SHOWTIME

★Theatre ★Arts ★Music

Bernice Collins, circus showgirl

Ladies and gentlemen and children of all ages, welcome to Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus. And...you have only until Sunday to catch lovely showgirl, Bernice Elaine Collins.

AFRO photographer Roman Hankewycz caught the 5'7", 125 pound beauty in the center ring dancing in the space-themed fantasy extravaganza decked in turquoise and silver with high plumed hat.

Miss Collins is a native of Kansas City, Kansas and ever since she was 14, she wanted to be a girl in the circus.

The daughter of William and Wanda Collins, she attended Washington High School and worked in a doctor's office for two years.

This is her third year with the circus. She wrote to the Ringling Brothers free Clown College and was accepted. She served as a clown for two years and then auditioned for showgirl.

"Ever since I can remember, I decided what I wanted to do", she said. Now she has a contract. She has four sisters and one brother. The brother is in radio and one sister is going to college for a music career.

She won't play her hometown this year so her parents will catch her in New York or Oklahoma City.

"Ever since I can remember, I always wanted to be in the circus."

Winners in the AFRO Clown Coloring Contest enjoyed a night with AFRO employees and newsboys. Among the winners were Annette Gregory, 3; Monique Reed, 4; LaToya Griffin, 3; Markenya King, 3; Nicole Neale, 6; Celena Stansbury, 7; Terry Cummings, 7 and Quinn Marshan, 7. Donta Brown was top winner and was Clown for AFRO Night.

World premiere 'Baltimore Bullet'

James Coburn and Cisse Cameron are leading a host of Hollywood stars. Minnesota Fats is heading up a list of the eight greatest pool players ...all now in Baltimore for the gala black tie $50-$100-a-head world premiere of the Avco-Embassy comedy, "The Baltimore Bullet".

"And, while the movie was not shot in Baltimore it could have been... and the city fathers have embraced the whole kit and kaboodle since the whole thing will benefit the H.O.S.-Billy Ehrman fund. They plan along with the Greater Baltimore McDonald's Operators Association and the City of Baltimore to open a Ronald McDonald House where families can stay when a member is hospitalized.

The $50 and $100 tickets admit one person to the First Annual Baltimore Bullet Pool Shoot Out" featuring Minnesota Fats at the Baltimore Convention Center from 1 to 5 p.m. You also get admission to the Grand Theatre for the showing of "The Baltimore Bullet" and then later to the reception with the stars at the Convention Center.

"The Baltimore Bullet" follows the exploits of two scheming, scamming hustlers who criss-cross the country, leaving their mark—and fleecing their marks—at every stop.

Nick Casey, (James Coburn) alias the Baltimore Bullet, is the senior half of the duo, a quick, cool con man with a taste for beautiful women and risky games of chance. Billie Joe Robbins,(Bruce Boxleitner) is the hustler's apprentice, who has learned how to bend the law of averages without breaking the law of the land.

Now, they're set for a high stakes showndown—call it the pool hustler's super bowl—against a suave, sinister gambler known as "The Deacon", (Omar Sharif). The winner will walk off with a small fortune. The loser will be lucky to escape with his shirt. Or maybe his life. "The Baltimore Bullet" opens March 28 at area theatres.

'Nobody' at Huber Church, Sat.

By Ida Peters

"Nobody...An Evening With Bert Williams", starring playwright Vincent D. Smith will be presented in a dinner-theatre setting by the Christian Interaction Programof Huber Memorial United Church of Christ, The Alameda and 29th Street, Sat., March 22 at 6:30 p.m.,the Rev. Choyce Hall, pastor.

In the five-day American College Theatre Festival at Penn State, the one-man play "Nobody" was the first play from the University of Maryland College Park and the first black play to make it to the finals.

Vincent D. Smith, a December graduate of the University of Maryland with a master's degree in theatre and drama communication conceived the play two years ago as part of his master's project.

Vincent D. Smith won $500. National Playwriting Award for his play "Nobody."

The Nyumburu Community Center (Black Student Union) under professor Otis Williams produced the play. Allen Ambush, 20-year-old music major is the musical accompanist and Greg Moquin, technician.

Last month, Smith won the Original Playwriting Award at the ACT Festival at Penn State. "Nobody" beat some 40 college productions in the six-state northeastern region and was one of five finalists.

