The McKenzie report

By Vashti McKenzie

Just about the hottest situation comedy on the tube these days is centered around the black middle life of Louise and George Jefferson.

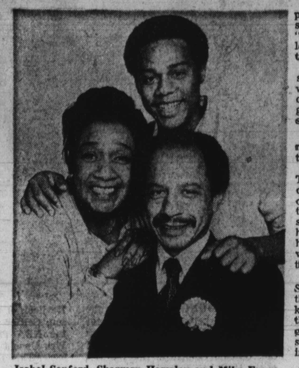
Week after week, "The Jeffersons" appear on the top ten show rating list. Premiering this past January and created by the makers of "All in the Family" and "Sanford and Son," the show continues to break new ground and continues to be hilariously funny.

New ground includes neighbors like, racially mixed couple Tom and Helen (Roxier Roker) Willis, Englishman Harry Bentley and Jenny Willis, the black maid.

Formerly "plain and poor" neighbors of Archie Bunker on the show "All in The Family," the Jeffersons have moved on up to the land of living high on a hog in a west side Manhattan high-rise.

Each week, we see the trials, tribulations and adjustments of the family to money and status. One episode showed Lionel, played by Mike Evans getting a big head about his father's new wealth. He decided to drop out of college and travel around with rich kids "looking for the real me."

Incidentally Evans, a bachelor, together with his writing partner Eric Monte, created the series "Good Times" another top rated show.



Isabel Sanford, Sherman Hemsley and Mike Evans star as Louise, George and Lionel Jefferson, respectively, in the hot comedy series "The Jeffersons."

In a recent episode, Evans' mother Anna Evans guest started along with Bill Putch, husband of Jean Stapleton, who costars as Edith Bunker on "Family".

George Jefferson can be described as a man easily cited to riot. Impulsive is the password and so is extravagant. In an effort to flaunt his new standard of living, he buys a concert grand piano to impress his neighbors, forbids his wife to do housework and hires a black maid.

Sherman Hemsley stars as George. A Philadelphia native, he made his Broadway debut in 1970 in the Tony Award winning musical "Purlie". If you have a chance to see the show in New York or on the road, you'll remember Hemsley as playing Gitlow.

Isabel Sanford stars as Louise Jefferson. She's a tough lady. She's able to stand up to her mother-in-law (Zara Cully), is sensitive to her family's problems and capable of handling George, at times. Louise has not forgotten her roots. She's down to earth enough to want to sit in the kitchen and gossip with the maid.

"I have to laugh when people refer to me as a star," says Ms. Sanford. "I've been working too long to be impressed by that sort of thing."

She has been at her craft since before World War II, when she joined the American Negro Theater after graduating from high school in New York.

Ms. Sanford temporarily retired from acting with the birth of her first child.

Ms. Sanford then joined The Star Players which disbanded with the coming of the war. Taking time off to have her second child, she was called by one of her former directors to help him for a few days with a new drama group at the N.Y. YWCA.

Days turned to years. She performed at night at the Y while working as a key punch operator during the day. The new drama group was a success and she worked with such rising stars as Cicely Tyson.

Ms. Sanford was offered several Broadway and off-Broadway roles in such plays as "The Flag and I" and "Shakespeare in Harlem".

She decided to pack up her children and head West. In Hollywood, more theater work, movies and television appearances followed.

Do you remember her in "Guess Who's Coming To Dinner"?

A widow now, she began playing her recurring role of Louise on "Family" in 1971.

"The word star is not important to me," says Ms. Sanford. "What is important is that the characters of the Jefferson family members are credible.

"If there is a star, it's 'The Jeffersons'."

TV Notes

By Vashti McKenzie

Support public TV

The state of Maryland's public television station received strong response from local residents during their recent fund raising campaign. More than $54,000 was pledged by 2,957 residents of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia to help support programming services of the Maryland Center for Broadcasting. The center operates stations in Baltimore, Salisbury and Hagerstown.

* * *

Blazing Saddles

Lou Gossett, Steve Landesberg, Millie Slavin and Noble Willingham star in the comical saga of "Black Bart," the first black sheriff in the Old West, on "The Friday Comedy Special" Friday, April 4.

Bart, portrayed by Gossett, is a flashy, contemporary symbol of the law in the bigoted town of Paria, Arizona. Steve Landesberg Broadway and motion picture star Gossett, probably best known for his starring role in both the motion picture and television versions of "Skin Game," recently completed two other features, "The Laughing Policeman" and "The White Dawn." His other credits include roles in "Golden Boy" on Broadway and in the film "Travels With My Aunt."

