

ENTERTAINMENT

BEHIND THE SCENES

Lisa Collins

And Now Arsenio's Steaming: "Sometime Spike has a 'blacker than thou' attitude," said Arsenio Hall with regards to statements made by the controversial filmmaker about Eddie Murphy. Hall recently took issue with the statements on his popular late-night talk show. Hall subsequently spoke to Radioscope's Lee Bailey in an exclusive interview regarding the issue. "There is power in unity, and I think the thing that's important is to sit down and talk about it. Come together as men behind closed doors. Don't go to the press and criticize our brother. That's absurd. Now, I said it on the air and the next day Spike Lee was on a radio show criticizing me." Hall quoted Spike as saying 'I would have given him a piece of my mind but it was the wrong place.'" Hall continued, "on the air he was apologetic, but in the paper again the next day he was criticizing myself and Oprah. And my thing is 'okay now, I tried to talk to you like men should talk and you have this attitude about the ghetto and being black, maybe a ghetto ass-whipping will make you realize that to talk behind my back and constantly criticize me instead of going about your business is not the way to go. Spike is no blacker than any of the people he criticizes...the Bill Cosby's...the Whoopi Goldberg's...the Eddie Murphy's...Meanwhile Paramount Studios and comedian Eddie Murphy have announced that they will be granting fellowships next summer to film school graduates in three areas of filmmaking: screenwriting, producing, and directing. In all, four fellows will receive a year's salary and will work with studio professionals in development, writing, and distribution. Murphy is also supporting a minority outreach effort, and the Paramount/Eddie Murphy fellowship will go to a graduating senior at a college with significant minority enrollment...And MGM/UA Television announced the signing of fellow Black pack member Keenen Ivory Wayans to an exclusive writer-producer development deal. Wayans recently wrote, directed and starred in 'I'm Gonna Get You Sucker'."

Battle Of The Bands? A simmering battle between road crews of the top R&B groups New Edition and Guy erupted into a brawl that left five men in jail one in the hospital and one dead. The fighting began as the road crews were setting up for the Budweiser Superfest. Road crew members battled with baseball bats, microphones and other weapons. Anthony Bee, security manager for Guy, was shot and killed when New Edition production manager, Ronald Byrd, shot him twice. The feud started in Greensboro, N.C., when Guy played past its time limit. According to witnesses, members of New Edition were said to have flown some "music" in from New York. Both groups were subsequently kicked off the national concert tour which is being sponsored by Anheuser-Busch. There was no comment from MCA, or concert officials...In other recording news, Paula Abdul's smash single, "Straight Up", led the field of recording nominees up for the MTV Music Video Awards with six nominations. The awards to be hosted by Arsenio Hall, will be telecast live on September 6 from Los Angeles...Speaking of Abdul, heavyweight champion Mike Tyson admitted before a TV audience (while hosting a special edition of Friday Night Videos), that he was so intimidated by her looks that he walked the other way when he saw her. (Note: Due to breaking stories, the Jennifer Beals piece will appear next week).

Short Takes: According to the insider track, Janet Jackson's LP is rumored to be a monster. But don't expect to judge for yourself until round September when A&M is scheduling its release...Sister LaToya is scheduled to perform in Russia sometime next month...Next week: a look at Hollywood's first black musical in years.

ON THE MONEY

Upscale Beats Emerge To The Punch: In the midst of all the hoopla surrounding Emerge as well as its financial dilemmas and reorganization, 29-year-old Bernard Bronner, due this year to inherit the throne at the family business-Bronner Brothers Corp.(one of the nation's top black hair care manufacturers), was quietly putting together a magazine of his own. With \$500,000 in support from the family and some personal funds, Bronner, a marketing whiz, raised a little over \$1 million in start-up costs. Just last month, his magazine, Upscale, billed as "the successful black magazine," hit the nation's newsstands. Initial response for the monthly publication was good. The initial order of 50,000 copies was instantly snapped up. An additional 200,000 copies is also expected to sell out. And while Bronner freely admits that all the talk about Emerge inspired him to get into publishing, he says he's not after the ultra-sophisticated, professional buppie audience that Emerge is targeting. Instead, he's marketing his magazine as a cross between Essence and Ebony, and aiming to take a bite out of Essence's market share. Said Bronner: "By the end of next year, we hope to outsell Essence." Course, by that time, Bronner will also be wearing the hat of CEO at the company his father, Nathaniel Bronner, founded. It is a role for which, the younger Bronner, already a millionaire, has spent half his life being groomed. He presently serves as interim president of Bronner Brothers, which last year, boasted revenues topping \$18 million...Meanwhile,

