Young master craves Brenda Sykes — Wife jealous of slave. — Wife rapes Mede (Ken Norton) — Wife has black baby

What's Happening 'Mandingo'...sick, brutal!

By Ida Peters

"Mandingo" which opens around the country this week, is a distorted sick film about black and white relations in New Orleans around 1840.

Hopefully, our young black people have studied African culture and history, and read John Hope Franklin's 'Black Americans. They will know that slaves in 1840 did not jump into boiling water, like Mede-played by a stupid-acting Ken Norton, to get his hie toughened for fighting. Because our young blacks do know that slaves protested their enslavement day by day... by rebellion, feigned illness in the fields, and destroying crops, animals an houses.

As long as you understand the contempt and hatred of the slaves for the masters of Falconhurst, Maxwell played by James Mason, and Hammond by Perry King, ...you'll be able to take the "Yessah bossing".

You can sympathize with the slaves but "Mandingo" equally brutalizes the white masters and white "society" and makes you want to vomit or just plain walk-out...as three of my colleagues did at a recent screening saying they didn,t "have time to watch such filth" in this day and age.

Last week, Gerald Burke writing from our Washington AFRO (see Baltimore AFRO 5-15) said "Paramount must have an especially grim view of its movie going public to hang a film like "Mandingo" around its neck. Sadly, it just could be a sign of the times that such a movie was considered marketable in the first place"

Briefly the old master of the decaying plantafion has two aims in life. One, is to get his crippled son married to a pure white lady so he can have an heir. Two, is to own a pure-bred Mandingo because in those days slaves were his only cash crop bringing anywhere from $400 to $10,000 apiece.

MANDINGOLAND

The gal behind me wanted to know what a Maningo was? Mandinka is located in Upper Guinea and since October, 1958 the Independent Republic of Guinea.

* * *

History tells us that African culture goes back to 350 BC. Mandingoland in West Africa was described by a slave trader as having many bustling communities where people wove cotton, worked in leather, fabricated iron, engaged diligently in agriculture and devoted themselves to reading and writing.

They were good hunters an warriors and in great demand because they bred hardy, healthy workers. They were dark brown, almost blue or black people, quick to anger. Mandingo and his descendants are supposed to have led many of the slave insurrections.

* * *

THE PLOT

So the young master goes off to a neighboring plantation to court his bride to be.

Enroute, he spends the night at a plantation to rest the horses and is given a virgin slave for the night...Ellen Brenda Sykes.

He then marries Blanche, (Susan George) and they honeymoon in New Orleans. He discovers she is not a virgin, she has been used by her brother since she was 13. She protests, but after all, the young master has had so many virgins he can tell. At his plantation, all the mammies save the virgins for the young master...it's an honor.

The young master scorns his new wife Blanche. Ellen, the young slave is his love and constant companion. Blanche takes to drink and while the master is away, flogs Ellen, knocks her down the stairs causing her to lose her baby.

Then she starts to yearn for Mede (Ken Norton) the Mandingo bought at a slave auction during her honeymoon. Ken Norton in this role as a Mandingo is enough to make you throw up.

In the first place, he can't act. When the common German widow trying to buy him started feeling his privates...he didn't change expression. He acted like some stupid bull.

In the end, Blanche has a black baby. The baby is killed and her husband kills her with poison.

Mede, even though he had no choice in raping Blanche is shot in a jealous rage by the young master and thrown into boiling water and stuck with a pitchfork in the most brutal scene shown on any screen.

Aside to .....

Your naked scenes don't do anything for you...you'll be sexier covered up.

To Ken Norton- the next time you're asked..say no- That naked rape scene was disgusting. You have enough stature to demand and get better protection and you don't have to do disgusting things for money.

To Paramount who used the little naked boy to ease the rheumatize on James Mason...did he have to put his feet on the boy's testicals? Somebody at Paramount should have drawn the line somewhere...and...if you, you, and you out there don't complain...I'm complaining for you.

* * *

Things I never want to see again. Two fighters bitting chunks out of each other like cannibals.

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The McKenzie report

Sell-out crowds for The Spinners

By Vashti McKenzie

Everyone who wasn't home watching the Bullets lose to the Golden State Warriors on TV was at Shady Grove Tuesday night for the opening of The Spinners and Hue Corporation

The Spinners, whose recent album, "New and Improved. The Spinners," is the best thing happening in sound today. They will be performing through Sunday at Shady Grove.

The Hue Corporation opened the show before 2,000 screaming fans with a high pitched dancing boogie-down soul act. Known for their million seller, "Rock The Boat," the trio showed the stuff rising young artists are made of.

