What's Happening

By Ida Peters

Cafe Des Artistes at Mechanic

The Mechanic Theatre complex will be another step closer to completion in mid-December with the opening of the Cafe Des Artistes, a sophisticated French dining room carved out of the former theatre restaurant.

The new restaurant, seating 120 guests, was designed by Gerry Ebert of Inner Space, Inc., Baltimore, and features handsome banquettes and dining alcoves, typical of those in Paris. The color scheme is a muted beige with soft wall coverings in fabric and imported French papers. The copper covered bar in the cocktail lounge faces the Hopkins Plaza Fountain and has a small dance floor that will feature nightly entertainment.

Table settings have been especially designed and include an array of stemmed goblets for a wide selection of wines from the wine cellar. Fresh floral arrangements will be placed on the tables daily.

The kitchen will be under the supervision of Jean-Paul Potier, distinguished member of Votel International and holder of the Master Chefs Certificate, awarded by the French Ministry. Chef Jean-Paul was saucier at Maxim's in Paris and has forty years experience in some of Europes finest hotels and restaurants. He comes to Baltimore from the embassy Row Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Dion Dortzas, owner of Cafe Des Artistes, trained in his father's hotel and has worked in the finest restaurants in London and Toronto, and most recently, at the Four seasons Hotel, the Sutton Place Hotel in Canada, and the Embassy Row Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Xmas week 'Guys and Dolls'

"Guy and Dolls," the hit all black production of the Frank Loesser musical, will have a special Christmas Week Schedule at the Broadway Theatre (Broadway at 53rd Street, N.Y.C.).

The holiday schedule for Christmas Week will be Tues., Dec. 21 at 8:00 p.m.; Wed., Dec. 22 at 2:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m.; Thurs. Dec. 23 at 8:00 p.m.; Fri., Dec. 24 at 8:00 p.m.; Sat., Dec. 25 at 8:00 p.m. and Sun., Dec. 26 at 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

41st Ice Follies

The box office is now open at the Baltimore Civic Center for the all new, all different 41st Edition of the fabulous Ice Follies.

Scheduled to perform from Tues. Jan. 11th through Sun. Jan. 16th, the Ice Follies offers the best family entertainment bargain of the year.

Among the wonders assembled for this year's show, entitled "Reflections on Ice," are the World-famed Mr. Frick; Richard Dwyer-Mr. Debonair" himself — and Susan Berens; David Comb, whose electrifying feats carry him literally in and out of the jaws of death; and the stunning beauties of the ice, Karen Kresge and Susanne Russel.

Introduced this year, for the first time, are the Baker Family — Mom, Dad, and their five talented kids, who will win the hearts of everyone; Little Lito, the brilliant mime from Argentina who, as Charlie Chaplin, will break the hearts of everyone.

Back again with the Ice Follies are Atoy Wilson, the breathtaking adagio team of Nancy and Leandre, and the 32 talented young skaters who make up the fabulous corps de ballet known throughout the world for their thrilling precision skating, the Ice Folliettes.

Benny Goodman with BSO

Jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman "The King of Swing," will pay a royal visit to the Lyric Theatre on Sat., Dec. 18, to perform with the Baltimore Symphony under Maestro Sergiu Comissiona.

The first half of this Pops concert—traditionally devoted to light classical orchestral pieces—will also be noteworthy on account of the world premiere performance of Eric Knight's "Pops Symphony"—a work commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony at the request of Mr. Comissiona.

Mr. Goodman will join the Orchestra as soloist in Malcolm Arnold's "Clarinet Concerto No. 2." The concert will open with Johann Strauss's "Overture to "Die Fledermaus" and begins at 8:15 p.m.

Ailey dancer teaches to CCB

Keith Lee, former soloist with the American Ballet Theatre and the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, will give classes and a lecture-demonstration during the mini-mester dance course, January 10-22 at the Village of Cross Keys.

Lee who is currently teaching at Goucher College will present his own company, Ballet Contemporary Arts, during the mini-mester session.