This week, The Kennedy Center and McDonald's Restaurants awarded Vincent D. Smith the $500 second place award, the Lorraine Hansberry Award for Original Plays in the Black Experience in the National Playwriting Competition.

The Nyumburu Cultural Center at the University of Maryland won a $250 grant.

"Nobody"...An Evening With Bert Williams" is an arrogant portrayal of Bert Williams' fight to buck traditional minstrel shows for sophisticated theatre. Vincent D. Smith digs beneath the surface and shows how Williams was victimized by theatre injustices.

Night Scene Seen

By Bob Matthews

The trend to live entertainment continues to escalate, with the positive results of more top quality acts playing the Baltimore area.

This week has to be called the battle of the organs with two of the greatest holding down gigs on the Night Scene. Richard Groove Holmes continues his month-long stint at the Sportsmen's Lounge.

Backing up Groove is Marshall Booze, guitar; Bobby Ward, drums, and Vernon Wolst, vocalist. He also appears at the Saturday afternoon jazz workshops, this week featuring reedman Marvin Cabell.

Meanwhile, at The Bandstand in Fells Pt., Jack McDuff will be on hand through Sunday with his quintet, which features two tenor saxmen. Jeff Hittman will play tenor and soprano saxes.

In addition, Orlando Phillips will play tenor sax, and do the vocals for the group. Derryck King is on drums, and Mike Pachelli, guitar. McDuff, naturally, is on organ, and we will certainly have to check out the kind of sound achieved with this instrumentation.

The Lett Bank Jazz Society will have another blockbuster this week, as Horace Silver brings his group into the Famous for the Sunday afternoon concert.

Haven't been able to get a list of the personnel Horace will be bringing in, but no matter who it is, you can rest assured it will be swinging from the first tune.

In case you hadn't noticed, the Sunday sets put on by the LBJS have become the IN thing to do, so if you're planning to attend—plan to get there early. If you want to get a seat, that is.

Jack McDuff
The Bandstand

Richard Groove Holmes
The Sportsmen's Lounge

The live music policy at the Gatsby's continues, and this weekend, they are featuring a group called "Kash." Must confess we haven't heard them, but am assured they play in the jazz to contemporary style.

Kinda glad to see a club in town giving exposure to some lesser-known (to us) groups. Brice's Hilltop is another outlet for new wave music sounds, and we understand the Park Plaza on N. Charles St. is now featuring live music a couple of nights a week.

Overdub is attractions in the country is on tap, Arthur Prysock and his revue, featuring his brother Red Prysock, along with singers and dancers.

They'll be on tap through Sunday, with dinner shows at 8 p.m. Kinda glad to find the Prysocks in this setting, for nightclubs are where the brothers should perform—especially since Red has an affinity for being a standup comedian.

The Closet is headlining Tom Harrell, trumpet, and Bob Berg, tenor sax, along with Marc Cohen, piano; Hugh Walker, drums, and Bob Gibson, bass.

In case the names aren't overly familiar to you, Harrell was in town last year for LBJS with a group, and Berg was in the Horace Silver entourage when Horace last paid a visit to Baltimore.

See where the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority is presenting a Take The A-Train Jazz Concert at the UMBC Theatre tonight (March 21). Featured will be Brenda Alford and the Morgan State Univ. Jazz Ensemble.

Monday nights are still reserved for jazz jam sessions at The Birdcage, with Mickey and Shirley Fields, tenor and vocals; Johnny Polite, drums and Dennis Fisher, organ forming the basis for drop-in artists who congregate there on that evening.

History Series

1898 PHOTO — The six Fitzgerald brothers made by Jones Photos in 1898. Seated from left, William L., Edward V. and John L. Standing James N., Cornelius C. and George A.

Dr. Edward Fitzgerald 1881-1921

AFRO reader Gladys Fitzgerald Sims sent us a rare photo of the six Fitzgerald Brothers photographed in 1898 by Jones Photos.

This Mr. Jones was the father of former State Senator J. Alvin Jones. Standing (L) to (R) in the above photo are James N. Fitzgerald, insurance salesman and father of Marie I. Fitzgerald; Cornelius E., who became the dean of black lawyers of Baltimore, father of John MacFarland Fitzgerald and grandfather of Betty Fitzgerald Howard and Barbara Fitzgerald Scruggs.

