What's Happening- Fats Waller

'One never knows, do we!'

By Ida Peters

Fats Waller was one of the giants in the music world as a composer, arranger, musician and bandleader.

81 years after his death, mainstream white America and millions of blacks are just getting to know his music through the tribute now playing before sell - out audiences at the Mechanic Theatre.

And, while this show captures the spirit and style of the great musician, you would have had to have seen this five foot, 276 - pound bundle - of - joy, literally draped over a piano stool lightly caressing the keys with pudgy fingers to appreciate him.

Fats' humorous chuckling and comments were part of his act, whether his big band that toured Baltimore's Royal, D.C.'s Howard or the chitterlin' circuit in Philly or Richmond or his little band that played toney white yacht clubs or hotels in New York and Chicago.

In the hey day of big swing bands Fats Waller was known as one of the greatest of stride piano players. When somebody mentioned Earl 'Fatha' Hines, Teddy Wilson or Oscar Peterson, Fats Waller was called the greatest along with James P. Johnson.

Two Baltimoreans had a great deal to do with Fats Waller's career. Elmer Snowden (Banjo and Guitar) who was born in Baltimore in 1900 and started playing in the Carey Street Theatre with Eddie Booze, the brother of Bea Booze the blues singer.

Then Eubie who had a dance band in Baltimore heard about Elmer and he joined Blake's band before Eubie went on to New York to work with Noble Missle and Miller and Lyles on "Shuffle Along", the first black musical on Broadway.

Fats Waller

Elmer Snowden formed a band in D.C. when Duke Ellington hung around his band while working in the Poodle Dog Cafe as a soda jerk.

Fats Waller was the piano in the band that played the Lincoln Colannades, and Murray's Cafe. Later, Snowden took his band to New York and formed the Washingtonians which later became Duke's band.

Meanwhile, Fats Waller was the pianist and composed songs for Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle on "Shuffle Along" with James P. Johnson also on piano and Elmer Snowden in the pit on guitar.

Another Baltimorean, Chick Webb was close to Fats. Dubbed the world's greatest drummer, Chick Webb was on drums; Elmer Snowden on guitar and Fats at the piano in 1930 at the Hot Feet Club in N.Y.'s Village.

Swing or hot jazz in Fats Waller's heyday after World War I; in the depression, flapper years of the 1920s and the fairly spartan years of recovery before World War II . . . because of segregation of races Fats music was not generally known in the white community.

Unless of course you were rich enough to trek to Harlem to Small's Paradise or the Cotton Club or the Music Box in Atlantic City or his sell - out Concert in 1942 at Carnegie Hall with Paderewski.

Television was invented but Fats Waller became famous and earned $72,000 in 1941 from his records, sheet music, Broadway Shows and by appearing on such radio shows as Million Dollar Band on NBC; Rudy Vallee Show and Chase and Sanborn Hour with Charlie McCarthy.

His movies included "Hooray for Love", "King of Burlesque" and "Stormy Weather"

In reference books, including Stanley Dance's "The World of Swing", every musician of note either talks about Fats, copied his style or revered his work including Duke Ellington, Cozy Cole, Claude Hopkins and Chick Webb to name a few.

In Baltimore and Washington, you could buy Fats Waller Song Books or sheet music at Woolworth's downtown, the most popular songs being "Your Feets Too Big", "Ain't Misbehavin", "Honeysuckle Rose" and "I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling".

And in the 1920s it was a big thing when you visited your bootlegger to hear Fats music on rolls on the player piano.

Thomas (Fats) Waller died at the height of his career at the age of 39 in 1943, aboard the Santa Fe Special, Super Chief as the train stood in the Kansas City, Mo., Union Station.

He was born on May 21, 1904 in New York, the son of the Rev. Edward M. and Mrs. Adeline Waller.

His father was a Baptist minister while his mother played the piano, organ and sang soprano. Adolph Waller, his grandfather, was a noted violinist.

His parents encouraged him to be a musician but his father objected to jazz, claiming it was "music from the devil's workshop."

Waller's own attitude toward jazz was simple. "I am nobody to get mighty about swing," he said. "It's just a musical phase of our social life."

Later he defined swing as "two thirds rhythm and one - third soul."

He studied under Carl Bohm and Leopold Godowski.

The Waller family attended Pentecostal Church on East 134th Street in Harlem, where between services Waller played the organ at the Lincoln Theatre on West 135th Street.

