

# ENTERTAINMENT

## BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

by Garland Lee Thompson  
**A TASTE OF "SUGAR CANE ALLEY" IN "A DRY WHITE SEASON"**

A rare new "wine" is coming out of "Sugar Cane Alley" of Martinique. Euzhan Palcy is a French-speaking colony in the Caribbean. She wrote and directed "Sugar Cane Alley," which brought her critical acclaim in international film circles. For that film she won the Silver Lion Award, and Best Actress Award at the Venice Film festival and the Cesar (French Academy Award) in the Best First Film category. This was a "first" for a black woman in the world film scene, to our knowledge.

This new film-maker, whose latest release, "super-starring" Marlon Brando (1st film in nine years) and Donald Sutherland, "A Dry White Season," is the current critically acclaimed anti-apartheid film of the 1989 season.

Euzhan Palcy came out of working in television in Martinique and directed a film, "La Messagere," in 1974, moved to Paris to study at the famous French film school Vaugirard, and also at the Sorbonne where she studied literature. She was a film editor on the film version of the black South African Broadway hit, "Sarafina," and as screenwriter she produced "La Raison," and "Dionysius."

**THIS FILM TAKES UP WHERE "CRY FREEDOM" LEFT OFF**

If you saw the earlier Richard Attenborough film, "Cry Freedom," you may appreciate the Stephen Biko story-based film, tackling the issue of apartheid and the racial terrorism that epitomizes South Africa under the rule of the white Afrikaners. But this new Euzhan Palcy film gives everyone his "day" in "A Dry White Season." Apartheid never looked uglier, tougher, more racist, nationalistic or more viciously like total nazism, to the general American public of viewers, who may have even started to grow "tired" of the seemingly never ending problem in world race relations in Southern Africa. The constant bad press numbs and assaults

The authenticity of the set and location, including getting very green Zimbabwe to look like barren Soweto in June (Palcy's film crew spread flour dyed red with food coloring), to the look of the homes in Soweto, showed everything representing a monumental international undertaking. It was a huge project. On location in several different countries, it has literally a cast of thousands, many of whom never acted before.

This monumental achievement, like "a Cecil B. De Mille's" film epic, belongs to a black female director and film-maker, "who may well represent the greatest single directorial, cinematic achievement yet, for a black director both in theme, scope, size and commitment at authenticity," according to Amsterdam News critic, Abiola Sinclair. The planning for the film had to be awesome and tougher than planning a "coup d'tat in Panama," for MGM producer, Paula Weinstein, Palcy, who co-wrote the screenplay with Colin Welland, from the book by Andre Brink.

With a cast of white superstars as well as some of the one of South Africa's best known actors, who now lives in exile in America. He plays "Stanley," a cab driver, and underground political activist, who knows "the Special Service Branch," the secret police of the South African government, may get him someday. How "Orwellian" can you get with this movie and not be "sci-fi?"

**MARKET THEATRE**

Producer Weinstein, betting a "bankroll" and her career, sent Palcy to Africa and there she was determined to gather a strong black South African cast to play the major roles. The new black director with a "vision," contacted South Africa's now famous Market Theatre, the same

theatre that produced the famous South African play, "Woza Albert!" One of the actors hired there was Winston Ntshona (he plays "Gordon Ngubene," a black gardener whose very young son is falsely arrested, beaten and later killed in detention after the Soweto uprising).

the human senses of more than a quarter of the Twentieth Century of white supremacist rule in that key part of Africa. The final part of "the triangle" of European-rule on the continent of Africa (from Portuguese Angola, British Rhodesia to the Dutch Afrikaners), is it the beginning on the end for apartheid?

"What blacks who even accidentally get caught up in the wheels of oppression endure, their unrelenting suffering, is vividly portrayed in this "bare-ass" proof of a powerful picture. "this film does what 'Cry Freedom,' did not do. It takes up where 'Cry Freedom' left off," according to the New York Amsterdam News.

**A BLACK VERSION OF "1984 ORWELLIAN" TERROR IN COLOR**

I had always wondered about the impact of the infamous "Soweto Children's Uprising," on history and South Africa. Here a host of black school-children numbering in the thousands were let out of school in Zimbabwe (aptly in the former British colony of Rhodesia) to stage the filming of the historical Soweto tragedy.

