Christmas movies

Foxy Fred Williamson to B-More in person

Fred Williamson — "Mr. Mean"

Foxy Fred Williamson will be in Baltimore at the Hippodrome on December 26 to premiere and promote his new movie "Mr. Mean".

The world premiere with the Ohio Players who did the soundtrack will be in Atlanta, Ga. December 20.

Fred produced, directed "Mr. Mean" for his own company Po'Boy Productions. It's a story of action, adventure, romance and suspense set in beautiful Rome, Italy.

Fred is a beautiful black brother. He's got his head on straight. This is his seventh year in the business. His film "Boss Nigger" grossed $3 million, he made "Adio Amigo" with Richard Pryor and 17 other movies including "The Lengend of Nigger Charlie", "Hell Up In Harlem," "Buck'town" and "Joshua".

"Close Encounters of the Third Kind" by Columbia Pictures written and directed by Steven Spielberg who also directed "Jaws" will be the Christmas block-buster. It's about UFO's.

Stars a 4-year-old Cary Guffey kidnaped by aliens of another world. Also Richard Dreyfuss as the electrician who also has a close encounter of his efforts to solve the mystery.

MGM offers Neil Simon's "The Goodbye Girl" staring Richard Dreyfuss and Marsha Mason and introducing Quinn Cummings. It's about an unlucky in love ex-Broadway dancer, a fast-talking but faith restoring actor and the dancer's precocious young daughter.

Richard Pryor's "Which Way Is Up? is previewing for a special audience this Sunday and opens December 23.

Miguel Pinero's "Short Eyes" opens this week and press premiered this past Thursday. It's about prison life in the "tombs" in Manhattan. The hardened inmates can't stand the deeds of "short eyes" as child molester. A beautiful study with as bitter ending.

"Telefon" from MGM has Charles Bronson as a Russian agent assinged to kill a Stalinist saboteur before he triggers World War II.

"Saturday Night Fever" stars John Travolta of "Welcome Back Kotter" fame. It's a story about a poor New Yorker who finds love and fulfullment in the disco scene.

"Pete's Dragon" with Helen Reddy and Shelly Winters is an adventure about an orphan and his sometimes visible animated friend, Elliott.

"A Hero Ain't Nothing But A Sandwich" the Randnitz - Mattel Productions filming of Alice Childress' novel which won Second Prize at the Virgin Island Film Festival will have a special screening at the Rotunda Dec. 20. Flick stars Cicely Tyson, Paul Winfield, Larry Scott, David Groh and Glynn Turman.

'The Nutcracker' at Enoch Pratt

The Pratt library's Travelling Troubadours will present free public performances of the popular Christmas story, "The Nutcracker," throughout the holiday season at branch libraries around the city, with a final performance on December 31 at the Cloisters.

The ensemble of six players — Jill Clark, Mona Cosgrove, Joan Feldman, Hannah Gaylord, Jill James, and Bill Weiner — has based its production on a script by June Walker Rogers, but has added dances, costumes, props, slides, and sound effects and has set it all to the music of Tchaikowsky.

The Travelling Troubadours are members of the Pratt library staff, employed with CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) funds to work as a performing arts group enhancing library services to children.

The schedule of "Nutcracker" performances is listed below:

Friday, Dec. 16, at 3:30 p.m. at the Pennsylvania Ave. branch, 1531 W. North Ave.

Tuesday, Dec. 20, at 3:30 p.m. at the Fells Point center, 606 S. Ann St.; 7 p.m. at the Patterson Park brahcn. 158 N. Linwood Ave.

Wednesday, Dec. 21, at 1 p.m. at the Cherry Hill center, 2492 Giles Rd.; 6 p.m. at the Light Street branch, 1251 Light St.

Thursday, Dec. 22, at 3:30 p.m. at the Gardenville branch, 5427 Belair Rd.; 7 p.m. at the Govans branch, 5714 Bellona Ave.

Niecy sang at Casino; Stevie found her at Morgan

By Ida Peters

When Deniece Williams the singer - songwriter called from Fresno, Calif. this week where she is touring with Earth, Wind and Fire, she delighted this interviewer with memories of her days at Morgan State University.

Since the EWF tour started in November, Deniece who opens the show with Pockets, another Baltimore group, says that there have been sell out crowds everywhere they have played. played.

Deniece estimates more than a million people have heard her sing songs from her hit album "This Is Niecy", "Free", "Slip Away", "If You Don't Believe", "That's What Friends Are For" and "It's Important To Me".