Midnight Special ...

The Ohio Players star in the first of three editions of "The Midnight Special" taped in Bartlett Gymnasium on the campus of the University of Chicago.

The entire show is devoted to the Ohio Players, who offer "Jive Turkey," "Fire," "Skin Tight," "Pain Part I," "Pain Part II" and "I Want To Be Free."

"The Baddest Show," Saturday, April 5. Highlights of this evening's program includes a performance by **Oba Koso**, a Nigerian touring troupe and an interview with its director, Duro Ladipo. Also Cockeysville High School is the featured school.

* * *

"Sammy and Company"

The late night 90-minute music-variety series, **"Sammy and Company"** starring of course, Sammy Davis Jr. premiers this weekend, 11:30-1 a.m.

Sammy, master of ceremonies for the 47th Annual Oscar Awards program to be telecast April 8, will pay special tribute to Fred Astaire during the special.

* * *

Christie

In an effort to bolster the lagging ratings of some of their prime time shows, ABC-TV is playing a switching game. "Barreta" starring Robert Blake changes day and time with **"Get Christie Love"** which stars **Teresa Graves.**

Christie gets involved in a baffling mystery about a young woman who moves next door to her, gets beaten up and then disappears, on "Get Christie Love!," Friday, April 4.

Christie Love and Barretta are two network shows most likely not to make the new fall line-up.

Others include: "Marcus Welby," "Movin On," "Petrocelli" (shame) and "That's My Mama" which stars **Teresa Merritt** and handsome **Clifton Davis...**

* * *

"Nova"

Not long ago it seemed that we would never run out of land or oil or fresh water or anything else. Three quarters of the world's surface is ocean. So it looked as if we would never run out of fish, either. But we are.

"Will the Fishing Have To Stop?" is the "Nova" program Sunday, April 6 at 7:30 p.m. on stations of the Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting.

* * *

Lt. Ben Logan and Sgt. Mark Walters investigate the gunning down by two hoods of retired syndicate leader Sam Montana in his fortified Miami home on "Caribe," Monday, April 7.

Stacy Keach stars as Lt. Ben Logan. Carl Franklin as Sgt. Mark Walters.

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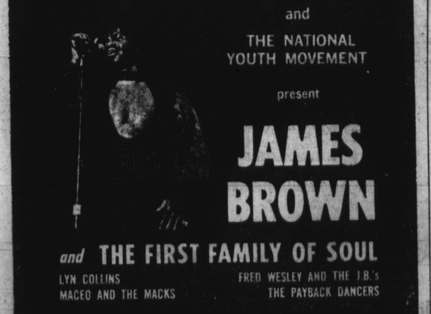

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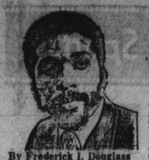
James Brown will be recognized with a special salute during the program.

For The Record



By Frederick I. Douglass

Gil Scott-Heron is the black poet laureate of America. He doesn't jive — he tells the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He recently laid down some gospel in B-More when he appeared at the Fifth Regiment Armory with the Crusaders.

While talking to people at the show I learned that there was some controversy as to whether Gil Scott-Heron or the Crusaders was the star of the show. As one lovely brown-skinned sister put it "the Crusaders are nice, but Gil's message is far more important . . . I just hope that the brothers and sisters are listening to the things he has to say about the inequities that are going down in this country . . . We have all kinds of Civil Rights laws on the books . . . BUT BLACK PEOPLE ARE STILL COMING OUT ON THE 'LOSING END IN THIS COUNTRY!'"

One of the brothers who was selling merchandise in one of the booths had a lot to say. "When Gil Scott-Heron raps, people stop and listen . . . Black people have heard scores of false prophets that promise miracles if you send them ten dollars for a prayer cloth . . . Black people have heard the jive-time riffs of all kinds of hustlers disguised as preachers, politicians, civil rights leaders . . . Gil Scott-Heron is for real . . . His words stop you in your tracks . . . He makes you think about the way things really are, not about what you've been led to believe . . . He is really hip, like LeRoi Jones (AKA Imamu Baraka) set to music."