Emerge has been rescheduled to Emerge September 18th with its financial problems behind them, according to Bob Johnson, president of Black Entertainment Television. Said Johnson, whose BET owns about 35% of the magazine: "we still have the challenge of making it a business, but we certainly have it capitalized at enough money to get going and BET is committed to it to the longterm. That if we need additional financial support, we are prepared to make an additional investment. We think it's a magazine that will take the next generation of blacks into the year 2000 and beyond, chronicling their achievements and outlining their challenges".

Happy Valentine's Day: Systems Management American (SMA) Chairman and president, Herman E. Valentine, was a recipient the Black Diamond Award presented at the 18th annual National Operation PUSH Convention in Chicago, Illinois for his part in building a legacy of service that reinforces the growth and development of minority enterprise. SMA is the nation's eight largest black-owned firm.

The High Price Of Marriage In Nigeria: As economic difficulties continue to grip Nigeria, tradition is perhaps providing the biggest blow of all to its young men. Fact is, bride prices in Nigeria have skyrocketed and all to many young countrymen just can't afford to get married. Leaders worry that the issue is prompting their youth to remain single too long. So much so that some rulers have placed a ceiling on bride prices. As custom has it, the price of a bride includes 30 to 50 jars of plum wine, cola nuts, clothes and cartons of beer, as well as food for the guests. Simply translated, without the equivalent of \$400, one can't hope to marry. Of course, that's a bargain in America where the average wedding now costs anywhere from \$5,000-10,000.

In Short: Stardom Has its price. Being a celebrity may look effortless, but in many cases, it takes equal parts of good strategy and cold cash on the part of a capable strategist. One like Pat Tobin, of Tobin & Associates, whose clients include controversial filmmaker Spike Lee. According to Tobin, it can cost anywhere from \$1,000-7,000 plus expenses (per month) to see that you are at the right place at the right time and get your fair share of good press Next week: A look at the best business bets for 1990.

BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

by Garland Lee Thompson

JEFFERSON HIGH LAUNCHES NEW SUMMER ARTS '89 PROGRAM

Once again Jefferson High School, "the performing arts High" of the City of Portland, takes "the lead" in the field of the creative arts. Nate Jones, principal, and Deb Brzoska, the Summer School principal, and counselor, Ken Berry, have designed a very progressive new arts program for their 1989 summer school. And in doing so, they have assembled an exciting staff of instructors, such as Bruce Smith, African dance, "brother Caton" on drums and Lennie Edwards, who teaches in the "state of the arts" video department.

In addition to these regular Jefferson Performing Arts Program teachers, the new Summer Arts '89 has taken the unusual step of hiring special local artists and other instructors as "community resource persons," to assist and aid in the development of several of the disciplines that are being featured at the controversial and much publicized city high school in Northeast Portland.

AN ORIGINAL PIONEER ALUMNI PERFORMING ARTIST RETURNS

As an alumni, who graduated with principal, Nate Jones, from "good old Jeff High," I am delighted to be apart of the "special community resource team" staff. There was no city-wide performing arts program at Jefferson when I attended the high school and became the first Black male student to be selected "Best Male dance performer," in my senior class.

This did not happen by accident. Believe me, it took a great deal of long hours and hard work, as I had to take myself "off-campus," after regular school classes and on weekends on my own (when I wasn't in football practice or on the track field), to secretly study dance movement (modern, ballet, hindu & jazz). And became the only African American member of the cast of "Kiss Me Kate," a hit musical production of the fifties at the oldest community playhouse in town, the Portland Civic Theatre. Yes, that where in all started for me in the theatre.

"NO ROOM AT THE IN-HOUSE DRAMA DEPARTMENT"

The "in-house drama department" at Jefferson, in those days in the fifties, was pretty much a "closed shop" and elite clique that has no Black or minority students, and when I dared to "try-out," during their little annual student drama club auditions. I was quietly told that "I lacked the whatever or where-with-all to be admitted in 'their chic, little private club!'" (Can you dig it)

So, theatre fans, since I could not join these "budding little students superstars," I took "my little Black behind-the-times," on downtown! And as Sammy Davis Jr. use to say, "And I did it my way!" "Shortly, after a stint at the University of Oregon (where I did one musical), I booked this town," "the times" and took a greyhouse bus to L.A. (LA LA Land). Ten years later, I was off to "the Big Apple, New York, on the first show I could get, or "anything, smokin'", that was heading East! "There's boat that's leaving soon for New York," as the song from the show, "Porky & Bess," goes. Write on!

