-Opera Ebony

(Continued from Page 6) Opera Ebony is out there all alone," he said.

It started as a small company in New York and Philadelphia with a staff of about 20. "It expanded to include more performers, committees and boards, and it now has a staff of 200," explained Poindexter, as he mentioned that the company would like to put more major performances to give its artists a chance to earn a decent living.

Currently, the company only gives one major performance a year and several "miniperformances, guest appearances and benefits." "In the future, as one of our goals, we would like to start doing two major performances a year and increase the number of workshops, recitals and appearances," said Poindexter, as he explained that Opera Ebony is

still in the struggling stage.

"Money is the only thing that stands between Opera Ebony and the biggest opera houses in the country," the enthusiastic business manager declared. "It's a struggle getting the kind of money to make possible more than one performance a year."

Critics give rave reviews to Opera Ebony performances and audiences leave the opera houses singing the praises of the 100 or so talented black artists that comprise the performing segment of the company.

But, Poindexter said, it's still a struggle to find patrons who are willing to sponsor Opera Ebony performances. And the troupe can't look to the big opera companies for aid or even oncouragement.

"Opera Ebony has been a thorn in the side of many opera companies. We have brought out talent that was in the woodwork and the companies have been embarrassed by it, because they have not been doing their job as an equal opportunity employer," Poindexter insisted.

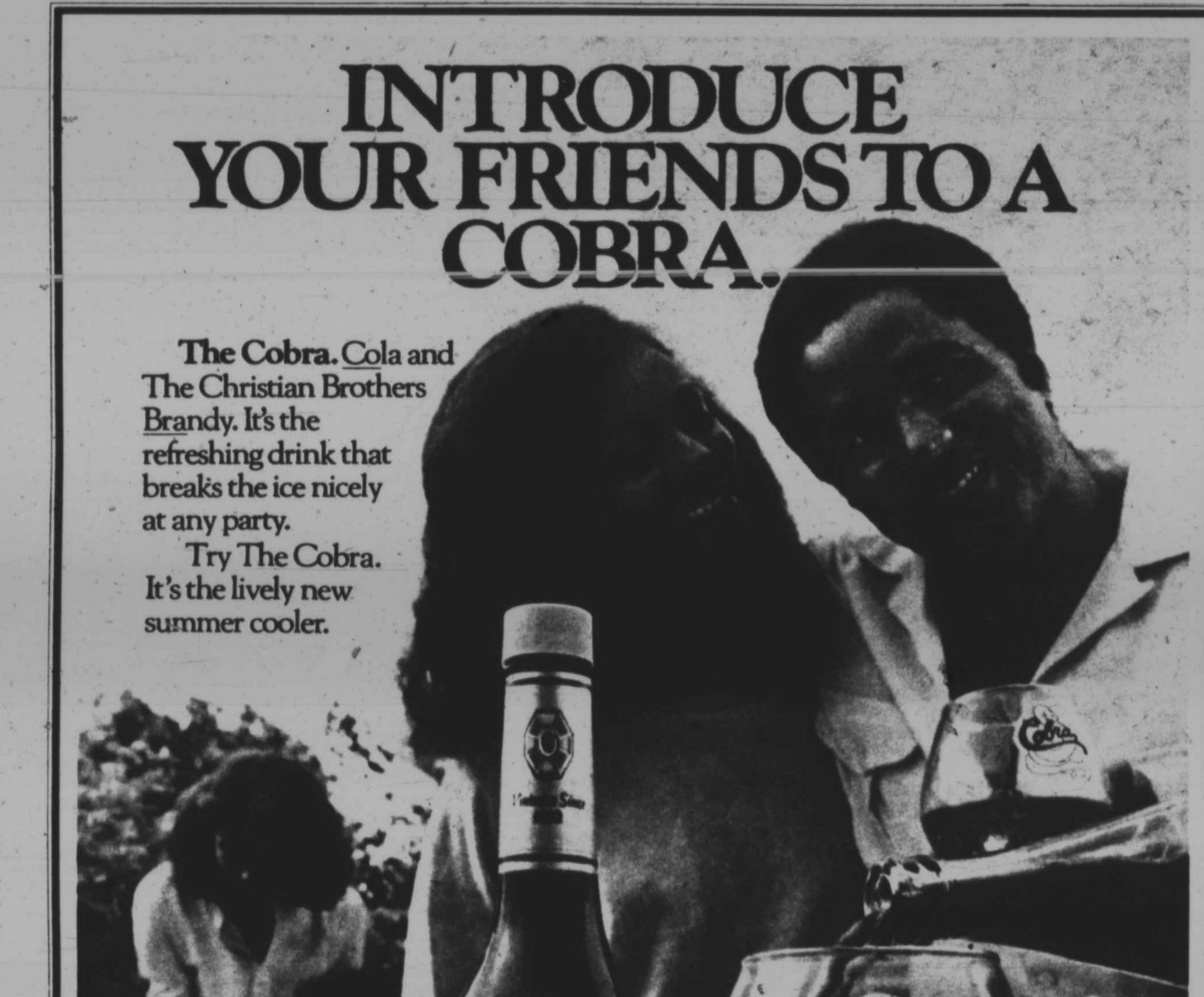
"They were using the old contention, 'We can't find any black singers.' We have proved that there are talented black opera singers and that audiences are ready for them," he added, explaining that black opera performers are a far more common site in Europe than in the United