Mr. Lee is also well known for his choreography. In 1970 he choreographed to the ballet, "Times Past," to Cole Porter music for American Ballet Theatre, and the ballet, "Us", for the Geneva Ballet in Geneva Switzerland. He has taught master classes at the University of Ohio.

The mini-mester program is sponsored by the Community College of Baltimore at the Village Club, Village of Cross Keys, 5700 Falls Road. For information call Deborah London at 296-0014.

* * *

On Sat., Dec. 18 at 1:00 p.m., Kathleen Jacobs will present two delightful puppet shows, "The Boy Who Cried Wolf", and "The Lion and the Mouse." Adapted to entertain ages 3-10, the puppet shows will last a total of one hour, and tickets are $1.25 each. Edwin Booth Theatre, Bel Air, Md.

Patterson Park: A Community Portrait", an exhibition of photographs by Maryland Institute, College of Art students and faculty will be on display at St. Elizabeth's Church, E. Baltimore Street and Lakewood Avenue Dec. 19 through 29.

Kong, a gigantic 40-foot-tall gorilla, is the frightening ruler of a mysterious jungle island where the natives offer him human sacrifices in the Dino De Laurentiis production of "King Kong," a Paramount Pictures release.

Robert Nemiroff producer of "Raisin" visited AFRO office this week, Jan. 7 opening night is benefit of St. Francis Academy in East Balto.

"The Bad Seed" will complete its performances at the Arena Playhouse Dec. 17-18-19. Stars are Misty Hall as the daughter and June Dashiell as the mother.

Sylvester Campbell star of Tchaikovsky's "The Nuteracker" at the Lyric Dec. 26-30. with The Maryland Ballet.

The Horses in "Equus" opening at the Mechanic Dec. 20. Front, Kai Wulff and Gerald Surerus; center, Milledge Mosley; rear, Albert Owens, Michael Rathay and L. B. Williams. Fifty students with I. D. cards can purchase special seats on the stage and be part of the play.

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What are you doing Xmas Eve?

By Vashti McKenzie

It seems the holiday season belongs to children, lovers and family. However, if you are among those who live alone, can't go home for Christmas or won't, live miles away from the folks or just can't stand the crowds...just what will you do Christmas Eve?

As far as entertainment goes, you can indulge yourself in one of the new movie releases including "King Kong", "The Enforcers", "Rocky" "Silver Streak" and "A Star Is Born".

Concert entertainers, if they're not playing in Las Vegas or Madison Square Garden in New York, traditionally take a break. So popular star live entertainment is slim pickings.

The discos and night clubs will be serving drinks and playing records but...they will offer less excitement because the crowds will have all gone back to home base...for Christmas Eve.

Very few good restaurants keep their employees cooking and serving on Christmas Day...so what are you going to do to entertain yourself

Why dont you bring the holiday on your own front door.

Have a Christmas Eve vigil at your home or apartment. Invite a few close friends, those without young children and family to gather around for a brunch on Christmas Eve. Plan to start around 10 p.m. and usher in Christmas Day the same as you would New Year's.

Serve lots of Champagne, lots of fluffy crepes filled with all kinds of delicacies...and don't forget the music from all your Christmas albums.

Funds are generally short around this time of year but you can give your guests a more personal and verbal gift. Select a verse from the Bible, closely resembling your friend or your friend's life and present it to them at midnight.

You can also add to your Evevigil a personalized Horoscope reading. Pick up Linda Goodman's new astrological book for excellent selections.

As the midnight hour grows near, be sure to have on plenty of mistletoe near so you can kiss under the one you hold dear or want to impress.

Or, you can watch the Christmas High Mass celebrated in New York's St. Patrick Cathedral on TV.

Your Christmas Eve vigil can mean not only food for the body but food for the mind and soul as well.

Try staging your Christmas vigil after attending the church of your choice and have a different outlook on 1977. Stay tuned for next week and I'll tell you some unusual things to do on Christmas Day.

