Dick Randolph talks about 'Minnie'

'Memory Lane' and 'Light My Fire' prophetic

Editor's Note: Dick Rudolph, Minnie Riperton's wrote this piece in April, 1979 describing her last great album "Minnie", not realizing she would die of Cancer at the age of 31. She as buried in Los Angeles, July 15, 1979.

We had some ideas about what we wanted in a producer for "Minnie," but couldn't settle on who it would be. Rupert Perry, at Capitol, suggested that we listen to those albums we particularly liked. There was a special sound we were after — it was a quality we only found on the Joni Mitchell "Blue" album, produced by Henry Lewy. When Rupert put us together with Henry we immediately felt great vibes and were impressed by his maturity and sensitivity. The relationship grew from there . . .

For an arranger, we wanted someone who could interpret our sound, not merely put it together. Henry introduced us to Jeremy Lubbock, who is especially talented in classical arrangements. Once we heard his work, we knew we'd found someone who could successfully blend our modern rhythm and jazz elements with a classifical feel which would effectively express the lyric and melodic content of each song. Minnie is the embodiment of that synthesis. . . . And about the songs . . .

Memory Lane — We wanted to write a song that everyone could relate to . . . "Memory Lane" definitely fills the bill. This is the kind of song that comes right out of the pages of real life. One night Minnie was going through a box of old photos and we were re-experiencing all those times. We knew we had something, so the next day we got together with Keni St. Lewis, and presto . . . "Memory Lane."

Along with our arranger, Jeremy Lubbock, we created just the right rhythm section. We started withthe great Harvey Mason, who came through with one of the solidest drum tracks ever. Chuck Rainey on bass and Phil Upchurch on guitar make the groove complete. Jeremy Lubbock's wistful piano and inventive arrangements guaranteed the right space and emotional feel. Minnie made up the backgrounds for the bridge and hook which make "Memory Lane" irresistible and give you the feeling you've been there before.

Lover And Friend — Stevie Wonder was eating dinner at our house one night (I believe it was lemon chicken) and we were discussing our various projects. We played the demo of "Lover And Friend" for Steve and told him we loved the song but we were having trouble finding just the right way to cut it. Steve loved the song too, and offered to cut therhythm track. We thought that would be beautiful (to say the least). Steve always says, "If you trust it, bust it!," so before we knew it we were in the studio and he was laying down the piano, synthesized bass, drums, clavinet and celeste tracks. This kind of giving of time and energy and love is what makes Stevie Wonder the exceptional human being he is.

Jeremy Lubbock added some elegant strings and the dynamite Seawind horns.

Minnie does all the vocals onthis one and the results are electrifying . . . you can rock all night long to "Lover And Friend."

Return To Forever — This is possibythe most touching song on the album, and Jeremy Lubbock's brilliant orchestration perfectly reflcts the lyric and melodic content. It featuresthe great Brazilian guitarist Oscar Castro Neves, with Victor Feldman on piano, and a haunting solo violin by the masterful Jerry Vinci that evokes gypsy vamphres and reflections of life throughthe mist.

We wanted a very special feeling for this song, so we cut it at a "live" session withtherhythm section and orchestration together. This was a diversion from the separate string session technique, and it was definitely worth it, for the live feel is there.

Dancin' & Actin' Crazy — What can I say . . . This is one of the baddest tracks. "Dancin' & Actin' Crazy" combines the best elements of funk and jazz. We had toget Leon Ndugu Chancler of "Reach For It" and "Dukey Stick" fame to play drums on this one. Randy Waldkman, aka "The Great Randini" plays an incredible moog bass and electric piano. The funky guitar belongs to Art Phillips, who had it down so good on the home demo of this song that we had to look no further.

Minnie went in with Sidney Barnes, her old partner from The Rotary Connection, and came up with the thoroughly delightful and outrageous backgrounds of "rus" and "uhms" and "ahs."

The party is one of those things . . . it's for real and we were really getting down even though Minnie was the only girl at the party.

