Theatre, arts, music, potpourri

Fred Benjamin at Coppin

Randy Thompson Jr., a poor, harassed detective, needs a glass of milk to calm his nerves in the Jules Pfeiffer comedy, "Little Murders," opening May 4 at Vagabond Theatre, 806 S. Broadway.

The Fred Benjamin Dance Company will appear in a program of Contemporary Dance on Friday, May 5, at Coppin State College.

Presented by Tawes College Center in conjunction with the music department, the performance will be held at 8:00 p.m. in James Weldon Johnson Auditorium, 2500 West North Avenue. There is no admission charge.

The Company was reorganized five years ago after Benjamin, its artistic director, returned to New York from Europe where he spent a year performing and choreographing. The fifteen member Company is based primarily in the jazz idiom though its young dancers have been technically trained so that their programs present the works of several choreographers.

The group has performed in New York at Clark Center, Town Hall, Henry Street Settlement Playhouse, Marymount College, Pace University and the Delacorte Dance Festival.

Benjamin has appeared on Broadway in "Hello Dolly" and "Promises, Promises." Most recently, he was a guest artist on the CBS television special "Ailey Salutes Ellington."

Jazz Expo '78 featuring, Sir Walter Jackson, Memorial Day, May 28, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Forest Glen Burnie, Md.

On the day long program Carlos Johnson, Andy Ennis, Ruby Glover, Shirley Fields, Dave Ross, Judd Watkins, James Bunn, Cocoa, Fuzzy Kane, More of Everything.

Also Mickey Fields, Jerry Hollinger, William Gorfigan, Harold Adams, Marlene Ross.

Awards will be presented to buisness, civic and musical organizations.

A reception to honor Dr. Frances N. Beckle, author of "20 Black Women" will be held Sunday, May 7 from 3 - 5 p.m. at the Afro - American Center, 12 W. Madison.

Ray Hamby's New Players Company open his new play and playhouse "Collateral" at Madison and St. Paul, Saturday April 29 at 8 p.m. It's about winners, losers and alcoholics with a lot of smiles.

Euble Blake will be in the Peabody Series on May 4 and the Morgan Choirs at the Lyric, Sunday May 7.

Fred Benjamin - Dance Company

The Dance Arts Ensemble and the Baltimore Percussion Ensemble will give a joint concert at the Baltimore Museum of Art on Sunday, April 30 at 3:00 p.m.

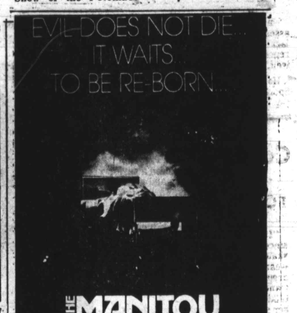
The dance company, under the direction of Frances Flint, is comprised of members of the Let's All Dance Project of the Mayor's Office of Manpower. Deborah London is project director.

Members of the company will perform "Speeds and Moments," choreographed by Mrs. Flint, "Victim of the Game," a dramatic modern work by Disa Hoover, and Leslie Weiss' balletic offering, "Let's All Dance in the Garden," among other diverse presentations. Solo pieces by members Audrey Terry and Harriet Lynn will be included in the performance. Rita Abel, Dawn Preuss, Michael Margolis, Theresa Carter, and Geri Lynn Halston, are also featured in the concert.

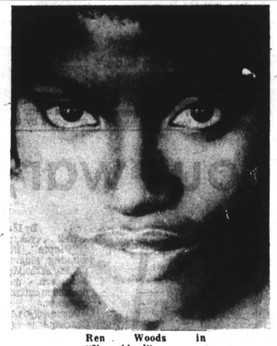
The 6th Annual Bonsai Show of the Potomac Bonsai Association will be April 29th and 30th, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the National Arboretum 24th and R. Sts., N.E., Washington, D.C. in the main administration building; admission is free.

CANTAT '78, an annual musical festival for high school singers, will be held April 27 - 29 in the Fine Arts Recital Hall of the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Debbie Allen holds copy of Lewis J. Carroll's "Alice's Adventures In Wonderland." She will play title role in "Alice," a new Broadway musical opening in July.