(R) standing is George A. Fitzgerald, mortician who lived and worked in the brothers' home city, Johnson City, Tenn.

Front row (from L) is William L. Fitzgerald, father of Jessie Fitzgerald Lemon and Baltimore City Councilman 1919 - 1921; Edward Vanlentine Fitzgerald, father of Gladys Fitzgead Sims and grandfather of Anne Sims Richardson and Cicero H. Sims, Jr. (neither of whom ever saw their grandfather) and far (R), John L. Fitzgerald, pharmacist and bachelor.

Of the six Fitzgerald brothers, Edward Valentine, nicknamed "Val" or "Vol" or "Dr. Fritz" was born on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, 1881 and died at the age of 40 in 1921. He practiced medicine in Baltimore for 21 years.

John MacFarland Fitzgerald wrote the following letter to Anne FitzgeraldSims in 1970. "Thoughs while bathing and shaving"

"Hi there, Cousins:

"As you've probably guessed, they are about a very special Valentine of ours — my favorite uncle and your beloved grandfather.

As a general practitioner fresh out of medical school, he had been quick to win the confidence and affection of the patients he served with skill anddevotion. (Actually, many of them entertained grave doubts that any black doctor could be as good as a white one).

A majority of these people were poor, often too poor to pay a doctor's fee or purchase the medication he prescribed. And like "The Great Healer", he would put these patients at ease by refusing payment for his services; sometimes paying for their medicines out of his own pocket or persuading the druggist to defer the settlement of his bill until the patient had recovered and returned to work. Thus, it is easy to understand that when he died very young—with so many good deeds undone—he left a terrible void in a lot of hearts and homes.

"In the eyes of his colleagues, he was a giant. And in the "art of diagnosis", the sine qua non of "how and where to begin" in the treatment of diseases his range and acuteness of comprehension caught the fancy of certain members of Johns Hopkins Hospital's renowned staff — najmes such as J. M. T. Finney (father and son), W. S. Thayer and others. A close personal friend and "med" school classmate of Val's (Dr. Hamilton Martin), said of him after his death, at 40:

He was a genus - no doubt about it. And true to the breed he has his irrational moments, but never in the line of duty. Val knew where he was going, but he got there much too soon.'

"To wrap it up, let's say that the young man was dedicated to his profession, but likewise loyal to family and friends. Liberal both as a thinker and in the treatment of his fellow human beings, he hated greed, snobbery and anything that hinted of racial or religious prejudice and persecution. In short, goodwill - not gold - was his god.

"You should be very proud of your granddaddy, Cousin".

If You have a rare black and white photo about early Baltimoreans, write, Mrs. Ida Peters, AFRO, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, Md. 21201.

What's Happening

By Ida Peters

Sam Gilliam, one of the most fascinating, articulate and important artists of our time will lecture at the Baltimore Museum of Art at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 23.

Gilliam was born in Tupelo, Miss. in 1933 and grew up in Louisville, Ky. He received his M.A. in painting at the University of Louisville in 1961.

He is anArtist Fellow of the Washington Gallery of Modern Art, 1968 and has taught at the Maryland Institute and the Corcoran School of Art.

In 1979 he held a one-man exhibition at the Hamilton Gallery of Contemporary Art, NYC; MiddendorfLane Gallery, D.C.; Florence Duhl Gallery, NYC; Montgomery College in Rockville and The Dart Gallery, Chicago.

Gilliam's "Leah's Renoir" is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection and his "Black" painting is in the Frances and Sidney Lewis Collection.

Now open thru April 4th in The Gallery of Art of Morgan State College, "Folio 4 Artists—That Another May Pick Up the Sword". Artists include Guy Jones, Pontella Mason, Ronald Roberson and Van Woodson.

TONIGHT, Friday, the New Orleans Tuxedo Jazz Band led by Bob French will be giving a free concert at the Dunbar Performing Arts Center, Caroline and Orleans St. at 8 p.m.

Originally the Heritge Hall Band led by Papa Albert French who passed in September 197.the Tuxedo Jazz Band is one of the oldest and most famous of New Orleans black jazzmen.

