



ENTERTAINMENT



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by Lisa Collins
Ann Marie Johnson's Biggest Challenge: Conservative—she hates the term, but it is perhaps the best to describe Ann Marie Johnson, as well as Althea Tibbs, the character she plays on NBC's top rated "Heat of the Night". Last season, Johnson's role was pumped up, due to the absence of co-star Howard Rollins, sidetracked much of the season due to problems stemming from a cocaine dependency. "When Howard was gone for those five weeks, they needed to concentrate on that second crew and that was me," Johnson says, while being caught on guard at the mention of Rollins, (and seeming to want to stay off the issue). "We used the time to make Althea a little more tangible... let her hair down. She dealt with a lot of social problems. It was a good season. It was nice to get some attention and when he came back, it ended." But not before she was able to prove that they'd hired a qualified actress. Fact is, Johnson says she has nothing in common with her TV counterpart. "I'm an extreme militant. Ann Marie Johnson speaks her mind much more readily than Althea Tibbs would ever. I don't even look like her," she

said pointing to her ruffled hair and makeup. (She wears very little makeup when she is not working.) However, Johnson's biggest challenge is getting others to believe it. Presently on hiatus and back at home in Los Angeles, Johnson is hoping to stretch out with other film opportunities—the chance to play a character nothing like Althea Tibbs. "I live off challenges," Johnson said. "After all, acting is what I was born to do." Meanwhile, "Heat" castmate **Geoffrey Thorne**, who is perhaps more brilliant than he is "Sweet," doubled as a playwright last month, with the Los Angeles debut of "Fall." The three-act play, written and produced by Thorne, and presently running in Los Angeles, is a contemporary drama that shows yet another side of his multifaceted talent. On the home front, word has it up-and-coming recording artist Christopher Williams is soon to be a daddy... Also that former Motown mogul Berry Gordy is all set to tie the knot.
The Hollywood Beat: Kareem Abdul Jabbar, newly retired from basketball, just can't seem (or perhaps doesn't want) to stay out of the limelight for long. The hoopster just recently netted the role of executive producer in an up-

coming movie called "Recruiting Violations." The film is about the relationship between a white coach and his top black college recruit. Kareem will use this project to get his feet wet on the production end of filmmaking... Meanwhile Sheryl Lee Ralph who intends to stay very much in front of the camera, just landed the leading lady role in "Randall and Juliet", opposite Richard Dreyfuss. But, don't let the title confuse you. Ralph will play a cleaning woman who opens the eyes of a company CEO to corporate backstabbing.
Short Takes: Danny Glover and El DeBarge were part of a group of celebrities making the trek to Oakland to lend moral support to gospel star Tramaine Hawkins as she taped her first live video... In Los Angeles, **Spike Lee** was honored with the Orson Wells filmmaking award during the American Film Institute's annual film festival... And **Anita Baker** is off and running this week on her first worldwide tour, with sold-out dates in Japan, London and New York City. The tour coincides with the release of her third album, titled "Compositions". The lead single "Talk To Me" debuts this week.

PULSE & IMPULSE: A MODERN DANCE SHOWCASE



Profile of Dancer/Choreographer Ruby Burns of the Oregon Dance Consort

Depositing her infant daughter on a secure spot of the studio floor and stripping off several layers of African-inspired fashions, dancer Ruby Burns picks up a large American flag and starts to swirl it around. A flag?! Yes, indeed. With a well-established reputation as one of the region's top interpreters and teachers of African dance, Ruby is branching out to explore the vocabulary of American modern dance—and American modern dance in the 90s is a many-faceted artform.

It's not such a huge leap for Ruby as it sounds; trace any modern dance style back to its roots and you'll find that the early pioneers drew heavily on folk and ethnic themes for inspiration in their work. Ruby herself has been greatly inspired by the work of modern dance pioneer Katherine Dunham who based her style directly on various forms of African dance.

Today, African dance is a highly visible, enthusiastically received part of Portland's cultural scene, but when

Ruby arrived here in 1978 as a refugee from New York City, this was hardly the case. As a faculty member at Dancers' Workshop, as a choreographer and performer, Ruby has played a vital role in focusing attention on the diversity and power of African forms of music and dance. Now, in her recent and upcoming work with the modern dance company Oregon Dance Consort, she's building more bridges and utilizing her powerful stage personality to interpret dramatic works from another tradition.

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REGGAE SUNSPASH SHOW MOVED

Reggae Sunsplash '90 concert, originally scheduled at the Masonic Temple, has been moved to the Schnitzer Concert Hall, Portland. The show time has also been changed from 8:00 to 7:30. Tickets are \$17.50 (not including service charge). Tickets available at all Fred Meyer FAS-TIXX outlets, Everybody's Ticket Centers, the Coliseum and Portland Center for the Performing Arts box office. For more ticket information, call 224-TIXX.



The Main Ingredient (Cuba Gooding and Tony Silvester), whose album *I Just Wanna Love You*, have resumed their place as innovators among vocal groups, and their tasty musical menu proves that they have *The Main Ingredient* for success. Since the making of their album, Jerome Jackson, former lead singer of the Nobles, has become the latest member of the *Main Ingredient*.

A COUPLE WHITE CHICKS SITTING AROUND TALKING

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Local Does Good...
 ... Found Within The Pages of Jet Magazine



Stephine Sawyer, a native of Portland, is on tour with the *Ebony Fashion Fair*. Recently featured with Paula Abdul and Janet Jackson on the cover page of *Jet* magazine—look for Stephine in the May issue. Best wishes to her.

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Performances at \$12.50 per person will be held Saturdays at 8:00 p.m. and Sundays at 5:00 p.m. on June 2nd, 3rd, 9th, 10th, 16th and 17th at the Otis Firehall. For further flyer or ticket information, call 994-5999

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