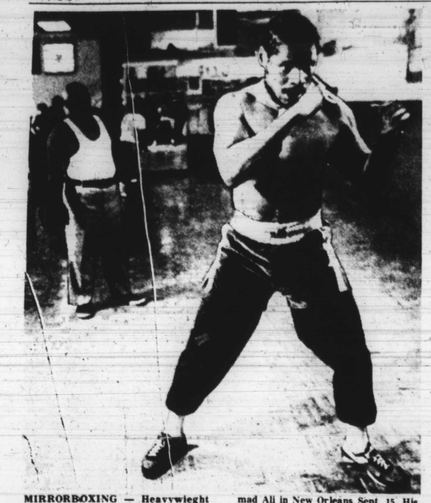

MIRRORBOXING — Heavyweight champion Leon Spinks boxes in front of a mirror in prepration for his heavyweight title fight with Muhammad Ali in New Orleans Sept. 15. His trainer Sam Solomon (background) watches.

Morgan players named to all-MEAC team

Morgan State University, North Carolina A and T University and South Carolina State dominate the pre - season All - Conference team in the Mid - Eastern Athletic Conference.

Leading the offense is Nate Rivers, South Carolina State's explosive quarterback who last year rushed for 863 yards and 13 touchdowns.

North Carolina A and T placed six players on the team and South Carolina State and Morgan State had four each on the All - Conference squad.

The defensive front four, all repeaters, include end Dwaine Board of North Carolina, South Carolina State's end Bobby Moore and tackle Walt Sullivan, along with Howard University's tackle Tom Spears.

The all - senior defensive backfield is led by safety Tom Warren of North Carolina A and T, who intercepted a league - leading seven passes last year, and Joe Fowlkes of Morgan State, Tom Douglas of Delaware State and Tyrone Smith of Maryland - Eastern Shore.

The linebackers are David Cocker of Delaware State, Walt Odum of North Carolina Central and George Small of North Carolina A and T.

The interior of the offensive line includes center Jeff Jackson of North Carolina A and T, guard Willie Washington and tackle Wheeler Brown.

Morgan's Marvin Hicks, a guard, and South Carolina State tackle Arthur Prescott fill out the line.

Morgan's Lloyd McCleave, the leading return career rusher in the MEAC, was picked as one of the running backs. The other is sophomore Anthony Beamon of Delaware State.

Receivers include tight end Joe Mack of North Carolina Central, who tied for the league reception lead last year with 34, and wide receivers Nathan Munford of Morgan and Steve Wilson of Howard.

Earlier, South Carolina State was tabbed as the favorite to pick up a fifth consecutive conference crown and North Carolina A and T was rated a close second.

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Bowie football team ready for '78 season

BOWIE — Bowie State's football squad opened practice sessions this week with a bigger, more experienced team giving Coach John Organ high hopes for a winning season, according to school officials.

In contrast to the rebuilding years of 1976-77, when the Bulldogs had records of 1-8 and 3-7, respectively, the team has 35 veterans returning.

With Sid Gardner, a 6-3, 230 - pound tackle from the 1975 team, returning for his senior year at Bowie after a tour in the Navy, Coach Organ said he will have a bigger, faster and stronger offensive line. At the other tackle will be Ernie Lievers, 6-1, 230 pounds, who played in 1976 but was ineligible for football last year.

"These two are going to add a lot of strength to our offense," Organ said. "Ron Nichols and Roger Briscoe, our offensive guards have put on 10 to 15, pounds through weight -lifting programs, so we'll be stronger and more experienced all across the line."

To spark the defense, Coach Organ has the Coates twins, Keith and Kevin, who between them had 218 tackles, 16 quarterback sacks and four blocked punts from their defensive end positions last year.

Organ has designated the Coates twins, who are seniors this year, as co-captains of the 1978 team.

To fill the very big hole on defense left by the loss of linebacker Archie O'Neil, Organ has a transfer from the 1976 University of Richmond team, Garland Branch, 6-3, 245 pounds, and three returning Bowie State players, - senior Dave Nickers and sophomores Steve Lee and Ben Bennett.

The major problem still to be worked out as the Bulldogs prepare for their home opener against St. Paul Sept. 9 is just what sort of attack to put behind that strong offensive line.