Love Hurts — We were trying to find words and a melody for a track that our friend Mario Henderson had brought by, and our son, Marc, arrived home from school with some artwork. It was a paper and poster rendering of a broken heart withthe words "love hurts" written above it. We were off and running . . .

This chart is brilliant. It gives Minnie a chance to stretch out in a whole other kind of way. We wanted to combine the drive of a modern rhythm section with jazz and classical elements, and "Love Hurts" shows how effectively it can be done. Harvey Mason is smoking on drums. Mitch Holder's rhythm guitar is outstanding. Abe Laboriel is a monster on bass. Arranger Jeremy Lubbock pulled out all the stops withthe horns and strings and even makes marvelous use of a flute section. At the song's end, the strings break into a fugue for a truly brilliant effect.

Never Existed Before — This song started out as just a little guitar piece (which turned out to be the bridge) that we played for our daughter, Maya, to dance to while she pretended she was the 6-year-old prima ballerina of the world. We showed it to our friend, the multi-talented Bill Thedford, and before we knew it, "Never Existed Before" emerged.

This song includes some great percussion work by Paulinho da Costa, Claudio Slom and Steve Forman. That's Steve on "pandeca" in the middle section. The pandeca is a Brazilian instrument that looks like a tambourine but is capable of producing a great deep bending sound when it's struck.

Minnie does all the vocals on this one, which included doubling with a four part flute chase and stacking her vocals against another flute section as Hubert Laws gently blows over the whole thing.

Like a breath of fresh air, "Never Existed Before" was done as the other live recorded session on the album. The arrangement, which features Oscar Castro Neves on guitar, is another Lubbock masterpiece. The strings, the flutes, the descending lines on the rhythm section in the verses, all serve to accentuate the freshness and joy that is the essence of this song.

I'm A Woman — This is another tune we wrote with Bill Thedford in our basement (euphemistically known as the music room). It started off as a great bass lick and grew fro there. We wanted it to be hypnotic and sensual and the result is one of the freshest, most interesting grooves on the album.

Abe Laboriel is, again, exceptional on bass as he plays to Mitch Holder's guitar and Randy Waldman's piano. Harvey Mason's drum pattern is somewhat evolved from Herbie Hancock's Headhunters album, as he and Paulinho da Costa set a sizzling, driving rhythm bed together, Paulinho's percussion track is a mindblower. He did it live and simultaneously . . . shaker cooking in one hand as he played at least 20 bells and blocks with the other.

The unique sound Minnie gave for this track is startlingly effective.

Light My Fire — "Light My Fire" is the crowning glory of the album and the perfect way to go out.

Minnie and I were riding along on a beautiful, balmy L.A. night. Jose's version of "Light My Fire" came on the radio and Minnie started singing along. We knew what we had to do. We cut the track with Harvey Mason, Abe Laboriel, Randy Waldman, Mitch Holder and Paulinho da Costa. One take only, and bam! The feel was fantastic.

One day while working at A&M, Jose (who was recording in the next studio) stopped in to say hello. Henry Lewy, our producer, said, "Man, you've got to hear this track." He put on "Light My Fire" and Jose sat by Minnie and was completely gassed. When it got to the vamp, Minnie whispered to Jose that she thought it would blow people's minds if Jose would sing a line or two right there in the vamp. Jose jumped up and shouted, "Put me up a microphone," and you can hear what happened . . . one of the sweetest duets of all time. Guess it was just meant to be!

Minnie Riperton

AFRO talks to men who created 'Moonraker'

By Ida Peters

"Moonraker" starring Roger Moore as James Bond 007 has to be one of the most spectacular films ever released in this or any other season.

The United Artist blockbuster, produced by Albert R. Broccoli and directed by Lewis Gilbert racked up $22 million in the first days at 86 theatres across the country.

On Friday the 13th, United Artists reserved a suite at the Watergate Hotel in D.C. for the Baltimore and Washington press to interview two of the artistic genius who are responsible for "Moonraker" and other Bond films. They flew in from New York where they put on a similar demonstration at the Museum of Modern Art.

