'Rocky' the great white hope

By Ida M. Peters

Americans of Italian ancestry have yearned for a "Great White Hope" in boxing for decades.

In the days of Jack Johnson they hoped. They still hoped in the days of Mr. Hamm[illegible]

Now [illegible] the low-body [illegible] "Rocky," starring Sylvester Stallone. The goal of [illegible] immigrant "Stallone had bounced around the fringes of show business following an abortive lesson as a troublemaker and his graduation in 1969 from the University of Miami. He acted in three films, failed at a New York stage career and wrote the television [illegible].

Along the way, he wrote an original screenplay about a plodding boxer who gets to make a name for himself battling the heavyweight champion of the world.

[illegible] remember how many your friends were cheering during movie [illegible] "Rocky" as chanting "Kill him, kill him!" out of anger over [illegible] Perhaps audiences reported [illegible] during climactic fight sequences for Stallone's hero in the mold of Rocky Marciano, who fought Jack Johnson.

[illegible] Brooklyn-born Carl Weathers, former Oakland Raider football star, plays the [illegible] Apollo Creed, heavyweight champion of the world.

Creed agrees to fight Rocky, a perennial loser and two-bit boxer and an ineffectual thumb-breaker for the mob in Philadelphia, as a Bicentennial publicity stunt.

And out of shape — clowning around, not training, he almost gets "whupped."

This is delighting fans across the country. The movie is about to win an Oscar for "Rocky" the man whose "whole life was a million-to-one-shot".

Starring Carl Weathers

Carl Weathers has never boxed. But he spent months preparing for the physically demanding part of a self-assured champ who faces a southpaw Philadelphia upstart.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Weather Jr. of New Orleans, Weathers and his wife Mary Ann have an eight-month-old young son.

Carl's first introduction to acting came in the sixth grade. His teacher, Mr. Slush, had written a musical western for the class to perform and Carl was given the part of a cowboy.

So impressed was Slush by Carl's performance that he asked Carl's mother if he might take Carl to New York, where he was moving to take a new teaching position.

Slush was positive Carl was destined to be an actor and wanted him to experience life outside the narrow confines of the then segregated South. Mrs. Weathers, of course, declined the offer.

Carl had spent his elementary school years pretty much as a loner, but junior high scholl found him eager to become more a part of groups. He accomplished this by joining the school football team in the eighth grade.

Football not only gave him a sense of belonging, it gave him an area he could excel in, one that was admired by his peers. In so doing, he developed a new-found feeling of self-confidence.

His prowess on the athletic field led to a scholarship at St. Augustine's a four-year, all-male, all-black high school in New Orleans run by Josephite priests. Carl played three years for St. Augustine's and then decided to move to California to live with his grandmother, Mrs. Jane Robins.

He completed his final year of high school at Long Beach Polytechnic, his first integrated school experience.

Looking back on his time at St. Augustine's, Carl reflects, "I sometimes feel that I chose St. Augustine's because the priests were strict disciplinarians. Even though I didn't know what I was going to do, I knew the training would be good for me. In acting, discipline is important because of the great amount of energy needed to work successfully. You've got to burn up a lot of heat even if you're sitting still.

"When performing, one can't just sit there drinking a cup of coffee and talking with a friend, as in real life. The energy level has to be much higher. When you read that an actor doesn't have to ability to fill the screen, it's a lack of heat, of energy expended, not necessarily a lack of talent."

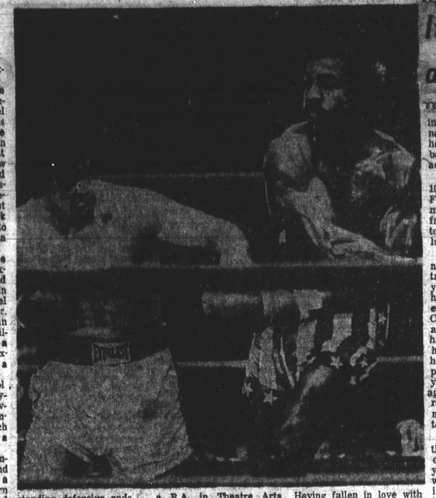
Following high school, Carl decided to quit playing ball, turning down several scholarships, and enrolled at Long Beach (Calif.) City College as a speech major.

