

# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer

## The Duke Report: "Get Shorty"



Chili Palmer (John Travolta, left) and Karen (Rene Russo, center) team up to try and persuade Karen's ex-husband Martin Weir (Danny DeVito, right) to star in their movie, in MGM's contemporary comedy *Get Shorty*. Photo Credit: Linda Chen

John Travolta redeems his star status as Chili Palmer, the gentleman gangster in "Get Shorty". Shorty has to be Danny DeVito as Martin Weir who Palmer and his ex-wife Karen (Rene Russo) tries to persuade Weir to star in their movie.

Palmer ends up in Hollywood chasing a loan and as a favor to a casino owner he tracks down B movie producer Harry Zimm (Gene Hackman) who introduces him to the movie business. Palmer is a



By Lanita Duke

movie buff who is tired of the loan shark business and his new supervisor in crime Ray "Bones" Barboni (Dennis Farina).

Zimm is dirty and is avoiding drug dealer/Limo owner Bo Catlett

(Delroy Lindo) who is still waiting for his name to roll in any movie's credits. Zimm is sitting on a fantastic script and Palmer becomes his partner.

"Get Shorty" has a few dips and dives and you will be surprised at which script gets produced. This is a likable film but I wonder why the two characters of color had to die. For Travolta "Get Shorty" dusts off his acting reputation and the public is introduced to a gangster we all want to live next door to.



By Cora Smith

## "Things Ain't What They Used To Be"

No tape recorders, no videos, no camera's, "Things Ain't What They Used To Be," premiered Thursday at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

The stage play that has America talking, played to a capacity house. With a look similar to that of the Apollo in New York, Portland supported the event with a maximum black audience.

Theatre-goers, experiencing the first indication of winter, were dressed in ambience, style and warmth - glamour at it's best. Basic black accented with gold and pearls, with splashes of red, continues to be the look for fall/winter 1995. Seen were Laverne and Kim Brooks, Calvin Allmon, Reba and son, Antoine Stoudameir, Benita Seamster, Na'im and Hakim Hasson, to name a few.

The Albina Ministerial Alliance came out in full force, holding court in preferred select seating. Rev. James Martin and wife, Lynette, were there in part to celebrate daughter's Tara's 13th birthday along with sisters Triffany and Ashley. Rev.

and Mrs. Dorsey McCullough, Rev. and Mrs. Robert Kemp were a few of the ministers whose ticket sales endorsement gave opportunity for success.

Award winning Delilah Rashell, writer-producer-director of her third play, addressed the senseless disregard for the family and disregard for women as our young men rape us publicly with the distorted lyrical content of some of today's music. The show format educated and entertained and offered God as the ultimate solution. A dazzling billboard of stars had Portlanders' standing to their feet and keeping beat to the sizzling musical sounds and the dra-

matic presentations by this passionate cast.

Leading actor/vocalist David Sea's velvety, charismatic voice and character projection left the audience spellbound and begging for more. His delivery cast a striking resemblance of Isas Haynes and his tall torso that of a model. His leading lady, Cheryl Denise Hunter, was equally as strong, wearing an attractive, interesting wardrobe. She endured the challenge of line delivery with a miserably mike.

Unmistakenly, "Things Ain't What They Used To Be" will leave Portland talking around about town.

## Asante'

As you listen, your mind drifts... to summer nights, to distant lovers, dreams lost and found, slow dancin' and good good lovin'.

Yes, the mood is old school '70s but the setting is strictly '90s. One look and half-a-listen tells you straight-up that this team is working off a whole other level than the racks of male group clones with their Xeroxed vocal yodels.

From the under-your-skin hook of "Look What You've Done," the hypnotic opening track, to a righteous, soul-filled a cappella workout on "The Impressions' "People Get Ready," there's no doubt about it: the four talented gentlemen who comprise Asante' deliver the goods. Few groups would attempt to cover The Isley Brothers, but Asante's sensual reading of the '70s classic, "Don't Say Goodnight" not only does justice to the original, material, Asante' compete with the masters. Listen to the slamin' jam, "Dopest Ethiopian" (an Asante' - penned props-giving shout out to sisters of African



origin), the tender "All About You", or the uplifting anthem, "Anything Is Possible" (which features additional vocals by Tawatha Agee, formerly of the group Mtume, and keyboard work by Bernard Wright.)

Asante' (Swahili for "think you") consists of Pharoah Oyewole', Warren Robinson, Andre Zachery and Wil Townsend. They've been together as a group since 1991, when a chance meeting at a New York recording studio led to a musical mar-

riage that grows ever stronger.

