNE

INFORMATION Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz, 503-666-3810

wrong when promiscuous sexual behavior is attributed only to Black women," says the psychologist. Black and white respondents in Wyatt's study overwhelmingly attributed the behavior to Black women. "Today the myths are shared by everyone, and both Blacks, and whites keep them alive," she remarked.

The media must also take credit for perpetuating stereotypes about Black family sexuality. The hot and ready "sister" in a skintight dress is seen on television every night and in the print media as well. The December 1988 issue of a national men's magazine featured a photographic spread of women wearing men's shirts--rather, the models were teasing the readers by clutching shirts that managed to hide their breasts and pubic areas. Three white models managed to look like virgins and striptease artists at the same time. The lone Black model stood clutching a dripping-wet dress shirt against her soaked body, one wet breast fully exposed, her eyes closed, lips pouting. If the other models were teasing with sex, she was selling it.

Wyatt says that Black women need to own their sexuality and define their sexual image. "We don't have to be victims. We need to write in to magazines that display us like pieces of meat. We shouldn't watch television shows or films that portray us as loose women. We shouldn't listen to music that gives that message. We need to send letters to all these places, voicing our concern...We can become agents of change."

FULL HOUSE AT THE BOTTOM LINE

Cheryl "Pepsi" Riley's recent show at N.Y.'s Bottom Line brought out a full house of admirers, including the members of Full Force, who wrote and produced her Columbia Records Me Myself and I album. Shown here in the stylish backstage area are (from left): Mark Fried of BMI (the performing rights organization); Full Forces' Shy-Shy, Bowlegged Lou, B-Fine (top), Cheryl "Pepsi" Riley, Curt-t-t and Paul Anthony of Full Force, and BMI's Rick Sanjek.

BAN APARTHEID!