She will be in Baltimore with EWF at the Civic Center, December 28 and on Dec. 29 will do a benefit for the Congressional Black Caucus at Capitol Center, Largo, Md.

The native of Gary, Ind., is the daughter of Alma and Lee Chandler. "I was working part - time in a record store, when the next thing I knew my boss has me singing for two talent scouts from the Toddlin' Town label and just two months before graduation from high school I found myself recording my first two singles."

This was in 1968 and I was goofing off on my grades. I wanted to go to Purdue in my home town but one of my teachers urged me to go to Morgan State College because he felt I needed to leave home, grow and expand my horizons.

She relates her teacher knew Dr. Martin Jenkins, then president of Morgan who was from South Bend, Ind. and he helped her get to Morgan.

Deniece says she lived on campus at Tubman Hall the first year and the second year, 1969, moved with a Mrs. Ada Carter at 2003 Baker St.

Her roommate was Brenda Ward of Virginia who finished Morgan and is now a Probation Officer in California.

Deniece says she had to work to get through her two years at Morgan. She ran into a group The Feminiques and one day walked into the Club Casino, auditioned, got the job and for two years earned $50. a week singing weekends at the Casino. She joins Slappy Shite and Redd Fox who also got a boost in their careers at the Casino.

She was enrolled in a work - study program and from Monday to Thursday also worked as a substitute teacher.

She says she was very sensitive and very quiet but her favorite teacher was Dr. Irene Diggs who taught her Sociology and wore the most beautiful jewelry.

She was very impressed and fascinated by Dr. Diggs and the way she talked and taught. She says this teacher stood for wisdom and knowledge which is the richest thing a person can have.

Another teacher who impressed her was Congressman Parren Mitchell who taught Political Science. As an aside, Deniece said she almost cried when she read that Morgan has become Morgan State University.

Baltimore means to her a growing up time because she had never been to a big city.

A friend of Deniece's who moved to Detroit gave a copy of her single, recorded in high school to Stevie Wonder and to her surprise Stevie Wonder came to Morgan and asked her to audition for his group Wonderlove.

She remained a member of Wonderlove for three years and between 1972 and the present has participated on every album that Stevie has recorded.

"I had been concentrating on my writing with no solo recording career in mind, when I submitted several demos to Maurice White, on which I had done the singing to cut down on expenses, with the hope that his group, Earth, Wind and Fire would consider recording some of them. But to my amazement, he instead expressed his desire to produce me."

The rest is history and since that meeting, Deniece has gone on to be nominated for the New-Female Vocalist of The Year by Record World magazine; has travelled extensively with Earth, Wind and Fire, has appeared on television nationally, on such shows as the Merv Griffin Show and the Mike Douglas Show as well as British television.

Edye Byrd in 'Chicago'

Edye Byrde, last seen on Broadway in the recent all - black revival of "Guys and Dolls," will appear in a featured role in the smash hit musical vaudeville set to open at the Mechanic Theatre Monday, Jan. 16 at 8 p.m. for a limited engagement of three weeks only.

Ms. Byrde will play the Prison Matron in the production which has a book by Bob Fosse and Fred Ebb, music by John Kander and lyrics by Fred Ebb. Bob Fosse is directing and choreographing the musical which stars Jerry Orbach and features Penny Worth and Carolyn Kirsch.

Ms. Byrde made her Broadway debut in the Tony Award - winning musical hit, "The Wiz." A jazz, pop and classical singer, she was featured with her husband bassist Jimmy Butts, and his trio playing clubs and hotels throughout the East and Canada for nine years. She was a leading soloist with the Forest Avenue Congregational Church in New York before joining the American Community Theatre under the direction of Maxwell Glanville.

Ms. Byrde's television appearances include "How to Survive a Marriage," "WNET" "Peelin Good," "Wedding Band" and numerous talk shows and commercials.

Performances are from Monday, Jan. 16 through Sat., February 4 with evening shows Monday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and matinees Wednesday and Saturday at 2 p.m.

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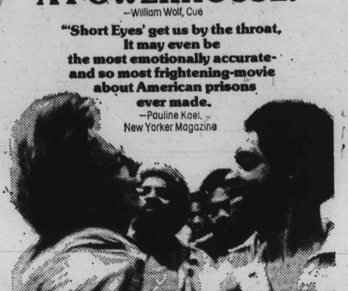
—Pauline Kael, New Yorker Magazine



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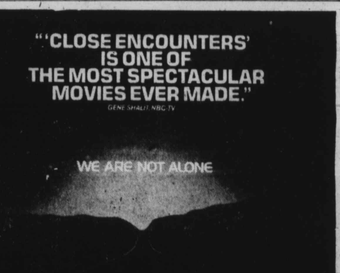

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Natalie Cole: 'Thankful'

By Vashti McKenzie

Natalie Cole's fourth album is called Thankful and she has every reason to be just that. Since her first album was released in mid-1975, her career has skyrocketed and taken her to true superstar status.

