

# ENTERTAINMENT



## BEHIND THE SCENES

by Lisa Collins

**Spike's Words Spark Bitter Feud:** Eddie Murphy was both miffed and dismayed about recent comments made by fellow filmmaker Spike Lee, who while stating that he was 100% behind Murphy, said "if I ever get one iota of the power he has, I'm gonna raise holy hell. I have minuscule juice compared to Eddie...Eddie has economic clout...Eddie needs to flex his muscles in ways that can help black people get into this industry." With that, the angry superstar retorted, "it's real easy to be on the outside looking in, telling people what they should be doing. I've done a lot for my people...I've opened the door for Spike and now he's throwing rocks at me. Clout comes and goes around here. I'm just the brother of the moment...Meanwhile, Murphy earlier this month began work on his latest film, Harlem Nights which will also star Richard Pryor and Arsenio Hall, and while Paramount is being hush-hush about releasing the names of the female leads, word is that Berlinda Tolbert (formerly of "The Jeffersons") will play Pryor's love interest.

**Jasmine Guy Inks Recording Contract:** A Different World's Jasmine Guy is singing a new tune these days, now that she's signed with Warner Brothers Records and will concentrate on here debut LP during her hiatus. The actress had been shopping a record deal for quite awhile. But don't get the idea that Guy is abandoning her acting career or the role of "Whitney" on the top-rated series. She plans to do both, and is hoping to break into film, as well. And while, she's been doing alot of auditioning (for film), nothing has materialized thus far.

**Grace Jones--Framed?** 37-year old singer-actress Grace Jones say the cocaine police found stuffed inside her purse while at her Jamaica retreat was planted. Stating that the truth is sure to come out in court, the singer, who was in Jamaica to scout video locations, plans to return to the jail in which she was held to film videos for two tunes on her next album. The LP, tentatively titled "on My Way" is due to be released in June. Jones said she was able to write about six tunes during her short incarceration, and is quoted in an LA Times interview as saying "something strange always happens to me when I come to Jamaica." Ironically, enough, Jones is a native of Jamaica, who says she doesn't even smoke pot. Ironically, a song on her upcoming LP is titled "Crack Attack" and warns of the perils of drugs. She blames "definite third party involvement" for her recent run-in with the law, claiming the identity of the third party will come to light at her trial, which is scheduled for June 6 in Kingston.

**Faith Pays Off For Francesca:** Former Frank's Place regular Francesca Roberts (who portrayed waitress Anna Mae) hopes to have found a new home on ABC's "Have Faith." Roberts is excited about the series centering around life in a contemporary Catholic church on Chicago's South Side, but is still disappointed about the cancellation of Frank's Place. However, said Roberts, "it gave me a lot of heart to see that people who are watching are not just writing in about what's wrong with a show, but what's right, and what they want to see. So, if nothing else I think that CBS got the chance to see that the audience is not as parochial in its view as they think. So I think it was ground-breaking in that sense."

**Short Takes:** Paula Abdul is talking with director Oliver Stone about choreographing the new film version of the long-running Broadway hit, "Evita...Lou Gossett is excited about getting the rights to a property based on the life of Harlem band leader Cab Calloway for a possible mini-series...Al B.Sure is not talking about the alleged rape incident that recently capped national headlines, commenting "let's talk about the positive things", while in Los Angeles for the Soul Train Awards...Stephanie Mills shows her versatility with some hip-hop tunes on her latest LP, "Home", which is slated for a May release...Next week: A look at Virgin recording artists...Eu, a super band that seems to have caught the record industry off-guard.

## ON THE MONEY

**BET CELEBRATES OPEN HOUSE:** Black Entertainment Television (BET) recently celebrated the opening of a brand-new \$10 million studio complex in the northeast section of Washington, D.C. The studio is one of the largest in the metropolitan Washington area, and will be used for in-house productions. Among those on hand for the celebration, (which centered around a live taping of its "Video Soul" TV program featuring host Donnie Simpson), were Patti Austin, Freddie Jackson, and recording newcomer, Tone Loc. The network has also just released a lineup of seven new shows for the upcoming fall season. Among those programs scheduled for release are "Personal Diary"--featuring interviews with the likes of Stevie Wonder and Bill Cosby, "Night-Talk"--a late night talk show (five days a week), "Budweiser Sports Report"--a live sports program, and "Teen Summit"--a portion of which would showcase music videos produced by teens. The company is presently generating enthusiasm with its reissue of the Jackson Five cartoon series...Meanwhile BET owner, Robert Johnson, has filed a \$2 million lawsuit against the New York Grand Hyatt. Johnson took the action when he failed to receive an apology from top hotel brass after a mishap where hotel personnel forcibly detained Johnson upon a reporter that a black man had mugged a hotel patron.

