WHAT'S HAPPENING

BY IDA M. PETERS

Clara Ward was a great lady. I had the pleasure of meeting her only once but had read of her many successes and her beginnings by reading our Philadelphia AFRO.

Clara came to Baltimore this past summer to promote her concert . . . . a first . . . open-air concert, at Carter-Barron Amphitheatre in D.C.

It was a so-so cloudy rainy day . . . and her agent called to say she would arrive in Baltimore on the Metroliner around 12 noon.

I picked her up in front of the station. We had at first started to have the interview at the AFRO home office . . we were both tired . . so she said anyplace . . . and we ended up at Garrison Lounge for lunch.

Morris Rubin saw us come in recognized her . . . showed us to a fast table. The Garrison is usually the hang-out for the D.J.'s of WEBB, so eventually they all passed the table and were introduced.

We talked for about two hours. Clara Ward was shorter than she seemed on the screen or TV and she told us about her favorite songs and the building of the new home in California for her mother.

Her main concern was her concert at Carter-Barron and how their voices would carry over the water. She told about royalties still coming in on some of the 500 songs she had written . . . and how she loved her songs sung by Aretha Franklin.

That day . . . she was wearing a powder blue two-piece dress with jeweled neckline.

I remember, I picked up the check . . . we both had Garrison's famous Liver and Onions . . . (and asked myself, on my salary are you nuts?) . . . but then forgot it as we posed for pictures outside the Garrison.

The photographer, who joined us for lunch and snapped happily away for some very exclusive pics was young Courtney Anderson, now a student at Syracuse University in Upstate N.Y. I remember, Courtney was so shy, he would only take a chicken sandwich.

Clara Ward was a nice person and we'll remember her for the way she granted us a fact-filled interview in a gracious, relaxed way. May she rest in peace.

1972 INTERVIEW

CLARA WARD was the 28-year-old "queen of gospel singers" in 1952. Her "Come In The Room" was approaching the one-million sales mark. She had sold over one-million copies each on "Surely God Is Able" and "How I Got Over".

1953-20,000 paid $40,000 to hear Ward Singers in Pa., N.J., Md.

ART BLAKEY

Art Blakey, renowned jazz musician, often described as an "electrifying dynamo" and "an eternal institution," will be presented in a seminar workshop and concert at the James McHenry School, Hollins and Schroeder Streets, on Saturday, January 20, at 3:00 and 8:00 p.m. The event is being sponsored by the Model Cities Cultural Arts Project.

Blakey is one of the most influential drummers in modern history. He and his famous jazz messengers continue to command wide and enthusiastic audiences both here and abroad. He, along with such musicians as Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, was responsible for the development of the be-bop era in jazz music. In spite of the many changes in jazz that has developed since that time, he has remained one of the most widely accepted and influential musicians in the field.

The seminar workshop will be open to those persons interested in obtaining information concerning jazz performance as well as some technical data on drumming. The concert is opened to the public, free, by tickets only.

For further information concerning tickets and seminar call 276-4646 or any Cultural Arts Centers.

* * *

LEFT BANK JAZZ

The Left Bank Jazz Society will present Art Blakey and the Jazz Messenger at the Famous Ballroom, Wunday, January 21 from 5 to 9 p.m.

Other 1973 attractions will be Monty Alexander trio; Louis Bellson and His Orchestra; the Maynard Ferguson Orchestra; Eric Kloss with the Barry Miles ton, Jr Quartet; and Count Basie and His Orchestra. Trio and Grover Washing-

* * *

SUSQUEHANNA

The Susquehanna Festival Theater will present "Death of a Salesman" by Arthur Miller, Jan. 25 through 28 and Feb. 1 through 4 at the College Center Theater of Harford Community College near Bel Air. Curtain time is 8:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 7 p.m. Sundays. For information call the Susquehanna Festival Theater Box Office at 838-1000 or 879-8320, ext. 217

* * * *

HARAMBEE WHEN?
Black Man,
keep
devouring
one another
and when
the millennium
comes
you
still
won't
be
ready...
Elissa Ward Johnson

* * * * * *

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COUNT BASIE and HIS ORCHESTRA
March 4th
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Earth, Wind and Fire

By ANGIE THORNTON

Black rock has not just come into being. It has been with us for some time.

It started with people like Chuck Berry and has moved quickly down the line. It has taken on a new face to some extent and some of us may not be able to recognize it when we hear it.