Ren Woods Stars in 'Youngblood'



Ren Woods in "Youngblood"

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Petite, young Ren Woods, who gained fame as "Dorothy" in the stage musical, "The Wiz," reaches another plateau as Sybil in the new American International Pictures' release, "Youngblood," combining to theatre screens this spring.

As Sybil, a young girl whose first tender love feelings are complicated by dope addiction, Ren adds another facet to a fast - rising dramatic acting career which has already seen her featured in the award - winning mini - series, "Roots" on television and the hit comedy film, "Car Wash."

Ms. Woods first began to make a name for herself singing at age 9 in Portland, Oregon, where she grew up and, "Sunday's Child," the trio she formed as a sub - teenager, made its national television debut on NBC - TV's "Social Special."

"Youngblood" stars Lawrence - Hilton Jacobs and introduces Bryan O'dell in the title role.

The film features an original musical score, composed and performed by the rock group, WAR.

Enoch Pratt Children, Events

Tues., May 2

Cherry Hill Center: Spelling Bee for ages 8 to 12 (or grades 3 to 6). Registration from available at library. Deadline for registration, Friday, May 19.

Herring Run Branch: Films — "Turned On!" and "Runaway Railroad," 3:30 p.m.

Central Library, Children's Department: Storey hour for ages to to 12, 4 p.m.

Fort Worthington Center: Films — "Dog's Heaven" and "Ben and Me," 4 p.m.

"Tales of Hoffmann" Central Pratt Library, Sunday 2 p.m.

"Pygmalion" Central Pratt Library, Monday 7 p.m.

"Amsterdam" and "Praise the Sea." Central Pratt Library, Tuesday 2 p.m.

"No Walls: A Prison Film," Pratt's Patterson Park Branch, Tuesday 7 p.m.

"Billy the Kid Returns," "The Great Toy Robbery," and "Son of the Prarie," Central Pratt Library, Saturday 2 p.m.

Top Gospel singles

1. Live At Carnegie Hall — James Cleveland
2. Love Alive — Walter Hawkins
3. Wonderful — Edwin Hawkins
4. Mighty Clouds of Joy Live — Mighty Clouds of Joy
5. The Comforters — Edwin Hawkins
6. Family of Light — Andrae Crouch

Top R & B Albums

1. Bootsy? — Bootsy's Rubberband
2. Weekend in L.A. — George Benson
3. Blue Lights in the Basement — Roberta Flack
4. Funkentelechy vs. Placebo Syndrome — Parliament
5. Street Player — Rufus featuring Chaka Kahan
6. All 'N All — Earth, Wind & Fire

—More Pippin'

(Continued from Page 13)

The opening night audience rewarded him with prolonged applause. Throughout the play he represented the devil's advocate... the man who kept reminding the players he was in charge and he could change their destinies.

The play opened with white gloved hands moving on a black stage to the tune of "Magic To Do". The moving hands were a take off of the old Slappy White routine he used to do on the stage of the Royal Theatre and in recent years at the Playboy Club.

Then the chorus or Players appeared dressed in white face with clown makeup and outlandish costumes to stimulate old Roman dress.

Pippin, we are told is the first son of Charlemagne. . King of the Holy Roman Empire and a "giant in the bedroom." He has just returned from the University of Padua. He tries to talk with his father about what he is going to do with the rest of his life.

The leading player, Larry Riley with magic tricks promises a play with the greatest ending ever seen.

The King introduces his son ts war in Scene 3 with "War Is A Science." The fast patter with the players seated in the formation of a minstrel show is comelete with white gloves, foot tapping, End Men, Mr. Interlocutor, Mr. Bones and tambourine . . . the whole bit.

Pippin is then introduced to the world of wine, women, song and sex with the players gyrating to the music that imitates the Calypso of Harry Belafonte to the disco antics of KISS.

The frantic and skillful bumps and grinds of the showgirls are faintly reminiscent of a burlesque show.

Then enters Thelma Carpenter, the grandmother of "Pippin" and her one big number "No Time At All" where she cautions Pippin not to take life so seriously and to enjoy it.

Thelma, in her costume, that could be a take - off of a Southern mammy or a burlesque of a Roman lady, gets the audience to participate with a huge sign board dropped from the ceiling. The opening night audience just ate it up.

There are plots and counterplots. The stepson and son plotting to kill the King. Highlight of the show is the performance of Carole Schweid as the stepmother Fastrada. Her sexy "Spread A Little Sunshine" is the hit of the show.