Cynthia Wormley, a 27-year-old native Philadelphian, is a singer affiliated with Opera Ebony. She says she is now studying in Munich, Germany "to further develop my skills and bring them back to America."

Cynthia says, "If Opera Ebony did not exist, I would continue to study and ready myself, but I would not have the chance to perform as much as I have."

"Opera Ebony is long overdue. We should try to make up for past ommissions," said Opera coach Sylvia Older Lee. "Think of talent that existed 20 and 30 years and and was wasted because there was no opportunity. We need a black opera company because there are precious few opportunities for black opera performers even though there is more integration in the arts today."

Poindexter said the audiences that attend major performances are usually about 50 to 60 percent black. "We also have a large white following and there are a lot of opera buggs in Philadelphia, especially in the Italian community who will come out to see the Italian operas no matter who is performing," he said.



Brandy from The Christian Brothers of California.

BRENDA SHELLING:

She Knew She'd Get The Aspiring toward more satisfying Job...And She Did! employment than purchasing agent for a paper bag manufac-

turer in Monroe, La., Brenda Shelling sought and found a challenging career in the direct selling field.

Today, overseeing some 153 sales representatives, Brenda is a highly successful district manager for Avon Products, Inc.

"I was looking for something that was more stimulating and rewarding," she recalled of her debut with Avon some three years ago. Brenda had consulted with a private employment agency in Monroe and was sold that the company had been interviewing people for the job she now holds. It was just what she wanted and she felt well prepared for it.

"I was so confident that I asked to be granted an interview," she reminisced. "The interview took place in April and I was hired on May 11, 1977, as a district manager."

Management had no doubts that Brenda could help the company maintain its leadership position in sales, attract more representatives and maintain the high level of customer satisfaction for which Avon is traditionally

Her work speaks for itself. In 1978, Brenda was Number One in her division in dollar and percent increases for the year, her first.

Among Mrs. Shelling's most memorable experiences since joining the company management team was winning the company's prestigious Circle of Excellence Award and the seven-day trip to France with over 300 other managers.

"I was impressed with the visit to Versailles, the wine cellars, the Arc de Triomphe and the friendliness of the people," she

Born in New Liberia, La., Brenda has also lived in New Orleans and Chicago. While attending Grambling State University, she met and married one of the college's football players. Roy Shelling, in 1963. Roy, an assistant junior high school principal, enjoys sports with Brenda and the couple's two children, Cassandra and Roy, Jr.

Brenda feels strongly that the Avon experience provides an excellent earning opportunity for

Brenda Shelling yoù never looked so good



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Success for us is having Brenda Shelling of Monroe, Louisiana on our management team.

Brenda has taken the challenge of success and enthusiastically encouraged other women to give it a try. AVOI

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