His early life was spent in church where he played violin, piano and organ. Contrary to rumors, he never played in a Harlem church except King's Chapel Assembly a holy roller mission on 134th Street and Glad Tidings Tabernacle on West 42nd Street.

Waller has written scores of hymns. His first composition, "Squeeze Me" was originally known as "Boston Blues" he composed at 16.

★★★ Movies ★★★

Renato Baldi (Ugo Tognazzi), (R), gives instructions to his maid; Jacob (Benny Lake), (L) in "La Cage Aux Folles" a United Artists release now playing in area.

Ron O'Neal narcotic agent in 'Force'

Ron O'Neal stars in American Cinema Productions' new high suspense action film "A FORCE OF ONE" with top liners Jennifer O'Neill and Chuck Norris. "A Force Of One" is now playing area theatres.

In a challenging role as Sergeant Rollins, O'Neal plays an undercover narcotics agent who yields to the temptation of constantly handling confiscated drugs with a street value in the millions. When his top - notch colleagues come too close to discovering his secret, he becomes involved in a deadly coverup attempt.

O'Neal is best known for his roles in "Super Fly" and "Super Fly TNT" which he also directed. In addition, he has been seen in "Brothers" and "The Organization" starring Sidney Poitier.

Another feature film "The Hitter" is now playing downtown, and O'Neal just completed filming "When A Stranger Calls."

O'Neal's television credits include "Freedom Road," an NBC Movie of the Week and "Brave New World."

Ron O'Neal now playing in "A Force of One" and "The Hitter."

More Happenings

Things missed — Last Friday's opening of the newest disco club in the newly renovated old Doge Theatre, Club Distinction on Landover Road in Landover, Md. A large club with sunken dance floor, high rise dance floor, silent movie shows, large game area, two wide bars, Club Distinction holds 1500 people with plenty of free parking spaces.

'Ain't Misbehavin', Arena Players In Ritz Showcase

Debra Byrd now playing at the Mechanic Theatre in 'Ain't Misbehavin' and Adriana Lenox and Theresa Bowers of the N.Y. Broadway cast will be featured when Shelton Becton presents "A Song For You," a showcase of stars at the Ritz Penthouse this Sunday.

Also featured will be nine members from the Arena Players current production "Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope."

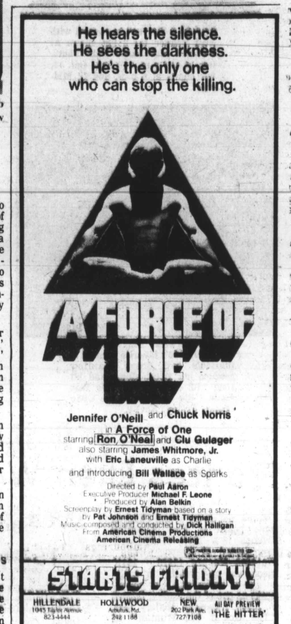
Shelton Becton, is a pianist and composer of more than 125 songs and associate conductor of the national company of "Ain't Misbehavin."

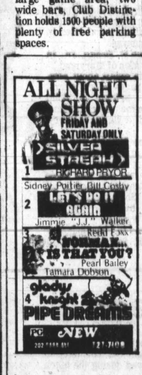
A native of Kinston, N.C. he started piano at the age of four and graduated summa cum laude from Howard University where he studied under Dr. Thomas Flagg. He was also guided and inspired by Dr. Thomas Kerr whom he lauds for constructive criticism and help in organ technique.

He recently served as associate conductor of the National Touring Company of "The Wiz" and has served as accompanist of the Howard University Choirs, and the Universal Dance Ensemble under George Faison.

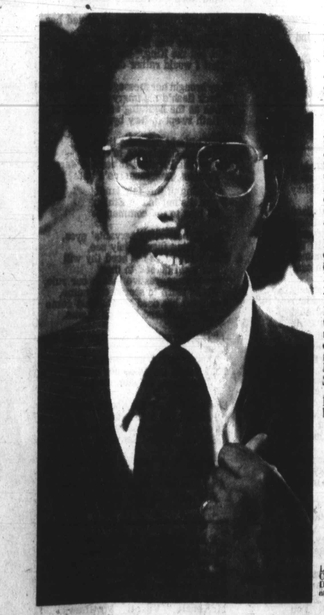
He has also composed two theatre compositions, "Tapestry: A Woven Legacy" performed at the Kennedy Center and

(Continued on Page 17)





"How I doubled my chances for success."