The rebellion of Pippin finally leads him to a buxom, loving widow, her young son and a choice.

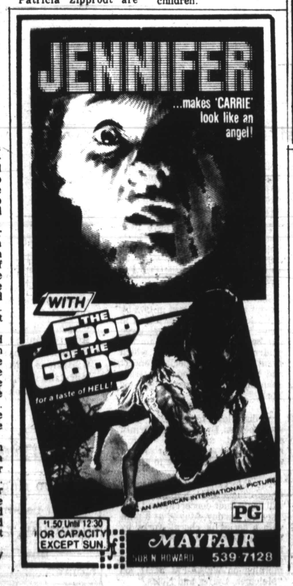
The leading player finally offers him the ultimate way to glory and the offer is finally refused and you'll be surprised at the ending.

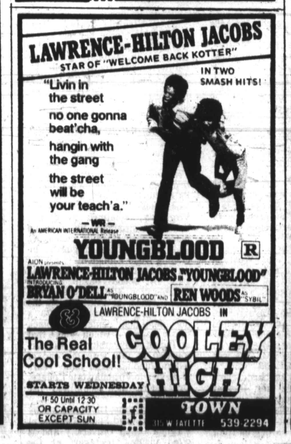
It's a little like Dorothy in "The Wiz."

"Pippin is a splendid production and it moves right along for two hours without an intermission. Larry Riley, who took over the Ben Vereen Broadway role is sensational."

The costumes by Patricia Zipprodt are outlandish and the scenery far and away the best seen in Baltimore this season.

Recommend you see "Pippin" for an enjoyable evening. Adults only. Not recommended for children.





...and all that jazz

By Bob Matthews

ave been doing lot of assessment of the local jazz scene...and happily report that it is alive and well.

Have dropped into the Sportsman's Lounge for the Saturday afternoon sets a few times, and am really impressed with the caliber of musicians playing the local scene.

Couple of weeks ago, there was what we would call a sax - bash at the Lounge, featuring Mickey Fields, Arnold Sterling and Andy Ennis.

Normally, Andy is out-of-town — on the road with the Ray Charles band. But — Ray usually takes a few months off each year, and when he does, Andy comes back to Baltimore to gig around.

Mickey and Arnold are well known, and we'll talk about their regular spots at another time.

There is a more or less "new" group in town, called "The Reacts."

They regularly play at the Lounge on Sunday nights — we're told, but we caught them at the Saturday set, and again at the benefit concert for drummer Jimmy Johnson.

The leader is David Smith, who plays tenor, along with Jimmy Wilson, trumpet; Bob Wyatt, drums and at the set we caught, Bill Byrd, organ.

The group leans toward the electronic jazz sphere. In fact, Wilson uses an induction mike to totally electrify his sound — which makes his horn sound like everything except a trumpet.

His play can be likened to the fusion, high energy sound of a Freddie Hubbard, with cascades of notes spilling out of the horn's bell, and the necessary speakers.

Yet, when he went strictly acoustic, the sound was much improved, and he swung mightily.

The same could be said of David Smith, who has what could be called a laid - back style of play, based on the type of music you expect from Dexter Gordon.

Bob Wyatt, on drums, is a former big band drummer, most recently having played with Maynard Ferguson.

Big band drummers are, of course, excellent timekeepers. In fact, their main forte is to push the music along, and allow for no respite until the final chord is resolved.

Wyatt fills the bill admirably. One sidenote: Johnny Polite, one of the local drummers, says the only chance he had to play with Maynard, came when he filled in for Wyatt who was out because of illness.

The group is building. Waited until we had heard them three times before forming an opinion, and we predict they'll be one of the groups Baltimore will clutch to its bosom — SOON!

On the jazz scene: The U.S. Navy Band, The Commodores, will play the Sunday set for the Left Bank Jazz Society. It's a free concert. If you haven't heard this group — you should.

It's a big band, which has to be one of the most tightly rehearsed groups around. After all, it's their full - time job.

Over in D.C., the Zoot Simms quartet is at Blues Alley on Saturday, with Ahmad Jamal coming in on Monday, May 1.