She has three Gold Albums (Inseparable, Natalie and Unpredictable), a Platinum Album (Unpredictable) and a Gold Single ("I've Got Love On My Mind")

Besides that Gold Single, she has five other smash hits which climbed to the upper reaches of both the pop and the R & B-soul charts ("This Will Be," "Inseparable," "Sophisticated Lady," "Mr. Melody" and "Party Lights"). Natalie also has three Grammy Awards and a host of other honors from around the world.

When her first record was released, she was most often referred to as the daughter of the legendary Nat "King" Cole. But in no time at all, she stepped from beneath that shadow and proved herself as an artist in her own right.

On Thankful, it's obvious how happy and thankful Natalie is. This year she married Marvin Yancy and she was awaiting her first child when she recorded this album. She celebrates love in several of the songs including "Lovers," "Our Love," "Nothing Stronger Than Love," "I Can't Stay Away" "Keeping A Light," "Lovers" is an uptempo, scat - singing tune that sounds as good or better than similar jazz or big band songs from the forties (where some of her musical roots stem back to due to her father and his friends).

However, Natalie shows her versatility with the first single off the album, "Our Love," a ballad that sounds like it could have come from some of the great soul singers of the sixties.

On "Be Thankful," she swings back into the funky, danceable style she has perfected. Once again Marvin Yancy and Charles Jackson produced and they also wrote five of the eight tunes.

Natalie wrote the other three songs herself (although her piano player and friend, Linda Williams, co - authored the Latin - flavored "La Costa").

On this new album, Natalie's rich, powerful singing is stronger and sweeter than ever. It will undoubtedly make her millions of fans extremely "thankful."

Were teachers better in the 1930s? Isaiah White answers on "In Person," Sunday, Dec. 18 at 4 p.m. on PBS.

...and all that Jazz

By Bob Matthews

Well, you win some — you lose some. And, sad to report, the Left Bank Jazz Society made a mistake last week.

Not with the group booked, Carlos Garnet et al, but in the singer with the group, Ayodele Jenkins.

Thought the word had gotten around about the LBJS audiences — what they expect — how a performer should conduct him - herself.

Key to the whole thing is — you are here because you are a jazz artist — so play some jazz. There is no room for ego trips, posturing and imitations of Nina Simone with an African twist.

This is what Ayodele Jenkins subjected the audience to. The LBJS crowd was polite — they gave her every opportunity to show what she could do — they even forgave the fact that she had no voice at all, was merely a song stylist.

But when no jazz was forthcoming — the audience turned her off. Have never heard so much audience crossfalk and murmuring while an artist performs. A sure sign of boredom.

Carlos Garnett was a different thing. Even before he began to play, you knew the kind of music he would perform. His hair was done in the style affected by Jamaican reggae proponents, and sure enough — that's what he played.

Garnett trod the fine line between jazz, salsa and reggae, but kept it all in context with his musicianship. He is a first - rate musician, a talented author, and brings a Latin flair to his horn playing that borders on pyrotechnics.

He has mastered the high - energy art of building to several climaxes before tottering over the peak and taking the audience with him.

'Twas good to see a small group reading charts. As is true with most modern groups, most of the tunes played were originals. A kinda painful thing for us oldsters since we have difficulty identifying with the music.

Some of the titles were "Eternal Love," "Africa is Here," "Sweet Love," and one from his current album, "Boleraw." All were well done, but none really could be classified as true jazz.

Richie Harper was on piano, and nobly demonstrated that you can generate high energy and build to an apex by loudly repeating a musical phrase and rhythmic segment.

'Tis an art brought to perfection by Ahmad Jamal, and Richie Harper has carried it a step further. He was far and away the most exciting player on the stand, and dipped into pure jazz on isolated occasions.

Otis McClairy was on guitar; Cecil McBee, Jr., bass; Chris Henderson, drums, and Carl Braithwaite, congas.

If you have got the impression that I didn't particulary care for this concert, you're wrong. I did — just didn't care for the posturing and bad singing of the vocalist.

Next week, the Thad Jones - Mel Lewis Big Band. Should be the premiere concert of the year, and would advise you to get there early.

