

ENTERTAINMENT

BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

by Garland Lee Thompson

N.C. BLACK REPERTORY HOSTS NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL

The North Carolina Black Repertory Company, in the City of Winston-Salem and the State of North Carolina will be the site for one of the most historical and culturally significant events in the history of the American Black Theatre Movement. The event is the 1989 National Black Theatre Festival which will be held August 14th through 20th.

The festival will feature the best Black Theatres in the country. Over 20 productions will be available to the general public. So, if you're going to be in North Carolina during this time, nearly 200 Black Theatres from across America will be attending the festival not only to enjoy but also critique the performances of the performing companies, but participate in workshops and seminars which will be important in creating an agenda dedicated to the continuity of Black Theatre in America for the next decade, the 1990's. The festival is expected to draw thousands of people from the general public sector to see the performances and to be a part of the history making and culturally significant event.

The 1989 National Black Theatre Festival is being produced and hosted by the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. My good friend, Larry Leon Hamlin is serving as producer and artistic director of the festival. Over the past several years, I have served as casting director source through the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop of New York, for Hamlin and his N.C. Black Repertory, which plans to produce the festival every two years.

MAYA ANGELOU NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON

National celebrity, Maya Angelou, who recently appeared here in Portland, is serving as chairperson of the National Advisory Board of the festival. Others serving include: Debbie Allen-Nixon, Margaret Avery, Robert J. Brown, Ed Bullins, Tony Brown, Roy Campanella II, Cab Calloway, Vinnette Carroll, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Bill Duke, Antonio Fargas, Arsenio Hall, Rosemary Harris, Faye Hauser, Robert Hooks, Yoland King, Woodie King Jr., Leslie Lee, Wynton Marsalis, Ron Milner, Brock Peters, Lloyd Richards, Esther Rolle, Howard Rollins, Sam-Art Williams, John Eaton, Dr. Edward B. Fort, Sylvia Spinkle Hamlin, Wilbert T. Jenkins, Lafayette Jones, Herman LeVern Jones, Harold Kennedy III, Curtis King, Ernie McClintock, Dr. Jane Milley, Gregory Javan Mills, Dr. Linda Kerr Norflett, Ernie Pitt, Vivian Robinson, Tommie Stewart, Dr. Cleon Thompson and Beth Turner, to name a few.

And, of course, this writer will attend, to cover the big event for BROADWAY BOUND REPORT in the Portland Observer and shall sit on the workshop panel on playwrighting, representing, as founder, the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop, the 1989 New York Village Voice, OBIE Award-winner, for on-going development of emerging playwrights in America.

Performances will be held throughout Winston-Salem in locations such as the Stevens Center, North Carolina School of Arts, Winston-Salem State University, Wake Forest University, and the Arts Council Theatre.

Black Theatre in America may very well become non-existent in the next ten years if steps are not taken now on a national level to ensure its longevity. The 1989 National Black Theatre Festival, organized and structured properly, will be a tremendous assistance in helping Black Theatre

to re-establish its momentum, find its center and successfully move forward with its mission, securing its goals and objectives.

FEDERAL, N.C. STATE, CITY, FOUNDATION AND PRIVATE FUNDING

The festival is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts-Expansion Arts Program, the North Carolina General Assembly, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, North Carolina Arts Council Theatre Arts Section, Southern Arts Federation, the Arts Council, Inc. of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, Sara Lee, Inc., Smith Jones and Associates, Inc., Minority Business Magazine, and the James G. Hanes Memorial Fund/Foundation. And the list is growing as additional sources come on board as "the Great National Black Theatre Festival '89 heads to Winston-Salem on US Highway, I-40.

Theatre fans wishing to have a schedule of events and ticket information should call the festival office at (919) 723-2365.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Larry Leon Hamlin, producer/
artistic director, 1989

National Black Theatre Festival

FROM: Garland Lee Thompson, founder/president, Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop, of New York City

RE: The Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop's involvement in the 1989 National Black Festival Theatre Festival

DATE: August 7, 1989

Pursuant to our telephone conversation of last week, I wish to confirm my participation in the 1989 Black Theatre Festival, scheduled for August 14-20, 1989, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, as hosted by your N.C. Black Repertory Company.