However, after auditioning for his first play and succeeding in winning a small part in "View From the Bridge," he switched his major to theatre arts. He was now determined to become an actor.

Football coaches, however, find it difficult to ignore 6'3", 220-pound, powerfully built students, who also happened to be outstanding defensive ends.

Once again, Carl found himself coaxed out onto the playing field and, after two years at Long Beach City, transferred to San Diego State, playing ball for two more years.

Just six units away from a B.A. in Theatre Arts, Weathers accepted an offer to play professionally for the Oakland Raiders. He was with the Oakland team for one year and part of a second when he was waived to Canada to play for British Columbia Lions. Having fallen in love with the Bay area during his short time there, Carl retained his home in Oakland while playing in Canada and enrolled in the off-season at San Francisco State College to get his degree. After three years as start-



It's only a movie

ing linebacker for the Canadian team, he decided he had had enough of football and quit to pursue his acting career.

Returning to Oakland in 1973, he worked in San Francisco, doing commercials until an actress friend convinced him to go to Los Angeles to try his luck.

Hesitant at first, he finally decided to give it a try, giving himself one year to get an agent and his first role in a film. An extremely positive thinker, Carl never realized what an enormous challenge he had given himself. Perhaps it is because of this he accomplished the impossible in less than a year, acquiring both an agent and his first film role in American International Pictures' "Buck Town" in 1975.

In the short time since then, Weathers has been on the move. In the two years he has been in Hollywood, he has amassed an impressive list of credits including "Good Times," "Barnaby Jones," "Switch," "S.W.A.T.," "The Six Million Dollar Man," "Kung Fu," "Khan," "Pop!," "McCloud" and "Friday Foster."

By Ida Peters

Remember stories in the daily press quoting Metropolitan management fears that "Raisin" would not sell in Baltimore

Remember the AFRO told "Raisin" is heavy, [illegible] "Raisin" pulled in [illegible] two weeks; [illegible] $128,963, two weeks; Before Your Eyes, $154,000, two weeks; [illegible] closed in Florida [illegible] $231,703; [illegible] $302,231; [illegible] in Boston.

"Raisin" has been setting records in Baltimore despite the cold, snow and myriad problems with [illegible] stoppages is almost sold out for final performances this week-end.

At the Saturday matinee, the guests of Dr. Pearl Cole Brackett will be on hand. She's the school executive the retirement dinner is being held for at the Green on Sunday. They include Etta Moten Barnett, of Chicago, one of our earliest movie stars, Flying Down to Rio. Also from Durham, Dr. Helen G. Edmonds, a pioneer in Theatre Arts at Howard University and Harry Edmonds; Atty. and Mrs. Hugo Madison from Virginia Beach, Va., and Mrs. Anna Julien from Chicago. Also Mrs. Polly Weedon and Maloney from Lynchburg.

* * *

This week-end will be loaded as folks start their take-off to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras. Town folks are scrambling for tickets to "A Chorus Line", others are taking one day at a time and going to the Sugar Ray Leonard fight Sat. at 4 p.m.

* * *

The Association of Black Media Workers present their Second Annual Cocktail Reception at the Maryland Historical Society at 6:30 p.m. Irving Phillips and James Crockett star in a one act play "Sunday".

Bootlegging: "Roots" Luxiest export from book stores in the B-More and D.C. area the increase of thieves snatching copies of "Roots" off the bookshelves. One man was caught with a trunk full of books. Seems the ploy is to buy five books and snatch three.

Morgan State University's Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts presents Leslie Lee's "First Breeze of Summer", Feb. 9-12 at 8 p.m. in the Carl Murphy Fine Arts Building on the campus.

C. Thomas Johnson is director; Dianne Jemison is public relations. In the cast are students from Coppin and Morgan and include Jo Ann Williams, Sonitha Whittington, James Wise, Mary Morgan, Michael Coleman, Stanley Harrison, Geraldine Tyson, and Kay Waters.

* * *

The Miles W. Conner Chapter of Virginia Union presents the Virginia Union Concert Choir on March 14 at 8 p.m. at Woodlawn Senior High. The concert is almost a sell-out at this early date. Tehy play dates in D.C., Philly and New York.

* * *

"The Boys in the Band, Mart Crowley's controversial hit play is coming to Columbia. Betty Purnell, Ben Presbury, and Verna Day, founders of the theater production company "A New Experience" chose "Boys" as their second production and the first of a series of plays that will be presented at Slayton House, Wilde Lake Village Green. The play is presently rehearsal and will run February 18-20 and 24-26.