Ken Adam, the Production designer for "Moonraker" is the motion picture industry's greatest production designer and who was the originator of more than 50 sets including the incredible $500,000 space center constructed on the outskirts of Paris. He brought along his original sketches and designs. He then explained how they were constructed.

Maurice Binder, who has designed the main titles for "Moonraker" as well as more than 52 films and most of the Bond Pictures showed how he has created the special effects using underwater photography and acrobats.

Binder's presentation was on film and he started with the Bond pickures with "Dr. No," 18 years ago. He laughingly explained that he designed the love scene you will see in "Dracula" while he had a little time off from "Moonraker."

Think back to Shirley Bassey singing "Diamonds Are Forever" and how that picture opened with shots of girls in all kinds of diamonds and you get the idea of Maurice Binder's work.

For "You Only Live Twice" he photographed living lava with Nancy Sinatra singing the title tune.

Ken Adam was most fascinating to talk to. As Production Designer for "Moonraker" he says he goes back to never-never land to create magic which is more exciting than reality. TV audiences today are tired of real landscapes and the designer has to create a concept.

Watching his sketches turned into actual sets asked Adams if he based his designs on what is happening in the space program in reality . . . Or, if after the space people see his designs, they copy from him. Adams laughed.

When you see "Moonraker" look for "pipe" and tube designs. Adam says he just happened to be in a pipe period so a lot of the sets are actually constructed around pipe forms.

With a recognized style and revolutionary ideas, Adam in 1963 designed "Dr. Strangelove," winning a British Academy Award for it and rejoining Stanley Kubrick eleven years later to make "Barry Lyndon" for which he received an Oscar for best production design in 1974.

Apart from the most Bond films, Adam was responsible for the design of Basil Dearden's "Woman of Straw" (1964), Sidney Furie's "The Ipcress File" (1965) — another British Academy Award for Art Director — Guy Hamilton's "Funeral in Berlin" (1966) and Ken Hughes' "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" (also for Broccoli) in 1968. He subsequently designed four films for director Herbert Ross: "Goodbye Mr. Chips" (1969), "The Owl and the Pussycat" (1970), "The Last of Sheila" (1972) and "The Seven Percent Solution (1976). Other films include Joseph L. Mankiewicz's "Sleuth" and "Salon Kitty" for Tinto Brass (1976).

Adam and Binder spent more than two hours explaining their craft while outside the Watergate Hotel was blasted by a raging thunder storm.

While everything turned out well . . . have strengthened my resolve never to travel on Friday the 13th. Our limousine broke down on the Baltimore Washington Parkway, a few miles from the airport.

A kind Richmond lady stopped and took up to the airport where we were finally picked up by another limoisine.

And . . . anywhere, anytime you know of anybody who wants to invite me anyplace on Friday the 13th . . . don't call me . . . I'll call you.

A super frog jumping contest has been set for children from seven-to twelve-years-old at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, July 24, at the Pratt library's Forest Park branch, 3023 Garrison boulevard. Children will learn to make paper frogs from an origami pattern book. The race begins at 2 p.m.

This special event is free.

George Burns on Burns

"They want me to pose for the centerfold," George Burns announced to no one in particular, "in an antique catalog."

The 83-year-old comedian unleashed his ready wit last Sunday at Resorts International when Columbia Pictures held the world premiere of "Just You And Me, Kid," in which he stars with adorable Brooke Shields.

Burns plays an eccentric vaudevillian who tries to befriend a distrusting teenager, played by Brooke. The movie's dialogue is liberally sprinkled with sophisticated humor, and Burns' casual, off-camera remarks were equally funny.

Asked to reveal the secret of his longtime success, he offered instant advice.

"The whole idea is to grow old and not use makeup," he said, puffing a cigar.

Why has he always smoked a cigar during his act?

"I always tell people it's because I never knew what to do with my right hand," he said. "But who knows if it's true. I lie a lot."