William "Tuffy" Stewart, a sophomore, is the only returning quarterbak among the three who alternated in that position last year, and there's no replacement in sight at this time for Rickie Simmons, pass - catching ace of the Bulldogs at flanker the past three years.

Mike Moore, the team's leading ground gainer with 294 yards and a 3.1 per carry rushing average last season, and Ron Evans, who gained 136 yards in 38 carries before being sidelined with a leg injury at midseason, are the only two running backs returning.

"We'll have a much improved team," Organ said optimistically. "That was evident in spring practice. And our new recruits should help, although how much is a matter of conjecture at this point. We look foward to finding out."

The Bulldogs will play a 10-game schedule, with Elizabeth City (N.C.), Norfolk State and University of D.C. the new opponents replacing New York State, Towson State and University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

AW GEE, UMP — Umpire Doug Harvey (R) walks off the field with a handful of balloons he had taken away from Pittsburgh Pirates first baseman Willie Stargill during a game with the Atlanta Braves Tuesday. Stargill, though, managed to hold on to one of the balloons.

Interleague play weighed

NEW YORK (UPI) — A three - divisional lineup in both major leagues with at least some inter - league play is "realistically possible" in 1980, baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn said last weekend in an effort to clarify the action taken by clubowners during their summer meeting in St. Louis.

Kuhn said that both the National and American leagues agreed to create a committee to study the possibility of divisional and inter-league play and added, "I believe it was a significant move."

Dave McNally ro be enshrined

Dave McNally, winningest lefthander in club history, will be inducted into the Baltimore Orioles Baseball Hall of Fame on Thursday, Aug. 31. Formal induction ceremonies will begin at 7 p.m., thirty minutes before the Orioles' game with the New York Yankees.

The announcement was made by John L. Buckley, Jr., co - chairman of the Oriole Advocates' Hall of Fame Committee. Last year, the Advocates instituted a Hall of Fame open to Orioles of the modern era (1954 to present). Brooks and Frank Robinson were inducted as the first members.

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Backlund tops card at Center

Spiros Arion, rugged veteran whose disputed win over popular Ivan Putski aroused a storm of protest recently, gets a title chance against World Wide Wrestling Federation heavyweight champion Bob Backlund, at Baltimore Civic Center Saturday night.

Arion, who will concede Backlund a youth advantage, will offset this, he says, by enjoying a weight advantage, 260 to 235 pounds, and a substantial edge in experience.

Arion curtly dismissed protests following his defeat of Putski.

"The little man won the popularity contest, but I won the match," he said.

In title match No. 2, the Lumberjacks — Eric and Pierre — will defend their WWWF tag team championship in a 2-of-3 fall meeting with Tony Garea and Haystacks Calhoun.

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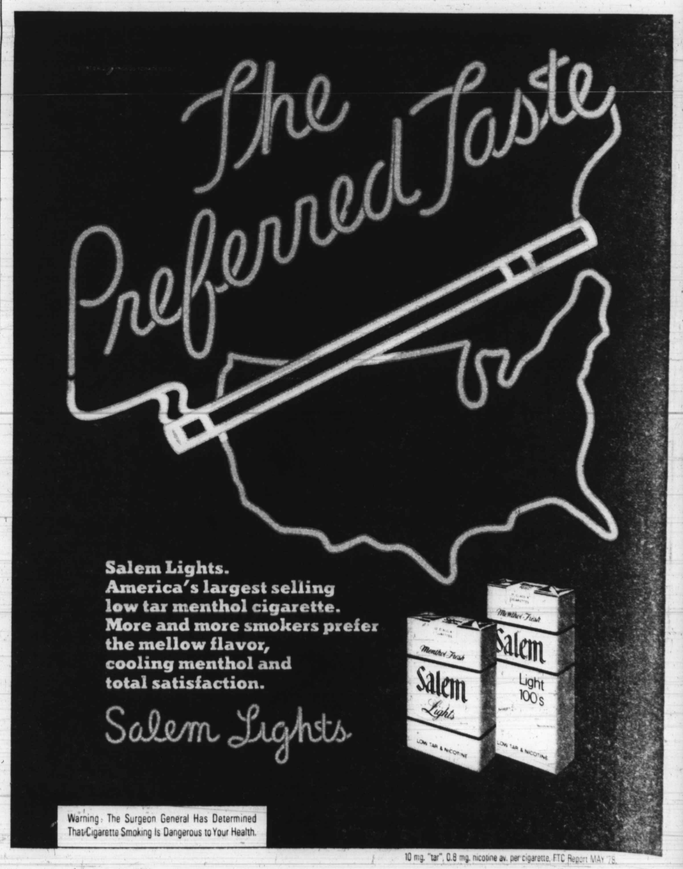


10 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report MAY '78.

