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SHOWTIME

Theatre, the Arts, Movies, Music

Heatwave 'boogies' in with Rufus, Stargard

By Ida Peters

One of the hottest and newest bands to emerge on the International pop scene is Heatwave. They will 'boggie' into the Capitol Centre at Largo tonight, Friday, in a "Street Players' Festival" with Rufus featuring Chaka Khan and Stargard.

This week, talked with Johnnie Wilder Jr., Heatwave's leader and founder. The Epic recording star called from Baton Rouge, La. across from Louisiana State University where a crowd of 300 students were trying to tear the store down.

He stated that while his group is being called an "overnight success" because they have sold 5-million plus records in one year, their roots stretch across two continents and span nearly a decade of evolution.

Their debut single "Boogie Nights" sold two million records in one year; their debut album "Too Hot To Handle" sold two million units; and their second single "Always and Forever" has just sold another million even before their second album "Central Heating" was released this month.

Heatwave opened its first U.S. tour . . . they're top of the charts in England and Germany . . . March 17 in Houston and they have been playing to sell-out and near sell-out houses ever since.

In Dayton, Ohio, they were met at the airport by 1,000 fans and the mayor and given the key to the city.

Johnnie Wilder Jr. is 28, a native of Dayton, Ohio, where he gained local fame in high school for his singing and dancing. He won awards in the school choir and amateur productions, "Music Man" and "The King and I."

At Central State University he had a major in math and a minor in gymnastics. His ambition then was to represent the U.S. in gymnastics in the Olympics.

Drafted in 1969, he was assigned to the Army headquarters in Heidelberg, Germany as a computer analyst and formed a singing group (like the Temptations) to sing in service clubs.

They called themselves the Soul Sessions. After meeting some German musicians the group was reorganized as the Noblemen, until his discharge in 1972.

From 1972 to 1976 the band went through many changes and made two summer tours of the United Kingdom before clicking and being taken on by GTO founder and president, Dick Leahy, and finding Barry Blue to produce them.

The members of Heatwave today re:

Johnnie and his brother Keith, vocals, Dayton, Ohio; Mario Mantese (bass from Spain and Switzerland); Rod Temperton (keyboards from England); Bilbo Berger (drums, from Czechoslovakia and West Germany); Roy Carter (guitar and keyboards from England); and his cousin Billy Jones (guitar, Dayton, Ohio).

Johnnie is the only married member of the band. He married his wife, Rosalyn, a native of Augusta, Ga. nine years ago and they have one daughter.

The group is based in Germany, but live in London, England.

Looking forward to meeting the group at the Capitol Centre where CBS Records has taken a Sky Suite to welcome them properly to the East Coast.

And . . . no kidding Johnnie! I have two children your age! That's what a columnist gets for asking an artist his age.

HEATWAVE — Members of Heatwave shown are (L to R): Keith Wilder, Rod Temperton, Billy Jones, (Standing), Johnnie Wilder, Mario Monteso, Roy Carter and Bilbo Berger

EDMONDSON PRODUCTION — The Edmondson High School Cultural Department will present "Soul Princess and the Blackeyed Pea," Sunday, May 7 at 2 p.m. and Monday, May 8, 8 p.m. The Princess, Valerie Rogers (L), is about to be crowned by the prince, played by Hartman Milton. Tickets may be purchased any day at the school, 501 Athol Ave., between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Inquire in the main office.

On black classical music

Dominique de Lerma

Dr. deLerma is professor music at Morgan State University. He also hosts a radio show, "Melodies, Notes and Lyrics," Sunday, 11 a.m., WEAA - FM

Nationalism and a pride in cultural heritage entered Cuban music largely through the efforts of a highly imaginative black composer, whose death at the age of 39 robbed the Western Hemisphere of one of its most promising musical figures.

