

1972 'Black Woodstock' Comes Alive

'Wattstax' captures feelings of the streets

(AP) — On Aug. 20, 1972, seven years after the urban upheaval in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, some 112,000 people came together for a daylong concert that would become known as the "black Woodstock."

They filled Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum to hear performances by Isaac Hayes, Albert King, the Staple Singers, Rufus and Carla Thomas, the Bar-Kays and more.

Staged by black-owned Stax Records, the Wattstax concert was not only a way to promote the young, Memphis soul label and its artists, but also to celebrate black culture and renewed hope for a troubled community looking to rebuild itself.

Stax President Art Bell decided to film the concert "for historical purposes." The result: the 1973 documentary "Wattstax," which made its broadcast TV debut this month on the PBS series "P.O.V." The airing coincides with the Warner Bros. DVD release of the film.

In a recent interview, Bell said he wanted "Wattstax" to be more than just another concert film.

"We needed to demonstrate that our music is an embodiment of the black experience and what goes on in the lives of our people," he said.

Bell retained noted documentary filmmakers David Wolper and Mel Stuart, providing them, he said, "with some of the best black camera people we could find" in order to capture "the correct perspective in presenting the black experience."

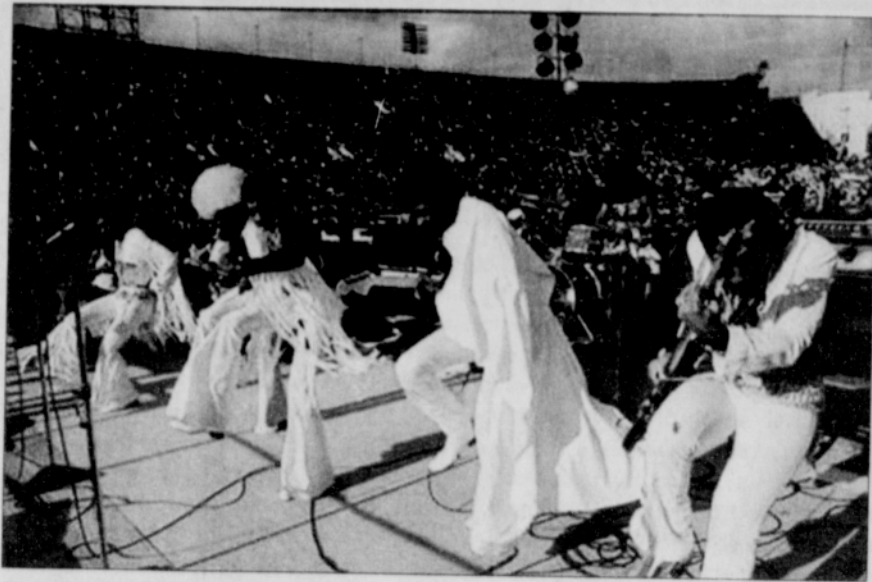
The mostly black crews scoured the street corners, barbershops, restaurants and churches of Watts, talking to people about politics, religion, music and relationships.

But artistically, Stuart believed the film needed more of a defining perspective, "a chorus like in 'Henry V,' a guy who tells you the meaning of the film," he said. "But I wanted somebody really funny, but who could really express the deep feelings of the community."

Stax executives took Stuart to a nightclub in Watts and introduced him to Richard Pryor.

"It's this funky club and here's this guy on the stage and he starts talking and in two minutes I knew I was in the presence of a genius," Stuart said of the comedian, whose acerbic social satire was widely known among blacks but had yet to cross over to mainstream audiences.

"I started talking to him," Stuart re-



The Bar-Kays perform at the Los Angeles Coliseum in this Aug. 20, 1972, file photo during a concert celebrating black pride. The PBS and Warner Bros. DVD documentary "Wattstax" relives the concert that took place seven years after the urban upheaval in Watts that became known as the "black Woodstock." (AP photo)

called, "and I said to him, 'Say, what do you think about women? about sex?' or 'What do you think about the blues, or gospel?' Whatever. And he would wind up with a half an hour off the top of his head, out of nowhere. And we used it. It was marvelous."

The film intersperses Pryor's trenchant

musings on the realities of life for blacks in the 1970s with man-on-the-street interviews and footage of the concert and audience.

"What you're seeing in 'Wattstax' is the survival of black people," said actor Ted Lange, who attended the concert and appears in the film as a 20-year-old unknown.

"It was a celebration of black people being black," added Lange, who played bartender Isaac on ABC's "The Love Boat." "Stax Records represented a closer connection to the average man, while Motown was trying to infiltrate the establishment. Stax was rejoicing in the difference in who we are, and that's what you see in the film," he said.

"There was hope in that film and everything that we aspired to be," said Hayes, who was grand marshal at the pre-concert parade. "It was a great day and it went off without incident. We didn't realize how huge it was until it was all over and the film was cut together and shown."

"P.O.V." executive director Cara Mertes said "Wattstax" tells us so much about black culture in the early '70s.

"It's an election year, and a lot of the issues that were the reason that the Wattstax concert happened are still issues today," she said. "Also it's a fabulous time capsule that takes us back to that moment in 1972 before so much happened in the '80s and '90s."

While little has changed for the community of Watts, Lange thinks the hope of the '70s is still alive.

"What matters is people can change things and with change comes hope," he said. "It was as true then as it is today. This film deals with that reality."

County Enforces New Income Tax

(AP) — Multnomah County is pursuing residents who never filed tax returns for a new local income tax, hoping to enrich the county coffers by as much as \$12 million by tracking down an estimated 58,000 households.

County officials have shipped out the first batch of letters to people suspected of tax evasion.