I talked to an elderly gentleman who had come along with his daughter. She wanted to hear Gil he wanted to hear the Crusaders. He seemed surprised at the calibre of Gil's poetry and the level of his intellect. "That young man really has his program together," the gentleman stated. "In Africa he would have been known as a Griot, one of the wise men who could verbally relate the tribal history for centuries back . . . these men would travel from village to village, carrying the latest news from other villages as well as reciting tribal history upon request . . . I think that the oral tradition is still strong in the black community, being realistic we have a lot of people who cannot read at the sophisticated level required to understand some of the things that are happening in this world . . . These people need someone to run it down to them in words that they can understand."

Listening to Gil Scott-Heron is like hearing a verbal collage-barrage of Dick Gregory, Angela Davis, Frederick Douglass and other incisive analysts of the social and economic scene in America. Gil Scott-Heron dissects contemporary America with a scapel, but unlike other social critics his viewpoint is not negative or pessimistic. He firmly believes that black people have earned and will get their share of America. However, as expressed in the tune "Gunsilla," on his latest LP "The First Minute of a New Day," we may have to be more aggressive and assertive in getting our fair share. Check out Gil Scott-Heron for yourself. His other LP's include "Pieces of a Man" and "Winter in America."

Enoch Pratt

Mon., April 7

Plant talk by Richard Andrews of Bob Graham, Inc., at the Pratt Library's Northwood Branch, 2:00 p.m.

"Cry, the Beloved Country," film at the Pratt Library's Edmondson Avenue Branch, 6:30 p.m.

"Emital" (Lord of the Sky), film at the Pratt Library's Keyworth Avenue Center, 6:30 p.m.

"Bicycling," lecture by Wayne Rogers of Bikeways, at the Pratt Library's Reisterstown Road Branch, 7:30 p.m.

Canton Library Center: films — "A Light in the Night," "Jazzoo," and "The General," 4:00 p.m.

Kirk Avenue Library Center: Films "Paddle to the Sea," "Billy the Kid," and "Just Say Hic!," 5:30 p.m.

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Eight Years After Memphis

When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was cut down by an assassin's bullet eight years ago in Memphis Tennessee he had won the Nobel Peace Prize and worldwide acclaim as this century's foremost exponent of human dignity.

On the eighth anniversary of his death WMAR-TV presents a half hour special tribute to the memory of the martyred civil rights leader by examining what individuals and institutions are doing to keep his memory and philosophy alive.

This tribute is produced and narrated by George W. Collins associate news director

Tonight 11:30 pm TV2

ARENA PLAYERS

Mr. Calvin Styles (left) present president of "The Peers, Inc." and Mr. Leonard Crosby (right) past president present Mr. Sam Wilson $250.00 as a payment on their $500.00 pledge to the Arena Players' renovation project.

You still have a chance to help the AFRO's Clean Block program by purchasing $5 tickets to the Washington Bullets-Atlanta Hawks game in Capitol Centre in Largo Saturday, April 5, 7 p.m. Tickets may be purchased Friday only at the AFRO office or by reservations from Mrs. Ida Peters, Saturday, LA. 3-0302. Above, Wes Unseld is selling tickets in Mondawmin with Mrs. Peters and Stan McKenzie, AFRO; Harry Davis, Johns Hopkins Public Relations; James Waller, and members of the Baltimore Marketing Association. Above Misses Helen Stafford, Alice Raiford, Sandy East and Myra Shields.

Crunch Blackstone (Yaphet Kotto, r.) takes his partner to a bar to introduce him to a few of the local "ladies," in "Report to the Commissioner."

Charles Moore at Bowie

What's Happening

Sensational 'Oba Koso' at Mechanic

By Ida Peters

Duro Ladipo's magnificent, exciting Yoruba musical "Obo Koso" direct from Nigeria will be at the Morris Mechanic Theatre starting Sunday, April 6 through April 12.

Caught a sneak preview of this tremendous troupe in Mondawmin this past Wednesday. Stop whatever you're doing and make it your business to see the brilliant dancing, singing and acting.

The most famous and revered of Nigerian legends, "Oba Koso" is the story of Shango, the God of Thunder, and his wife, Oya, from whose tears sprang the River Niger. The major musical hit of Nigeria, it has been performed almost continuously on tour in that country for the past ten years by the Duro Ladipo National Theatre company. Duro Ladipo himself is Nigeria's foremost theatrical talent, and he has been honored by the Nigerian government for his efforts in bringing the rich and varied folkloric heritage of the Yorubas into popular form.