The Cellar Door in D.C. will have Freddie Hubbard today and tomorrow, with a group called Directions, featuring Jack DeJohnette on drums for Sunday.

Candy's exhausting role in "Rollergirls'

Candy Ann Brown

"I hadn't roller skated since the days of hooking skates on your shoes and wearing the skate key around your neck," says Candy Ann Brown in talking about how rusty her skating was when she began preparing for her role as J. B. Johnson in NBC-TV's "rollergirls" series premiering this week.

Candy Ann — familar to TV audiences via commercials for everything from cameras to bathroom tissues, and to theatregoers for her numerous appearances on Broadway in productions such as "Purlie," "Applause," "Pippin" and "Chicago" — stars as the Pittsburgh Pitts roller-skating team's "foxy," street-wise member, who developed her speed and skill by dodging Harlem dudes.

"J.B. is egotistical, but she doesn't say anything she doesn't believe," says Candy Ann of her character. "She really believes she is the best skater, as well as the best looking girl in the arena. Her attitude is, 'I am fine, I can skate, I am a star.' She's not humble. She comes out with what she considers to be the facts.

Getting back to the training for her role as J.B., Candy Ann continued: "John, our technical adviser, made it look easy as well as a lot of fun. Ignorance is bliss. I couldn't take more than two minutes at a time around the arena. It was exhausting. The following day, I was in terrible shape — my arms, shoulders and upper back were killing me."

Born and raised in San Rafael, Calif., the 5' 6" actress, the daughter of an Air Force officer, traveled extensively with her family during her youth. She attended elementary school and became a student of dance in Queens, N.Y. She went on to junior high school on Okinawa; high school in Duluth, Minn.; and college at Macalester University in St. Paul, Minn., where she majored in elementary education.

At the age of 18, she moved with her family back to New York, where she traded her desire to teach for a stronger yen to be an actress, auditioned for and joined the chorus of the Broadway production of "Hello, Dolly!" The following year, she moved to Los Angeles for a role in "Perpetual Sunshine."

Other theatrical credits include Ruth Gordon's "Ho!, Ho!, Ho!" and the Mark Taper Forum production of "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide-When the Rainbow Is Enuf."

Included in her film credits are "Heavy Traffic," "Mortadella" and "Minnie and Moskowitz." She has appeared in TV's "Feelin' Good," "Search For Tomorrow" and "Singer Presents Liza With a Z."

TV Watching

By Vanessa Johnson

Friday

CPO Sharkey: A chiseling used - car dealer flimflams Sharkey's ring with a bogus $250 lemon. 8:30 - 9:00 p.m. - NBC.

Baseball: The Orioles vs the White Sox at Chicago. 8:30 - 11:30 p.m. - Channel 13. -

Rockford Files: Rockford's old buddy (Isaac Hayes) asks for help in finding his girlfriend Dionne Warwick), a night club singer abducted by her ex - husband. 9:00 - 10:00 p.m. - NBC.

MIDNIGHT Special : Guest host is Journey, Eddie Money, Rita Coolidge, Al Jarreau and Juggler Chris Bliss are the guests tonight. 1:00 - 2:30 a.m. - NBC.

Saturday

Fat Albert: Lacking musical instruments to begin a marching band, the kids learn how to improvise with what they have. 12:00 - 12:30 p.m. - CBS.

Soul Train: Guests today are Smokey Robinson, Patti Alston and the Soul Train Gang. 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. - Channel 11.

The Jeffersons: George actually encourages Florence to insult him after noticing how her biting wit amuses a visiting big shot. 8:00 - 8:30 p.m. - CBS.

Baseball: The Orioles vs the White Sox at Chicago's Comiskey Park. 8:30 - 11:00 p.m. - Channel 13.

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Saturday Night Live: Hostess Mary Kay Place is joined by Andy Kaufman and country singer Willie Nelson and the Not Ready for Prime Time Players starring - Garrett Morris. 11:30 - 1:00 a.m. - NBC.

Sunday

Three on Three: Pete Maravich (Jazz), Billy Cunningham (coach of the 76ers) and LeVar Burton vs Rick Barry (Warriors), Lenny Wilkens (Coach of the Supersonics) and Kent McCord. 1:00 - 1:30 p.m. Channel 2.

Baseball: The Orioles vs the White Sox at Chicago's Comiskey Park. 2:15 - 4:45 p.m. - Channel 13.