I first saw Winston Ntshona on stage in New York, appearing in "Sizwe Bansi is Dead," and "The Island," after they formed the Serpent

Players in 1967, together (they actually wrote the two hit plays) with John Kani (he portrays Julius, a black clergyman of little help due to his position). They both won Tony Awards for Best Actors on Broadway that year that I saw them perform for Best Actors on Broadway that year that I saw them perform live for the first time before an American theatre audience.

Janet Suzman brilliantly plays Donald Sutherland's wife, "Susan deToit," the white South African woman who "just wants her family as it was." The actor, Sutherland is equally brilliant as the white employer, "Ben duToit," who has his eye "opened" by the farcical "whiteman's court" Suzman, the actress is a co-founder of the interracial, Market Theatre, as well as an accomplished actress in British theatre.

**A MUST-SEE FILM FOR MARLON BRANDO FANS**

Everyone in the movie industry and me alos, is asking, "how did she get "bi'g, bad Brando," who is rich beyond one's wildest dreams for an actor who "hates" acting now, to play a "huge," noted white South African civil rights attorney?

Some in the film business say: "It took a little brave woman of color, a real burning issue and cause celebre, to sign the aging "warhorse," Marlon, the male "diva," Brando, who plays out, with his careful "method-acting" brilliance, the endless "farce" of South Afrikan "justice" and the black and white men and women, who dared to "test" it. Even when he knows it won't work and he can't win the case, he takes the case to file the inquest into the torture and police murder of "Gordon Mgbene," who tried to recover his son's body and protests the fact, until he himself is arrested and dies like so many have before his.

i have a problem with the "hollywood" simplistic ending of the film (some people applauded), but you be "the judge" in this must-see political and art film of one of the world's newest "super" film-maker. Write on, Euzhan Palcy, I can't wait to see you and Nelson Mandela, the Lion, "free" to do your next and "his thing," in life.

Only then can we all feel any true "freedom" for all of us. This is why such art, as this film is so powerful, and is "banned" in places like Johannesburg, South Africa. And to write about it also is rare! Write on, for freedom! "Woza Albert!" (Rise up!)

**On The Money**

**Black Businessmen Insist Bid To Buy Denver Nuggets Is Still Alive:**

Despite the fact that last week the contract to purchase the Denver Nuggets for \$65 million had expired. Chicago businessmen Bertram Lee and Peter Bynoe are confident they will seal a deal sometime in the next month or so. Some, however, are not so sure, pointing to the fact that this is third closing deadline the investors have failed to meet. The deal, should it go through, would make the Denver Nuggets the first major franchise to be owned by minorities. By all accounts, Nuggets owner Sidney Shienker is committed to selling to minorities, and as yet there are no other solid offers for the team. In fact, according to a spokesman for the black investors, this is no more than a delay. "There were a few documents that were not completed, so the deadline for the agreement lapsed. We expect the documents to be completed soon, and we fully expect for the sale to be closed in the very near future." Indeed the contract lapse merely means that the period of exclusivity extended to the investors has ended and the team may entertain other offers.

**Long Road To Fortune For Blacks**

In TV: Aside from the fortunes of those like Steven Spielberg and Michael Jackson, you'll find little argument in the fact that a majority of the fortunes being made in the entertainment industry spring forth from television. Just think of it -- the deal that put the "Cosby Show" into syndication netted Bill Cosby over \$50 million alone. Yet while Cosby has been the exception to the rule for blacks in TV, there are many success stories. That of "A Different World" co-executive producer Thad Mumford, Bill Boulware who heads the spirited writing team of "227," or Married With Children's co-producer Mike Moyer Still, blacks have no real power in generating and getting TV's large revenues. "People prefer the company of those who share a like background and that almost automatically creates an obstacle that blacks have to overcome." That's according to Ron Taylor, who pitched and sold TV pilots before joining Walt Disney Studios as a producer. However, Taylor added that the industry "was quite open to