**Black Radio Responds To FCC Ruling On Distress Sales To Minorities:** in a recent decision, the us Court of Appeals ruled that the Federal Communications Commission's "distress sales" rules (created in 1978), which allow quick sales at reduced rates of defunct or disenfranchised stations to minorities, violated the equal protection provisions of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution. What impact could such a ruling have on the growth of black radio: Jim Winston, executive director and general counsel of the National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters (NABOB), says very little. "The distress sales policy had been fairly inactive in the last few years because of other policy changes made at the FCC during the Reagan administration years. The clause had reduced the asking price of a station by 25%. WDAS-FM in Philadelphia, one of the nation's top black radio stations, was purchased through the distress sales process. However, according to Winston, "the typical black radio station is not purchased through the distress sales process". Black radio is, in fact, big business. The largest black-owned station in the US would be WBLS in New York, which Winston estimated could command between \$60-70 million. Just last December, one of Washington's top stations, WYKS, was sold to a black-owned radio station. But Winston says this is mostly due to another FCC policy allowing a huge cut in capital gains tax to those broadcasters selling to minorities.

**Government Steps in:** Black-operated Founders Savings & Loan in Los Angeles was among 38 ailing savings and loan institutions the federal government took control of earlier this month under its program to stabilize the thrift industry...

## BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

by Garland Lee Thompson

### NORTHWEST AFRICAN AMERICAN WRITERS GUILD RECEIVES 1ST GRANT

The newly formed Northwest African American Writers Guild has received its first support grant, according to Useni E. Perkins, Executive Director of the Portland Urban League and the founder of the pilot group of poets, playwrights, fiction writers and novelists. The new grant has been approved by the Metropolitan Arts Commission for an starter recognition award to assist in the publication of the Writers Guild's first anthology of new works by the founding members of the organization.

The proposal was written by Mr. Perkins, a published and produced playwright, originally from Chicago, whose extensive background in the arts and management has given him ample knowledge to create a soundly written request proposal application to the City of Portland's leading literary agency, the Literature Panel of the Metropolitan Arts Commission.

### AFRICAN AMERICAN WRITERS NEED TO DEVELOP AND PUBLISH

The new MAC support grant will assist in the first direct funding support in history for writers of African American descent in the State of Oregon, to gain the first step in the extremely difficult field of literary publication and documentation of their written work. It is always a "Catch-22" situation for new writers of any color to gain publication of their first work and "a must" for them to qualify for any fellowship grant funding from numerous other fund sources, such as the National Endowment for the Arts, Rockefeller, Jerome Foundation, etc. Like the saying goes: "you got to be to it to win it!"

### A PUBLICATION OF NEW BLACK WORKS IN FICTION, POETRY & PLAYS

In speaking to Perkins, his concept is to publish a new anthology of new works in fiction, poetry, excerpts of plays and essays by Portland's African American writers who are members of the newly formed Writers Guild. For many in the group, this will be the first time their work will have a public exposure or debut of any kind. The next step is to raise matching funds to develop the additional monies needed to complete the graphic and printing expense cost of the anthology project to bring forth the copies to the public's eye and reading taste. We'll be watching for this Oregon literary premiere in Black works with great interest. Write on, Useni and the Guild members.

### PORTLAND ARTS & LECTURES PRESENTS THE "SLUT OF LITERATURE"

Portland Arts & Lectures' Executive Director, Julie Mancini, and engaging, sad, dark-eyed person of regal beauty, with some natural style, Tuesday night, April 25th, 1989, took the fateful risk of introducing, "the Slut of Literature" (as she called herself), Fran Lebowitz, the Jersey "chain-saw smoking" drop out, who's "hiding out" in New York's "hard under belly" (somewhere midtown, of course), searching for, no doubt, "intelligent life" in "the universalist non-church" of "Madhattan" (New York City).

### THE "LENNY BRUCE" OF LITERARY LAZY LOUNGE LIZARDS

Leobowitz, who confesses, "I'm lazy!" Indeed, she, like lists of "jewish

indian gun-fighters," has a "long line of two books! But wait, she's a best-selling "authoress" ("Metropolitan Life"), as she "backhand slams" the poor male questioner, who used that sexist term, while asking from "the trapped audience non-smoking section" (she declared the stage as "the smoking section") about her "favorite feminist authoress?" With "Lenny Bruce-type retorts (the late "sick comic of the sixties"), she asked: "you mean, like 'jewish or negress?'" She said she had none.

Like Jean Genet's Black Black comedy farce, "The Black," Portland Arts & Lectures, in good fate, probably should have declared, at least one person in the all-european (as far as I could see) audience of 500 or so giggling persons in the Intermediate Theatre (of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts), as "the designated person of color!" I guess that is probably what I was. Yes, thanks to producer, Phil Ottum, who invited me to this bizarre evening of an hour and a half of "standup tragedy." This poor "yuppie-darling" of the "New York Market," with its "chief cash crop," besides crime, being books was quite naturally or arcadely, sponsored by portland's famed Powell's Books, whose people must have cringed with her line about being "surprised that Portland had arts!"