* * *

The fourth production of the 1976-77 Center Stage season will open Feb. 8 with the rich and rewarding drama, "Toys in the Attic," by Lillian Hellman.

Ms. Hellman is known for producing drama that binds us to its story, its people, and its bitter incisive language. "Toys in the Attic" was winner of the 1960 New York Drama Critics Circle Award for best play of the year. New York critic John Chapman said: "Lillian Hellman has lifted the theater out of its childishness with a smackingly vigorous drama."

Set in New Orleans, "Toys in the attic" reveals the story of two unmarried sisters waiting for their younger brother to need them again, and the effects of new found wealth on their dreams and their love for each other.

* * *

An exhibition of 27 lithographs by French artist Honore Daumier (1808-1879) featuring cartoons of political and social subjects will be presented at Morgan State University from Feb. 15, through March 8.

Organized by Jay Fisher, Assistant Curator of Prints and Drawings at The Baltimore Museum of Art, this exhibition is being circulated throughout the state by the Museum, under a program supported in part by the Maryland Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C. The lithographs, some of them hand-colored, were drawn from the collection of The Baltimore Museum of Art and from The George A. Lucas Collection on indefinite loan to the Museum from The Maryland Institute, College of Art.

"Breaking With Old Ideas", a film from the People's Republic of China, will be shown Feb. 16 based on the experiences of the Kiangsi Labor University is at the 5 West Theatre, Sun. Feb 6 at 12 and 3 p.m.

The film set in rural China is a conflict between illiterate workers and their right to free schooling. The same ideas were expressed in the early part of this century in American in the debates between Booker T. Washington for trade school and agricultural education and W.E.B. Du Bois and his theory of education for the talented tenth.

With free schools in America, state schools, scholarships, GI scholarships, junior colleges, free black and white colleges, night schools, the film had no relevance to the plight of blacks in America today. True, black people have a long way to go, but not as far as the Chinese people in the People's Republic of China.

* * *

An exhibition of photographs by renowned contemporary artist Nathan Lyons will open at the University of Maryland Baltimore County Library Gallery Feb. 9 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Lyons will be present at the opening and at 8 p.m. will give a slide demonstration and lecture in Room [illegible] of the Fine Arts Building.

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THE MANAGEMENT

Shady Grove new season

The Shady Grove Music Theatre opens their 1977 season with Gladys Knight and The Pips May 3-May 8. The sensational soul group is enjoying tremendous recording success with "So Sad The Song", the title tune from the movie "Pipe Dreams". The movie stars Ms. Knight.

Sonny and Cher is bringing sparklink comedy, dazzling costumes and song to the Grove May 9-May 15.

Lou Rawls and the lady of sophisticated soul, Dionne Warwick star at the Grove May 25-May 29.

The Carpenters create their unique musical stylings June 14-June 19.

The Spinners bring their solid gold soul to Shady Grove September 13-September 18.

Black sheriff in Texas

"There was a time when the people here didn't want any northerners, let alone blacks," said Otis Hitson, one of the older natives of Breckenridge, Tex. "A family moved in from the North, and they were nice folks, but Granny insisted we get rid of the Yankees. Now things are different . . ."

They've changed so much in West Texas that Stephens County, of which Breckenridge is the county seat, has a black sheriff. Sheriff Louis Hall and his neighbors will be the subject of a feature on NBC News' "Weekend," Sat. Feb. 5 on NBC-TV.

Hall was a deputy sheriff before he was elected sheriff and so he tells it: "I walked proud and I felt proud as a deputy — not a black deputy. I remember the first time I was called to a saloon fight, and I put my hands on a white man for the first time. I wondered what he'd say and he asked, 'You going to take me to jail?' I told him 'You know what you did,' and he just said, 'OK.' That was seven years ago and I've never had any trouble."

Hall ran in the primary against five white candidates, including the ex-sheriff and two former chiefs of police. He polled more votes than his five opponents combined and was unopposed in the general election. He's the only black sheriff in the Southwest, and one of five in the entire country.

Breckenridge is 160 miles west of Dallas, and — indicative of the attitudes — the county was named after Alexander H. Stephens, vice President of the Confederacy.

