SHOW TIME

The AFRO celebrates 86 years of continuous publication August 13, 1978

'Eubie' opens on Broadway Sept. 20

"Eubie," a new musical revue, with music by Eubie Blake, will premiere on Broadway at the Ambassador Theatre (49th Street and Broadway) on September 20 with previews getting underway on September 14. "Eubie" is currently playing an extended run at the Walnut St. Theatre in Philadelphia where it opened to rave reviews on June 17th.

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"Eubie" was conceived and directed by Julianne Boyd and has choreography and musical staging by Billy Wilson. Featured in the musical are Ethel Beatty, Leslie Dockery, Lynnie Godfredy, Gregory Hines, Maurice Hines, Mel Johnson, Jr., Lonnie McNeil, Janet Powell, Marion Ramsey, Alaina Reed and Jeffery V. Thompson. Danny Holgate is the musical supervisor and arranger, Bernard Johnson created the costumes, Karl Eigsti the sets, William Mintzer the lighting and Lou Gonzalez the sound.

Ashton Springer is the producer in association with Frank C. Pierson and Jay J. Cohen, John N. Hart, Jr. is the associate producer.

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Eubie Balek, native Baltimorean and now a 95 - year - old resident of New York City, makes frequent appearances on television, radio, movies and at universities. His chief collaborators were Noble Sissle and Andy Razaf. He is perhaps best known as the composer of "Shuffle Along" (1921), the first show on Broadway written, produced, performed in and directed by American blacks.

"I'm Just Wild About Harry," "In Honeysuckle Time," and "Memories of You" are a few of the songs from that show included in "Eubie." His other musicals include "Chocolate Dandies," "Blackbirds of 1930" and "Swing It."

Now in its eighth week in Philadelphia, "EUBIE" has a gross of $97,200 in its preceding week at the Walnut Street Theatre.

Leslie Dockery (L) and Lonnie Mc Neil kick up their heels in 'Eubie'

Eleanore Mills has top hit with Norman Connors

By Ida Peters

Eleanore Mills is a serious songwriter and an exciting performer, as proven by her three year tour of the United States and abroad.

Her most recent recorded performances are with the Norman Connors group, "Romantic Journey" from the current hit album "This Is Your Life."

Today (Friday) she will be singing "The Lord's Prayer" at the AFRO's 86th Birthday Party being held at noon, War Memorial Plaza.

A native Baltimorean, Eleanore Mills has always had a never - ending urge to sing and began her career in church, ? ? ? at the age of five.

By her tenth birthday, she choose the arts and was able to travel and perform for various church and school groups as well as being a member of the Dixie Cups, then a well known teenage group.

Many people ask her where she received her musical training. She replies "In church under the inspiration of Christ."

Motivated by such artists as Sam Cooke, Carmen McCrae, Shirley Bassey and Aretha Franklin, Eleanore feels that what she sings and believes is her way of communicating with all people.

When not performing or cultivating her craft, she models professionally is a songwriter and has performed off - Broadway in a number of plays.

She enjoys horseback riding and a vigorous exercise program in a houseful of plants, another hobby that sometimes grows out of hand.

Eleanor Mills sings "This Is Your Life" on Norman Connors' hit album, "Romantic Journey." She will sing The Lord's Prayer at AFRO Birthday Party at War Memorial Plaza at 12 noon (Today) Friday.

On Black classical music

Puerto Rico's first opera composer

Dr. DeLerma is professor of music at Morgan State University. He also hosts a radio show, "Melodies, Notes and Lyrics," Sunday, 11 a.m., .His name was Felipe Gutierrez y Espinosa, and he lived from 1825 to 1900, spending most of his life in his native Puerto Rico which was, at that time, a Spanish colony.

His father waw a bandsman who encouraged his son to secure a good musical training. By the time *Felipe was 20, he had mastered all* of the instruments and was ready for his professional career, starting off as principal musician of the Regimiento Iberia.

For a 40 - year period, he was chapel master of the cathedral and, during its brief existence (1871-1874), head of the music academy.

In 1856 he wrote "La palma del Cacique," the first opera to be composed by a Puerto Rican.

This was then followed by "Guarionex" whose success can be grasped by the following review, taken from "La guirnalda puerto - riquena" of Aug. 30, 1856:

"The taste which distinguishes this composition, its beautiful melodies and harmonies, and the interest it maintains to the very end, are circumstances which say much in favor of the composer, who has known how to drink from the finest fountains of the art, thereby capturing the most beautiful and sublime, but this is not to say that he has imitated anyone."

The next opera was "El bearnes" and then, perhaps in his final years, "Macias."

In addition to these works are various liturgical compositions, doubtless employed by him for his services to the cathedral

All well and good! Another black composer from Latin America, now ready to join Saint - Georges, Jose White, Jose Nunes - Garcia, Roque Cordero, Juan Morel Campos, Justin Elie, Teodora Gines, and the many other Afro - Latino artists whose names and careers are being researched. But the music that people write needs to be heard, and we will not let Gutierrez fall back into obscurity.

For that matter, "Macias" was produced last season in San Juan, and the audience was hysterical. It is hard to determine exactly from which fountains he drank, but they were mostly Italian.