On courting women, Burns admitted to a unique style.

"I start with a song, end with a song — and nothing happens in between."

Further on women, "I have to date young ones," he claimed. "There are none my age."

On the final day of production, George sent beautiful teenager Brooke Shields a basket of flowers for her dressing-room.

"I wish I were 68 years younger," the card read.

Jesse Walker in N.Y.

CICELY TYSON and Hector Elizondo will have the leading roles i the revival of Tennessee Williams' "The Rose Tattoo," staged by Craig Anderson, playing Aug. 1-13, at the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Stockbridge, Mass.

THE FOURTH ANNUAL "Chink" Cunningham Memorial Golf Classic, sponsored by The Floggers Golf Coub, is set for Monday, Aug. 6 at the Rivervale Country Club in Rivervale, New Jersey.

MOTOWN INDUSTRIES has upped Junius Griffin to vice president for community relations, Shelly Berger for artist relations and Danny Davis for promotion.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS Creative Arts Center is presenting "Mary Goldstein" and "The Author" by Oyamo, with Starletta DuPois and Ben Halley, Jr. at the Henry Street Settlement Arts for Living Center July 12, 15, 19, 22.

CBS Records has upped from director to vice president Vernon Slaughter, jazz and progressivd marketing, and Win Wilford, press andpublic information, black music marketing.

Cancer society cites Minnie Riperton

A tribute to singer Minnie Riperton for her courage in enduring a long drawn-out personal bout with cancer was issued this week by Dr. LaSalle D. Leffall Jr., "She was a symbol of hope and courage to many," he said.

Riperton who died of cancer while serving as Honorary National Crusade Education Chairman of the Society's

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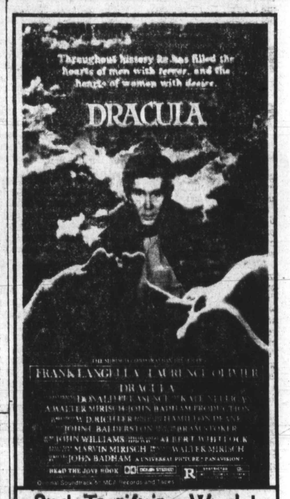

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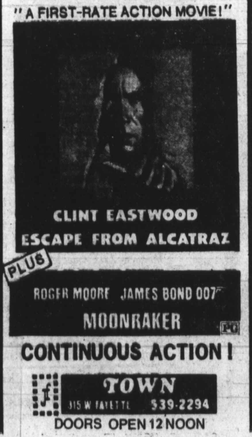
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Theatre

HOME AND BEAUTY — Eisenhower Theatre, Kennedy Center, D.C. A revival of W. Somerset Maugham's comedy directed by Jose Ferrer. Thru July 21.

SWEET CHARITY — The Spotlighters Theatre, 817 St. Paul St. Weekends thru July 29. Musical with book by Neil Simon.

G.O.R.K. — The New Players Company, 100 E. Madison. Original drama on mercy killing by Ray Mamby. Weekends thru July 22.

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' — Musical tribute to Fats Waller, now thru Aug. 5 at Warner Theatre, 13th and E Sts., N.W., D.C.

Music

ANNAPOLIS BRASS QUINTET — Free Brass on the grass concerts in the square, 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. every Saturday at the Village of Cross Keys.

CHER — Kennedy Center, D.C., July 16-21.

CHARLIE BYRD — "the complete guitarist," will play a three week engagement at the Maryland Inn's King of France Tavern July 17 thru August 5. Joe Byrd on bass and Wayne Phillips on drums, Charlie's regular backups, will also be appearing.

Special

MARYLAND SCIENCE Center — 601 Light St. "Electronic Games" — on exhibit permanently. "Origin of the Moon" thru July 29. Also, photographs featuring the life and works of Albert Einstein, thru Sept. 1.

TRADE CENTER — Three lobby exhibits, including oil paintings, an Aquarium display and a traveling art show are on view during July and August, free at the World Trade Center, Pratt Street at the Inner Harbor.