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For more information, write Army ROTC, P.O. Box 7000, Department R-704, Larchmont, New York 10538.

Lincoln M. Catchings, Jr.
Captain, U.S. Army Reserve
Director of Personnel Services
at Prairie View A&M University

ARMY ROTC. LEARN WHAT IT TAKES TO LEAD.

NikkiRandolph danced in Fats' Broadway hit

When Fats Waller died suddenly in December, 1943 he had written the music for a hit show running on Broadway, "Early To Bed".

Nikki Randolph, then Nikki O'Daniel, now wife of politician, Lloyal Randolph introduced Fats Waller's "When the Nylons Bloom Again" with Harold Cromer in the Broadway production.

Coming next week in the AFRO Mrs. Randolph's report on that musical.

After seein "Ain't Misbehavin' performed at the Mechanic Mrs. Randolph says, "Talk about nostalgia, this was it."

TV Watching

By Vanessa Johnson

Friday

Baseball: Game three in the American League Championship Series is telecast from the park of West Division champions. The Baltimore Orioles vs. the California Angels. 8:00 - 11:00 p.m. - Channel 11.

Soap Factory Disco: Musical highlights by Enchantment who sing "Magnetic Feel." 11:00-11:30 p.m. - Channel 45.

Midnight Special: Blondie, (host) is joined by Supertramp, Robert Palmer, Rick James and others. 1:00 - 2:30 a.m. - Channel 11.

Saturday

American Bandstand: Performances by Smokey Robinson and Mary MacGregor. 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. - Channel 7

Soul Train: Guests today are Shalamar and Tata Vega. 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. - Channel 11.

This is the World Series: Mel Allen describes memorable moments from past Fall Classics with clips featuring Mickey Mantle, Reggie Jackson and Bill Mazeroski. 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. - Channel 2.

Baseball Play - Off: If necessary, channels 2, 4, 8, 11, 16 and 25 will pre - empt regularly scheduled programming at 3 p.m. to cover the fourth game in the American League Championship series.

Bad News Bears: In the first of a two part show, Buttermaker renews his romance with Amanda's mother and pops the big question. Starring Christoff St. John. 8:30 - 9:00 p.m. - Channel 2.

Paris: An impulsive rookie goes undercover on his own to nail the vicious muggers who maimed his mother. Starring James Earl Jones, Lee Chamberlin and Lawrence Hilton Jacobs. 10:00 11:00 p.m. - Channel 2.

Man Called Sloane: Sloane hunts a rogue general who is plotting an assault on an underdeveloped country. Starring Ji - Tu Cumbuka. 10:00 - 11:00 p.m. Channel 11.

Sunday

NBC Movie: "Sidekicks", above average TV movie satirizing the Old West with Larry Hagman and Lou Gossett as inept con men. 11:30 - 1:00 p.m. - Channel 11.

Baseball Play - Off: If necessary, NBC will pre - empt regular programming at 1 p.m. to cover the fifth game in the National League Championship Series.

Detective School: After Nick learns that a motorcycle gang is holding his runaway niece, the class members go undercover as bikers. Starring LaWanda Page. 5:30 - 6:00 p.m. - Channel 13.

Baseball Play - Off: If necessary channels 2, 4, 8, 11, 16 and 25 will pre - empt regularly scheduled programming at 8 p.m. to cover the fifth game in the American League Championship Series.

The Jeffersons: Florence poses as Mrs. Jefferson to keep a dinner date with Louise's old boy friend (Ford Lile). Starring Sherman Hemsley and Isabel Sanford. 9:30 - 10:00 p.m. - Channel 2.

Trapper John: Gonzo treats a patient suffering from radiation poisoning while Dr. Riverside contends with an ailing Gypsy who distrusts modern medicine. Starring Jayne Kennedy. 10:00 - 11:00 p.m. - Channel 2.

Brian Mitchell plays Dr. J.J. (Jackpot) Jackson in the new 20th Century - Fox TV series, "trapper John, MD.," airing on CBS-TV Sunday nights at 10:00-11:00 p.m.

Free film script for deaf

Charles Laughton presents a humorous view of England's famouyantmonarch in "The Private Life of Henry VIII," to be shown at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 8, at the Reistertown Road branch, 6310 Reistertown Road.