He could hardly have escaped being influenced by Verdi, his contemporary, but it seems that he also knew quite well the more serious operas of Donizetti. The harmonic language is nonetheless rather advanced and quite original, once in a while taking on Spanish flavors.

The opera takes place in Spain, early in the 15th century. One of the characters, Enrique de Villena (1384-1434) was, in fact an ancestor of mine.

The hero, Macias, has been away from court for a year. Elvira promised to wait for that period to marry him but, when Macias fails to return on the exact day the year ends, she is forced to marry Fernan.

Macias arrives too late. His anger at learning what took place at the last minute culminates when he challenges Fernan to a duel, but his behavior is so unruly he is placed in jail to wait for the duel. When Fernan sneaks into the cell in the middle of the night, planning to murder Macias, he is horrified to find his wife Elvira already there, trying to help Macias escape.

Macias is killed, and Elvira stabs herself. Rather than feel any remorse because of the deaths, Fernan takes comfort in the fact that the stain on his honor has been removed, and the opera comes to an end.

My readers familiar with Spanish ideals of "honor y hidalguia" *(honor and nobility) will recognize* how ethnic this plot is.

The translation of the plot, by the way, has recently been accomplished by Joseph Vales, of Baltimore.

As for a future of this opera in the United States, I am pleased to state that permission has been granted from the Spanish government for me to prepare a new edition (the composer dedicated the opera to the Kinof Spain and governmental permission was therefore essential).

Paul Freeman plans to give "Macias" its American premiere in Rochester during the 1979-80 season, following this with performances in New York City and, very likely, a recording. Casting is not completed yet, but the singers will consist mainly of Puerto Rican and Afro - American artists.

As details are worked out and the time draws nearer, more information will be peovided in these columsn.

Parliament lead singer dies of Hodgkins Disease

Parliament Funkadelic

Family, friends and colleagues were shocked this week at the sudden death of Glenn Goins, former lead singer for Parliament - Funkadelic.

The 24 - year - old Goins died at Raritan Valley Hospital in Plainfield, N.J. from an infection. Goins had suffered Hodgins Disease since he was sixteen, but it had been in a state of remission for the past eight years.

Funeral services were held at the Church of Christ in Plainfield, N.J. Goins is survived by his widow Bobbi; daughter, Ka-Sette and brothers, Tyrone and Kevin.

Glenn Goins

... and all that Jazz

New saxist is spooky

By Bob Matthews

Continuing the trek around area jazz watering holes, dropped in to the King of France Tavern at the Maryland Inn in Annapolis.

On tap (if you'll pardon the pun) is a quintet, headed by Scott Hamilton, with Buddy Tate as the alternate saxophone alter ego.

Had heard Scott on recordings, but was not prepared for what his presentation showed. First of all, he looks less like a musician then anyone we've seen.

In fact, the group was so well dressed, in coats, shirts and ties, it was truly amazing. Scott looks like a floorwalker at Macy's. All that is missing is a carnation in the buttonhole.

Then, they started. First tone was "All of Me."

When Scott soloed, it was downright eerie. There was a certain spookiness about hearing a 23 - year - old man playing in the true style of one of the old past masters.

On this particular tune, he sounded like Stan Getz. Of course when Buddy Tate took his solo, it was like a reincarnation of Coleman Hawkins, from whom he took a style years ago.

Tate has been around quite a while. He played with the Basie band from 1939-49, taking over the chair of Lester Young when he left Basie.

But, Buddy was a known quantity. We knew how he would sound. We didn't, however know how the guitarist Chris Florrie would sound.

Believe it or not, he evoked memories of Django Rheinhart, with overtones of Herb Ellis and Les Paul — simply frightening.

Then, there was Chuck Riggs on drums. Bless Bess, he handled brushes and sock cymbals much in the Gene Krupa manner, plus doing a little stick work like Philly Jo Jones.

On one solo, he stayed with a one - beat roll — and displayed some of the fastest hands we've ever seen. He never strayed too far out, a single paradiddle was the extent of his exploration.

Phil Planagan was the bassist, and he too was in the old school mold. None of the fancy runs exemplified by a Ray Brown, his was the tried and true plunkings of a Milt Hinton or Al McKibbon.

Like I said, the entire proceeding was spooky.

Then came the real mind blower. The quintet launched into "Blue and Sentimental." As any old jazz fan know, this was recorded by the Basie band back in about 1935, and featured Herschel Evans on tenor sax — the forerunner to Lester Young.

Bearing in mind that Scott Hamilton is 23 years old, you kinds wonder where he learned all the changes. Except for Buddy Tate, who is in his sixties, the average age of the quintet members is about 27 years of age.

Talked to Buddy Tate after the set.

Believe it or not, we just couldn't think of the name of the second tune they played. The melody was oh, so familiar, but the name — escaped us.

When Buddy said, "that was Robbins Nest," we nearly flipped. Buddy said the Left Bank Jazz Society wanted to book the group, but they are headed for the west Cost.

They will play at the Monterey Jazz Festival, after which they go their separate ways. Scott goes to Japan, and Buddy Tate heads to Seattle and Portland.

They've been together over a year, splitting occassionally for separate gigs, and are still having loads of fun playing together. The chemistry is there, and you can see that Scott idolizes Buddy.

They're at the Maryland Inn through Sunday. And if you go to see them—we recommend it—you'll know what we mean by spooky.

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