As we discussed, I will attend and represent the Workshop, as founder and original director for the first thirteen years, and currently president of the board of directors.

The Workshop, now in its sixteenth year, is one of the two 1989 OBIE co-award-winners for our ongoing support and development of new and emerging playwrights and their craft. This is a new category announced by the publishers of the New York Village Voice Newspaper, in its 34th year of presenting the Annual OBIE Awards.

It is the first time that a black theatre company above West 96th Street in New York, has ever won an OBIE Award in New York theatre history. The Workshop shared the OBIE Award with the Intar Hispanic Playwright-In-Residence Theatre and split a cash award of \$1000 equally (\$500 a piece).

It is therefore, highly important that the Workshop be represented at the first Bi-annual National Black Theatre Festival; "to provide black theatre artists from around the country a unique opportunity to commune with each other, share concerns and triumphs (such as the 1989 OBIE Award), devise strategies for the future survival and existence of the American Black Theatre Movement, after the demise of such national projects, as the Black Theatre Alliance of New York, many other numerous Black Theatre companies, their founders and artists, across the country."

As we spoke, I will be happy to participate on the panel on playwrighting, representing the concept that we have worked with over the years at the Workshop in New York, and in any other way that you deem appropriate.

I am looking forward to seeing you, and my friend, Maya Angelou again, and meeting many new members of the American Black Theatre Movement. Thanks again and I'll see you soon.

JAZZ SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED

The Jazz Society of Oregon is now offering applications for the Andre Garand Memorial Scholarship. \$100, \$200, and \$300 scholarships in vocal, instrumental, theory and/or composition fields are available for jazz-oriented musicians from Oregon and Clark County, Washington.

Applicants are invited to call the Jazz Society Hotline at (503) 234-1332 for information and to obtain an application packet. Call now!...application deadline is August 31, 1989!

BEHIND THE SCENES

Lisa Collins

Jonelle Allen Emerges As "Erica Kane" of Black America: "I've gotten fan mail where people have equated the role of Doreen to Erica Kane, but I think they like her," said Jonelle Allen of her part in NBC's newest and most talked about daytime serial, "Generations". Actually, Allen is partial to Doreen, and while she was called to audition for the role of Ruth, she hoped most to be considered for the role of Doreen. Her hopes were realized a month or so later when producers thought she was much better suited to portray Doreen. Ironically enough, Allen says the most common misconception about her is that she is "stuck up". "A Diva," she laughs. "But I think that those kind of misconceptions about me stem from that fact that I am insecure, so you build up those barriers and guard. Because you're more afraid of people than they are of you." In fact, Allen who has been acting since the tender age of three, identifies quite a bit with Doreen. "She's a former singer and I get to sing on the show, which has been great, but the best thing about being Doreen is that she goes through a lot of things that are cathartic for me. She's a woman who abuses alcohol and has had a problem with other substances, and I'm a recovering alcoholic. Playing her I get to see what it was like and to get in touch with that recovery process on a daily basis, and best of all get paid for it!"

Back To The Nest... This season marks Lisa Bonet's return to the Cosby home from Africa, married to a military man and with a small baby. Bonet was currently in LA putting household affairs in order before making the move back to New York to resume production on the series. She will join her husband Lenny, who is already there. His album is due out on Virgin Records in early September. **In other casting news,** Harry Belafonte, who is busy doing pre-production work for a movie project based on the life of Sister Thea Bowman, a pioneer in the black Catholic movement, has cast **Whoopi Goldberg in the title role.** ...and while super-singer Singer Bobby Brown may have cut some concert dates, he is set to play the parts of all three blind mice in "Mother Goose Rock 'n' Rhyme", a rock-style TV movie. Also cast in the 90-minute movie to be released on the Disney Channel is Little Richard as Old King Cole.