What's Happening

'Color Me Flo'

By Marvin Pittman
Walbrook High School
An autobiography by Florence Kennedy

"Florence Kennedy is a woman that I unashamedly dore. This well known political activist, feminist, and lawyer, who is known for her profane as well as outspoken tongue, has written a book about her earlier days up to today, "Color Me Flo, My Hard Life and Good Times," released by Prentice-Hall.

"Ms. Kennedy was born some 60 years ago in Kansas City. Her parents taught her at an early age not to take anything from anybody. That's a theory that she stil believes today.

She tells of her up/down marriage with an alcoholic Welshman, ten years her junior. She handled the estates of both Billie Holiday, and Charlie Parker, and she lets us know in no uncertain terms the injustices that were performed on them.

"Color Me Flo" is packed with pictures, interviews, newspaper clippings, and a huge helping of profanity. The cover shows Ms. Kennedy decked out in Western drag, giving us the finger.

"Color Me Flo, My Hard Life and Good Times," released by Prentice-Hall.

Triumphs of 'Roots'

"Roots" on ABC-TV changed the face, style and mind of television establishing a new high in TV viewership. ABC research estimated that 130 million saw some of the series and an estimated 70 million average each of the eight nights.

The Sunday, Jan. 30 two-hour concluding episode became the top rated TV show of all time with a 51.4 and 71 share of the market that lifted it over "Gone With The Wind."

In terms of all-time ratings, Sunday, Jan. 30 ranks first; "Gone With The Wind" Part 1, second; and "Gone With The Wind" Part 2, third; then "Roots", Friday, fourth; Thursday's "Roots", fifth; Tuesday, sixth; Super Bowl 1977, seventh; Monday "Roots", eighth; Saturday, "Roots", ninth.

Two more 1977 Super Bowls rank 11th and 12th with Sunday, Jan. 23 "Roots" 13.

To judge the scope of "Roots" each night, the nightly ABC average on each of seven nights was better than the combined averages of CBS and NBC.

And for the record, "Roots" brought viewers to TV who normally do not watch primetime TV.

* * *

Silkscreen prints by artist Tom Considine, will be on display in the overmass gallery of the University of Maryland Baltimore County Library through Feb. 28.

Buddy Johnson ill in N.Y.

Buddy Johnson, who was one of the great big swing bands during the period of about 1945 to 1955 and who composed and recorded numerous R and B and Pop hit songs, is reported critically ill in New York City.

Buddy's most noteworthy composition is "Since I Fell For You", which he and his band recorded for Decca in 1947 with his sister Ella Johnson as vocalist for a tremendous blues record hit.

"Since I Fell For You" eventually became a "Pop" hit when revived in 1963 by singer Lenny Welch, whose record on the Kapp label became a top chart hit of that year and the song gained recognition as a standard via subsequent renditions by such diversified recording artists as Ray Charles, Doris Day, Ketty Lester, Laury Lee, Mavis Staples, Barbra Streisand, Charlie Rich and others.

Buddy — pianist, arranger and composer — was one of the pioneers and chief delineators of big band rhythm and blues with a "swingin" ensemble that was relatively unexposed and unknown to white audiences, who were more aware of the Basies, Hamptons, Ellingtons and Luncefords.

Critic and music authority Leonard Feather in his "Encyclopedia Of Jazz" wrote "Buddy Johnson's big band records, especially those with vocals featuring his sister Ella are outstanding for their unique beat and for the melodic variety Johnson's arrangements attain within a narrow blues framework. Still almost unknown to the white public, the combination of Ella's laconic style of modern blues singing and her brother's ingenious arrangements is unique and delightful."

Hugues Panassie, the European jazz authority in his "Guide To Jazz" commented, "Buddy Johnson is an excellent pianist; his band has real punch and hard, sharp accents on the beat somewhat in Lionel Hampton's style."

Signed by Decca Records in 1944 for what was then known as that company's "Race" series label (later renamed "Rhythm and Blues", Buddy and his band with Arthur Prysock and Ella as vocalists turned out such hit sides as "Baby, Don't You Cry", "Please, Mr. Johnson", "Stop Pretending", "Since I Fell For You", "You'll Get Them Blues", "I Don't Care Who Knows", "They All Say I'm The Biggest Fool", "Serves Me Right", "I Cry", "Did You See Jackie Robinson Hit That Ball", "I'm Tired Crying Over You", "Satisfy My Soul," along with such great rockin instrumentals as "Lil Dog", "Pea Coat", "Down Yonder and "Dr. Jive Jives."