* * *

The new Sylvers' single "Hot Line" on Casablanca Records, is quickly following the path of the No. 1, two-million plus-selling smash hit single "Boogie Fever." "Hot Line" is already Top 5 on national R and B-soul charts Billboard and Cash Box as well as Top 20 on the pop charts (Billboard, Cash Box and Record World).

AFRO's Vanessa Johnson talks with Jean Carn and Dexter Wansel at CBS press party. Right, Jean Carn belts on backed by Dexter Wansel and The Planets.

Welcome Dexter and Jean

By Vanessa Johnson

Last week at the Showboat Club in Silver Spring, Md., Dexter Wansel and Jean Carn put on a fantastic show, intertwining their songs and music from each of their albums, "Life on Mars" and "Jean Carn"...as guests at a press party given by CBS records.

Dexter, a handsome, vivacious, musician came on stage first, dressed in plum colored velvet jacket, trimmed in black satin, with black pants, along with his band The Planets, consisting of six exceedingly good musicians.

As I sat there listening to his music, I watched the audience. It seemed that any moment everyone would jump and start jammin'. His music is so good and he plays with such intensity that you feel it to the very core of your being.

Born and raised in Philly, when at the age of 12 he received his first initiation into music, mastering the flute and cello. Dropping out of high school to enter the service, Dexter was stationed in Thailand, China. He attended the University of Thailand, learned to speak Chinese and soon became a United States Army interpreter.

Upon leaving the service in 1972, Dexter returned to Philly where he met Karl and Roland Chambers, who introduced him to Philadelphia International records and in 1973 he had his first album release, "Yellow Sunshine".

Although "Yellow Sunshine" had only a mild success, Dexter's musical prowess Was recognized by a montage of Philadelphia producers. In the span of one year he became involved with a dozen albums, and had cut his own album "Life on Mars".

His new album has been described as jazzy, spaced and soulful. It is a unique sound contributed by Dexter's expertise on the keyboard, arp, mog, and other synthesizers.

Jean joined Dexter on stage singing ballads and love songs in an overpoweringly beautiful voice many from her new album "Jean Carn" which will be released in January.

She has been singing since age three in concerts, recitals as well as churches and synagogues. She has played Clockenspiel, Bassoon, English Horn, Oboe and E-flat Clarinet, in her high school band.

As one of the newest and brightest stars at Philadelphia International Records, Jeane considers her union with Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff as a most rewarding learning experience. Her new album gives vent to a side of her musical personality never before witnessed. She simply glows with excitement about her album. She has sung with Duke Ellington, Earth, Wind and Fire, Norman Connors,

By Frederick J. Douglass

What about dirty language on records?

The Bar-Kays' latest album "Too Hot to Stop" contains a tune entitled "Shake Your Rump to the Funk" which is one of the many songs on the market causing high decibel cries of shock and outrage from black parents, educators, ministers and other concerned citizens about the increasing use of "vulgarities" and "obscenities" that can be heard from sun up to sun down in jams played on almost all radio stations.

There is an upsurge of concern that the lyrics heard in contemporary black music may be causing the morals of our youth to decline as they did in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The lyrics heard in the song "Shake Your Rump to the Funk" are, in reality, comparatively tame to the things that bombard our youths from the boob tube, movies, and skin magazines.

Current television programs feature characters that are admitted and obvious homosexuals; Mary Hartman explores and discusses all the vices known to mankind including drug abuse, alcoholism, adultery and other behaviour that it considered to be less than desirable according to the mores of our society.

Pre-teen children can walk in any drugstore and peruse copies of skin magazines like Playboy, Hustler, Oui, Playgirl and other books that expose the human form right down to close-up photos of the labia majora, labia minora and clitoris.

In Baltimore, kids can go see X-Rated movies and the more precocious go down on the Block where they can get unprincipled adults to buy hard core pornography for them at a substantial mark-up. Indeed, some of these teenagers can be observed peddling themselves on the street at intersections near the Block.

Anyone whose eyes an ears are open will soon realize that everyone in our society is constantly bombarded by a variety of stimuli that is sexual in nature, primarily for the purpose of getting us to buy certain products. We are hit from every angle beginning in the early morning hours when we turn on the radio, TV or begin reading the newspaper.

