Focus on Africa at Pratt Saturday

By Ida Peters

What's Happening

Dr. Elliott P. Skinner, Anthropologist, guest speaker.

Dr. Dollie Walker, President of Diversified

Mojo Gentry, director of Park Heights School of Performing Arts. (See What's Happening)

"Focus on Africa; A Dialogue of the Life Styles, Values and An African Diaspora" is being held on Saturday, Oct. 25 in an all - day workshop at the Enoch Pratt Library, downtown.

This will be the third of a series of Institute Workshops sponsored by Diversified Systems Groups Inc. under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Dr. Dollie B. Walker is president and Dr. Gwendolyn Cooke is project director.

Registration is free and the morning session 10 a.m. to noon is devoted to the topic, "Human Development and Infra - Structure in Africa Today."

Guest speaker will be Dr. Elliott P. Skinner an anthropologist and renowned scholar in black affairs. He specializes in African ethnology, African political systems and race relations in the New World. He has written extensively on the Mossi Peoples of French - West Africa.

Dr. Elliott Percival Skinner was born in Trinidad - Tobago, West Indies and received his college education at the University of Neuchatel (Switzerland); M.A. and Ph.D. from the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University. He served as U.S. ambassador to Upper Volta, 1965-69.

Currently he is a lecturer and professor on Africa Affairs and serves as chairman, African Subcommittee of the Committee for the International Exchange of Scholars (Fulbright).

The afternoon session from 2 to 4 p.m. will feature a book review on "Things Fall Apart" by Chunua Achebe and African films.

Films to be shown are "The Last Grave of Dimbaza" a Rosa Moreno film, filmed in the Republic of South Africa in 1979 and "The Dispossessed" - "Abathpuerwe."

This focus on Africa is being presented because most Americans, of all races, lack sufficient knowledge to understand the nature of the rise of Black Africa on the world scene. Diversified Systems Groups' year long institute provides opportunities for Americans and others to deepen their knowledge of the contributions Africans have made in the humanities and Africa's current roles on the modern - day body - politic.

Mojo Gentry is director of the Park Heights School of the Performing Arts which is under the umbrella of the Park Heights Community Organization.

A non - profit corporation, it was founded by Gentry in 1978 and offers free classes in the arts . . . mime, dance, voice and acting currently at Greenspring Junior High and St. Ambrose Rosa Park School.

Gentry has a graduate Associate of Arts degree from Towson State University and has taught at Towson State, Pimlico Junior High and Callaway Elementary.

His major objective today is get more people aware in the Park Heights area of the free programs. He is currently rehearsing two original plays and mime skits on blacks in America.

Thought For Today — "If women are sleeping their way to the top, they must be having insomnia, because they're not getting to the top . . . There is a kind of very faintly veiled hostility toward any kind of successful woman. And, of course, Mary Cunningham has several strikes against her. She's young. She's attractive. And obviously, she's very competent." — Eliza Goodman, journalist and social observer, commenting on the case of Mary Cunningham — a well educated, 28 - year old businesswoman who left her high level Bendix Corporation position because of rumors linking her climb up the corporate ladder to her good looks and alleged relationship with her boss.

'Motel Hell'

"Everybody loves a horror movie" — and with that in mind "Motel Hell" opening at area theatres has been created to frighten every movie - goer out of at least a month's sleep. Starred are Rory Calhoun, Nancy Parsons, Paul Linke, Nick Ameral and Wolfman Jack.

The original screenplay is the work of two young brothers, Robert Jaffe and Steven - Charles Jaffe, both of veteran film - maker Herb Jaffe, who serves as executive producer. Steven - Charles Jaffe and Robert Jaffe also serve as the producers of the United Artists release.

The director is England's Kevin Connor, a foremost creator of eerie, suspenseful, adventure films, several of which are developing a cult following. His credits include "From Beyond the Grave," "Land That Time Forgot," "Trial By Combat," "At the Earth's Core," "People That Time Forgot," "Warlords of Atlantis" and "Arabian Adventure."

Among prior credits, Robert Jaffe co - scripted the ominous "Demon Seed," presented by MGM for UA release. Steven - Charles Jaffe, who spent an number of years in various motion picture production capacities, most recently co - produced (with director Michael Pressman) "Those Lips, Those Eyes."

Herb Jaffe launched his independent production company program with the big action picture, MGM's "The Wind and the Lion," followed by "Demond Seed," "Who'll Stop the Rain" (rated by many critics among the best movies of 1978), all for UA and the highly acclaimed "Time After Time." He also is executive producer of "Those Lips, Those Eyes."