From its relative obscure beginning as a localized expression of fun, the Yoruba musical form has blossomed, especially in the last two decades, into a widely acclaimed international entertainment, and its appeal cuts across sectional, national and even continental boundaries. The original cast from Duro Ladipo's company of "Oba Koso" is joined in this North American tour by the famed Elewe War Dancers from the Court of Oba Adetona Ayeni, King of Ila-Oragun, and this is your opportunity to see why critics around the world have called this delightful musical "irresistible," "brilliant," uninhibited" and "magnificent."

* * *

Hank Levy and his renowned Towson State College Jazz Ensemble will perform in concert on Wednesday, April 9, at 8:15 p.m. in the Towson State College Fine Arts Building Concert Hall as part of the college's annual "Twentieth Century Music Week."

* * *

The musical group WAR was in D.C. this past week. They are making a tour of college campuses and paused for a breather at the Statler-Hilton in D.C. We missed them by a hair, because we thought they were interviewing in B-More.

* * *

THANKS-THANKS ...

Orchids to Franklin Parker of the Hiram Grand Lodge for his help in selling tickets for the AFRO Clean Block Bullets game. The members of Medina Temple, Columbus Office at 923 E. Fayette St. Under the leadership of a committee of Laymon Hunter, James Lucas, Carl Easley they raised $210. for the Golbs Family.....

Ruby Dee gives King lecture at Hopkins

RUBY DEE

Award-winning actress Ruby Dee will deliver the fourth annual Martin Luther King Jr. Lecture on Monday, April 7, at The Johns Hopkins University. Miss Dee's lecture is one of several activities planned at the University in honor of the late Dr. King.

Presented by the Black Students Union and the Student Council, Miss Dee will speak at 7 p.m. in the Listening-Viewing Room of the Hopkins Union on the University's Homewood campus. The lecture will be open to the public without charge.

A graduate of Hunter College in New York, Miss Dee started her theatrical career in the basement of the 135th Street library in Harlem, the home of the American Negro Theatre. Among her many stage credits are "Purlie Victorious" written by her husband, Ossie Davis; "A Raisin in the Sun" opposite Sidney Poitier, and "Boesman and Lena" opposite James Earl Jones, for which she won the 1971 "Obie" for best performance by an actress.

Miss Dee has appeared in the motion pictures "To Be Young, Gifted and Black," "Buck and the Preacher" and "The Incident," among others, and is a frequent guest on television. She and her husband have also made extensive tours presenting readings from black literature.

She has been the recipient of several professional awards and honors and in 1972 was given the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award for Excellence in Family Life and Contribution to Humanity by Operation P.U.S.H.

Among the other activities planned in honor of Dr. King is a showing of the documentary "I Have a Dream" at 3 p.m., Tuesday, April 8, in the Listening-Viewing Room. The CBS News film uses news footage to diagram the chronology of the American civil rights movement and the life and works of Dr. King.

Provident Hospital will sponsor sickle cell and Cooley's anemia testing from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on April 7 and 8 in Conference Room A of the Union.

The executive board members of the Black Students Union are Pamela Chevers, Gregory Stewart, Diana Smith, Janet Brice, George Dredden, Richard White and Roderick Carr. Andrew Savitz is president of the Student Council.

Fayetteville choir at Morgan State

The Fayetteville State University Concert Choir will be presented in recital on Monday evening, April 7, at 8 p.m. in Murphy Auditorium at Morgan State College. Admission is free and the entire public is invited to attend.

Dr. Lemuel Berry, Jr., director, is a graduate of Livingstone College where he received his B.A. degree in 1969. He has also completed advanced study at the University of Iowa where he was awarded both the M.A. and Ph.D. degree.

Since 1971, Dr. Berry has written numerous articles for publication. He is presently serving as Chairman of the Department of Music Education and Acting Chairman, Division of Humanities.

The Fayetteville State University Concert Choir is composed of 41 touring members. The repertoire of the choir is very diversified in that its compositions include popular selections, early csacred compositions from various music eras and contemporary works.

During the 1973-1974 academic year the choir and octet performed more than sixty times. Their performances covered mostly every state from Georgia to New York. The choir has traveled to Frankfurt, Kentucky; Chicago, Illinois; Rochester, New York; Montreal, Canada; Augusta, Ga.; Birmingham, Ala.; as well as presenting numerous concerts throughout the State of North Carolina. The choir will be producing its second album in March.

School No. 451 visits AFRO

The Librarian Club from Joseph Briscoe School No. 451, Biddle and Druid Hill, visited the AFRO as a part of the Newspaper in the Classroom Program.