Bill Lane in Hollywood

By Bill Lane

LOS ANGELES, CA

BILL COSBY finally was able to get the Tonight Show producer to OK Sonny Rollins for a musical swing on the show. Ever since the famed comic has been hosting the Johnny Carson show off and on over the years he's been trying to get "Boot Whip" Rollins on to exhibit his saxophone prowess. And Cosby is a jazz buff from 'way back. The Rollins appearance coincided with his new album's release. Title "Don't Ask," and it's on Milestone.

AFTER busy sessions with Willie Bobo and his Latin - sound combo, Ernie France trekked Abbey Lincoln into his Parisian Room here for a song sway before opening the doors to a fellow a lot of people thought had retired — Brook Benton. The Parisian is about the busiest jazz - buies - pop spot in Los Angeles, the city not being so diverse and "hip" as San Francisco where top artists, many of whom live in California, are headlined all the time. For instance, right after he and Carmen McRae play the Music Hall in S.F., Count Basie will head up an October date at the Marin County Center in the area while Lou Rawls plays the Concord Pavilion and "Ain't Misbehavin' " keeps on racking up kudos at the Curran Theatre.

WHILE ace and fairly historic photographers Lotte Jacobi and Ansel Adams are enjoying national showings of their photographic work, in their reclining years, black photog James Van DerZee of NYC is also getting widespread plaudits for his national showings. His work is on a tour of top museums around the United States. Van DerZee is an entrenched name in Harlem, and has been so for many years, his camera lens and mind's eye having photographed the world famous and most unusual over the years.

SUSAN Anton currently out as star of the movie - "Golden Girl," in which she plays a star of Olympic qualifications, and who has as her trainer actor James Watson . . . Singer Hoyt Axton doing good with his revival of the religiously humorous Mahalia Jackson song - "Rusty Old Halo" . . . The O'Jays, Charley Pride and Dionne Warwick have lined up a big list of California appearances for November. And on October 2 and 3 The Jacksons will kick off their world tour of 49 cities in New Orleans at that city's Municipal Auditorium. They will soar off on their big concert tour accompanied by the group Ltd. It had at first been projected that Taste of Honey would be with The Jacksons on the tour, but changes were called and Ltd got the nod. The tour is under the aegis of Atlanta's black concert promoter, Leonard Rowe. And black publicity and promotional firms are also signed to publicize and promote the concerts, something of a first all around.

BROCK PETERS and Melba Moore scored mightily in their performances in "Lost In The Stars" at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco. And in Las Vegas Berry Gordy and Diana Ross are being seen out together at various shows, including Sammy Davis, Jr's top performances. . . In L.A. the Times played down the Lana Rawls - Hamilton Jordan "coke" things, but the L. A. Herald - Examiner rewrote the New York Times feature on the story and played up Lana as if she was still wed to singer Lou.

EMMY did not smile on black performers on the second "Roots" the way it was with the first series. The only winner being Marlon Brando, who had asked to play his role of American Nazi Party leader Lincoln Rockwell. But Esther Rolle's winning was a fitting tribute for that actress' stellar acting job in "Summer of My German Soldier." And everybody wonders still about what happened to "Backstairs at The White House."

GAY THOMAS is featured beauteously on the cover of the current Essence Magazine, the one in which Diahann Carroll and Dionne Warwick tell how being alone again is somewhat natural, as that's the way they originally started out on their individual roads to fame . . . The Congressional Black Caucus listed LeBaron Taylor, community relations VP of Columbia Records, is one of its first to receive the CBC Chair Award.

BEN HOOKS disclosed in NYC that the NAACP now has 16 chapters in U. S. prisons, the new program headed by Leroy Mobley, a recent graduate from a federal pen. Although black people make up only about eleven or twelve percent of the national population, about half of the prisoners in state and federal prisons are black

JIM BISHOP is a white writer of years in the Hearst papers and syndicated through many others. One of his books, "The Day Christ Died," has been made into a movie by 20th Century - Fox for showing on CBS - TV. the rights for which Bishop says he got a quarter of a million dollars. But Bishop is angry. He says the Fox and CBS people would have liked history to have been other than the way it was and have conspired to change his story around to make it look like Pontius Pilate, who told the complaining Sanhedrin leaders who demanded Christ's crucifixion that he could "find no fault in this man," was himself part of a singular Roman plot to destroy Jesus. Bishop says this blame - shift effort subverts not only his story but Bibical history, and he wants the title changed and his name deleted from the writing credit. All we can say is that a lot of people are always subverting history. There's no way in the world Jesus Christ was blonde and blue - eyed. And that went for almost everybody in the Fertile Crescent area of the Mediterranean region at that time. Look for another subversion any time soon now, when Hollywood gets set to film the Alps crossing of the African general Hannibal. Although Muhammad Ali has been projected to play the tole of Hannibal, plans are afoot to depict Hannibal as white. If it happens, this columnist promises to sue. Not complain, but to sue.

