What's Happening

By Ida Peters

Bill Elliott in world premiere 'Hangup' benefits AFRO's Mrs. Santa

It's not often that Baltimore has a real live young movie star. Of course, we've had Cab Calloway, Eubie Blake and Billie Holiday.

Bill Elliott is something else. He has fought his way to the top after playing the policeman in "Coffee" with Pam Grier.

His new film, "Hangup," in which he stars with Marki Bey is from the book "The Face of Night" written by Bernard Brunner. The film is a Brut Presentation for Warner Brothers release.

It's an actual case from the Chicago police blotter and it's about a young policeman caught between duty and love for his girl hooked on drugs and his search to catch the master pusher.

The World Premiere of the film will be held at the Hippodrome Theatre on Tuesday, October 22 at 7:30 p.m..

Since this is Bill's hometown he will come to Baltimore on Sunday and Tuesday will be proclaimed "Bill Elliott Day" by Mayor William Donald Schaefer with appropriate ceremonies in City Hall and Hopkins Plaza.

Bill Elliott comes home Oct. 21

Opening Night will be a benefit for the AFRO's Mrs. Santa program to help needy families have a good dinner at Christmas.

Tickets will be priced at $5, and go on sale at the Hippodrome this Monday.

Co-chairmen of the Bill Elliott Day and World Premiere of "Hangup" include the managements and disc jockeys of radio stations WWIN, WEBB and WSID.

Mrs. Ida Peters, the AFRO's Mrs. Santa, is general chairman assisted by Mrs. Bonnie Butler.

A parade is planned for Monday, October 21 starting at the AFRO office and visiting Douglass High School, Coppin, Carver, Morgan State and Dunbar.

Queens and disc jockeys as well as Mrs. Santa's helpers will ride in the parade. If you or your group would like to join Bill Elliott in the parade, call Mrs. Peters, 728-8200.

The group will stop in Mondawmin with Bill Elliott for an autograph party on Monday from 1-2 p.m. with music by Julius Brockington's group.

Calvin Lockhart star in "Uptown Saturday Night" poses with AFRO's Ida Peters at N.Y. luncheon.

Barbara Mason

All over town this week, at record stores and on radio you were seeing and hearing Barbara Mason promote her new record, "The Transition."

You have seen Barbara Mason this year on a TV special with the Temptations, Spinners and O'Jays. She has been to Baltimore frequently in the days of Hot Rod and Paul Johnson.

She's a native of Philly, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Mason, and she says it really began in 1964 with her first record, "Troubled Child." In 1965 she did "Girls Have Feelings" and "Yes, I'm Ready" and that did it all.

In her new album, "The Transition" for Buddah, you'll hear "Half Sister, Half Brother," "Miracle Man," "I Believe and Have Not Seen" and "Trigger Happy People." She writes almost 90 per cent of her songs and is backed by Philly's MFSB.

She's on her way to D.C., Detroit and Atlanta. For our interview she wore yellow jump suit, large gold hoop earrings and gold rings with clusters of diamonds. Her hair is short and bouncy, and she has a happy manner and beautiful smile with very white teeth.

Overs

More "Amazing Grace" — An unsigned letter in our mail today ... four pages in fact takes us to task for our criticism on "Amazing Grace." To the author ... call and give us your name. We don't print unsigned letters. We'd like to print your entire letter as is and will not use your name if requested not to do so. Your criticism is valid, but you did not understand my complaint. Keep reading and writing. There's always two sides to every story.

Coming

Top places to go this weekend include "The River Niger" at the Mechanic Theatre; "Disney On Parade" at the Civic Center and "Butterflies Are Free" at the Arena Playhouse.

Saturday night is the Fire Arts Ball at Towson State; Sunday, the Morgan State College Choir benefit at the Lyric.

Today (Friday) is the BSO Women's Association Luncheon and Fashion Show at the Hilton Pikesville featuring the fashions of Oscar de la Renta.

Next week, we'll be attending rehearsals of "The Wiz" which opens at the Mechanic, October 21. Opening night is a benefit for the Maryland Conference For Social Concern. Mesdames Marion Patterson and Kathy Hardiman are co-chairpersons.

* * *

On Saturday, October 12, The Greater Model Community Council, Inc. will sponsor its Third Annual **"Area G Day Festival"** between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in the historic and picturesque Franklin Square Park, 1500 block of W. Lexington Street.