THREE AWARD-WINNING BROADWAY SHOWS, THREE NATIONAL TOURING COMPANIES, OVER FORTY OFF-OFF

'DRUGS ALMOST DESTROYED MY CAREER'

New Orleans TV anchorman Warren Bell, Jr. returns to prime-time prominence, and tells how drugs nearly destroyed his career, in the August EBONY.

Bell, 38, who had reached the high point of his career in 1980 as the city's only Black prime-time news anchor, rapidly plummeted to the lowest point in his life after turning to cocaine use as a relief from career pressures. "I destroyed my own career," Bell admits. "I had become so

BROADWAY SHOWS & AN NEW YORK OBIE AWARD THEATRE CO., FILMS, TV'S "STARTREK," "PERRY MASON," ETC., LATER IN NEW YORK....

My old buddy and former roommate, actor, Al Freeman Jr. ("One Live To Live," the TV soap, etc.), always use to tease me about the fact that it took me some ten years to get to New York, but I didn't finally get to "the big league" theatre town, looking for an acting job in "the business!" But no, I went there, instead "to hire" a bunch of actors for the show, in which I was working my way east, Charles Gordone's Pulitzer Prize Play, "No Place To Be Somebody!" To be sure, that was the way I felt like, being a young Black person, living in Portland, Oregon, during the fifties, with truly "No Place To Be Somebody," and daring to think about show business and a career in the arts. "Get a job, kid and don't be stupid," everybody around me said! So, I left! (Wouldn't you?)

Years later, my old school buddy, Nate Jones, who had now become the principal of our old high school, flies into New York for an education conference. We meet for a drink, he tells me about, "a coming class reunion" (This town is big on class reunions). And he asked me, "why don't I come back home," to Portland and work sometime soon, with his "hot" new performing arts program at old Jeff High. Why not, I said, since I haven't been home in years!

Four years later, and here I am, generating a little script concept with the video person, Lennie Edwards, for a project that his summer arts '89, students have decided to do shoot, based on the old "Twilight Zone," TV series.

"What goes around, come around, as the world turns!" Write on, Nate Jones, Deb Brzoska, Jefferson High and the Summer Arts '89. It's our answer to part of "the youth gang" problem and why not!

COLUMBIA THEATER TO PRESENT WORLD PREMIERE OF PLAY ON RACISM AND "SOUTHERN JUSTICE"

"A poor Black teenager accused of murdering a rich white classmate in a small southern town," is the theme of a new play, "Southern Justice," written by Portland playwright, Dave Kanner, and directed by Gary O'Brien. This new works opens, Friday, July 28, 1989, 7:30PM, at the Columbia Theater Company.

I spoke at length, with the playwright, who is having his first full-length play, that he explained to me, examines "serious social themes through the eyes of two reporters--one Black and one White--covering a murder trial. The new piece is based on a trial, which the author covered while working as a broadcast reporter in North Carolina in 1977.

The world premiere production of "Southern Justice," a finalist in the 1988 Terra Nova Theater playwrights' competition in Eugene, Oregon, will feature a cast, headed by Bill Burger, Paul Jones (who appeared last summer in "Simply Heavenly," at Portland State University), Melvin Huston and Nancy Wilson. It has received a grant from the Metropolitan Arts Commission, to aid in the production cost of the show, that is scheduled to run at the Columbia Theater Company, 2021 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Thursday, through Saturday, August 26, 1989. For further info, call 232-7005.

COLUMBIA THEATER COMPANY AND METRO ARTS COMMISSION PRESENT THE WORLD PREMIERE OF DAVE KANNER'S

SOUTHERN



DIRECTED BY GARY O'BRIEN JULY 28 - AUGUST 26, 1989

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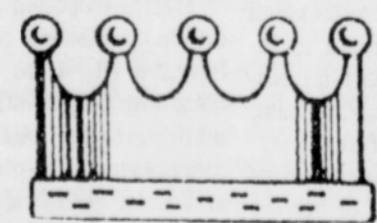
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