We live in an increasingly permissive society which is saying loud and clear to adults that this is the age of "do your own thing" because it is your constitutional right, so long as you do your thing with a consenting adult. But what has happened in this pursuit of freedom is that the media is also spreading the "New Morality" or amorality to kids who are within earshot of the message aimed at adults.

While parents may find songs like "Shake Your Rump to the Funk" to be objectionable, there is little that can be done to shield children from such messages, of course, parent could band together and wage a battle against playing such songs on the radio, but this music will still be available in the record stores as on the party records made by Redd Foxx, Wildman Steven and myriad others. But the music is only the tip of the iceberg and the fact, that the only safe course of action is to educate the kids about sex at home before they are hit with misinformation in books, on records and from people in the streets that might want to exploit them.

As far as the Bar-Kays record "Shake Your Rump to the Funk" is concerned, you can expect to hear more of it because it is very danceable and the music of the Bar-Kays appeals to contemporary record buyers.

In fact, the album "Too Hot to Handle" is excellent from a strictly musical standpoint and is on its way to being a best seller. Thus, it will be impossible to keep your children from hearing the group talking about the shaking of posterior anatomies to the beat.

Thus, I caution parents who want their children to be well educated and capable of dealing with the constant bombardment of sex oriented messages to break down the communication barrier and to begin giving their brood a good education about the facts of life at home. Don't gamble that your kids will find out the facts of life on their own because they might end up getting their education from someone with a twisted and perverted mind.

Top R&B Albums

1 Songs In The Key Of Life — Stevie Wonder
2 Spirit — Earth, Wind / Fire
3 Car Wash — Original Soundtrack
4 The Tones of Dr. Funkenstein — Parliament
5 Flowers — Emotions
6 Good High — Brick

. . . and all that jazz

By Bob Matthews

The old cliche "the show must go on," is still with us — and still true.

There was a remarkable example of it last Sunday, when Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers were featured artists at the Left Bank Jazz Society's concert.

The concert was nearly an hour late getting started.

The reason?

Art Blakey's father had died that morning. Art was busy on the phone handling funeral arrangements.

But — the show must go on — and it did.

After Art announced the distressing news of his father's death, he proved once again why the Jazz Messenters continue to be one of the most innovative jazz groups extant.

Seems that each time Blakey comes to town, he brings along a new member of his group. This time it was trumpeter Frank Gordon.

In fact, Art announced that Gordon was playing his first set with the group before the LBJS audience.

You wouldn't have known it. The only clue was that he was reading the charts.

Walter Davis was pianist, and while not a truly outstanding soloist, is better known as composer and arranger for this and many other groups.

Actually, it was rather refreshing to listen to ad lib solos consisting mainly of chords, rather than the flashing runs and trills usually associated with piano solos.

If you need a basis of comparison, guess the closest I could come would be the work of John Lewis with MJQ.

Tenor saxist was a young man named Dave Schnitter who never failed to excite the crowd each time he took a solo.

Then came the big surprise.

During a swinging rendition of "Paper Moon," Dave stepped to the force, started singing the lyrics, then launched into a yodel not unlike that popularized by Leon Thomas.

As for Blakey, he once again proved that he has no peers. He was in complete control, often starting many tunes with a drum introduction.

One high point was a rousing rendition of "Blues March," which is done in one-beat time.

As played by Blakey et al, it became a tour de force for the soloists who took every advantage of the platform.

Cameron Brown was on bass, and in the now established tradition of young bassists, totally capable, innovative and experimental.

Naturally tunes from the latest album of the Messengers were included, but the old favorites seemed to garner the most approval.

Starting with "Body and Soul," "Just One of Those Things," and others, the apex was reached with a cooking rendition of "Moanin'."

Because of his father's death, Blakey cancelled the first two days of his scheduled appearance in DC, but he is now ensconced at Blues Alley in D.C.

Top Jazz

1 Breezin' — George Benson
2 School Days — Stanley Clarke
3 Main Squeeze — Chuck Mangione

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