The teachers were Mrs. Barbara Mills, School Librarian and Mrs. Bettye Ford, Library Aide.

Students in the club are Geemayne Nickles, Margie Walkins, Barbara Freeman, Steve Pinchback, Philip Fester, Victor Henderson, Clinton Williams, Norman Henderson and Maurice Terry.

...all that JAZZ

By Bob Matthews

Walked into the Sunday concert of the Left Bank Jazz Society, last week, to hear a soulful rendition "That Rainy Day" being played on the tenor sax by Marvin Cabell.

'Twas a bit startling to me, for the Cabell quintet is known basically as group specializing in electronic modern day jazz.

It features, along with Cabell on tenor sax, flute and sexcello...that's right saxcello. Harold Williams Jr. . . . on electric bass; clavinet and synthesizer; Ricky Knox, electric bass; High Walker on drums, and Richard Lake alternating with Willie Barber on percussion instruments.

Talked with Marvin during an intermission, and asked him what on earth his saxcello was. Seems it's a cross between a soprano sax and an oboe. Cabell has been in Baltimore now for two years. Originally from Chicago, he made his professional debut at age 19, with blues singer Otis Rush.

Since then, he has played with Funk Inc., Johnny Lytle, and Johnny Patton, before forming his own group. He came to Baltimore to play with the Tiny Tim (not the ukelele player) group at the Room Upstairs-and just stayed.

He neither drinks nor smokes, is 30 years old, single-and totally dedicated to music. He does most of the arranging for the quintet and has authored several songs, including "Mandingo" and "Vibrations".

If anything, the Cabell electronic group is LOUD When the synthesizer is cranked up, you can really feel the sound-it permeates the very walls of the room.

In sharp contrast was the second group on tap for the Sunday concert, The Allen Houser Quintet from Washington, D.C.

Playing all acoustic instruments were Houser on trumpet; Buck Hill, tenor sax; Ned Einstein, piano; Terry Plumeri, bass; and Harold Chavis, drums.

The group sounded almost inaudible after the stirring Cabell sound. But, once your ears became attuned, the realization dawned that here was a groovy little group that was gently swinging and totally delightful.

No tricks or gimmicks, this was a "straight ahead" jazz ensemble perking merrily along . . . and a pleasure to hear.

Most delightful to me, was the stray thought that Baltimore and Washington are in the mainstream of the music business . . . jazz is alive and well . . . and functioning in our area. Whoopee!

ADDENDUM....

Heard there was a 9-year-old drummer gigging with a group around twon. So...dropped into the Sportsman Lounge to check it out Easter Monday.

Sure enough, there was a 9-year-old drummer flailing away on the skins. His name is Gary Flanigan and he plays with a rock group called "The Fabulous Friends and One Inc."

Since rock drummers don't get the chance to display their skills in' executing the paradiddles and ratamacues inherent in all Jazz drums solo, couldn't really assess the work of young Gary.

But, he was right on the beat and driving every moment. A student at School 132, Gary bids fair to be one of the greats someday...

Although Gary is the youngest in the group, the others on hand were Kenneth Boyd, 16, lead guitar; John Howard, 16, organ; Landy Baker, 12, tenor; Ching Wang, 20, lead singer; Danny Baker, 16, bass guitar; Charle Jackson, 21, lead singer, and Anthony Rhodes, singer.

The group has been together for 2 years. Most attend Douglass High and Harlem Park Junior High. Managed by George Allen Boyd, who the youngsters call "Papa G"... It's a group to keep an eye on. They've got a great future in the rock music world.

BSO Auditions

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's 1975 Young Soloist Auditions will be held at the Langsdale Auditorium of the University of Baltimore on Saturday, May 3, and Sunday, May 4.

Applications are invited from interested young musicians currently enrolled as regular students in public, private, or parochial schools throughout the state of Maryland.

Candidates, who are eligible through their senior year in high school, can perform on string instruments, brass, woodwinds, piano, or percussion, and will be asked to play a movement from a concerto or concert piece with orchestral accompaniment.

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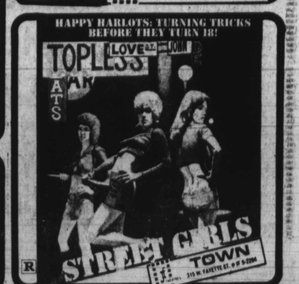

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