Headlining the entertainment program will be "The Softones," as wel as the Pamoja Ebony Choir, the Olu African Dance Theatre and the Model Cities Cultural Arts Dancers and Band.

COMING OCT. 22

WORLD PREMIERE

HANGUP

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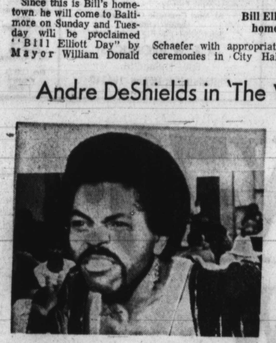
Andre DeShields in 'The Wiz' native Baltimorean



Dear AFRO:

It is with great Black Pride and esteem that I tell you that Andre DeShields, one of the actors soon to be appearing in "The Wiz" at the Morris Mechanic Theatre is my brother and a Baltimorean.

Andre has appeared in many plays. I am Andre's older sister. As a child, I always thought Andre was very gifted in his singing and dancing talents. Besides Andre there are eight more of my mother's children, and I feel I am speaking for all of them.

The above facts prove that you can get more from the ghettoes than dope pushers, addicts, robbers and murderers. My beautiful black brother, Andre has proven this, and so has many more blacks from the ghetto. With pride, I thank you.

Iris DeShields Flowers

Editor's Note: Andre DeShields has the role of The Wizard of Oz in the musical "The Wiz" coming to the Mechanic. He choreographed the Harlettes for Bette Midler.

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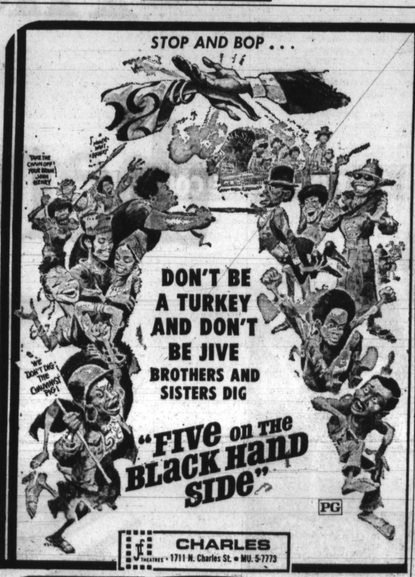
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The McKenzie report

By Vashti McKenzie

When you talk about local talent making good, you can talk about Julius Brockington.

Born and raised in Pumphey, Md. (that's near Brooklyn), Julius Brockington has a hit single out entitled "This Feeling." Described as a song of freedom, it's rated number 30 in the city and moving up.

This weekend he will be featured at the East Wind for the 30 Flat affair. And, if his "black rock gospel sound with the jazz horn cross/over" gets to you, then you can catch him every Monday and Thursday at The Room.

I've been into music ever since I can remember," said Brockington, in an interview this week. "I began banging on the piano and discovered I could play."

In the sixth grade, Brockington said he discovered the saxaphone. In the ninth grade he began to sharpen up his piano. There was no doubt in his mind he'd turn professional in due time.

"This (music) is the only thing that got my interest," he said.

He started playing at functions in the area and in night spots from Boston to Florida about five years ago. He's also been with promoter and record man Charlie Berman that long, and his fourth single is recorded on the Berman label.

Brockington said his career really got started when he got a chance to record in 1971, "when Anthony, the D.J., got me with Perception Record Company."

"The Brockingtons," was his first album. It featured the single "Jeremiah" and vocalist Vonda Marie. The album did fairly well, and he arranged it himself.

The next album, "Sophisticated Funk," made the national charts as well as listings in Billboard and Record World Magazine. His instrumental of Aretha Franklin's "Rock Steady" also received a lot of play.

Brockington used the name of the group of six musicians, "The United Chair," for the title of his third album. Two of the original members of the group are still with him. "In the Back of the Church Yard" was the single out of that album.

Brockington said he did so well with his creations that he got to be an arranger and writer for many of that label's entertainers.

"I did a 45 with Bobby Rydel and Wanda Robinson, she's from Baltimore too," he said. "I also did a Bennie Johnson album," "Vision of Paradise."

"Celestial Navigator," a 45 for King Harvest, a white rock group, really took off for me."

Brockington now with Berman records here in Maryland. In fact he'd just finished a recording session and a new single minutes before this interview.

The single, "You'll Never Come Down," will be released in about four weeks. Brockington played it for me, and if you like to move, then you'll like his number. Don't forget to listen to the lyrics, because there's a message inside.

