

# ENTERTAINMENT

## BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

By Garland Lee Thompson

### NORTHWEST AFRICAN AMERICAN WRITERS PUBLISH 1ST ANTHOLOGY

In a historic occasion, Sunday afternoon, September 24, 1989, 2-5 PM, the newly formed Northwest African American Writers Workshop presented its first published anthology of new written works.

"VOICES OF KUUMBA" (the Kiswahili language for creativity) is the title of the collected works of poetry, short story, essays, playwrighting, etc (the final scene from a play of mine, that won the Washington, D.C. One-act Play Festival, "Sisyphus & The Blue-Eyed Cyclops," is also included).

The new anthology was edited and the Forward was written by Useni Eugene Perkins, who founded the Writers Workshop unit here in Portland, and arranged sponsorship and meeting space at the Urban League of Portland.

Under a grant from the metropolitan Arts Commission of Portland and printing by the Portland Public Schools, the first collected group of Oregon African American writers have "hit the deck running," with this newest Oregon black book.

Charlotte Lewis, the graphic artist, did the cover impressively for the new five hundred test copies that just made it off the PPS presses in time for the first ever book signing, presentation reception and party held at the YWCA office on Martin Luther King Blvd, just north of Killingsworth. Several writers and poets. Kamau Anderson, Malaika Ashanti (who did the typing for the publication), Karima Aziz, Mattie Ann Callier-Spears, Joe Franklin, H.A. Hagood, Joyce Makini Harris, Donna Johnson, Lenny Johnson and myself read from or spoke about their works, which is dedicated to the late great writer, James Baldwin, at the friendly neighbor reception in North Portland.

Other writers, who are included in the new book are: Carole Rohr Aquino, "Backlash" (a short story), J. Lynn Ervins, "Better Than the Day Before" (a poem), Sherrian Haggan, "Man of Mine," and a group of poem, Pearl Wood Lewis (she is 93 years old), "In The Meadow" and another poem, "Reaching Out," Selaalo Maredi (she is a South African playwright now living in Portland, Oregon), contributed his poem, "Hunger in My Rich Land," Pamela Slaughter (two poems), "Creation" and Dilemma," and "Faye Ann Williams-Bell (two poems), "A Divorced Mother's Love" and "The Liberator." (It is important to note that this is the first time that any portion of mine play, "Sisyphus & The Blue-Eyed Cyclops," has been published after it was written twenty years ago and performed in Los Angeles by actors Paul Winfield and D'Urville Martin, in New York, by actors Al Freeman Jr. Morgan Freeman and Adolf Caesar, at Howard University, Washington, D.C., Princeton University and toured the South by the Carpathag Players of Knoxville, Tenn.)

### USENI EUGENE PERKINS HONORED

A special plaque and award was given to Useni Eugene Perkins, himself a playwright and author of several

books, honoring him for his work in conceiving the concept and organizing the Workshop that produced this historic new book of Oregon black writers.

In Perkins' Introduction to the book he writes: "Oregon has a rich literary tradition, and some of America's finest writers live in this scenic Northwest state or come here to participate in various writer's conferences, seminars and workshops. However, few African-American writers who live in Oregon have benefited from this tradition and consequently, they have been conspicuously ignored. Whether this has been by intent or not, the African-American writer in Oregon has received limited literary exposure." "The works herein represent a sampling of the writings that have emanated from our workshop. They reflect a variety of styles, themes and creative expressions which reaffirms the rich literary tradition of African-Americans bonded to slavery to produce such noted writers as Phillis Wheatley, Jupiter Hammon, Countee Cullen, Zora Neal Hurston, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright and James Baldwin. Indeed, it is tradition that celebrates and captures the unique experience of African-Americans who have survived slavery and other forms of social and economic oppression. Despite efforts to control and inhibit their literary expressions, African-American writers have persistently waged an endless struggle for their voices to be heard." Write on, Useni and take Workshop.

### OREGON POET-LAURATE IS PRESENTED THE NEW ANTHOLOGY

As a follow-up to the introduction and presentation of the new book, on Tuesday night, September 26, 1989, I, as a member of the new published anthology, did present a first edition copy to William Stafford, Oregon's famous retiring poet-laurate, after his appearance and reading at Delialah's Coffeehouse restaurant, at their Tuesday night reading series in Portland.

Also Dr. Darrell Millner, chairperson of the Black Studies Department of Portland State University, received his copy personally from myself. He is the head of the department where I teach my new fall class, "African American Playwrights, Their Craft and Legacy." He has agreed to review the new black book for his reactions and interest. Write on, Dr. Millner. (The next meeting of the NW African American Writers Workshop will be Sunday, October 22, 1989, 3-5PM, 6600 SE Division Street, Portland, OR (66th & Division Street)

### THE NATIONAL BLACK TALENT DIRECTORY

The National Black Talent Directory's publisher, J.J. Jones, announces the launching of registration for the second annual edition. 10,000 copies are distributed throughout the country to major studios, film companies, producers, record companies, talent theatrical agencies, and other key decisionmakers in the entertainment industry.