It's very easy to recognize the new age of Black rock. Just listen to a group like Earth, Wind and Fire.

Their music consists of a mixture of gospel, blues, soul, and screaming guitars. Put all these together and what do you get, the Universal Elements, Earth, Wind and Fire.

They have a tone of the good old Baptist church in their music and yet at times they get to be really funky.

Earth, Wind and Fire has been together for 2½ years. They've been playing and singing their way into a world where it's not hard to be a music critic. These young people from the Los Angeles area range in age from 19 to 25.

They developed their names from their own birth signs. Each of them has a birth sign that is ruled by one of these elements. The group consists of Maurice White vocals and timboles; Verdin White bass guitar; Al McKay guitar; Ralph Johnson drums, and Andrew Woolfolk sax and flute.

The group writes and arrangs all of its own material. At present they have a release out called "Mom". It has already made the top of many charts and continues to move on up on many other charts.

Why? Because Earth, Wind and Fire has a sound unique to many other Black rock groups. It is one of softness, yet they can be heard; one of loudness, yet they can be soft; and one of various music patterns, yet they can stick to one basic melody.

E, W, and F is a group that will be remembered for its performance at Coppin State, and a group that you'll probably be hearing much more about.

EARTH, WIND & FIRE members. Jessica Cleaves, Ralph Johnson, Andrew Woolfolk, Verdine White, Maurice White, Phillip Bailey, and Larry Dunn. Not pictured, John Graham and Al McKay.

MOTOWN

McDOUGAL

Weldon Arthur McDougal, III, a four-year veteran sales promotion man for Motown Records, has been named to the newly-created position of Director of Artist Relations and Special Projects.

McDougal has been associated with the music business for 23 years as a singer, producer, writer and record promotion specialist operating from his home base in Philadelphia.

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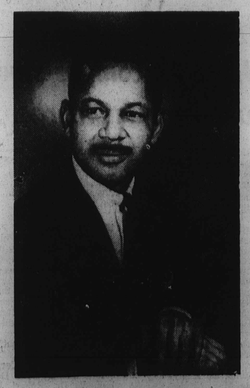
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New Records

STEVIE WONDER

Stevie Wonder, writer, composer, lyricists and arranger, has the number one single record in the country, "Superstition." The unprecedented chart action was revealed this week in Cash Box and Record World, music industry trade publications.

According to the survey of the two publications, "Superstition" reached the number one spot only in a matter of weeks after being released from Stevie's smash Tamla album, "Talking Book."

The album, which is nearing the million dollar sales mark, was composed, produced and arranged by the talented performer. The "Talking Book" album contains the hit single, and is currently number eleven on the nation's music trade charts with a bullet.

This is the second time within a six week period that Motown has had the number one single record in the country. The Temptations "Papa Was A Rolling Stone" made the coveted position as did their album "All Directions."

Stevie Wonder is currently in Los Angeles making preparations to produce MoWest recording artist, Syreeta.

* * *

Wilson Pickett has signed a long-term exclusive contract with RCA records. His first single is soon to be released followed with his debut album.

Pickett first scored heavily with "In The Midnight Hour" followed by "Funky Broadway", "Mustang Sally," "Don't Let The Green Grass Fool You" and "Don't Knock My Love".

He has also received a Grammy Award for his recording of "Engine 9."

* * *

Jimmy Byrd has been appointed Manager, Contemporary Product Merchandising, RCA Records.

Byrd got his start in radio in 1951 at WSRC in Durham, North Carolina. After working in the Boston area for approximately ten years, he was most recently associated with WNJR in Newark, N.J.

* * * *

BOLTON HILL

"Me and Thee," a comedy by Charles Horine, is the current production at The Bolton Hill Dinner Theatre. Featured in the production are Robert Mitford, Shirley Reinhardt, Karlene Wiese, Doug Roberts, Morty Mittenthal, and Lynne Lambert. The production Stage Manager is Michael Harroun; the set designer is Jay Scott. Paul Hjelmervik has directed the production.

"Me and Taee" will continue at The Bolton Hill Dinner Theatre, located at Sutton Place, through February 4.

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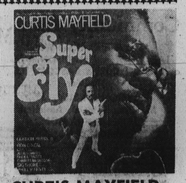
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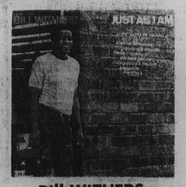
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