Films

"Things to Come," a 1936 Alexander Korda production based on a book by H. G. Wells which uncannily predicts many of the inventions and discoveries of the next decades, will be shown at 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 21, at the Central Library, 400 Cathedral Street.

Free Events For Children

Mon., July 23

Herring Run Branch: Preschool activities, 10 a.m.; Arts and Crafts Club, 2 p.m.

Cherry Hill Center: Games, 12 noon.

Edmondson Avenue Branch: Films — "Do Your Own Thing" (Fat Albert) and "Up in the Air," 1 p.m.

Central Library, Wheeler Auditorium: Films — "The Mole and the Umbrella," "Many Moons," "Helen Keller," and "Dr. Seuss on the Loose," 2 p.m.

Canton Center: Films — "Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel," "Rapunzel, Rapunzel," and "The Loon's Necklace," 4 p.m.

Tues., July 24

Reservoir Hill Center: Preschool story hour, 10.30 a.m.

Cherry Hill Center: Games, 12 noon.

Edmondson Avenue Branch: Films — "Do Your Own Thing" (Fat Albert) and "Up in the Air," 1 p.m.

Forest Park Branch: Super Frog Jumping Contest for ages 7-12. Make your own paper frog, 1 p.m.; Contest begins at 2 p.m.

Lafayette Square Center: Films — "Helpmates," "Lying" (Fat Albert)" and "The Singing Bone," 1 p.m.

Light Street Branch: Chalk Day, 1 p.m.

Pennsylvania Avenue Branch: Films — "Lickety-split Licorice" and "The White Seal," 1 p.m.

Pundalk Avenue Branch: Arts and crafts for ages 6-12, 2 p.m.

Fort Worthington Center: Films — "Police Dog, Part II" and "Faster Than Witches," 2 p.m.

Herring Run Branch: Jug Band, 2 p.m.

Patterson Park Branch: Films — "The Follish Frog" and "Mighty Mouse in the Witch's Cat," 2:30 p.m.

Highlandtown Center: Films — "Blind Sunday," "The Singing Bone," and "Pashmi Pullyu," 3:30 p.m.

Waverly Branch: Preschool activities, 6:30 p.m.

First Class is winding up their Caribbean tour and will return home to their native B-More, July 31 thru Aug. 11. They will then tour Canada.

Policy at nightclubs exclude blacks and gays

By Roger S. Glass

While blacks have gained entrance to almost every social, political and professional starta this city has to offer, many are discovering that their presence in certain circles remains unwelcomed.

Blacks and other minorities claim that they are often confronted with "blatant discrimination" when they try to enter some of Wshington's restaurants and nightclubs This alleged "closed door policy" at some ofthe city's public facilities was the focus of a public hearing earlier this week.

According to Anita B. Shelton, director of he Office of Human Rights, the session was called "to determine whether or not thre is a need for a ful investigation" into the discrimination charges

Shelton's office announced the hering in June after Mayor Marion S. Barry expressed concern over allegations that some District nightclubs and other public facilites discriminate on the basis of race

"This hearing should have been held ten years ago," a participant contended

Several of those who testified gave firsrt-hand accounts of alleged discrimination. Ms. Valerie Ducker spoke of an instance at the Elan cafe and nighclub where she and three associates were denied entrance. Ms Ducker is black.

Ms. Ducker claims that the club's unannounced "quota system," (the club's management denies and such quota system) qrevented her and her friends from attending a gathering of alumni from her college which she was invited to. She maintains that the club's management acted in a "less than professional manner" when denying them entrance.

The office of Human Rights (OHR) was urged by Ms. Ducker to, among other things, demand the all D.C. nightclubs institute clear admission policies."

A representative from Elan, which along with the Appletree Nightclub came under frequent (criticism,) claims that there is no discrimination at the northwest club. (Some Elan cardholders testified, however that they were given the same memberships which other have to pay for.)