DICK GRIFFEY, prexy of Hollywood's Solar Records, has set up the Donny Hathaway Scholarship Fund. One of the late Doany Hathaway's best songs has been given new lyrics by singer-composer Carrie Lucas and recorded by The Whispers and is in distribution on RCA Records. The royalties will go to the wife and children of Hathaway. Next year a scholarship will be awarded to gifted music students to further their musical dreams and goals, in the name of Donny Hathaway

Keene-Street Theatre

"Tambourines To Glory," by Langston Hughes, will be performed by Keene - Street Theatre at the Providence Baptist Church, 4200 Liberty Heights Ave., Oct. 27.

The theatre has been performing throughout the Baltimore-Metropolitan area, Columbia, Catonsville and other parts of Maryland.

The Keene - Street Theatre was formed by Warren W. Street, executive producer and Kevin T. Keene, associate producer in May 1977. The first production was directed by Ed Heath and assistant director, Ms. Cathy Crawford. Title "LUV" by Murray Schisgal. The play was performed at the Marshburn Elementary School located at Eutaw and McMechen St. The company has also performed original productions, such as "Joe Carey's Kids" written by Warren Street.

Some of the company's overall objectives are touring schools to promote interests of younger people in cultural arts. To bring out some of the hidden talent in the communities. Also, one of the criteria of the Keene-Street Theatre is to help people who are especially interested in drama to pursue their goals. (Acting as an agent in a sense of opening doors in New York, California, etc.)

As we are sure you are aware all companies need the participation of the community, we are constantly in need of new members (experienced or not), sponsors and very dedicated volunteers to help form a Women's Auxiliary.

The Keene - Street Theatre has selected a possible site for their home and are in the process of negotiating for it. All fund raising proposals and - or donations (do not send cash), send checks or money orders addressed to The Keene - Street Theatre, P.O. Box 622, Baltimore, Md. 21203. For more information contact Ms. Eleanor Welch at 448 - 4742 or 728 - 4744.

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"Ain't Misbehavin' sent the crowd home snapping their fingers and humming melodies they won't forget."
Cecile Deegan-News American

"Lively Salute to Fats Waller."
Lou Cedrone-Sunpapers

Top Jazz

1 STREET LIFE — Crusaders
2 LUCKY SEVEN — Bob James
3 MORNING DANCE — Spyro Clarke
5 HEARTSTRING — Earl Klugh
6 MINGUS — Joni Mitchell
7 AN EVENING OF MAGIC — Chuck Mangione
8 WATER SIGN — The Jeff Lorber Fusion
9 HOT — Maynard Ferguson
10 EUPHORIA — Gato Barbieri

Top Disco

5 DON'T STOP TIL YOU GET ENOUGH — Michael Jackson
6 THE BOSS - NO ONE GETS THE PRIZE — Diana Ross
7 LOVE INSURANCE — Front Page
8 GREEN LIGHT - POW WOW — Cory Daye
9 OOH, LA LA - HARMONY — Suzi Lane
10 FANTASY — Bruni Pagan
1 COME TO ME - DON'T STOP DANCING — France Joli
2 FOUND A CURE — Ashford & Simpson
3 THE BREAK — Kat Mandu
4 MOVE ON UP-UP-UP — Destination

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Calendar

Theatre

JONI — World premiere of World Wide movie starring Joni Eareckson, Baltimore Civic Center Fri., Oct. 5, 8 p.m. Baltimore Civic Center.

DON'T BOTHER ME, I CAN'T COPE, Arena Players, 801 McCulloh St. through Oct. 14, Friday curtains 8:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 7:30 p.m. for further information call 523 - 8557.

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN, at the Morris Mechanic, to play through October 13, Curtain: Monday through Saturday, 8 p.m., special matinee at 3 p.m. Further information call 727 - 2924.

MOTHER COURAGE and Her Children starring Trazana Beverley at Center Stage, through Oct. 14, Curtain: Tuesday through Saturday, 8 p.m., Sunday 7:30 p.m. with 2 p.m. matinees. For more information call 332 - 0033.

Music

MARYLAND INN — Milt Jackson Quartet, Oct. 2 - 7. Blues on vibes and vocals.