black creative talent --writers, directors and of course, black actors. There are black writers in this town that do extremely well." Taylor is right. At least one good example is the successful writing team of Steve Duncan & Travis Clark. The two who created "Tour of Duty" (CBS) before going on to co-produce and develop "A Man Called Hawk" make up one of the hottest black writing teams in Hollywood. Said Clark, "we can not get comfortable when we become successful. It's been a long road." Fact is, in an effort to write and create positive images, the two recently struck a deal with Black Entertainment Television, "supporting bob Johnson in his efforts to create positive images and making that our network, because it is our hope. We also need to start participating in the process, --writing to the networks and telling sponsors we are going to stop buying their products." Said Steve Duncan, "power in this industry is measured by how much money you make and the deals you make. Duncan was first paid to write by high school chums who wanted something to say to impress girls on the phone. Today, he says the biggest obstacle "is getting somebody to read your material who can actually do something with it if it's good. Just like any other business, you have to be able to communicate well and build relationships with key people." How much money can one make? An hour-long dramatic TV script can bring up to \$40,000.

**PATTI LABELLE AND JAMES INGRAM**

Two of the music industry's classicist and most original performers, Patti LaBelle and James Ingram, will headline the 1989 Michelob Class Acts 20-city R&B tour.

LaBelle and Ingram kick off the tour November 17 in Chicago. Other cities on the tour include: Kansas City, Detroit, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Norfolk, Richmond, Atlanta, Miami, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Memphis, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Seattle, Oakland, Baltimore, Boston, New York and Washington, D.C.

Rather than large auditoriums, the Michelob Class acts tour is scheduled for many of the nation's most intimate theater venues. Among them are Cleveland's State Theater and the Orpheum Theater in Memphis.

"When contemporary adults think of Michelob, words such as 'special' and 'elegant' come to mind. The same is certainly true of Patti and James," said Peter C. Rozzell, senior brand manager of the Michelob family. Last year's tour played to rave reviews and sold-out houses. This year's tour will continue to establish Michelob as the beer of choice among contemporary



adults. Spanning nearly 30 years, Patti LaBelle's varied musical career is best summed up by the title of her newest album, Be Yourself. LaBelle can be consistently counted on to dazzle music fans with her stunning voice and flamboyant hair and clothes. The versatile singer and actress is also very active in civic and charitable organizations such as Big Sisters of

America, Save the Children and the United College Fund. It's Real, James Ingram's newest album, embodies both funk roots and the smooth balladry that first brought him to international attention. A double-Grammy award winner, Ingram's distinctive, and often imitated style is alive in It's Real selections such as I Wanna Come Back" and "Someday We'll All Be Free."

**Music Millennium Has Record Release Party**

Music Millennium will have an official Record Release Party for Portland's own U-KREW (formerly the Untouchable Krew) on October 31st at 4:00 p.m. This Rap/Hiphop band's debut self-titled Enigma Records Release will be arriving in store on this day (Halloween) and U-KREW will play a live set plus be available for autographing. There will be free Halloween refreshments for everyone and anyone in costume will receive a prize. Many additional surprises in store. The event will be held at the 32nd and East Burnside location of Music Millennium.

**The San Francisco Mime Troupe's Arrives "Seeing Double"**

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of The Funding Exchange (a national network of progressive foundations) and the McKenzie River Gathering Foundation's thirteen years of service to Oregon, a presentation of the new play, "Seeing Double," a performance of the world famous Tony Award-winning, San Francisco Mime Troupe. The performance in Portland is made possible, in part, by subsidy from the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF).

The performance will be in the Grand Ballroom of the Portland Masonic Temple, 1119 S.W. Park Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97205, on Saturday, October 21, 1989 at 8:00 P.M.

"Seeing Double," is one of the latest of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. This highly acclaimed play was written by SFMT playwright, Joan Holden, in collaboration with an Israeli, a Palestinian, Jewish-Americans, and Palestinian-Americans. Reviewers have said that this play is an even-handed attempt to dramatize humorously the volatile Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The sensitive performance explores a potential solution that focuses on the need for the two peoples to communicate meaningfully and build trust. The production uses true Mime Troupe style -- one that draws freely from such theatrical forms as commedia dell'arte, melodrama, mystery-thriller, and the Broadway musical.

The Mime Troupe's intent is to make the Palestinian experience real to the Jewish people, and the Jewish experience real to the Palestinians, and both experiences understandable to a wider audience.

Tickets will be \$12.00 at the door and \$10.00 in advance at A Woman's Place Bookstore, Catbirde Seat Bookstore, Laughing Horse Bookstore, Artichoke Music and Music Millennium.

For further information, call 233-0271.

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