SHOW TIME

Fatima....

By Ida Peters

Fatima Ball is a native of Baltimore and currently is engaged in a very dangerous occupation . . . that of Fire Eater and Flame Dancer at Brice's Hilltop Inn and at Cross Keys Inn in Columbia.

In her act she uses six torches and a tray of fire. Without her usual Calypso music, Miss Ball illustrated for the AFRO how she mixes the dangerous chemicals and rubs fire all over her body and then walks through it.

She also extinguishes the flame torches in her mouth. She admits that she has to practice hard to keep from burning her lips. And, she showed us a tiny spot where she had burned her belly button.

To perform her fire tricks, she uses a special chemical, flash paper and a little gunpowder.

She learned her craft when she stayed on Cat Island, between Haiti and the Bahamas for two years studying with fire dancers there.

Fatima's mother is from Baltimore and her father from Bombay in the West Indies. Her grandmother is Matilda Lee, a singer who played the Saw.

She graduated from Eastern High School and Towson State College where he majored in Theatre Arts.

A tiny five foot four, she is single and 27. She has worked at Center Stage where she appeared in "Death of a Salesman." She has also appeared in television commercials in this area.

fire eater, flame dancer

On black classical music

By Dominique de Lerma

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

"An extraordinary mezzo-soprano of regal bearing, with a voice of full-throated splendor, meticulous in musicianship, insightful in interpretation, delightful and instructive and an enricher of our culture."

Thus was Betty Allen described when Whittenberg University awarded her an honorary doctorate in humane letters recently.

I first met Betty in Helsinki, at a rehearsal of the solo quartet which was preparing for a performance and recording of my edition of the Requiem Mass by Nunes-Garcia.

Betty, fresh from a tour of Scandinavia, joined us to sing the mezzo part. Here bullient personality filled the rehearsal room, and her lively dialogue was colored with phrases in Swedish, Italian, French, and just plain funky Afro-American.

We all recognized a delightful, intelligent prima donna beneath that large Tyrolean hat, from which a florid plume emerged with no embarassment at all.

Finlandia Hall was a long distance from Campbell, Ohio, where she had been born, not into glamor or wealth. Her father worked in the steel mills and her mother kept two washing machines going night and day to supplement the family income.

When she was 12, her mother died. In his grief, her father turned to alcohol.

One day she got on the bus for the courthouse in Youngstown where she went before a judge asking that she be put up for adoption.

Certainly a painful step for her to have taken but, even at so early an age, Betty Allen knew she was going to make it, regardless of her sociological inheritance.

The first arrangement did not work out nor, for that matter, did the second. In one case it was a question of family morality and in the second, well, the future diva was being paid $3 a week to do all the washing, ironing and cooking.

She subsequently stayed with an elderly black lady whose great-grandfather had been Jefferson Davis (you know, the one who believed in segregation, all but a few hours of the day), but the regime was too strict — for example, she could not practice the piano on Sundays — so she left for a room at the YMCA.

Betty Allen won

Betty Allen in 1955
AFRO file photo.

During her high school days she thought of becoming a translator, having been attracted to German and Latin, so she went to Wilberforce as a language major.

But her German teacher also taught voice and had been a tenor of the Berlin Opera, and he encouraged her to join the Wilberforce Singers, which she did.

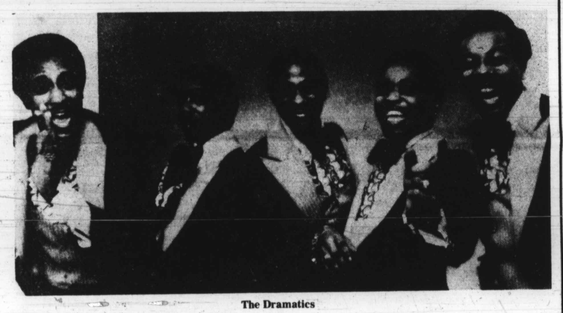
That should have been quite a chorus, by the way, with Betty Allen in the mezzos and with the soprano who was there at the same time: Leontyne Price.

