

# ENTERTAINMENT

## BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

by Garland Lee Thompson

(My apologies for being out of print for the past three weeks, as I was out of town in New York, in addition to having an auto accident and computer equipment problems. It was all just before the 41st anniversary of the Vanport flood on May 30th, 1948, which my family was in and survived. So I wonder if that had anything to do with it all? Who knows, "the shadow do!")

### 1989 NEW YORK OBIE AWARDS FOR FRANK SILVERA WRITERS' WORKSHOP & INTAR HISPANIC PLAYWRIGHT-IN-RESIDENCE LABORATORY

After recently returning from New York, I just learned that the New York Village Voice Obie Award and Cash Award (\$500.00) has just been presented to the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop and the Intar Hispanic Playwright-In-Residence Laboratory. The 34th Annual Obie Award banquet was held in New York City on Monday, May 22, 1989 to announce the winners of Obie Awards for 1988-89.

#### A NEW CATEGORY & A FIRST FOR A HARLEM BLACK THEATRE

For years (1976 to 1985), while I was first founding (in 1973) and running the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop, we won AUDELCO Black Recognition Awards every season during that time period. It started with the 1976 Board of Director Award that was given to me for (check this out) "Superior and Sustained Contribution to the development of Community Theatre." (Is that impressive or what?) The Workshop has won AUDELCO Awards for Best Musical, Actor, Director, Playwriting, Sets, Lights, Costumes and even for Sound Design (a category that was created and first won by my son, Garland Jr., for Sound Design and it was presented to him on the stage of the famous Apollo Theatre in Harlem). But this is the first time that the Workshop and likely the first Black theatre company above New York City's 96th Street, that has ever received an Obie for a new special award category; for contribution to new theatre and playwright development in the country.

For the first time in 34 years, the Obies included no playwrighting awards. "The Largest and most heterogeneous group of Obie voters ever," according to Erika Munk of the Village Voice Newspaper, "each of whom was enthusiastic about one or several scripts, couldn't find a majority for a single play." As no one got the Best New American Play award—a crucial one, with money attached—the award committee decided to reallocate it, not to an individual, but to two groups who work with playwrights: the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop in Harlem and the Intar Hispanic Playwrights' Lab. The Voice's publisher, Sally Cohen, generously decided to make this developmental award permanent, even when—"god willing and the creek don't rise," next year—there is a Best New American Play. A declaration of faith in the future, in the future specifically of writers who don't come from or appeal only to the white middle-class audience of a certain age." Unquote. Write on, Village Voice.

I found it interesting, as founder of the Frank Silvera and I'm sure that my old friends at the Intar Hispanic Playwrights' Lab, will also, when they read in the New York Village Voice (May 30th, 1989 issue) about the little behind-the-scenes controversy regarding the presentation of this new award. The accompanying statement was originally worded, "The judges have voted not to give a best play award this year....Therefore they have, with the support of the Voice, decided to allocate the play-

writing money in a different way. The publisher didn't like this, demanded different wording ("This year the Village Voice is giving a new award to encourage young playwrights"), and insisted that any mention of not giving a playwrighting award had to be severed from the new award, despite the obvious relation of the two. The feeling was that to link the two events might insult the proceedings. So we end up with the kind of thinking that creates the kind of cultural environment which fosters the kind of theatre that makes serious playwrighting impossible, at the very moment of handing out money to help make it possible." Unquote again.

Well, here we go again, Black theatre fans. But I want the publishers of the Village Voice to know that it's not our problem uptown in the Black and Hispanic community and we, at the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop, appreciate the award (after sixteen long years of hard work with new and known playwrights of every color, age and sex), the cash and the good thought. And we will let the "downtown New York Village folks" battle it out among themselves, okay? Write on, y'all!

#### VETERAN BLACK ACTRESS WINS OBIE

One of the "divas of divas" among Black actresses, Gloria Foster, however, did receive the 1989 Obie for her wonderful performance in the new American Black play, "The Forbidden City." Now let me tell you, theatre fans, this is the new play by the late Black playwright, Bill Gunn (he passed away on April 6, 1989, the opening press night), that in my opinion, should have been given the Obie for the Best new play of the season. It is currently performing at Joseph Papp's Public Theatre. I saw it at a special press performance when I was in New York during that time and it is powerful theatre, to say the least! Write on, Gloria and Joe Papp, who directed as well as produced it.

As a playwright, founder and president of the Board of Directors of the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop, I will recommend at the next board meeting that the Workshop accept the new Obie award "to encourage new playwrights," in the name of our late friend and brilliant artist, Bill Gunn. I'm just sorry that I or our vice president, Zebedee Collins, wasn't informed of or invited to attend the 34th Obie Award banquet to accept the new Obie in person and in Bill Gunn's name. It would have been the thing to do. Write on, because we miss you, Bill.

**NORTHWEST AFRICAN AMERICAN WRITERS WORKSHOP PREPARES FIRST ANTHOLOGY OF NEW WRITERS' WORKS**

The newly formed Northwest African American Writers Workshop has received a \$1,200.00 grant from the Metropolitan Arts Commission of Portland. The new grant, according to the Workshop's founder, Useni Perkins, executive director of the Urban League of Portland, was raised from \$800.00 to \$1,200.00.