Buddy switched to Mercury Records in 1953 and scored with numerous hit singles and five LPs for that label, including "I Have No Love For You", the first record of his to hit high on the national "Pop" singles charts. All were his own compositions and arrangements.

Buddy Johnson

The Buddy Johnson band was a fixture at the famed Savoy Ballroom and at the Apollo Theater in New York's Harlem, the Howard in Washington, the Royal in Baltimore, the Regal in Chicago, and in ballrooms, armories, warehouses and auditoriums throughout the country where it was one of the biggest drawing attractions of all the black dance bands of those years.

In 1952 Buddy was crowned "King Of The One-Niter Circuit" in a poll conducted among the nation's black dance promoters. The Johnson band at its height numbered 17 pieces with four trumpets, four trombones, five saxes, piano, string bass, guitar and drums with Buddy himself at the piano.

Buddy was born in Darlington, S.C., Jan 10, 1916 as Woodrow Wilson Johnson, being one of two noted bandleaders named after the World War I president, the other being Woody Herman.

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Emotions smooth, sweet

By Vashti McKenzie

Entertainers are more aware than others that careers go up and down. The family singing group, The Emotions know all about it.

Right now they are "up"—an album "Flowers" produced by Maurice White, of Earth, Wind and Fire, among the big winners.

Like other family singing groups The Jacksons, Brothers Johnson, to name a few—The Emotions have been making music for a long time. The father, Joe Hutchinsons, Jr. (now manager of the group) taught the kids years ago to sing and read music.

They sang a variety of music, including blues, ballads and gospel. A year later, they made their professional public appearance, on the Jerry Van Dyke Show.

"Those beginnings really aided in shaping us into what we are today," said Wanda recently. "We know what each of us is capable of because we've worked together for so long."

The Emotions' professional priming came later, in the world of gospel music. They were known as the Hutchinson Sunbeams and toured extensively with Mahalia Jackson.

Nine years ago Janette, Wanda and Sheila Hutchinson signed with a subsidiary of Stax Records under their current name. During their Stax years, the group's hits included "I Call This Loving You" and "Put A Little Love Away."

Super success was fairly brief.

There were exciting times—appearing on top television shows like "Soul Train," the Merv Griffin-Isaac Hayes special and also the monumental "Wattstax" show in L.A. They shared the stage with the nation's top, including Stevie Wonder, The O'Jays and Dionne Warwick.

The pendulum swung in the other direction when Stax closed its doors, due to distribution and other legal problems.

"Stax stopped distributing records and The Emotions stopped also," said Sheila. "We had to keep reassuring ourselves that everything was going to be all right, that the Emotions would come out on top in the end."

Positive thinking and talent won over. As fate would have it, things worked out extremely well. The trio had been just released from their Stax contract when Maurice White contacted them. He was looking for a group to produce for Columbia Records.

White had become one of their biggest fans, both through listening to their recordings and sharing a bill with them while he was with Ramsey Lewis' group.

"We were shocked," remembered Sheila. "He told us how he'd always enjoyed our music. He even has all our records he bought years ago. It really made us fell good to know that he was familar with our sound."

Their first musical offering for thier new label and producer was "Flowers." It is an album of beautiful, fluttering ballads and dynamic mid-tempo tunes. They also wrote the mate.

"Working with Maurice was really something else," said Jeanette. "He's simply a great producer. He was so easy to work with, and he knows what he's doing."

"Maurice let us do it our way" added Sheila. "It was beautiful to have such freedom."

The Emotions are in the studio preparing another album promising, "It's even better than the first."

People are now saying The Emotions are synonmous with sweet things like whipped cream. At their best, both can be delicate and smooth.

"People say it all the time," said Shelia. People have also told us our sound reminds them of different things like silk and softpess. Wt don't mind, we like to hear it."

OK, your sound is like a message of love.

Side effect... has what you need

By Frederick I. Douglass

Wayne Henderson, the trombone player who gained considerable fame as a member of the Crusaders, has found a new musical outlet as the producer of up and coming groups like Pleasure and, most recently, as extremely talented group known as Side Effect.