H. Ann Kelly, St. Clair Lee and Tommy Brown make up the group. Brown recently replaced Fleming Williams who decided to take off on his own, after they cut their first album.

On stage H. Ann is one moving sister. Her voice is clear as a bell and rings with the beat of a gospel singer. Originally she's from Alabama having grown up in Los Angeles. And wouldn't you know it, she started her singing career in her church choir.

The way Ann Kelly moves on stage, you'd think she was the younger sister of the pulsating Tina Turner. When asked about the comparison backstage, she smiled saying the comparison had been made often.

Lee is another ball of energy. He teases the ladies by dancing seducively inside his silver and yellow costume. He just THINKS he's the coolest thing in the world with a scarf tied around his head ... no less.

The Hues sang most of their hits including "Off My Cloud" and "Rock The Boat" ... the biggies. They also introduced a new single to be released in a few days, "One Night Together."

The Spinners are just about the hottest soul group on the country. Sell-out crowds follow them just about everywhere. Remember the sellout Civic Center crowed in April?

It's not only because of their superior stage act but because of their new album.

Every cut can take a walk from that album and hit Gold for the Spinners. The current single from that Gold Album hitting the charts is "Sadie."

The Spinners, who have been together for 18 years, are a well polished and sophisticated group. There is nothing shoddy about their presentation. All this professionalism does not cut into their soul appeal.

It's been a long time since I've been to a concert where the audience gave the artists a standing ovation in the middle of their act.

Their lead tenor, Philine Wynn was not with the group. He's ill with an abcess on his tonsils. They can't be removed until the infection is gone. He's allergic to Penicillin, so his joins the group on July 3rd.

His replacement is John Edwards. He doesn't know all the dance routines but nobody cared .... because Edwards can sing. He did a number on "Sadie" that had the whole audience testifying.

... All that JAZZ

By Bob Matthews

Dropped into the Famous Ballroom last Sunday for the regular concert put on by the Left Bank Jazz Society. Knew that Mongo Santamaria would be there.

Took Number 3 son Carl along. He's 16, a jazz buff, and a disc jockey at his prep school radio station. Only brought that up because the LBJS concerts have a great tie in with music-oriented college and high school students.

This week, there was a group on hand from No 451. They were brought along by the school librarian, Barbara Mills.

"Tis a healthy thing, and bodes well for the future of jazz music.

Mongo Santamaria et al are exciting. Although the basic beat is Latin, careful listening points out the African origins of many of the rhythms.

Musically this group is superb. Justo Almario, on tenor sax and flute; Elliott Rodriquez, trumpet, Al Williams Alto sax and baritone; Greg Jarmen, percussion; Steve Berrios, drums and timbale; Roscoe Mackey, bass; Armen Donelian, piano, and of course Mong on conga drums.

Waited until the group launched into the familiar "Watermelon Man" before querying Number 3 son about his reactions.

He rather stunned me when he pointed out similiarity between the voicings of the Mongo group with Kool and the gang. Sounded like something out of left field, so just smiled.

Naturally, soon as we arrived home, went rummaging through that mass of disarray he calls a room to locate a Kool and the Gang album.

Flopped it on the turntable, and lo and behold, Carl was absolutely right. Pointed out to me just how close jazz and rock are getting.

This is not to say that you would mistake Mongo Santamaria for Kool and the Gang — no way! But you can hear the basic sameness in style albeit one is Latin — one is rock.

As to my reactions to Mongo Santamaria, I consider them the best in their field.

They have a knack of building to a series of climaxes in their music.

Inadvertently, you find yourself pulsing inwardly as the crescendo builds.

By the time the timbales and conga drums interweave with the lyrical play of the brass instruments, you are weaving in tempo and sitting on the edge of your chair.

Excitement — that's the key word.

* * *

Got a chance to watch a couple of real pros at work last Saturday.

The Sportsmen's Lounge featured a group consisting of Mickey Fields and Buck Hill on tenors; El Prince, conga drums; Thomas Hurley, organ. and Ronald Dawson, drums.

This is not unusual. All of the musicians are quite familiar to Baltimore jazz lovers.

What struck me was the instant rapport between the musicians although they don't play together regularly.

One of the players would lapse into a bob cliche, to be instantly answered by his compatriots — and off they would go.

Was interested to watch Dawson on Drums. His base drum was transparent, so it was easy to see when it was struck. Contrary to the base drum play in big bands, Dawson used it only for accents — or as the bop musicians used to say," for dropping bombs."

This is not unusual these days — but, as I said —'twas interesting.

Next week Left Bank will present the Maynard Ferguson big band, which means you'd better get there early. It might be interesting to note how many college students will be on hand for this concert. The resurgence in big band jazz has neared tidal wave proportions.

Good!

* * *

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