The Kings Landing Women sService Club which does so much to help with the AFRO's Mrs. Santa and Clean Block Programsalong with its other charities is holding its Second Disco, Bull and Oyster Roast at La Fontaine Bleu, Sunday, March 23 from 2-6 p.m.

Betty Lindsay is president; Carliss Corprew, program chairperson; Mildred Nelson, treasurer; and Mary Smith, ticket chairperson.

The menu is so fantastic it's almost unbelievable. I don't know where else in B-More you could pay $15 and get this much food plus set-ups and beer and help a worthy charity.

The menu: - Tasty oxtail soup, delicious oyster stew, famous oyster puffs, Texas beef barbeque, fried whiting fish, hearty baked beans, raw beef and onions, fender roast beef, frankfurters smothered in sauerkraut, Danish ham, American cheese, cole slaw, homemade potato salad, raw oysters on the half shell, spring onions, tomatoes, rye bread, apple strudel with whipped cream.

Leroy Wilkins and the men of Avalon Travel Club have picked Europe for their 1980 vacation trip. This is another group that combines having fun along with their charitable activities. In the past two years they have helped the AFRO's Mrs. Santa with $600 and the Arena Players Possible Dream. If you want to know more, join them Sunday, March 23 from 6 - 8 p.m. at the Winchester Armory.

Bob French and the Tuxedo Junction New Orleans Jazz Band in free concert at Dunbar, tonight, Friday.

The Port City Jazz Ensemble with Marian Kaul, coodinator and Alto Sax; Bill Warfield, Band Director and Trumpeter and Frances Sherr, liaisonwill perform at Morgan State University in a free concert inCarlMurphy Auditorium from 12 to 2 p.m., March 26.

A gala black tie national press conference is being held tonight March 21, 8 p.m. at The Mechanic Theatre for the premiere of "Equus: The Ballet" by the Maryland Ballet.

Leading dance critics from London, Paris, and New York, as well as many dance notables, are expected to attend. Invited that evening are: Maryland Governor Harry Hughes; Baltimore Mayor William Donald Schaefer; playwright Peter Shaffer; "Equus" original Broadway star Peter Firth; Dance Ballet. Magazine editor and publisherBill Como; dance critics Clive Barnes, Anna Kisselgoff, Barton Wimble; choreographers Robert Joffery and Arthur Mitchell; Anthony and Sally Bliss of the Metropolitan Opera; Livingston Biddle and other leading members of the National Endowment for the Arts the British Consulate General and others. All members of the audience will be invited to a champagne reception in the lobby afterwards.

All parts in the ballet will be danced by Maryland Ballet company members: Louis Perella will dance the role of Alan, the boy who commits a passionate violent act against six horses; Reva Pincusoof and Debra Van Cure will alternate in the role of Jill; Sylvester Campbell performs the role of the horse Nugget; and The Maryland Ballet's newest member, premier danseur Clark Tippet, will dance the role of the psychiatrist, Dr. Dysart. The ballet's score will be performed by a 40 member orchestra conducted by John Head, music director of the Atlanta Ballet.

AFRO talks to 'Changeling' director

Unaware of the strange happenings experienced by its former tenants, George C. Scott rents an old Victorian mansion from Trish Van Devere in "The Changeling".

By Ida Peters

A hollow,moaning sound is heard like the wind through a pipe. The sound whirrs and grows louder, taking on a character, barely audible within it. Partially shaped words, indistinct—perhaps not there at all. A graveyard-whisper in the wind-sounding like, "John . . . help" . . . "John help . . ." He hears it — his hands clutch at the arms of his chair as a shuddder runs through his body.

It's moments like this which set off an irreversible chain of events, cloaked in the heart-stopping terror and gripping suspense, which results in the motion picture "The Changeling", starring George C. Scott, Trish Van Devere and Melvyn Douglas.

Produced by Joel Michaels and Garth Drabinsky, Peter Medak directs from a screenplay by William Gray and Diana Maddox.

This Gothic tale focuses on the horrifying parapsychological experience which traumatizes a grieving composer, essayed by Scott; who moves from New York to Seattle to escape reminders of the tragic accidental deaths of his wife and young daughter.

It begins when he takes up residence in one of Seattle's very old homes and soon learns it harbors a deep, dark secret in its shrouded past. Compelled by a haunting force to unearth the mystery, the composer pursues the truth to its startling and electrifying revelation.