Amadeo Roldan y Gardes was born in Paris, on July 12, 1900, to Afro - Cuban parents. By the time this prodigy was nine, he had won first prize in theory at the conservatory in Madrid, where the family was then residing and, in 1916, the same school awarded him the Sarasate prize in violin.

He remained in Spain until he was 19, active as a recital soloist. When he moved to Cuba in 1919, he decided on composition as his profession, although he remained quite busy as a performer.

By the time he was 24, he had served as conductor of the National Theatre of Havana, established the Chamber Music Society, played the violin in the Symphony Orchestra of Havana and was appointed concertmaster of the Havana Philharmonic.

Already in his first composition, the "Poem for String Quartet," he had introduced Afro-Cuban Rhythms, departing from the Italianate styles of composition which were expected of Latino composers at that time. This quartet which comes from 1921 particularly makes use of hemiola: — that simultaneous or consecutive use two-and three-beat patterns so often found in Caribbean and Mexican folk music and dances.

The musical life of Havana really came into full blossom as a result of Roldan's intense schedule. In the last 13 years of his life, he established three significant concert series, founded the Havana String Quartet and initiated the Normal School of Music. Subsequently, he was appointed director of the Philharmonic Conservatory, professor (and later, director) of the Municipal Conservatory of Havana.

But perhaps his major position was that of conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Havana, which ensemble he helped found and with which he remained until his death.

These groups were dedicated, not only to the performance of important works of the past, but to that of contemporary music.

In his short life, Roldan wrote 20 works, including compsitions for choral and chamber ensembles, songs, orchestra music, works for piano and ballets. Many of these secured performances in the United States, most often at festivals of Latin - American and contemporary music.

While his "Children's Pieces" (1937) enrich the potential repertoire of the moderately advanced pianist, perhaps no works were as innovative or remain more attractive than the fifth and sixth items within the sextet of pieces called "Ritmicas."

These final items are set for a fairly large ensemble of percussion instruments — almost all of which are of Afro - Cuban origin. The writing is highly contrapuntal, with each instrument maintaining its own personality and role within the group. The effect is startling neo - African.

Fortunately, the music of these two "Ritmicas" is in print and available from Peer - Southern (1740 Broadway, New York City 10019) and should be considered for performance by any advanced group of percussionists.

Those wishing to hear these pieces might be able to locate a recording by the Manhattan Percussion Ensemble, conducted by Paul Price (Mainstream MS - 5011), although this is not easy to find.

May is 'Eubie Blake Month'

Eubie Blake, that grand young man of music, at age 95, was in our town Thursday for a concert at Peabody. (See our review coming in Tuesday's APRO).

The theme of the press conference this past Thursday was "We're Just Wild About Eubie."

Mayor William Donald Schaefer has issued a proclamation designating May 1978 as "Eubie Blake Month" in Baltimore.

The Proclamation

Whereas, James Hubert (Eubie) Blake has led a career unparalleled in American popular music, linking the eras of vaudeville and television with a special style and quality that has marked his work as both performer and composer; and

Whereas, although loved and respected for his role in the "ragtime" era, Eubie Blake has in fact contributed steadily to our musical culture throughout the twentieth century; and

Whereas, Eubie Blake is deserving of a special honor from his hometown, one reserved exclusively for artists celebrating the start of their fourth quarter-century of making the world a measurably better place to live;

Whereas, by proclaiming May, the month of the Preakness, the Flower Mart and other Baltimore institutions as "Eubie Blake Month," we include this gentleman among the most prominent treasures of which this city can be proud.

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APPEARING AT THE LYRIC — Nathan Carter, (L), is shown directing some of the members of the Morgan University Choir who will appear in concert Sunday, May 7 at 8 p.m. at the Lyric Theatre. Shown in this rehearsal photo are (L to R): Tanya Lanham, Mary Moore, Nathaniel Smith, Veronica Bell, John Jackson, May Young, April Colladay, Oscar Muriel, Reginald Ryans, Evelyn Sallee and Tera Deaton. For more information, call 444-2168.