'Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope'

What's Happening

"You gotta cope I gotta cope All God's children gotta cope"

By Ida Peters

A musical slice of black life opened this week at the mechanic for a limited engagement. It's "Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope."

It's a joyous hand clapping trip through all the aspects of blackness from its inception in America through the islands, Harlem ghetto life, childhood, change, rhythm, love, fighting and praying.

There are moments in between the dance sequences for soul searching and deep thought. "Cope" says something, if not saying it all about what it is.

And this thing about don't bother me, because I can't handle the situation?

Well, it appears that above and beyond the call of duty, regardless ... "You gotta cope, I gotta cope, all God's children gotta cope." And that's what it is all about.

Even though "Cope" first appeared on Broadway in the summer of 1972 as the brainchild of **Vinnett Carroll**, director of the **Urban Arts Corps**, it's still refreshing and growing.

Ms. Carroll was at the preview showing of "Cope" at the Mechanic Tuesday night. She sat in the rear of the theater taking notes and carefully watching the musical she conceived and developed with a strong hand.

Besides the company appearing here, there is a Washington and New York cast of "Cope." Ms. Carroll says that all companies are playing to full houses every night, indicating it's one of the most successful black musicals in the country.

Ms. Carroll also directed the Chicago and West Coast companies of "Cope."

She was awarded the **New York Outer Critics' Circle Award** for her conception and direction of "Cope" as well as an **Image Award** from the NAACP.

The production of her Urban Arts Corps keeps her busy in New York most of the time. She just, however, finished a drama stage production in Chicago featuring Cecily Tyson. Her directorial achievements and awards are too numerous to mention. However, Baltimoreans will remember she staged a production at Morgan State College a few years ago and many saw her "Black Nativity" in New York.

The youngsters are probably familiar with Ms. Carroll as **Lillian on Sesame Street.**

* * *

This Saturday, July 27 **Dick "Night Train" Lane** will be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He played 13 seasons in the National Football League as a defensive halfback. Night Train was in town recently with comedian **Red FOXX** as his personal body guard. He was never out of Foxx's sight through all of his personal appearance and performances at the City Jail and State Penitentiary.

A reception honoring **Nigerian Folk Artists** will be held this Sunday, July 28, 4 to 6 p.m. at the Dunbar Community Center. The artists are sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute.

The Vagabond Players are holding auditions for their production of **Two Indian Legends** also Sunday at 2 p.m. at their Fells Point location of 808 South Broadway (between Shakespeare Street and Lancaster Street).

Adapted from Indian folk material by Michael Gilbert and Michael Joyce, these two one act plays are designed for presentation to young children by older teenagers. A number of male and female high school students are needed.

The Art Department of Towson State College is currently presenting **"African Impact,"** a show of African Art emphasizing new acquisitions of objects, statues, masks and textiles. The display will run until Sunday, August 18, in the Art Gallery.

Approval has been given to the nation's music industry by the Ellington family to launch an all-out effort to raise funds to build a Duke Ellington Cancer Center in conjunction with the Hamptons Hospital and Medical Center on Eastern Long Island. Although the national campaign is not scheduled to be officially launched until August 2, this "Salute to the musical genius of the Duke ..." is garnering nationwide support daily.

Movie happenings: Jim Kelly of "Three the Hard Way" fame is now featured as a special guest star of **"Golden Needles"** starring Joe Don Baker coming to this area soon.

Super Fly Ron O'Neal is now appearing in L.A. in a movie titled **"Pacheco"** based on the true story of a runaway slave.

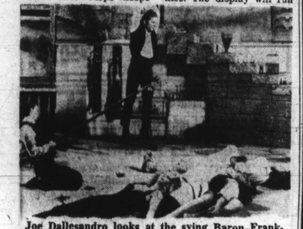
Ruby Dee and **Ossie Davis** hosted a "non-cocktail party" at their home in New Rochelle, N.Y. to aid the fight against "malnutrition and non-nutrition" in Asia, Africa and U.S. **Dick Gregory** cut short his 900-mile anti-hunger run from Chicago to Washington, D.C. to appear as guest of honor. Afterwards, he returned to Detroit to continue his run. $11,000 in pledges was raised at Ruby and Ossie's.

The Moments will be appearing this weekend at the Carousel Lounge.

Funny gal **Joan Rivers** and Cosmopolitan nude pull-out **John Davidson** are appearing at Painters Mill thru Sunday.

Pretty Angela Heard, the Baltimore native who dances with the Lu Parks Dancers, is on her way to Barcelona, Spain to appear in Broadway-type shows. She'll be appearing at the Club Harlem, Atlantic City, August 27, with Billy Paul.

Julia Arams, LeRoy Britton and Feda T. Vanterpool are shown here in scene from "Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope" an award winning musical at the Mechanic.



Joe Dallesandro looks at the sying Baron Frankenstein and the bodies of his zombies, wife and assistant on the laboratory floor in Andy Warhol's Frankenstein opening this week downtown.