PEABODY — American composer Ned Rorem will present a free lecture at the Peabody Conservatory of Music entitled "Song in America," on Wed., Oct. 12 from noon to 1:00 p.m. in the Peabody Concert Hall, 1 East Mount Vernon Pl.

BSO — William Henry Curry will conduct the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra at Catonsville Community College on Wed., Oct. 17, at 8 p.m. The concert will be held in the Humanities Theatre on the CCC campus, 800 South Rolling Road. The Symphony will perform Beethoven's "Lenore Overture, No. 3," and "Symphony No. 6 in B minor" by Tchaikowsky. They will also perform "Sinfonia Concertante for Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn and Orchestra in E flat," written by Mozart.

PEABODY — Cellist Stephen Kates and pianist Ellen Mack will present a recital in honor of the great cellist Gregor Piatigorsky on Sat., Oct. 13 at 8:15 p.m. in the Peabody Concert Hall, 1 East Mount Vernon Pl.

Poe Month at Cloisters

Edgar Allan Poe, Baltimore's famous writer of bizzare mysteries, will be the featured topic for exploration at The Cloisters Childrens Museum during the entire month of October.

Children's activities which relate to Poe stories and poems will include a treasure hunt for the tell - tale heart, black cat and the raven, and tombstone rubbings. Storytelling, movies and performances will bring alive the chilling excitement of Poe's writings.

The largest collection of Poe memorabilia ever to be assembled in Baltimore, will be on display at The Cloisters. Among the items from the museum's Parker collection and the Poe House Museum will be Poe's lap desk, two portrait paintings of the author, original letters written from Poe, his telescope, and much of his china and furniture.

The Poe exhibition and activities will run throughout the month of October. The Cloisters Children's Museum is open free to the public week days, 10 - 4:30, and weekends, 1 -4. The museum is located at 10440 Falls Road. Call 823-2550 for further information.

Free Events for Children

Sat., Oct. 6

Central Pratt Library: Preschool story hour, Children's Department, 11 a.m.; Film: Feature - length film, starring Jackie Cooper and Wallace Beery, based on a book by Robert Louis Stevenson, Wheeler Auditorium, 2 p.m.

Gardenville Branch: Preschool story hour, 10:30 a.m.

Mon., Oct. 8

Walbrook Branch: Halloween Drawing Contest for ages 6 to 12. For more information, please see children's librarian.

Pimlico Branch: Preschool films — "I Know An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly" and "Harold and the Purple Crayon," 9:30 a.m.

Highlandtown Center: Films — "The Chimp," "Hardware Wars," and "The Sneetches," 3:30 p.m.

Canton Center: Films — "The Cricket in Times Square," "Ozwald and the Lion," and "The Fabulous Harlem Globetrotters," 4 p.m.

Tues., Oct. 9

Gardenville Branch: Creative dramatics under the direction of Pratt's Travelling Troubadour, Rebekah Kaufman, 3:30 p.m.

Free Film

Hemingway's bittersweet tale of love and war, "A Farewell to Arms," can be seen at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 6, at the Light Street branch, 1251 Light St.

Book sale

The Pratt library's Walbrook branch will hold a book sale from Monday, Oct. 15, to Fri., Oct. 19, offering a wide range of adult and children's titles at bargain prices: fifty cents for hardcovers and ten cents for paperbacks. Sale hours are noon to 5 p.m. on Mon. and Wed., noon to 8 p.m. on Tues. and Thurs., and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday. The Walbrook branch is located at 3203 West North Avenue. For further details, call 947-2736.

Showcase

(Continued from Page 16)

"Run, Sugarfoot Run" for the Memphis Alex Haley Extravaganza.

Debra Byrd is a native of Cleveland where she worked at Karamu Theatre as musical director, vocal coach and actress.

She has worked with Barry Manilow appearing with him on television and she has sung with Lady Flash. She has also sung backup - with Jose Feliciano and The Spinners.

Adriana Lenox is out of Memphis with a B.A. in drama from Lambuth College in Jackson, Miss. For two summers 1976-77 she has toured with the Perry Como Show.

Theresa Bowers holds a B.S. in Music from East Tennessee State University and a master's degree in Opera Performance from Cincinnati Conservatory of music. She has appeared in repertory and opera in her home city of Cincinnati.

Meeting

The Howard University Alumni Club of Baltimore will meet Thursday, Oct. 11, 7 p.m. at the Me - De - So, 1800 Eutaw Place. Dr. Roland B. Williams is the president of the local chapter.

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