The collection effort is crucial to maintaining money for schools and county services, promised when

voters passed a three-year 1.25 percent tax hike last year.

The 58,000 households account for one-fifth of the county's taxpayers and owe an estimated \$18 million for the 2003 tax year, officials say.

Dave Boyer, the county's chief financial officer estimates the county could collect about two-thirds of that, bringing in an estimated \$12 million for schools and county services.

Katz' Health Improves

(AP) — The latest medical tests show Portland's Mayor Vera Katz has no remnants of cancer, following a bout of chemotherapy this June.

A recent scan showed that the tumors, previously found in her stomach, are no longer visible. It confirms her gynecologists' findings that the hard mass discovered in Katz lower abdomen on June 10

is gone. "The cancer is currently undetectable," said Dr. Rebecca Orwoll, Katz' oncologist with Northwest Cancer Specialists.

Katz, 71, has been undergoing treatment while still acting as mayor. She will retire in January after more than 30 years in Oregon politics, including three terms as Portland mayor.

Ask Deanna!



Real People, Real Advice
An advice column known for its fearless approach to reality-based subjects!

Dear Deanna!
My girlfriend cheated, lied, stole from me and got pregnant by another man but I still love her and want to be with her. What can I do to make her see my love and want to be with me and do the right things. These other men are using her and aren't as seri-

ous and dedicated as I am. The man who got her pregnant is denying the baby but I will step up to the plate and be the family man she needs. Help. --Tony Foster; Buffalo, N.Y.

Dear Tony:
Stop being a Fool in Love and realize your girlfriend doesn't want you, your commitment or your family values. It's commendable you'll suffer the storm with her but in the long run, the drama, deception and stress isn't worth it. God has a pearl for you but you'll be too blind and broke down to receive it if you stay in the mess you're in. You can't force the relationship on her so you need to count her as a loss and keep it moving.

Dear Deanna!
I've had it with your column. You need to be more sensitive. People write you with their problems and it seems like you're

purposely hardcore and slam your responses too hard. True, your advice is good but can you at least be softer? --John; Birmingham, Ala.

Dear John:
Reality and honesty is never viewed as nice to people that are used to lies, and being told what they want to hear. We live in a hard cruel world that's being made worse by sin, propaganda and half truths. Therefore, you will not find sugar coated replies just for the sake of a smile. Truth, cutting-edge wisdom and reality are here to stay. Keep reading and remember that soft mainly applies to cotton balls, kittens and newborn babies.

Dear Deanna!
I made the mistake and married a man that was a virgin. Everything in the relationship has always been wonderful until our wedding night. I was disap-

pointed because I've been with others and had experiences that were 10 times better. I'm not sure I want to stay in the marriage because I can't deal with this. What do I do? --Misha Tyler; Fort Hood, Texas

Dear Misha:
Be glad you married a man that avoided sexual immorality. Your virgin eliminated your exposure to AIDS, diseases and baby momma drama. Apparently there were things other than sex that made you love him and accept his hand in marriage. If you were smart, you'd realize you're the teacher with a permanent student whose skills are going to get better and improve with each lesson...if you know what I mean.

Ask Deanna is written by Deanna M. Write Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or write: Deanna M, P.O. Box 88847, Los Angeles, CA 90009. Website: www.askdeanna.com

Telethon Fights Sickle Cell

Area residents can join in the fight against Sickle Cell Anemia disease by calling in your pledge of support during a Saturday, Sept. 25 telethon from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Multnomah County Cable TV.

An inherited blood disorder affecting primarily Afro-Americans, but frequently Hispanic, Greek, Maltese and Caucasian ethnicities also, Sickle Cell Anemia can be life threatening. It is a disease that it painful, disabling and often results

in premature death. Take back life by supporting the telethon as funds are raised to help find a cure and better treatment. For information about being tested for the disease, call 503-249-1366.

Islam and Politics

continued from Front

one of the most common misconceptions about Muslims.

"The concept of a holy war in Islam primarily deals with war on one's self, war on our destructing, immoral appetites, things that cause problems for a human being," he said.

His shows also touch on similarities between Islam and Christianity.

"One of the things we try to focus on is promoting the similarities through interfaith advocacy, and try to promote interfaith dialogues," he said.

Haamid also uses music as a means of communication in his radio show, "The Essence of Soul," also on KBOO, which airs every other Friday from 7 to 9 p.m.

He says music is another tool he uses in reaching African Americans, his primary audience.

"As a practicing Muslim, I have a responsibility to minister and promote the religion and healthy community life. That's what I try to do with those programs," he said. "Even the with the music program, you have to be realistic if you want to reach the African-American audience, and music plays a big part in that. I don't speak for the African-American community, but I am a part of it."

Come join us for the release of the Dynamix CD

"Chillaxin' on the MAX"

Dynamix in concert with DJ O.G. ONE

12:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

on the Sabin CDC-TriMet Community Stage, NE Alberta & 22nd Ave. Free Dynamix CDs and autographs following each performance.

7th Annual Alberta Street Fair

A multicultural neighborhood celebration

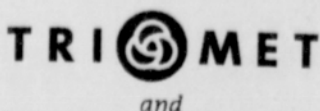
Saturday, September 18th

11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

NE Alberta St., from 11th Ave. to 31st Ave.

"Chillaxin' on the MAX" is sponsored by TriMet and Sabin Community Development Corporation and includes a music CD as well as radio and TV public service announcements. This project was designed to provide youth with an opportunity to create a safety campaign for their peers, while learning valuable media industry skills in the process. Many thanks to our project partners: Dynamix, Urban Living Maps, Jai D'Shea Entertainment, Portland Community Media and students, Alberta Wash House and Allied Vaughn.

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and Sabin Community Development Corporation