"I'm still writing and I guess spreading myself a little thin," he said. "I'm doing a lot of things for other people with the help of Charlie Berman."

Watch for Brockington to perform at Mondawmin for the October 21 affair for the premiere of the movie "Hang Up." feature Baltimorean Bill Elliott.

Charlie Berman

All during his interview, Brockington kept mentioning another local standout several times. Charlie Berman. Berman who's been in the record business since 1966, not only has Brockington under contract but the Artistics as well, He's in the middle of promoting Brockington's hit single right now. He hopes to be able to distribute it nationally.

In the 60's he put out a record "Mister LBJ" for which he received a letter of congratulations from the President. Do you remember that one?

The record biz fell by the wayside soon after, and he's just starting it up again.

"It's a little easy to move in the business today than before," said Berman, "But you still run into problems," in spite of the popularity and success of black music and independent record companies.

"Being black, it's still hard to get good exposure and publicity," he said. "It's still hard trying to get the radio stations to play it."

Berman is actively looking for artists to record.

"However," he said, "I'm looking for the best to record. I'm looking anywhere for talent who is qualified.

"Some are just playing and are not qualified to record."

He added that support of black artists and companies is needed from the black community.

A promoter at heart, Berman is the only promoter to have a whole state to show the historic world heavyweight championship between George Foreman and Muhammed Ali October 30 to thousands of anxious sports fans.

The state?

Alaska!

Julius Brockington

'Disney On Parade' at Civic Center

The Mary Poppins number has integrated cast. Photo taken by Roman Hankewycz on opening night.

It was a packed house at the Civic Center opening night for the fifth straight year of "Disney On Parade" in our town thru Sunday ... delighting small fry as well as grownups.

"Mary Poppins" opens on the world's largest portable arena stage in Cherry Tree Lane, a charming section of London. Parasailerally flies into the area with her umbrella to present all of the famous songs including "Spoonful of Sugar," "Chim Chim Cheree," "Step in Time," "Jolly Holliday" and "Supercalifragilistic - expialidocious."

"Bedknobs and Broomsticks" presents live adaptations from the original film situated in the South Sea Island Naboombu. Action then moves to the simulated underwater Briny Ballroom where the entire cast turns into sea creatures for a 1920 mini musical revue.

The "Further Adventures of Pinocchio" is situated in Italy. Other acts in the fourth edition include the opening "How Dee Do" and "It's Wacha Do With Wacha Got" where the entire cast greets the audience. Goofy Tangles with a playful model-T and lovable Herbie the Love Bug in the "Used Car Lot."

Mary flies into Civic Center with her umbrella.

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O.C. Smith scores with "La La Peace Song"

With the constant day to day surge of new talent upon us it's difficult for an established artist to maintain his popularity without a continuous flow of hit records. Without that hit an artist must find a way to remain in the limelight while the search goes on for that magic tune.

O. C. Smith has kept his name in neon with countless television and nightclub appearances throughout the United States and Europe. His fans have always kept a warm spot in their hearts for him, because he's not the type of entertainer one listens to, but experiences.

Finally, and I say that because it has been a while, if you've been waiting for O. C's next smash, it's upon us: his single, "La La Peace Song" produced by Johnny Bristol, is currently climbing the national musical charts and his fans are smiling again. The Louisiana born, Los Angeles raised, performer, first garnered national acclaim with "The Son Of Hickory Holler's Tramp," which sold close to a million copies a, was later followed by the smash "Little Green Apples. His albums include "The Dynamic O. C. Smith," "Hickory Holler Revisited" and "For Once In My Life."

O. C. Smith

O. C. continues to play top night clubs, such as the West Side Room at the Century Plaza in Los Angeles, the Embassy in Toronto, Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, The Sherman House in Chicago, and the Playboy Club in Baltimore.

His popularity and place in contemporary music has never waned. Despite everything he's accomplished thus far, the best of O. C. Smith is yet to be heard.

Enoch Pratt

"To be Young, Gifted and Black," a powerful yet appealingy personal portrait of Lorraine Hansberry, will be presented on film Monday, October 14, at 1:30 p.m. at the Pennsylvania avenue branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, North and Pennsylvania avenues.

Born on May 19, 1930, Ms. Hansberry was a noted black woman playwright whose brilliant career ended prematurely in 1965 when she died of cancer. The film is from the play which offered a compilation of passages from her letters and diaries interspersed with scenes from her best known plays — "A Raisin in the Sun," "The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window," and "The Drinking Gourd."

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