Henderson used the group Pleasure, whose most recent smash album is entitled "Accept No Substitutes" as the backup musicians on Side Effect's latest album "What You Need" and has achieved monumental success on a host of jams that freely intersperse Jazz and Rock idioms.

Side Effect gets the album off to a romping start by putting words to saxophonist Ronnie Laws' monster composition "Always There" and taking the jam on a five minute excursion through disco rhythms churning behind tightly arranged vocal acrobatics. "Always There" comes off with a moving groove with foxie lady Helen La Rue Lowe blasting out the lyrics with her powerful, soulful voice

The other members of the vocal quartet include Angie Johnson, Louis Patton and Gregory Matta, all of whom play instruments and composes music. What a dynamic combination.

The album "What You Need" gives the members of Side Effect an opportunity to display their versatility and ability to convincingly deliver an amazing variety of material. Helen Lowe is particularly effective when it comes to crooning sexy, sultry ballads that are suitable as background music for intense boudoir activities. When the lady belts out a tune like "O.S." you want to rush to her side immediately and to help her out in any and every way possible.

Other members of the group get an opportunity to take the lead on slow jams especially Augie Johnson who really wails on cuts like "Finally Found Someone" and the cello mellow "I Know You Can" which features some really spacy skat singing and slick harmonizing.

Yet another silky smooth jam "Baby Love," a tune on the slow tempo beat is "Changes" which features Louis Patton way out front chirping away like a songbird on a song that deserves to be beamed at a wide audience via a single release. The other up tempo jams on the album are ready for people, particularly the cut "Life Is What You Make It" which highlights throbbing drums played contrapuntal to a pulsating bass guitar. The up tempo monster on the album is a rollicking tune "Honky Tonk Seat" which is fast paced and right on time for dancing. Once again, the members of Side Effect deliver with their unique vocal stylings and multiple octave spanning voices.

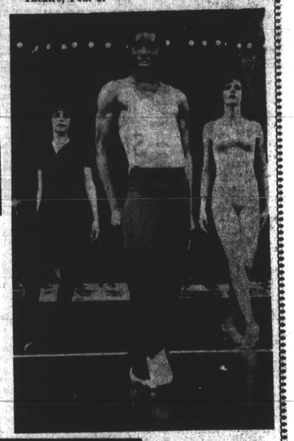
The prime tune on the album is another jam that the members of Side Effect have taken from the, overflowing bag of Wayne Henderson, their mentor. Entitled "Keep That Same Old Feeling," the tune was a big success for the Crusaders and promises to open the ears of a lot of music lovers to the splendor that is Side Effect. The group could have improved on the song by adding a few lyrics to the song's repetitive refrain, but it is nonetheless an opportunity for them to show what they can do with sounds.

"What You Need," the latest album by Side Effect is worth checking out, and, if you really dig their sound, you might want to get into the group's first album entitled "Side Effect" which features the phenomenal talents of the phenomenal Thad Jones-Mel Lewis big band, who have won just about all the polls as the No. 1 band in the land.

Patty Ruth Bayley and John Bartholomew star in Bolton Hill's Dinner Theatre production "The Little Black Book".

Chorus Line

Thousands lined up in the cold to buy 7,520 tickets for the 23 performances of "A Chorus Line". Show opens at the New Mechanic Theatre, Feb. 9.



Franco Marshall makes his theatre debut as Alan in "The Boys in the Band" presented by A New Experience at Slayton House Theatre, Village of Wilde Lake, Columbia, Feb. 18-20.

Maryland Ballet

Students in a Rhythmical Appreciation class at Maryland Ballet Center, the official school of the Maryland Ballet. The school is still accepting applications for its spring term, call 366-5800.

Gathered together in the studio during recording of the ABC original cast album of "Your Arms Too Short to Box With God" are (L to R): Vinette Carroll, author and director of the play; William Hardy Jr. and Salome Bey featured soloists: Micki Grant, responsible for additional music and lyrics; Delores Hall, featured player; H. B. Barum who did the orchestrations; Sheila Ellis and Clinton Derricks-Carroll, featured soloists; Chapman Roberts, responsible for choral arrangements and and direction; George Broderick member of the cast: Esmond Edyards the producer and Barney Perkins the engineer.

Barry White with Love Unlimited and Love Unlimited Orchestra at Constitution Hall, Mon. Feb. 14 in D.C.