Asante' began when Wil and Pharoah first hooked up and were on the lookout for other singers to fill in the sound of their fledgling group. It was at a Bronx studio that the duo ran into Warren and Andre who were each doing separate projects. "The four of us just started vibin', singin' and jammin' together," says Warren, "and we enjoyed it so much we figured we could just take to another level."

## "Waiting To Exhale"

Arista Records Releases "Waiting To Exhale" soundtrack album to be in stores on November 14. The record features an unprecedented powerhouse lineup of music's hottest "divas". Whitney Houston (who also stars in the film), Toni Braxton, Aretha Franklin, Mary J. Blige, TLC, Brandy, Chaka Khan, Patti LaBelle, Faith Evans, SWV, CeCe Winans, Shanna, For Real, Chante Moore, and Sonja Marie. The album was written and produced by Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, who wrote 14 new songs plus the film's score.

The first single will be by Whitney Houston. The title is "Exhale (Shoop, Shoop)," and it's a warm, lifting ballad that summarizes the overall theme of the film and its soundtrack.

On assembling this all-star female cast for the soundtrack, Edmonds explained, "The film was written, from a female perspective, so it felt quite natural to have all the music written for and performed by women.

What makes the soundtrack unique, though, is the diversity of female artists from Whitney Houston, Chaka Khan and Toni Braxton, to Brandy, TLC and SWV. This is one of those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that you dream about as a songwriter/producer.

## O.J. Simpson Trial Series

The Home Video Series Continues With Volume Three And Four

Volume III: The Defense & Volume IV: Closing Statements and Verdict Available November 21st Special Consumer Savings of \$4.00 on Purchase of Entire O.J. Simpson Home Video Series

Courtroom Television Network (Court TV) and Warner Vision Entertainment has announced the release of volumes three and four of an exclusive home video collection featuring the most newsworthy coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial. Volume III: The Defense and Volume IV: Closing statements and Verdict will be available on November 21 at a retail cost of \$12.95 each.

Volume III: The Defense. As the leader of the defense team, Johnnie Cochran Jr. raises controversial questions about the prosecution's side of the story. Is the DNA evidence reliable? Did detectives both evidence with their sloppy investigation? Has Mark Fuhrman deceived both the jury and the court with false testimony? In a rush to judgment, did the district attorney fail to investigate the real killer?

Volume IV: Closing Statements and Verdict. In the final days of

California v. O.J. Simpson, prosecutors, in closing statements, ask the jury to consider the "mountain of evidence" that Simpson is guilty of murdering Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Defense attorneys maintain that "something is terribly wrong" with the state's case. Eight months and 159 days of testimony come to an end with just two words, "not guilty." O.J. Simpson is acquitted amid tears of anger and elation inside the courtroom.

The O.J. Simpson Trial home video series features trial footage and reporting by Court TV from its live in-depth coverage of California v. Simpson. O.J. Simpson is charged with two counts of first-degree murder in the June 17, 1994 slayings of Nicole Brown Simpson, his former wife, and Ronald Goldman. The video series takes a comprehensive look at the intricate workings of the judicial system and a trial that has captured the attention of the nation. Each video includes explanations of the law, rules of evidence and procedural technicalities, along with expert commentary and analysis of both prosecution and defense strategies.

Narrated by Court TV anchor Gregg Jarrett.

Court TV is a registered trademark of Courtroom Television Network, a cable television network dedicated to educating viewers about the judicial process. The network is a joint venture of American Lawyer Media, L.P., Time Warner Inc. (TWX), NBC (GE) and Tele-Communications, Inc. (TCOMA).

WarnerVision Enter Entertainment, a full service home video and television company, is a Warner Music Group Company.

Consumers can save \$4.00 on The O.J. Simpson Trial Collection with a mail-in rebate on vol. I-IV as follows:

- Volume III, The Defense, catalogue number 52153-3.
- Volume IV, Closing Statements and Verdict, catalogue number 52153-3.
- Volume I, Background and Opening Statements, catalogue number 52150-3.
- Volume II, The Prosecution, catalogue number 52151-3.

Suggested Retail price is \$12.95 each with a running time of approx. 60 minutes each.

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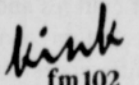
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## DEBORAH COX

At age 21, it's Deborah Cox's turn to stand in the spotlight. The Toronto-bred songstress was exposed to an electric mix of Jazz, Reggae, R&B and Pop music from birth, and began singing at the age of five. Her debut features production from Babyface, Dallas Austin (TLC, Madonna) and Vincent Herbert (Toni Braxton).

