

# ENTERTAINMENT



## BEHIND THE SCENES

Lisa Collins

**Hollywood Goes Gotham:** It was quite an active week with the star-studded openings of both "Ghostbusters II" and "Batman" Warner Bros went all out for the premiere of Batman, even thought it shelved its plans to turn the premiere site into a lookalike of Gotham City. Still for those who were able to attend the glitzy premiere and after-party, it proved to be quite a good time. Among those joining film stars Michael Keaton and Jack Nicholson were Quincy Jones, Robert Townsend, Eddie Murphy (whose entourage included Jasmine Guy) and Prince... Just a few days prior to the event, Columbia transformed the lobby of the Hollywood Palladium to resemble Disneyland's Haunted Mansion Ride for the premiere of "Ghostbusters II." Those turning out for the festivities included the entire cast as well as Suzanne de Passe, Magic Johnson, Paula Abdul, Bobby Brown, and a host of stars... Meanwhile, across town, **Marla Gibbs turned 30?** Or at least that's how her birthday bash was billed. At any rate, she went all out for the occasion with a lavish party at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Those on hand to wish her a happy birthday were of course all her cast members from "227" with the noticeable exception of Jackee. Other guests included Lou Gossett, Roxie Roker, Mayor Tom Bradley, Assemblywoman Maxine Waters, Lou Rawls, and Nancy Wilson. Capping off the evening was a musical number performed especially for Marla by Lou Rawls and Nancy Wilson.

Actress Beverly Todd Says Thanks: "Lean On Me" co-star Beverly Todd extends her thanks to all the many Behind-The-Scenes readers who sent their condolences upon hearing about the recent death of her teenaged son, Malik. The actress has been spending a great deal of her time seeing that justice is done in Salt Lake City, where the incident took place. The trial has been postponed until October 2. In the meantime the Kwanza Foundation, a group of black actresses, including Marilyn McCoo, Marla Gibbs, Sheryl Lee Ralph, Thelma Hopkins and Sheila Frazier, have implemented a scholarship fund in the name of Todd's son. Direct all inquiries or donations to the Kwanza/Malik Smith Scholarship Fund, 256 S. Robertson Boulevard, Beverly Hills, CA 90211.

**Natalie Cole & Dionne Warwick--Dynamic Duo!** It was quite a show that Natalie Cole and show biz veteran Dionne Warwick put on last week at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. Both looked resplendent as they delighted audiences with medleys of their hits and rotated turns at center stage. Perhaps most touching is the segment focusing in on her Dad, complete with soundtrack and slide show. So touching was it that Natalie's Aunt Bay (the late Nat Cole's sister who was on hand) became teary-eyed. Their managers came up with the idea. At first Cole thought it was kind of crazy. "There's a different kind of music happening and you have to really be versatile to like both of us, so it's amazing that this show really works. We really seem to have the same sense of music, and I feel like she's been maternal in many ways with me. When we first started on this project she said, the music should be the star and not us and I liked that very much, because I'm about promoting the music, not me."... **In other music news,** in Cincinnati, police charged two rap groups--NWA (Niggers With Attitude) and Too-Short--with disorderly conduct after a concert at Riverfront Coliseum because of the content of their songs. The performers were fined \$113.

**Short Takes:** Look for Rain Pryor, Richard's daughter, next fall on ABC's "Head Of The Class." Rain, is being touted as a shoe-in to replace one of three original cast members who seem to have outgrown their roles and won't be returning to class in the fall. (No, Robin Givens is not among them)... **Muhammad Ali has pacted** with Lee Caplin Productions to do a motion picture based on his life... **Alfre Woodard is off** to Puerto Rico to begin shooting "A show Of Force" with Amy Irving, Erik Estrads, and Lou Diamond Phillips... **Next week: I'll have that story I promised on Atlantic Starr.**

### On The Money

**Griffey Inks Joint Venture Deal With Epic:** When the merger of Solar Records and Motown fell through earlier this year, Solar chief Dick Griffey initiated talks with CBS Records. The talks seem to have paid off for Griffey who recently announced that his Sounds Of Los Angeles Records (SOLAR) will indeed be distributed and marketed by Epic Records, a division of CBS. With the sale of Motown to Boston Ventures, Griffey's 12-year old, LA-based label, became the nation's biggest black-owned record company. CBS Records president Tommy Mottola stated that while CBS enjoyed an excellent share of the black music market last year, the Solar pact will put the company "in the forefront of the marketplace". Solar's roster includes the Whispers, Midnight Star and one of the record industry's hottest producing teams, --Antonio "L.A." Reid & Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds. Meanwhile, Griffey's business ties in Africa have reaped big profits as witnessed by the appearance of another of his holdings in Black Enterprise's most recent listing of the nation's largest black businesses. In accordance with the list, Griffey's African Development Public investment Corp. posted '88 revenues of more than 12.5 million.

**Much Ado About Nothing?** It was three years ago that Betty Dixon, wife of Congressman Julian Dixon (House Ethics Committee Chair), obtained a lucrative stake in a profitable concession at the Los Angeles international Airport. This coming just five months after her husband's panel hired Johnnie Cochran, a longtime friend, as commission chair. While no one has made any accusations of violation against Dixon or his wife, the investigation into House Speaker James Wright affair, has been enough to make it an issue. However, in a recent Wall Street Journal interview, Johnny Cochran said he had no part in the selection of the bidder for the airport's seven duty-free shops. While no one in Dixon's Los Angeles office would comment on the matter, Dixon has before maintained that his wife, an apt businesswoman, was qualified for the concession. (The Dixons also own a Washington show--**Much Ado About Something**). According to the Associated Press, Dixon obtained her interest in the venture for under \$15,000. Records show that in the addition to undisclosed director's fees, Dixon has since received dividends exceeding \$150,000.

**Operation PUSH Kicks Off 18th Annual Convention:** A gospel extravaganza headlining Aretha Franklin marked the beginning of the 18th Annual Push Convention in Chicago this past weekend. The theme of this year's convention was "the challenge to reinvest in America. None other than founder, Rev. Jesse Jackson served as convention chairman and of course, keynote speaker.

**In Short:** A recent Supreme Court decision held that worker who are adversely affected by court-approved affirmative action plans may file lawsuits alleging discrimination. Many believe this action could spark a dramatic increase in the number of lawsuits filed by white male workers who had been forced to share hiring or promotion opportunities with women or minorities as a result of affirmative action plans... **Motown Productions** announced the acquisition of sole rights to the Carmen Miranda story and plans a Broadway musical about the flamboyant singer-actress, most remembered for the large fruited hats she modeled in lavish 1940s musical. According to president Suzanne dePasse, their primary goal is to create a Broadway musical that offers insight into one of the industry's most legendary enter-tainers. Even still, Motown also owns motion picture and TV rights... **Next week: A look at New Orleans entrepreneur Barbara Lamont, who by all accounts is the only black woman in the U.S. to own and operate a TV station.**

## BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

by Garland Lee Thompson

### LONG TIME SINCE YESTERDAY OPENS AT IFCC

★★★★★★

Its been a "Long Time Since Yesterday," that I saw the original production at the New Federal Theatre in New York (1985). Woodie King Jr. produced and Bette Howard directed it to win a "sack full of AUDELCO Black Theatre Recognition Awards. P.J. Gibson, a Black woman playwright, won Best Dramatic play. New York Black woman director, Bette Howard, won Best Director of a drama and there were other AUDELCO Awards for our "Toussaint L'Overture" production, but it was "Long Time Since Yesterday," that held the spotlight with Ms. P.J. Gibson smiling with her "dimple-self."

**The PassinArt:** A Theatre Company opened "Long Time Yesterday," J.P. Gibson, Friday, June 23rd, thru July 16th, 1989, 8:00PM, at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center. Performances will play Fridays, Saturdays at 8:00PM and 3:00PM on Sundays. It's a woman's play about a Black woman, who had committed suicide while it appeared she and some of her old college girls had "made it" in life.

These are real "BUPPIES" (Black upward mobile person), who have come together in a reunion, at the wake for "Janeen (played by Betty Jean Garner). Things begin to "pop" when "juicy" things begin to jump out "the closet!"

The exciting new play was first presented by Woodie King Jr.'s New Federal Theatre at the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse in October, 1985, where I first saw it with a strong cast in New York City. "Long Time Since Yesterday," is a powerful drama set in suburban Ewing Township, N.J., at this reunion of former college mates, now in their thirties, after the funeral. These women are not poor, but prosperous, professional, middle-class BUPPIES, who have gone through the turbulence of the sixties and come out on top in the eighties. At the wake for their deceased friend, the suicide which has brought them together again, we find a literate, humorous, and sensitive look at the lives of some dynamic and contemporary Black women.

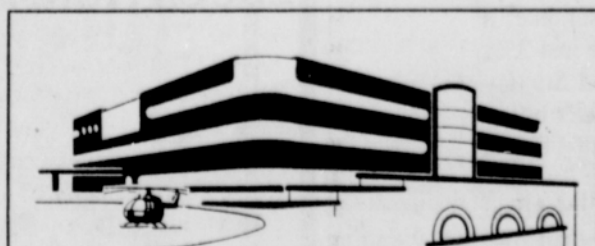
### Miller Genuine Draft Rose City Blues Festival Nearing Final Countdown

The count is in; forty-three blues bands from around the country and throughout Oregon have signed up to participate in the Miller Genuine Draft Rose City Blues Festival. The festival begins Friday, June 30 from 5p.m. to 10 p.m., at Tom McCall Waterfront Park. The event continues Saturday, July 1, and Sunday, July 2, from 12 noon to 10 p.m. each day. Blues greats James Cotton and John Mayall headline this event that benefits the Oregon Food Bank.

In support of the Blue Festival, Mayor J.E. Bud Clark has proclaimed the week of June 26 through July 2 to be Blues Music Week in Portland. Festivities planned for that week include a blues Music parade and several other musical activities.

On Monday, June 26, at noon, flatbed vehicles and cars will carry performing blues bands and celebrities from inner SE Portland, across the Hawthorne Bridge to City Hall, where "Blues Music Week" will be officially proclaimed.

As part of an outreach project to bring blues music closer to the community daily matinee performances by local blues artists such as Janice Scroggins, Bob Shoemaker, Mike Propsom, and Al Carson will take place at Piedmont Loaves and Fishes, the King Center, Veterans Administration Hospital, Shriner's Hospital and the AYH Hostel. The Galleria and the Lloyd Center will host lunch-time blues performances as well.



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Everybody in the group and the audience wants to know why their old buddy, "Janeen," had killed herself. "Old wounds," old business and some new "do do in the game" comes out when "sparks fly" between "Janeen's" former childhood "partner-in-crime," "Laveer" (play by Brenda Phillips) and one of "Janeen's other girl friend, "Panzi" (played by Carmen Warrens), with whom she had a sexual relationship that ruined "Janeen's marriage."

The cast of this Passinart production consist of some actors, who have been enjoying a full season of success, such as Denise Williams, who plays "Thelma Carlson," the Black woman doctor' in the group. Ms. Williams opened the current 1988-89 season with "Simply Heavenly," at PSU Last summer, '88. She went on to "The Colored Museum" at IFCC, and now she opens in this production, directed by Connie Carley, who saw both of these other productions. It's the thing that good workshop/actor development is made of, in the training of actors and production staff, such as Wanda Walden, designing the costumes for the show, who also did all the other shows ("Simply Heavenly" and "The Colored Museum"). Others in the cast include Jeanette Russell Brown (she plays "Babbs, the drinking problem"), who also played in "Simply Heavenly," Cynthia A. Phillips (plays "Alisa," Aisha Irving ("Young Laveer Swan") and Letta LeDuff ("Young Janeen Earl")

The set and sound design is by Doug Strong and Gigi Meeks did the makeup/hair to make these ladies look great.

The problem that I have with the production is uneven acting from new acting cast members, who are a bit young-looking for their parts, the pacing of scenes, the directing (Is it her debut?), which is difficult enough in the "dream-like flash back scenes with the deceased woman. This piece requires very careful direction and planning to go from the past to the present and make the play continue "to move forward" in continuity. Hopeful, it will improve with the run, the director's notes and continued improvement in the current staging of the Oregon premiere of this playwright's work. Write on, Passinart.

JUNE MUSIC MONTH



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