A scholarship for graduate study was accepted from the Hartford School of Music and then, in 1952, one to the Berkshire Music Center. Here she attached the attention of Charles Munch, then conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, who engaged her to sing with the orchestra.

The next year she met Leonard Bernstein who got her to be soloist in his "Jeremiah Symphony," and then Virgil Thomson secured her for his Parisian production of "Four Saints in Three Acts." A career was launched.

Now, with almost 20 major recordings to her credit, more than 60 concerts a year, and a happy marriage of 25 years, Betty Allen finds time within her schedule once in a while to give her energies to the instruction of young vocal talent, sharing with them her irrepressible humor, her warmth, her appreciation for mutual devotion and respect, and her concern to preserve the heritage to which she has already contributed so much.

Between the steel mills and washing machines of Ohio, which might have locked her into a drab and the meaningless existence, and the international stature she now enjoys, there is a lot of talent which was brought into play because Betty Allen was not afraid to work, and her innate dignity demanded that of her.



The Dramatics

AFRO talks with Squirrel

...of The Dramatics

By Ida Peters

"We're going to set it out for you . . . be ready" said Larry (squirrel) Demps, baritone and leader singer for the Dramatics, calling from his home in Detroit.

He was referring to the fact that The Dramatics will be in town Sunday at the Civic Center with A Taste of Honey and Showdown.

The Isley Brothers are headlining.

Demps says the Dramatics are taking a breather in Detroit because they have just completed concerts in Memphis, Milwaukee and St. Louis, with the Isley Brothers. They play Norfolk, and Richmond, Va., Friday and Saturday and Baltimore on Sunday.

They will be singing some of their oldies and goodies as well as their recent Gold records "Do What You Wanta Do." Other hits they will be singing include "Watcha See Is Whatcha Get," "Me. and Mrs. Jones," "Me and My Girl."

The Dramatics are hitting new highs on their tours with The Isley Brothers and Larry Demps says.

"We got the polish from Sammy Davis Jr. and the 'get down' from James Brown."

The Dramatics toured for eight months with James Brown into every major city and in 1974 did two national tours with Al Green.

In 1978, they are still versatile - and producing a hypnotic - like effect on live concert audiences. Music has a tendency to change and The Dramatics have kept up with it.

"We work hard onstage and the people enjoy it" said Demps. Look for them Sunday with The Isleys.

The Isley Brothers at Civic Center, Sunday

Sam Rivers, Johnny Griffin to play LBJS

By Bob Matthews

Every now and again, an event occurs. And the Left Bank Jazz Society has two on its schedule.

The first happens this Sunday, when Sam Rivers brings a quartet into the LBJS set. He'll have Dave Holland on bass, Thurman Barker, percussion and Joe Dalley, tuba.

We call this an event, for it marks the first time that a member of the Soho Studio jazz ilk have played the Famous.

Sam was into the hard bop thing years ago, when he played with Jaki Byard, Gigi Gryce and others. He also played for nine months with Miles Davis, following Coltrane's stint with the trumpeter.

But it was the stretch he played with Cecil Taylor that really shaped Sam's direction. As he puts it: "We rehearsed six to eight hours a day. Constant rehearsing — I'd never done that before."

Rivers says he has just started to receive good press notices, although he's been on the scene many years. He cites Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman as two innovators on the music scene, and of course we add Sam Rivers.

So, don't expect to hear the stomp down beat of a Jimmy Smith or Dexter Gordon. Sam Rivers is of the new school, and one of the best practitioners of the art. It'll get you.

The other upcoming even marks the return of Johnny Griffin to these shores.

Sam Rivers

Johnny Griffin

He's been gone for 15 years working in Europe. Currently, he lives in Holland and has been busy with European recordings, and festivals plus TV and radio programs.

Johnny started out at 17 with the Lionel Hampton band, and really rose to fame with some albums in 1957 with John Coltrane and Hank Mobley.

He played with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, with Thelonious Monk and in 1960 joined forces with Eddie (Lockjaw) Davis for some remarkable sides.

He's returning to play the Monterey Jazz Festival, will join up with Dexter Gordon for a New York date, and come to Baltimore to play the Left Bank Jazz Society gig on Sunday, Sept. 24.