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The McKenzie report

A master performer

By Vashti McKenzie

Alex Bradford has been coming to Baltimore for 25 years singing with his famed Bradford Singers.

The winner of an Obie Award for his performance in "Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope" is back again. This time on the Mechanic stage in the award winning black musical, "Cope".

"Theater is like church," said Bradford in an interview at the AFRO.

"The things you see in church isn't too alluminating but "Cope" tells it like it is about black people.

"We are hard working, descent loving people and we need to be shown these things."

He says there have been so many negative things about black people shown that "w need to see the good."

"James Brown did a good thing when he said "I'm black and I'm Proud," said Bradford. "It's a shame that we had to be told that."

Bradford plays the minister and the voice of blackness at its inception in America," an accapella lazy chant.

As the minister he fills the theater with life and joy singing "Good Vibrations". He turns the audience on and leaves them shouting Amen, Amen!"

Watching him walk through the audience doing his thing, you soon become involved, halplessly. Inhibitions fall by the wayside and hands start to clap, feet stomp and heads nod.

Everyone wants to reach out and hoake hands because "Cope" is a celebration of black life.

Bradford is a master performer.

Besides directing the Bradford Singers, he is the Minister of Music of The Greater Abyssinian Baptist Church of Newark, N.J.

His wife of 14 years, Alberta assists him and she is also a star in the New York coast of "Cope". The two find little time together.

The have two daughters, Denise, 12 and Lisa, 9 "who's in love with one of those rock stars."

"I believe when you find a good pattern, why not make the best of it," said Bradford. "I feel its a blessing from the Lord that it's ("Cope") a success because no one cared before."

Bradford played the male lead in Vinnette Carroll, production of a "Black Nativity" in New York, Europe and Australia. "Dark of the Moon" at New York State University, what to do ... change is a force that cannot be stopped ... You have to try to understand what's happening and then find out where you fit in the new groove..."

Alex Bradford

He further states "while music is changing rapidly musicians should have a knowledge of the past ... If I wanted to be a painter I would study the old masters like Rembrandt and Van Gogh ... but since I'm a musician I have spent a lot of time studying The Duke, Art Tatum, Thelonius Monk, and Bud Powell ... these are the old masters in my field."

* * *

Discussing his approach to life and music, Silver states, "I started playing piano at the age of twelve under the guidance of a classical teacher named Professor Scoffield ... When I was fourteen, he told me that it was time for me to begin exploring music on my own ... I began listening to records and playing with groups that were willing to experiment ... we really taught each other a lot ... I'm still learning in fact ... that's why I always try to find new talent to play in my group ... something new from one of the band members."

A firm believer in astrology, Horace Silver states "I was born under the sign of Virgo, the sign of communication and service to mankind ... I've learned a lot about myself through the study of astrology, numerology and graphoanlysis these are sciences designed to enable man to know himself better ...

Heavy Silver

By Frederick I. Douglass

I'd be glad to get to Baltimore.

Before I've been robbed, beaten and all kinds of things."

Jazz pianist Horace Silver recently put on two shows here in B-More; one in the downtown Hopkins Plaza and the second in Druid Park. His performances were sponsored by the Urban Service Agency and marked the tenth annivrtsary of the "Jazz mobile" which is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Silver has been one of the dominant pianists on the jazz scene for many years and has composed immortal jazz classics like "Song for my Father," "Sister Sadie," "Filthy McNasty," "The Preacher," "Cape Verdean Blues," "Senor-Blues" and others. A master pianist, Brother Silver is also highly articulate and outspoken when discussing his craft and life on planet Earth.

"Jazz is growing and evolving," asserts Mr. Silver. "It is not what it was yesterday or when I started playing ... We cannot expect things to always remain the same ... people who resist change wither and die ... they get left in the past because time and change don't wait for you to make up your mind

Horace Silver

"However within these fields there are a lot of fakes that will tell you anything to get your bread, so if you really want to experiose these kinds of things be sure to find someone reputable ... one thing that you can discover about yourself through these sciences is talent that is hidden within you ... For example I discovered that I had a hidden ability to write poetry and now I have gotten into writing lyrics for my songs like I did on my latest album "In Pursuit of the 27th Man."

A few words about the concerts: the one in Hopkins Plaza was good, the one on the "Jazzmobile" in Druid Park was superlative.

Accompanying Silver were Tom Harold, trumpet; Bob Berg, tenor; and Mike Richmond, bass. Silver's problems and B-More's William Doffigan replaced him at the last moment. The brother stopped everybody in their tracks. Fitting in to the Silver groove like a champ, Brother Doffigan drummed up a storm which learned him nods of approval from Silver and the other band members as well as applause from the audience.

Al Green, the Impressions, Jim Brown and Fred Williamson will be featured this weekend on Soul Train, the 60-minute trip into television's hottest teen-oriented musical-dance-variety show hosted by executive producer Don Cornelius.

Earl Hines

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