Elain's Mikes Scanlo said that Ms. Ducker and her firiends were the victims of shoddy arrangements by the affair's organizers, and that the club has been falsely blamed.

One black - owned club, the Foxtrappe, was attacked by an ex - member who questiond their grounds for revoking his membership.

Edward Wilson told Ms. Shelton and the other panel members that the Foxtrappe, a private club, only catered to "high - yellow blacks and professionals." He termed theclub an "elitist" establishment.

Bill Lindsey, one of the Foxtrappe's owners, countered by fxplaining that Wilson's membership was revoked because he was hassling some of the other patrons with his picture taking.

BRE, the Black Radio Exclusive weekly magazine having to do with black radio nationwide, topped off its busy and star-gilded second annual convention here with a slambang awards concert at the Hyatt-Regency featuring Marvin Gaye and Platinum Hook. The joint was jumping and rocking all night, with deejays and records people in attendance from everywhere. Motown sponsored the closing night's affair, which was undoubtedly the top show of the whole confab.

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Curtain Calls

By Charles Farrow

We are constantly looking to devise ways to beat the latest community horror story, the gas crunch. Yet there are ways to have great entertainment and to cater to one's personal desires, pleasure and relaxation. The feeling of the country, while still in the city.

If you were to grab a well stocked picnic basket, you might head out 16th street N.W. to the arter Barron Amphitheatre. Of course you can go by car but public transportation is right at the corner. Then there is the program, custom made for the summer night

The Houston ballet through its soloists will be making its Washington debut July 20-22 at the Carter Barron. Under the artistic direction of Ben Stevenson, the company will present selections from the Houston Ballet repertoire performance times begin at 8:30 p.m. all seating is free, and nearby is the park. It might do well to come early, even though there are over 4,000 seats available, ballet lovers manage to turn out in force when the situation is right; in this case, the cast and no cost.

The program for Friday and Saturday is the same and will feature a world premiere of Stevenson's "Tchaikovsky Variations". The program changes on Sunday evening and will feature another premiere "Britten Pas de Deux" also choreographed by Stevenson

This presentation is part of Carter Barron's celebration of its 29th season.

If you are inclined to beat the gas squeeze but don't feel like doing it in the out of doors, you do have a choice. There is the multi-media fantasy of never never land as seen by the classic James Barrie play, "Peter Pan", which opened July 19th at the Opera House

You may not realize it but you can take the Metro subway to the Foggy Bottom station on the Blue Line and a less than 10-minute stroll and you are inside the Kennedy, having spared yourself the 2.50 parking fee.

The play will be performed in Spanish and English at All Souls Church and the theme, a satire on the perverson and transience of power is staged in an insane asylum.

English performances will run through July 22, while Spanish performances will run July 27 through Aug. 5th.

On Eartha Kitt

Dear Ida:

I was just reading your articles on Eartha Kitt. How you built her up! She certainly is the "One and only Eartha Kitt." She's such a phoney with that made-up European accent.

She's told that story about her people not wanting her because she was "too light" so many times that when she told it again on Channel 13, I almost threw up.

I watched her sitting on the sofa with her legs doubled up under her. I said to myself, "Why can't she sit down like the other performers. She's got to put her dirty shoes all over the sofa."

Ida, what is all that squirming around that she does? Is that to prove that she is a sex kitten? Boy, is she a phoney.

I was reading a movie magazine once and it had a picture of her dancing with Sidney Poitier and the magazine mentioned that that very unusual because she had never been known to be or to have been connected with her own race.

I read that she had a white secretary and a white god-child and I'm sure she could have found a black secretary and a black godchild So I don't know what you are so excited about.

She married an unknown white real estate man who sold a house once in awhile and dumped him because she said publicly "I'm tired of paying his bills." She did get something out of it, a daughter. You must be very young and don't know Eartha. She stinks!

E.C.

Dear E. C.:

Meow! Your claws are showing for writing such a mean letter about a great actress. The way Miss Kitt conducts her private business is her business. You'll have to admit she puts on a whale of a show in "Timbuktu."

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