Whitney Houston On Alert: Whitney Houston is among a group of celebrities who have been warned by Illinois prosecutors about the possible release of a mental patient (who is also a confessed murderer). Letters to his family reveal that Houston (along with Madonna, Olivia Newton-John and others) has been the focus of some of his delusions. In the letters, the mentally-ill man wrote that the stars wrote songs for him, held benefits concerts for him, built homes for him, and asked him to enter into sexual affairs with him.

Commodores Fire Long-time Member: Milan Williams, one of the original members of the Commodores has been fired for refusing to perform with the group in South Africa. The band had earlier canceled its proposed tour of South Africa due to an onslaught of media controversy surrounding the scheduled appearance, and though the controversy has died down. Williams said he was dismissed after 20 years with the group, following a majority vote...**In other recording news,** Gladys Knight is said to want out of her MCA recording contract.

Short Takes: Keisha Jackson, daughter of singer Millie Jackson, signed a recording contract with CBS Records...Sad to report that **veteran Actress Mabel King has suffered a massive stroke.** The actress who starred in "The Wiz", as well as the popular TV series-"What's Happening", is hospitalized in serious condition...**Next week: Generation's celebrates their 100th episode with party.**

ON THE MONEY

Softsheen Lays Ground For 25th Anniversary Gala: Softsheen Products Company is laying plans for a gala extravaganza in their home base of Chicago to celebrate their 25th anniversary. Set for mid October, the gala will coincide with a massive nationwide advertising campaign. Said company spokesperson Andrea Smith: "it's gonna be real big, cause we want to let the world know that we're really proud to be here. As a black corporation, we feel a big responsibility to let other entrepreneurs and business people see that it can be done" (Last year, sales at the company topped \$85 million). Added Smith: "we've also got some exciting new product ideas that will be taking the country by storm, not only in the ethnic community but across the board", however, while the company is in the midst of key negotiations, Smith declined to provide any further details. The company is also being hush-hush with regards to new details involving its endorsement pact with R&B superstar, Anita Baker, only saying that they will have some exciting announcements to make in the next few weeks with regards to new arrangements with Baker. Baker is presently signed to a one-year pact as celebrity spokeswoman for Optimum Care, their hair care line targeting black women.

The Gordy Company Scores Yet Another Triumph: The first big venture Motown Productions has undertaken since founder Berry Gordy sold his interest in Motown Records last year, has once again paid off. It's western miniseries--Lonesome Dove recently led the pack in TV adaption put CBS in second place among networks garnering nominations. Suzanne dePassee, president of Motown Productions reportedly broke into tears upon hearing the news.

Pepsi Forges Economic Alliance With Black Businesses: "We're very pleased with the growth of our minority business enterprise program", said L. Michael Green, National Manager of Black Marketing for Pepsi. "Business that was done with minority vendors came to a total of \$185 million dollars last year, and we feel that number speaks for itself in terms of the kind of efforts we're making. We have established local link programs that allow us to put our local bottlers in contact with various minority vendors throughout the country, and we feel that this is a means of truly making a contribution back to the black community. It simply makes good business sense." Green says that Pepsi uses minority vendors for anywhere from travel agency assistance to product suppliers for the various plants. "Just the whole gamut of services a major corporation would seek". Those vendors who are interested should contact: Betty Darrell, director of the MBE Program, Routes 35 & 100--Somers, New York 10589.

Going For A Business Loan? If you're thinking of striking out on your own, you'll need money. But before you consider the neighborhood bank as an option, you should know that banks almost never loan money to beginning businesses. There are exceptions, but you'll have to do your homework. Packaging is everything. Here are just some things you'll need to include in your package: (1) how much money you need, what you'll use it for, and how you'll pay it back; (2) how you'll distribute your product or services; (3) the going rate for your product/service; (4) marketing strategies; (5) the cost of materials and/or overhead; and (6) an alternative plan should things not go as well as planned.

In Short: If you thought lawyers made big bucks, the results of the annual Altman & Weil Survey of Law Firm Economics will surprise you. According to the survey, last year marked the first time in history that average lawyer income exceeded \$100,000. In fact, in 1988, average lawyer income rose to \$108,266...**Next week: Find out how much the skirmish between New Edition & Guy is costing them.**

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