Roy Ayers with Michael Henderson and Ayana at Constitution Hall in D. C. Sat. Feb. 5

. . . and all that jazz

By Bob Matthews

Well, it happened again! Talking about the Left Bank Jazz Society's audience magic.

"Its sheer inspiration for the performers to play before an audience so hip that the slightest nuance is immediately recognized.

On tap this past Sunday was the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis big band, who have won just about all the polls as the No. 1 band in the land.

I've been trying to determine what sets the Thad Lewis-Mel Jones group apart. Just what is different about them?

* * *

For one thing, he determined, the section work is used as a framework for solos.

This may not be outstandingly different, but in this day of artists who merely pour out cascades of notes, it is refreshing to hear solos that swing. And that's the difference.

A Buddy Rich band, or a Maynard Ferguson or Stan Kenton, can wow you with its precision and squeaky-type section riffs. The band's soloists are brilliant, but they don't swing.

Basie's Band builds on swinging section work, unison riffs, plus a driving pulsing beat. While the soloists are capable, they can't cut loose because of the tight arrangements.

And so, this is what the fabulous Thad Jones-Mel Lewis has done, corralled some top flight solo artist, set them up in a big band frame and let them swing on their own.

This band has such a plethora of talent that Thad himself soloed only once last Sunday.

This writer then got to wondering what causes the distinctive sound of the band.

Figured that out too. Delving into big band history, remembered that the Glenn Miller Orchestra was easily recognized because the reed section voicings always featured upper register clarinets.

The booming voice of Harry Carney's baritone sax could always be heard in Duke Ellington's Band.

Freddie Guy identifies the Count Basie Band with chunk-chunk on guitar.

Jimmie Lunceford featured upper register alto sax, played by Willie Smith to give the band it's individual style.

The Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Band in its section work features a soprano sax playing in the upper register as its signatory. And it works.

The present group has jelled. The charts are tight and intricate, and the band flows easily through them . . . perfectly as one voice. This is what big band jazz is all about.

Next week, Freddie Hubbard will be on hand.

Enoch Pratt

Sun., Feb. 6

"The Past Is Only a Beginning," lecture by Augusta Baker, editor and author, in honor of 50 years of Children's Services at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, at the Central Pratt Library, 3:30 p.m.

Mon., Feb. 7

"Arthritis," an informational program cosponsored by the Arthritis Foundation and the Enoch Pratt Free Library at the Pratt Library's Edmondson Avenue Branch, 1 p.m.

Tues., Feb. 8

"America: Making a Revolution" (Part 3), film at the Central Pratt Library, 2 p.m.

Wed., Feb. 9

"Arthritis," an informational program cosponsored by the Arthritis Foundation and the Enoch Pratt Free Library at the Pratt Library's Edmondson Avenue Branch, 1 p.m.

And . . . watch those commercials

After watching Cicely Tyson scream out her agony at losing her son to the slavers — the quick cut to the Ben-Gay commercial "when pain is at its worst" is disconcerting and ironic to say the least. Ben-Gay is not going to help.

Records

By James Greenberry

In a continuing effort to close the entertainment circle, here is a sampling of one of the newest records hot off the press.

"Ask Rufus" — Produced by Rufus; recorded at Kendun Records, Burbank, Calif. for ABC Records 1977.

The group includes Rufus, Chaka Khan, vocals and "sweet thing" Kevin Murphy, keyboards; Bobby Watson, bass; Tony Maiden, drums; Milt Holland, percussion; Ron Wood, Guitar; and David Wolinski, keyboards.

Guess everybody knows Chaka Khan dropped out of school at 16. We also know she joined Rufus in 1972 and, along with Kevin Murphy, has made the group something special.

What you may not know is that Rufus and "Sweet Thing" have matured. Their latest effoning is a pleasant experience. As you listen to each cut, you expect Chaka Khan to scream at you, but she doesn't. Rufus does not have to rely on noise and gimmicks anymore.

This latest offering is well made, innovative and attractively presented. The album cover is eye-catching and includes a poster-size pinup of the album's front cover.

Flip over to Side One was a medley: "Slow Screw Against the Wall" and on Side Two, "Hollywood" and "Made In Your Eyes'. Rufus proves on this album that anybody, young or old can listen to their music and enjoy.

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