Indeed, Lebowitz, "the literary lip-with", like a female Don Rickles (remember his funny "grenade humor"), "trashed" nearly everything from, pets, outdoors, camping (even though she's pretty "campy," herself), airlines (write on!D), New York's uptown (I guess Harlem), outside of New York, inside of New York, New York landlords (I agree), the french (je ne sais pas), Minneapolis, Ed Koch (mayor of New York and I agree on that one also), rich actor Robert Redford, stewardesses, non-smokers (when smoke gets in your eyes, she suggests closing them), children, motherhood (she prefers "god-motherhood") perhaps like "the godfather"), the lonely (they should lead the blind, not dogs, which she hates also, as she pointed out in her "Pointer for pets"), and of course, Exxon (she got my vote too).

As I left the theatre to go home and hug my dog, I heard somebody say to a young woman, "I see you came anyway, and she replied, "someone gave her the ticket," as I was wondering why anyone would pay to see the author read un-interestly, the two passages from her books, as oppose to saving "the showfare," to just buy her books, and stay home, out of the stormy weather director read her in the quiet of one's home, like Lebowitz, said she does, and smoke what every you want?

It was a queer evening and queerer still was "the non-reception" afterward, that I "crashed" as "the only person of color" at the Portland Arts Museum. I followed her umbrella carrier and entourage at a distance. Oh, well... as she said onstage, she refers "her kind of people, or her class. That's the kind of girl I am!" "I can dig it!" I did over hear someone say, "she offended everyone, but nicely!" I enjoyed a native Oregon strawberry or two and since the rain had stopped, I rendered myself invisible, like the shadow and left. Write on.

## 'TRIBUTE TO JOHN COLTRANE' LP RECORDED LIVE IN JAPAN

TRIBUTE TO JOHN COLTRANE, recorded live in Japan in honor of the 20th anniversary of the saxophonist's death, and starring Wayne Shorter and Dave Liebman, is set for May 9th US release on Columbia Records.

Originally presented in front of 20,000 fans as part of the 10th annual Select "Live Under the Sky" summer jazz concert series (sponsored by Japan Tobacco Inc.), the all-star tribute was recorded at the Yomiuri Land Open Theater East on July 26, 1987. In addition to Shorter and Liebman on soprano saxophones, the rhythm section consisted of pianist Richie Beirach, bassist Eddie Gomez, and drummer Jack

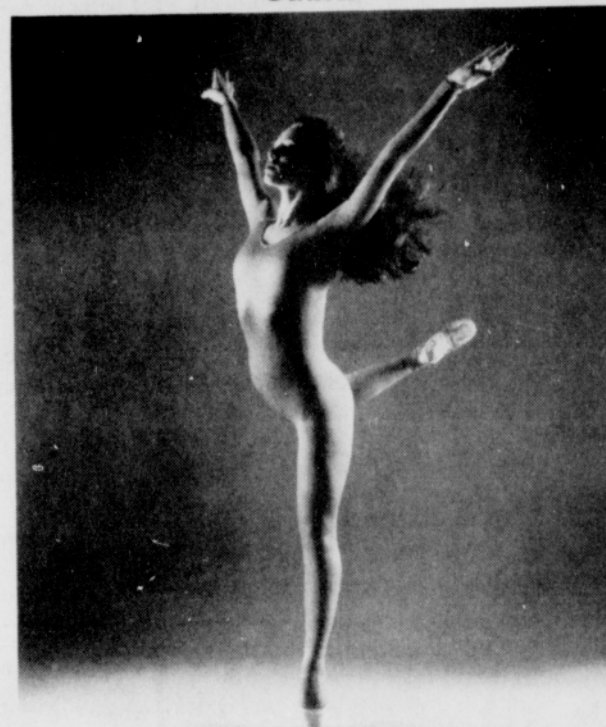
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"John Coltrane's legacy for saxophonists is well known," wrote Liebman in his notes to the original LP, released on King Records' Paddle Wheel label in Japan.

"John William Coltrane, born in Hamlet, North Carolina on September 23, 1926, died in New York City on July 15, 1967. He is represented on this album with "Mr. P. C.," "After the Rain/Naima," and "India/Impressions."

"John Coltrane Live!" affirm Khephra Burns' liner notes for the American LP release. "In the music, still resonating with his sound. In the quest for harmonies as yet unheard, except perhaps in the heart.

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**Business Briefs:** On the heels of R & B singer Gladys Knight's entry into the cosmetics industry comes news of yet another cosmetics venture. This one called Egyptian Goddess, is being launched out of Los Angeles, and is billing itself as a skin-care system. Initial plans are that the line will be marketed within the next couple of months, over syndicated cable and TV net works and initially sold through an 800 number....In other business news, representatives of the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists recently began meetings with industry executives with the mandate of increasing employment for minority performers. Next week: A look at Fashion Fair Cosmetics,--the fastest growing arm of the empire built by John H. Johnson.

## PORTLAND OBSERVER

"The Eyes and Ears of the Community"

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