This exciting new anthology will include poetry, short stories of the members of the Workshop, and the final scene from an unpublished play of my, "Sisyphus and the Blue-Eyed Cyclops," winner of the 42nd Annual One-Act play Festival in Washington, D.C., in 1973 (a Howard University Players' production.) It was also the opening play at the first Black Theatre Festival at Princeton University in 1975.

"Sisyphus," was first presented in Los Angeles at the Actors' Studio West, starring Paul Winfield and D'Urville Martin in 1970. It was presented next in 1971 by the Negro Ensemble Company of New York (another Obie award-winning Black Theatre), starring Al Freeman Jr. and Adolf Caesar. Another production with an extended run in 1975, starred the "Tony" and "Oscar" award

nominee, Morgan Freeman, who is also a co-founder with me, Billie Allen and Clayton Riley, of the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop. This will be the first time that the play will be partly published.

This is a clear example of how difficult it is to have new plays or works by Black, Hispanic or minorities, as well as White writers, documented in a publication form. It is

for this reason that I am working hard to publish some of the best of "the Silvera Years," from among the more than 4,000 unpublished play manuscripts currently in our files of the Frank Silvera Library of the Living Playwright, at the archives of the famed New York Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Write on and you heard it here first, theatre fans.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

Lisa Collins

Everyone is still talking about the statements Apollonia made with regards to another Prince ex, when asked whether or not they were ever in competition. Apollonia, whose reply appears in this month's issue of Spin said: "not really. I mean her L.Q. is equivalent to her Bra size--which must be 32 now. I have nothing positive to say about her." Speaking of Vanity, things are going well for the beauty who was just recently been casted as the bad girl in "A Heartbeat Away," which stars Brigittes Nielsen as a secret agent who stumbles into a presidential assassination plot. The film is set to begin shooting next month.

**Ike Turner Will Once Again Have to Face The Music:** Things have not gone well for singer Ike Turner (Tina's ex), who will be tried on charges of transportation of cocaine and being a convicted felon with a concealable firearm, as well as possession for sale of cocaine. All this in connections with a drunk driving arrest filed in West Hollywood on May 22 after Turner was spotted running a stop sign.

**Champion Black Cyclist Becomes Hot Hollywood Property:** While few know the name Marshall "Major" Tatlor, Hollywood is finding him to make pretty good copy. In fact, at least three projects, based on the life of the champion black cyclist, are currently underway. Orion-TV appears to have a head start with production slated to begin this summer on "Dark Wind," which was inspired by Taylor's life. The TV mini-series will feature Malcolm Jamal-Warner in the title role of Taylor, who incidentally was recently inducted into the U.S. Bicycling Hall Of Fame. Meanwhile, Whoopi Goldberg took an \$80,000 film option to make a film based on the 1988 Taylor biography and the sports marketing firm, ProServ, is said to be coordinating a two-hour TV movie (based on Taylor's life) at the suggestion of Arthur Ashe.

"There's no one singing like me," said Gerald Alston "The sound that I had with the Manhattans, the producers brought over here (Mowtown) to a contemporary sound, let me sing the same way and put the music around me." It's been two years since Alston left the Manhattans to pursue a solo career. "At first, I was afraid, but my faith was strong. When I was with the group, if I hit a wrong note, they were there to cover. No one's there to cover now." However, the success of his first release, "Take Me Where You Want To" shows that Alston just may have made the adjustment. Alston, a balladeer, says the key to singing great ballads is "to take each song for its personality. I'm emotional, a sentimentalist... Every song I sing, I put me in it--as though it happened to me, or that I know it could happen to me, and deliver it just that way." Alston's latest release is an R&B version of the former Eagles hit, "I Can't Tell You Why." ... In other recording news, the industry's hottest producing team--L.A. & Babyface are looking forward to producing "After 7," an R&B group just recently signed to Virgin Records. But then it's really a matter of family ties as the group features two of Babyface's brothers and one of LA's cousins... After two years out of public view, **Klymaxx is hard at work on album number five--"The Max is Back."** Due to be released this fall if "Ayugust, beginning of September, the album will feature some hip-hop and a little of the go-go sound.

**Short Takes:** "21 Jump Street" actress Holly Robinson is putting the finishing touches on her debut album and then preparing to go out on tour. Of course, that will make it hard for her to spend time with her boyfriend, Brian Robbins (who stars in "Head Of The Class"), but those are the breaks... **Jasmine Guy is hard at work** laying tracks for her debut LP with producers like Rex Salas, who is fast becoming one of the most requested producers on today's R&B nysc scene... **Next week: Find out what's become of Sister Sledge.**

## ON THE MONEY

**Marla Takes Giant Step At Crossroads:** Actress Marla Gibbs recently finalized negotiations for a \$5 million arts and educational center, the Crossroads National Education & Arts Center, in Los Angeles. The facility houses a 1,200 seat theatre, a restaurant, cultural artifacts boutique, exhibit space and banquet facilities. Additionally, Gibbs will have the option to lease commercial space. The non-profit community service center will offer training programs for workshops for the physically handicapped.