"The Changeing" has been sneak previewing in the Baltimore-Washington area and the AFRO was in D.C. Tuesday to talk with Peter Medak, called by AFD, the Canadian firm that produced the $6 million dollar film... "one of the brightest and most talented directors in the motion picture industry".

The interview took place over a leisurely lunch of two and a half hours at the Madison Hotel in Medak's suite.

Peter Medak is a Hungarian Jew whose family had to flee Nazi persecution in 1956. He escaped to England with a friend at 19 and began his film career at the Associated British Studios in London

His father owned a textile factory and Medak remembers the maid telling his father one day at lunch that the Gestapo was searching the apartment complex. The family just walked away and hid out with relatives in the country. The children slept on stacked beds.

He also remembered his father going back years later. The building had been bombed and the lunch plates were still on the table. He humourously also remembered a Dutch aunt who was a singer who slept with all the Nazi officers and helped many Jews escape.

Not that this conversation has anything to do with "The Changeling" but that's how critics luncheons go.

In 1962, Medak worked in Hollywood on "The Alfred Hitchcock Hour", "Wagon Train" and "The Virginian".

In the 1970s he directed for televiston, Jim Novak and Tony Curtis in "Third Girl from the Left" and episodes of "The Persuaders", "Space 1999" and "The Saint".

Medak was not the first director on "The Changeling", he says he was very skeptical at first and "some part of me didn't believe the story", but he reduced it to what I believe.

Admitting that "The Uninvited" is his favorite ghost story, Medak says there is something very frightening about old houses and the terror that people feel while viewing "The Changeling" has no logic behind it and while there are some lapses in logic most people will miss it.

A great deal of the action in "The Changeling" takes place in the foreboding Victorian mansion. The house itself had to be built by production designer Trevor Williams on two different sites. The exterior was erected in suburban Vancouver, British Columbia, while the interior was duplicated on the sound stage at nearby Panorama Studios.

The outside was a huge three-story wooden facade placed in front of an existing home. It took four weeks to build this 150-foot front and age it to look like it was almost 100 years old.

The 18-room interior is a single, continuous unit, also rising three stories. This differs from most movie sets, which build the rooms all on one floor, even though in the film it is made to appear the action has moved upstairs. This massive undertaking took another five weeks, with the total cost running nearly $300,000 for the interior and exterior construction.

In this manner, Medak cameramen are able to move their cameras in a "ghostly way, like a puff of wind".

Bill Lane in Hollywood

Doing our 'roots' to death

Some call it the legacy of "Roots", in that since U.S. television discovered how many people could be interested in watching a series about enslaved black people TV should henceforth try to ride a good horse to death.

Some people would be surprised to know the big batches of scripts always arriving these days at Hollywood film studios—scripts about blacks and days of yo re De Ole Plantation when Massa built miniscular empires with free black labor and emulated ancient harem keepers by having a white wife and an acre of black mistresses. Freedom existed only in the skies, reachable only when the Sweet Chariot would swing low to carry some poor soul "home".

And according to many white historians, the black serfs were inexorably a happy lot. Even though they often tried to escape to Canada, it was suggested that these people loved their emasculated lifestyles

Really, the only people who loved it all were the keepers, not the kept. If vote for black slavery today it's possible they would do so. For one thing, they can vicariously harken back to those Good Ole Days by watching the way it was on television—if NBC-TV and David Gerber Productions have their way comes this May.

That's when they expect to air a mini-series called "Beulah Land", based on the

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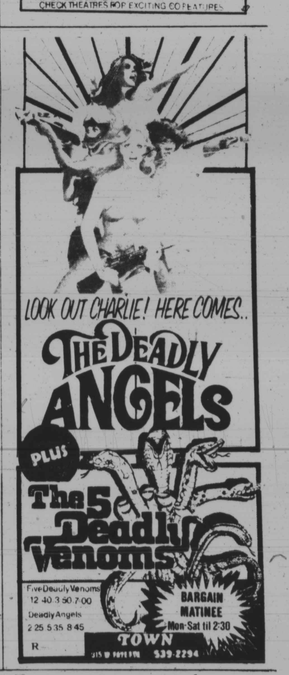
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