That will conclude the concert series for 1977. The 1978 season will start on January 15 with the Navy Band, The Commodores.

What promises to be the swingingest New Year's Eve cabaret of the town will be put on by LBJS when they present the Etta Jones - Houston Person Quintet at the famous. They'll even hand you the black eyed peas at that one.

Christmas at Enoch Pratt

Coming Events

Mon., Dec. 19
"Feet First," film at the Pratt Library's Kirk Avenue Center, 6 p.m.

Tues., Dec. 20
"Ten Who Dared: Ronald Amundsen," film at the Central Pratt Library, 2 p.m.
"Christmas Cracker," film at the Pratt Library's Dundalk Avenue Branch, 6:30 p.m.
Pre . Kwanza celebration at the Pratt Library's Pimlico Branch, 6:30 p.m.

EVENTS FOR CHILDREN

Mon., Dec. 19
Pimlico Branch: Films — "Jumprope," "The Shoemaker and the Elves," and "The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge," 10:30 a.m.
Lafayette Square Center: Films — "Peggy and Pierre," "Palle Alone in the World," and "Bluenose Ghosts," 4 p.m.
Brooklyn Branch: "Charlie Brown's Christmas," puppet show, 6:30 p.m.
Fells Point Center: Film — "Toccata for Toy Trains, 7 p.m.

Tues., Dec. 20
Fells Point Center: "The Nutcracker," presented by the Pratt Library's Traveling Troubadours, 3:30 p.m.
Central Library, Children's Department: Film — "Pluto's Davis, Mackenzie Phillips and Paul Lynde are guests tonight. 8:00-9:00 p.m.-ABC.

ABC Movie: Bizarre creatures imperil "The Golden Voyage of Sinbad," as that mythical adventurer sails to further their exploits. 9:00-11:00 p.m.-ABC.

Midnight Special: Guest host tonight is Lou Rawls, Rod Stewart, Electric Light Orchestra, Dorothy and Paul Nicholas are guests. 1:00-2:30 a.m.-NBC.

SATURDAY

Soul Train: Guests today are Brick, Sister Sledge and the Soul Train Gang. 1:30-2:30 p.m.-Channel 11.

Women Now: Topic

SUNDAY

Fat Albert: The Cosby Kids and more help Fat learn the true meaning Christmas when a reclamant mother and down and out family seeking refuge in the clubhouse. 7:30-8:00 p.m.-CBS.

Barry White: Barry White and the Love Unlimited musical group. 7:00-8:00 p.m.- Channel

Tiny Tree: A story of love and loyalty, in which a crippled girl befriends a tiny pine tree and the circle of animal companions. 7:30-8:00 p.m.-CBS.

The Jeffersons: To win a date with an indifferent young woman, Mercedes leads her to think that George's son and daughter-in-law is someday going to rule the Jefferson dry-cleaning empire. 9:00-9:30 p.m.-CBS.

TV Watching

By Vanessa Johnson

FRIDAY

Dinah: Guests today are Peter Marshall, singer Thelma Houston, Patrick Duffy, and Frankie Howard. 4:00-5:30 p.m. - Channel 9.

Night Before Christmas: An animated tale of how Clement C. Moore came to write "Twas the Night Before Christmas. 7:30-8:00 p.m. Channel 13.

The Nutcracker: The first of two Nutcracker Ballets. The Nutcracker is a wooden toy that becimes a living prince at Christmastime when he whisks young Clara into a magical kingdom of dancing dolls and flowers. 8:00-9:30 p.m.-CBS.

Donny & Marie: Mac

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Top R. and B. albums

1 All In All
Earth, Wind & Fire
2 Live!
The Commodores
3 In Full Bloom
Rose Royce
4 Reach For It
George Duk
5 Odyssey
6 Menagerie
Bill Withers
7 Feelin' Bitchy
Millie Jackson
8 Come Go With Us
Pockets
9 Action
The Blackbyrds
0 Flying High On Your Love
The Bar-Kays

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1 Heads
Bob James
2 Feels So Good
Chuck Mangione
3 Reach For It
Goerge Duke
4 Ruby, Ruby
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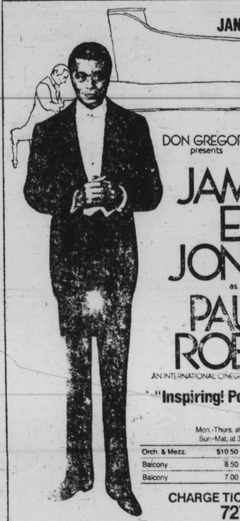

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