**Black Auto Dealers Continue Negotiations With Japanese Manufacturers:** While Japan claims to be making headway in their resolution to do more business with minorities, black auto dealers say it's just talk. "We've found that the Japanese in particular are totally unsympathetic to our needs as addressed in terms of affirmative action," said Bill Schack, the nation's top black auto dealer. "There's no preferential treatment being given to us and we feel it's unfair. There are only 5 black Nissan dealers in the country out of 2500. We buy alot of Nissan cars had been very supportive of them and we feel that if should be a reciprocal affair. We should be exchanging services with them our dollars, and not purchase their products as African-Americans."

**Shack Speaks For A Privileged Few:** "For blacks, the road to owning dealerships is unorthodox. Most of us have come through some successful in another business, then purchasing a dealership. Blacks have not grown up in the business, so to speak." Of course, a great deal of that is because the automobile industry is very high-risk. According to Bill Shack, who along with partner Timothy Woods, owns eight dealership (and grossed at least \$20 million more than Motown Records last year alone), "the reason more blacks have not entered this business is that the average investment is about \$1 million. Now, because we're successful, it's perceived as "these guys just jumped up and bought a number of dealerships," but I've been in the business 20 years." Fact is, Shack took a cut in pay to become a trainee with Ford Motors in 1973. "I couldn't pay my bills but I decided I wanted to be an automobile dealer because I saw the opportunity." He later sold everything he could to open his first dealership. Said Shack, "it takes perseverance. I had something in me--instilled by I guess my mom and my parents that said, never give in."

**Recent Study Could Hurt Black Advertising Revenues:** While the findings of a recent Nielsen study showed that black audiences watched an average 44% more TV than whites, the conclusion advertisers may come to draw is that black audiences might be easier and less expensive to reach than earlier thought. What this could mean is that dollars earmarked specifically towards reaching a black could be curtailed if it is generally accepted that network TV is the strongest medium to reach blacks. The study also showed that the most popular shows among blacks featured blacks. Among the top ten shows for blacks were: "The Cosby Show", "Amen", "Knot's Landing", "Dynasty", "America's Most Wanted", "Cheers", "21 Jump Street", "The Golden Girls", "227" and "A Different World". In fact, the top-rated show among blacks was "A Different World".

**In Short:** A North Carolina businessman has requested the assistance of conservative Senator Jesse Helms in getting the Rev. Jesse Jackson to repay a \$25,000 loan. Helms wrote a letter to Jackson imploring him to "work out this situation." ... **Next week: we'll profile black entrepreneur Cecile Barker whose firm, OAO, landed a contract worth over a record \$200 million with NASA.**

20th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

# CIRCUS VARGAS

AMERICA'S BIG TOP GIANT

See The Raising Of The World's Largest Tent Each Opening Day At 10:30 am. Meet A Circus Vargas Clown. Free Mother's Cookies For The First 500 Children--Animals On Display!

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>PORTLAND, OR<br/>Multnomah County Expo Center<br/>Off I-5 North-Exit 306 B<br/>Off I-5 South-Exit 307</p> <p>June 16-20<br/>Showtime<br/>Fri, June 16 8:00<br/>Sat, June 17 12:30 3:30 7:30<br/>Sun, June 18 1:00 4:00 7:30<br/>Mon, June 19 4:30 7:30<br/>Tue, June 20 4:30 7:30</p> | <p>PORTLAND/HILLSBORO<br/>Washington County Fairgrounds<br/>Sunset (Hwy 26), Cornelius Pass Exit, South to Cornell Rd.<br/>June 21-22<br/>Showtime<br/>Wed, June 21 4:30 7:30<br/>Thur, June 22 4:30 7:30</p> | <p>SALEM, OR<br/>Oregon State Fairgrounds<br/>17th St./Battlefield<br/>Exit off I-5</p> <p>Additional Children's Coupons At All Fred Meyer Stores</p> |
|--|---|---|

THRILLS \* SPILLS \* CHILLS  
UNDER THE BIGGEST BIG TOP

For More Information Call Now: (503) 283-6407 or (503) 581-0303

**FREE CHILD'S General Admission COUPON**

ONE COUPON PER CHILD

\$4.00 VALUE General Admission

TICKET BOOTH LOCATIONS:  
Longview, Wa-Triangle Mall  
Portland, Or-Jantzen Beach Center  
Portland/Hillsboro-Beaverton Mall  
Salem-Or-Salem Centre Mall

MAY BE EXCHANGED FOR PREFERRED SEAT (at an additional charge)

GOOD FOR ONE CHILD 11 YEARS AND UNDER. If Child Appears Older Than 11, Legal Written Proof Is Required.

REDEEM THIS COUPON AT THE CIRCUS! GOOD ANY SHOW

OPEN INVITATION

### Alberta Street Festival and Celebration of Jeff's Birthday

"Western Style"  
Saturday July 8th from 10am till 11pm  
Food Art Entertainment

Managing Agent: Royal Esquire  
Community Service Dept.  
287-5145 288-8569

JAZZY FM 89.1

# KMHD

MT HOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE