

# ENTERTAINMENT

## BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

by Garland Thompson

### FIRST SOUTH AFRICAN PLAY READ AT PORTLAND CIVIC THEATRE

The Portland Civic Theatre, Portland's oldest community theatre, presented a reading on Monday evening, July 10, 1989, of a new play, "Young Diplomats," by South African playwright, Selaelo Mardedi (the author of "Homeland," a play recently presented at the IFCC Theatre). It marks the first presentation of a play (in the theatre's Blue Room) by a Black playwright in the history of Portland Civic Theatre. The special reading and critique of the play was sponsored through the Civic Theatre's children School.

### SOUTH AFRICAN PLAY-WRIGHT'S LATEST PLAY

The author, who is now in Portland, after working and touring throughout the United States (From New York to Los Angeles and San Francisco), has joined the new Northwest African Writers Workshop at the Portland Urban League, founded by Useni Perkins, and plans to present his new work, "Young Diplomats," and other plays of his, here in the community. A larger turnout of interested Portland theatre artists were on hand to hear Mardedi's new work and join in the critique analysis and discussion of the play, that was read by a group of young Black and White actors, who are connected to the Theatre's children School.

### A CHILDREN THEATRE PROJECT OF THE PLAY IN THE WORKS

The playwright indicated that the management and staff of the Portland Civic Theatre's Children School, has the new piece under consideration for a special children's theatre project at the theatre, with the date of the pending production to be announced. The Portland Civic Theatre has never in its long history, ever presented a new play by an African or an American Black writer, which will mark this project and event, the first in its forty plus year history of producing local theatre in the City of Portland. Write on.

### "DO THE RIGHT THING," SAYS BLACK FILM-MAKER, SPIKE LEE

The "hottest" new Black film-maker on "the movie scene," today is Spike Lee ("School Daze"), who hand-carried his first super hit film, "She's Got To Have It," to the Cannes Film Festival in the south of France. It "blew the elite film and french folk away," a couple of seasons ago, and now he was back there with his latest film, "Do The Right Thing," doing "the Cannes thing" again and getting over" even more than he had done with his premiere piece. Lee was one of the American hits and leaders of the "new wave" of young, dynamic film-directors that took "the super spa movie jetset, out to lunch," and packed them to see him, his new product and "masterpiece."

### SPIKE LEE'S A HERO TO KIDS AND BLACK FOLKS OF BEDFORD-STUYVESANT

With the rave and attention that Spike Lee and his latest film, "Do

### SEAFIRST/BLAZER SLAM'N JAM

The Portland Trail Blazers and Seafirst Bank are joining forces to present "SLAM'N JAM '89": an entertainment packed summer event for all ages: Saturday, August 5th, at Civic Stadium. Doors open at 2:30 PM. The event schedule includes:

- 3:30-6:30 PM BLAZERS CHOICE BARBECUE (chicken, chili, German sausage, potato salad, pickles and a soft drink plus a free sports bottle for \$6.50 - proceeds go to the Columbia Pacific Council of the Boy Scouts of America)
- 3:30 PM BODY AND SOUL (Formerly "Salmon Dave", Portland's best Motown sound)
- 4:30 PM MILLER LITE SIX PACK SKYDIVERS (Attempting the world's first sky dunk)

the Right Thing," have received from critics, such as Abiola Sinclair of the New York Amsterdam News, and moviegoers, it is comparable to the enthusiastic reception he and his crew got while they were on location making the film.

"No matter what anyone says about him, Spike's hero to us because he works and lives with us," says a young 18-year old black man of Brooklyn, New York's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. Some of the story of Brooklyn's experience and reaction to being part of "Do The Right Thing," filming, was, according to an local resident, whose house was used as the central headquarters for a short while during pre-production activities for the Spike Lee film: "a learning experience for everyone on the block. We see how effectively things can get worked out with the City Council, the police and fire department, property owners, city agencies and merchants when all concerned are interested in "Doing The Right Thing, the resident further concluded."

With the help of neighborhood residents like that woman, sorting out "block" logistics was no problem for this new Black movie-maker of the eighties.

Lee filmed thorough September 12th, in record-breaking temperatures and met the very real challenge of providing adequate security on the set, by hiring the Fruit of Islam of the Black Muslim Nation of Islam. They were on the job for 24 hours a day for the duration of the shooting schedule. "The brothers, dressed in suits and ties, commanded respect and offered it to all, from neighborhood residents to cast members, according to all reports from neighbors and business people. Also, when the Fruit of Islam people moved in, crack and drug dealers took their business elsewhere, without fanfare or fight (Deep, and did you hear that, Black United Front!). Says Lee, "people knew we meant business." (I Love it and his name is Lee, also.)

Even the NYPD officers assigned to cover the filming were impressed, said one, "I feel as though I'm doing absolutely nothing."

### AFRICAN AMERICAN URBAN LIVING

A wonderful thing happens on the way to the end of "Do The Right Thing." Lee transforms African American urban living, the humor, the rhythms, the vibrant sounds, the rich (saffron-sienna-blooded) colors, the relationships - into one huge moving provocative mural. "Do The Right Thing," is about a lot of things, tragic-comic - that could and have happened on many blocks in cities across this country of America and such places as the Caribbean (Jamaica and the Bahamas). Spike Lee continues to enjoy success among the people whose portraits he depicts and "paints" because he is faithful to his vision as well as his community and old neighborhood. Write on, Spike. See "Doing The Right Thing," currently running at the Guild Theatre "right" here in our City of Portland, who is experiencing its own "urban problems, tests with the drug and gang warfare. Check it out film & theatre fans. Write on.

- 5:00 PM QUARTERFLASH (First Portland performance in three years)
- 6:00 PM BLAZER ROOKIE GAME
- 7:30 PM SKY DUNK COMPE-
- 8:30 PM NU SHOOZ (Grammy nominee for Best New Artist)
- 9:45 PM JAY LENO (America's hottest comedian and guest host of the "Tonight Show")

A free shuttle service to Civic Stadium will be available from the south Coliseum parking lot and Good Samaritan Hospital between 2 and 11:30 PM. Tickets are available at G.I. Joe's Ticket Master outlets and through Memorial Coliseum, Civic Auditorium, Civic Stadium and the Performing Arts Center. Credit card orders can be placed 24 hours a day by calling 1-800-843-0915.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

Lisa Collins

Everyone is talking about excerpts from the book, "Fire & Fear: The inside Story Of Mike Tyson," which is due out this month. The book, which is written by Jose Torres, a former boxer and Tyson confidante, details just some of what went on in the now celebrated marriage of Tyson to actress Robin Givens, while providing some insight into the psyche of heavyweight champ, Mike Tyson. In the book Tyson says, "The best punch I ever threw was at Robin Givens. Man, I'll never forget that punch. She really offended me and I went bam. She flew backward, hitting every...wall in the apartment." In another excerpt Tyson is quoted as saying, "I like to hurt women when I make love to them....it gives me pleasure." According to a Tyson insider, the book doesn't even touch the real insanity of Tyson. Givens is not talking much these days to the press, especially with regards to her ex-hubby, even though she was quoted as saying she was still in love with the champ...Speaking of ex-wives, Richard Pryor's ex (and the mother of two of his children) has decided to pursue a recording career on "DefSlamin' Records. You'll be able to judge for yourself just how talented she is with her soon-to-be-released LP, "In Like Flynn." The upcoming single off the LP is ironically enough entitled "Hollywood Faker."

**Sinbad--The Gift That Makes Him Special:** "When they first put me on the show ("A Different World"), to be honest I thought they were going to let me play a crazy character...so when I got on and I was like the straight man, I was dying inside. I said, 'oh God, they could have gotten a real actor to do this. But the second year, Debbie Allen and Bill Cosby said, let him go and they let me do my thing and I thank them so much. They are the reason that my character has evolved." Today, offers for the 6'5", 32-year old comic are plentiful. He's touring this summer and entertaining the idea of doing a role in a film based on the life of Jimi Hendrix, but he is not switching gears. Said Sinbad "I'll be a comic for the rest of my life. I'll never give that up. That's the gift that makes you special. I would love to do a variety show like Carol Burnett or the Flip Wilson Show. That's my goal." Perhaps the most refreshing part of Sinbad's comedy is that he's managed to steer clear of the obscenities that all too often color today's comedians. "My mama would hurt me," he laughs, and then pauses. "Some people like to hear that and that's okay. But, I also want as many people as possible to come to my shows. And the challenge is to keep it clean. I'm just being who I am. Plus I have two kids and I don't want them repeating what I say if I said stuff like that."

**On the home front,** recording artist Vanessa Williams recently gave birth to a baby girl, Jillian It is the second child for Williams and hubby Ramone Hervey...Elsewhere on the home front, James Pulliam, father of Keshia Knight Pulliam, the 10-year old "Cosby Show" co-star, is asking that the writers tone down her character. While admitting that his daughter is precocious, he feels that in the last season the character has gone beyond what is appropriate for a little girl. Said Pulliam: "when you see Rudy, this adorable little girl, using words like "lie" and having these grown-up conversations about babies and love, it makes me wonder." **Short Takes:** Blair Underwood has been signed to star in an NBC-TV movie based on the incident that sparked the controversial film, Mississippi Burning." The telepic will coincide with the 25th anniversary of the now infamous "freedom summer" of 1964. Filming is slated to begin this summer...NBC's "Generations," the first soap opera to feature blacks in prominent leads, is a bonafide hit in the eyes of network execs, who say it has done better in the ratings than they had forecast it would...**Next week: Find out whatever happened to "Flashdance" sensation, Jennifer Beals.**

## ON THE MONEY

**Black Investors Buy Denver Nuggets:** Black businessman and financier Bertram Lee and Chicago businessman C.B. Bynoe, led a group of black investors in the purchase of the Denver Nuggets, making it the first minority-owned major league professional sports franchise. The group paid \$65 million for their team, in what Lee termed a "non-subsidized business transaction", Said Bynoe: "we think this, for us, is an opportunity, a business opportunity. If other issues evolve out of that process, if we become role models for other people, if we set a standard for excellence and professionalism, then we're very proud and happy with that." For Lee, who serves as chairman of Boston-based BML Associates, Inc. as well as the Boston Bank of Commerce: "the buy was good for the psyche of African-Americans", while stressing in one interview the fact that blacks owned most of the teams in the segregated Negro baseball leagues that flourished before Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in 1947...Meanwhile Lee and his Boston investment firm--B.M.L. Associates, have taken the lead in the pending takeover of M&M Products. M&M, which posted \$20 million in 1988 sales, ranks 36th among the nation's largest black-owned firms. The firm, which was founded in 1973 by Cornell McBride, specializes in the manufacture and distribution of hair care products--it's hottest seller being Stay Soft Fro. According to a company spokesman, "it is not a hostile takeover and is due to go through at anytime. And while it is a total takeover, there won't be any major changes with regards to the name, or the location." However, the spokesman declined to cite any specifics with regards to what was behind the takeover.

**Champions Forever:** Black and white consumers alike will be privy to the "most massive marketing and publicity campaign ever launched for an original video", claims Los Angeles-based, J2 Communications, the makers of "Champions Forever". The video details the personal recollections as well as vintage clips of five world heavy weight champions--Muhammad Ali, Ken Norton, Joe Frazier, Larry Holmes, and George Forman, who is this year attempting a comeback. Scheduled for a September release, it will retail for \$29.95. For their part in the video, the ex-champs who came together last November in Las Vegas, will receive an undisclosed sum, while a percentage of the proceeds will go to the establishment of a Champions Forever Foundation to help under-privileged children.

**The best business bets for 1990:** Thinking of becoming your own boss? Well, before you do anything, you might want to know that according to experts, the best bets for business startups are prone to be service oriented. Industry analysts point to health maintenance, business and personal services as the areas with the most growth. Experts advise against the restaurant industry, where larger costs continue to rise and the abundance of eating establishments are crowding out high profits; and retail outlets, that are all too often chasing too few dollars.

**For the record,** (and while on the subject of good bets), the lottery is the worst form of gamble. No other segment of gambling returns less to those bold enough to wager. What's more, for those who do beat the 500,000-to-one- odds, the size of the lottery jackpots is commonly overstated, and generally return as prizes only 50% of money bet. The percentages typically returned in other legal games are as follows: football--90%; slots/casino games--85%; dog racing--80%; and horse racing--80%...**In Short:** Chrysler Corporation became the 62nd company to join the NAACP to double the number of minorities and women in executive management positions to 20% of its work force within five years...**Next week: find out just how much crime does pay and whether or not it's worth the risk.**



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