American Sportsman: In search of the "real Kuntas," LeVar Burton journey's to the South American nation of Surinam. There he makes contact with members of the Aruriconer tribe, whose ancestors had rebelled against Dutch slave traders more than three centuries ago. 4:00 - 4:30 p.m. - Channel 7.

ABC Movie: "Sky Terror," about a 707 hijacked to Moscow. Starring Rosemary Grier. 9:00 - 11:00 p.m. - ABC.

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Jesse Walker's N.Y.

...and now a word

Toni Morrison, author of novel, "Song of Solomon," is profiled on PBS, Mon., May 1 at 10 p.m.

Don King, "King of the Hustlers," is reviving the old Hustler's Ball — only his event will be called a Sportsman's Ball and held in Las Vegas at Ceasars Palace, June 8, the night before the Norton-Holmes Heavyweight "Title" fight. $10,000 in cash prizes being offered for best dressed brother, sister and couple.

Melvin Miller, publisher of The Bay State Banner, Bert Lee, president of the Dudley Corporation and Henry Morgan, a professor at the Boston University School of Business Administration are the top officials in New England Television which paid a reported $59 million for WNAC-TV, the Boston affiliated of CBS. With FCC approval, it will become one of the few TV stations to have Blacks among its directors and stockholders.

A 100-member all-black National Afro-American Philharmonic Orchestra will perform at the Philadelphia Academy of Music on May 22, conducted by James Frazier, Jr., first black conductor to lead the Philadelphia Orchestra.

James Earl Jones is closing April 30 in "Paul Robeson," the one-character play now sharing the boom theater with "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf."

Guitarist-singer George Benson returns from his Australian tour to play the Belasco Theatre in NYC, May 3-7.

Dorothy Donegan is breaking up everybody on her latest return to Jimmy Weston's on East 54th Street. She's sharing the stage of the popular club with the Tommy Furtado Trio, a fixture there.

Cab Calloway, still going strong at 70, is in "Bubbling Brown Sugar" at New Jersey's Paper Mill Playhouse.

Gossip

Bill Lane in Hollywood

Sonny Rollins racking up kudos for his San Francisco gig, still talking about his recent India concerts and the honors he received when he was in Atlanta to bestow honors upon fellow jazzman Duke Pearson, who lives in Georgia now and is confined to a wheelchair with multiple sclerosis.

Dick Griffey, the Hollywood concert promoter and president of Soul Train Records, says he's changing the name of his company. The film and its records products will now bear the name Solar Records, the name deriving, says Griffey, from "Sound of Los Angeles Records." First out under the new Solar label are The Whispers, with their hot single "All The Way" from their upcoming "Headlights" album, On Solar, of course.

When Michael Jackson was interviewing heart - transplant specialist from South Frica, Dr. Christiaan Bernard on his KABC radio talk - show here a black caller asked the surgeon if he had his choice would he prefer being born black or white in the United States or South Africa. The medic said quickly he'd prefer to be born white in either country "because the opportunities are better that way," adding, "but when I operate on a patient I find always beneath the skin they are all the same."

Slim Gaillard, years back did a zany "vout - o - Reeny" folio of records and inventive procursor of songs like "Tutti Frutti" and "Flat Foot Floogie," came back to L. A. recently for some mini concerts. He now has a grey beard, is 62 and is into farming in the State of Washington . . . and Roderick Mann declares Cicely Tyson is the cheapest date of all, as she goes on dates carrying her own flask of water and a pocketful of nuts.

Toni Morrison's new book, "Song of Solomon," now a Book - of - The - Month Club selection. Toni works for a major publisher in New York, Random House. She's now editing a new book on the master chefs of New Orleans . . Candi Staton getting back from her European tour with the Stylistics, and doing TV specials in Holland and Belgium . . . John Lee Hooker's out with his new two - record album, "The Cream," recorded at the Keystone Club in Palo Alto, California. . .

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READY TO GO to San Francisco for tenth annual meeting of National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc., are Rosetta J. Jolley, president of Baltimore chapter, second from left, and H. J. Gillis and Carl E. Bell, shown getting tickets from Stella Alston, vice president of Aristocrat Travel Service Inc., which arranged charter flight for group which leaves Sunday.

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