Portland's Minority Artist Representatives, Inc., Joe (Bean) Keller, is registering black artists now, with the deadline: October 15th, 1989. For information, call (503) 288-1662, P.O. Box 12471, Portland, Oregon 97212

### Behind-The-Scenes

(Byline=Lisa Collins)

**MCA Hosts Big Bobby Brown Bash:** The attire was "after five" and the party, --in celebration of the sale of 5,000,000 units of Brown super smash debut LP, was hosted by MCA Records president Al Teller himself. Everyone put on their best (the guest of honor came decked out in red silk) and the party clearly lived up to its billing as guests included MCA recording star Tiffany (who was celebrating her birthday), members of New Edition, Keenan Wayans-still in talks with Fox-TV over his proposed special, Eddie Murphy, Janet Jackson, Thomas Hearn, Jody Watley, Mica Paris, Babyface, and Bebe Winans (who Brown himself confesses to being a big fan of)...On the home front, word has it Brown recently moved his girlfriend and their newborn into a king-sized, \$1.5 million newly-purchased estate in Atlanta. Others include "LA & Babyface", Pebbles and former Klymaxx lead, Joyce Irby...Meanwhile, actress shari Belafonte (formerly of the TV series "Hotel"), has set June 9 as the date of her up coming marriage to actor Sam Behrens (formerly of General Hospital, presently of "knots Landing"). It is the second marriage for Belafonte.

**Lenny Kravitz Makes Debut:** Actress Roxie Roker was at her best the other night in the role of mother at the Hollywood showcase of her son, Virgin recording artist Lenny Kravitz. Roker danced in the aisles before making her way to the front of the stage as the crowd rocked at the Roxy. Other notables on hand included Teena Marie as well as his wife, cosby actress Lisa Bonel. In fact, Kravitz began his set with a song off the LP, "Flower Child", which was written for his wife, Lisa. (We'll take a closer look at this new talent next week.

**Roger Mosely's Last Acting Project?** "The fact that they've got two academy award nominees Denzel Washington and Bob Hoskins may make this film work" said Roger Mosely of his upcoming film "Heart Condition". It is the story of a white man who is transplanted with the heart (and ghost) of a black man. The ghost later convincing the man to find his murderer. Mosely's co-starring role in the upcoming movie, could well be his last major acting role. Said Mosely, "If something comes that puts me in front of the camera, fine, but that's not my motivation. After getting a chance to direct on Magnum, I realize where the real power is--behind the camera, producing and directing."

**Apollonia Nabbed In Two-Day Anti-Drug Sweep:** Actress-singer (and former girlfriend of "Prince") Patricia "Apollonia" Bernhardt, 30, was recently arrested in Los Angeles as she tried to purchase less than an ounce of marijuana. "I am not a user", Apollonia was quoted as saying. In fact, according to her spokesperson, the actress (who purchased the marijuana from a 10-year old girl), was during research for an upcoming movie that deals with streetkids. AHowever, as of our presstime, the singer's \$25,000 black Mercedes Benz (confiscated as part of the sweep) was still being held by the Los Angeles Police Department..

**FBI Takes Firm Stance With NWA:** News of a letter from FBI officials to Priority records regarding LA-based rap group N.W.A.'s encouragement of "violence against and disrespect" for law enforcement surfaced in the recording industry just recently. In the letter, the FBI took exception to the advocacy of violence and assault, particularly as it relates to the tune entitled "...Tha Police", recounting tension between LA street gangs and the LA Police Department...Short Takes: Singer Ray Charles was named chairman of the Rhythm & Blues Foundation, a non-profit Washington D.C. based group that assists R&B

performers who have fallen on hard times...Randy Jackson--youngest member of the famed singing clan is about to release his solo LP on A&M... Next week: Jasmine guy talks about her upcoming role in "Harlem Nights."

### The S.O.S. Band Shines On "Diamonds In The Raw"



First Single, "I'm Still Missing Your Love." Catches Fire At Urban Radio

Tabu/Epic recording artists The S.O.S. Band are back in action with a fast-rising, streetwise single, "I'm Still Missing Your Love," and a new album, Diamonds In The Raw, slated for October 3 release. Produced and co-written by Curtis Williams (of Kool & the Gang fame). "I'm Still Missing Your Love" made its Billboard Black Singles chart debut at #87\* and promptly jumped to #67\* in the week of September 16. The song seems destined to join the S.O.S Band's impressive string of Eighties hits like "Take Your Time (Do It Right)", "Just Be Good To Mew", "Tell Me If You Still Care," and "The Finest." The forthcoming album includes tracks produced by Curtis Williams; the team of Eban Kelly & Jimmy Randolph; and The S.O.S. Band's own Jason Bryant. The ultra-funky "Goldmine," and the hypnotic "Men Don't Cry." The new LP is the first to feature The S.O.S. Band's new female lead vocalists, Fredi Grace and Chandra Currelley, along with stalwart members Jason Bryant, Bruno Speight, and Abdul Raouf. Diamonds In The Rough is dedicated to the late Billy Ellis, a founding member of The S.O.S. Band whose lyrical saxophone solo pierces to the heart of "Hold Out." Having completed highly successful tours of West Germany and Japan earlier this year, The S.O.S. Band are planning more international concert dates before embarking on a major U.S. tour in support of Diamonds In The Rough. THE S.O.S. Band: Shining on with "I'm Still Missing Your Love" and Diamonds In The Rough, on Tabu/Epic Cassettes, Compact Discs and Records.

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