Much of the filming for "Motel Hell" took place in the area of northern Los Angeles County known as Canyon Country. A huge, sprawling ranch house, was transformr into a motel office with a nearby stable almost magically converted into the motel proper. In addition to a one - day location in suburban Moorpark, California, extensive interior filming was done at Laird International Studios (formerly Culver City Studios).

The music for "Motel Hell," ranging from country - western to punk rock, was composed, arranged and conducted by youthful Lance Rubin, who has provided music for five television series and the recent Ron Howard motion picture "Leo and Loree."

Farmer Vincent(Rory Calhoun) and his sister Ida (Nancy Parsons) admire the crop of human victims in their hidden garden in "Motel Hotel."

Go out and Zapp yourself!

By Ida Peters

Inquiries have been coming to the AFRO Entertainment desk asking about the musical group ZAPP, where they are coming from and who they are.

One thing for sure the group's LP "Zapp" has reached number one on the Cashbox Black Contemporary Chart (they don't call it R & B anymore). What's more the group's first single, "More Bounce To The Ounce" has replaced Queen's "Another One Bites The Dust" on the Black Singles chart.

Though most artists must adapt to market demands, Roger Troutman, a cofounder of the group says the Warner Brothers recording outfit Zapp has "responded to the challenged change without forsaking the basics."

The Zapp outfit is composed of Troutman with his brothers Larry and Lester. Zapp (the youngest for whom the group was named) and friends Greg Jackson and Bobby Glover.

Of special assistance was Bootsey Collins, longtime cohort and coproducer of the LP with Roger Troutman and the group.

The group's album covers a number of styles of songs with common element in it all — funk and electricity.

Coming up on the tours of Cameo, LTD and the Bar-Kays . . . look out to be Zapped.

Bill Lane in Hollywood

THe Temptations headed back home, to Detroit, to headline the reopening of the 20 Grand nightery, the same spot they opened some years back as headliners. And the Motor City also offered up another bit of talent—Ms. Rosa Parks, the lady who sparked the no-more-back-of- the-bus move in Alabama years ago and who's now head of Congressman John Conyer's Detroit offices. Rosa Parks was Computerized on the dotted line for an American Express TV commercial.

Bob Marley, the famous sound from the islands, coming out of Mexico where he went for a rest after his doctor told him he should nix his scheduled concert tour. Too much work. He says he felt more tired watching in Las Vegas the Ali-Holmes bout than he ever possibly could have felt doing his slated concerts. Now Marley looks forward to a talked-about duo concert package with the wondrous one, Stevie Wonder.

JUNE GATLIN put down her acting career to become a psychic. The only acting to be done would be done by her young son, who had a part in "Beulah Land," the controversial TV series that aired recently on the tube. When folks were wondering if the protests would hurt airing the series, Miss Gatlin said she had numerically ascertained that "Beulah Land" would be a television hit, a part of the karmic Master Plan. She also predicted that the slave-days series would make a lot of money for the producers when shown in European cities.

A lot of people are saying, however, that "Beulah Land" was nothing more than a glorified soap opera, with the strongest character coming through not the fine actress Ren Warren but rising new actor Dorian Harewood.

Too, a lot of people insisting that more people watched "The Win" on the tube than watched "Beulah Land."

SPEAKING of TV, Sylvester came through as one of the top interviewed artists of the season, his appearance on the Tom Snyder show taking the cake, ice cream, too. Next up, possibly, the Two Tons being interviewed by the Great Gaves on the Muppets show.

RICHMOND Barthe, the internationally famous artists and sculptor who lives in Pasadena, donated funds raised at his 80th birthday party last January to help prepare a videotape history of early blacks in Jackie Robinson will be one of the included early citizens.

FORMER Little Rascals star Matt "Stymie" Beard says no matter what anyone else says, Billy Thomas was the one and only first Buckwheat starring in the old "Our Gang" film series from 1934 to 1944. Thomas died the other day in Los Angeles, at age 49, of natural causes. There had been for years protests from another gentleman that he starred as Buckwheat in some of the series, and not the late Billy Thomas.

NANCY WILSON'S big tennis tourney in Palm Springs was the last word in excitement, color, elegance and competition for a worthy cause, the Nancy Wilson Foundation camp for underprivileged youth in Yucca Valley, in the high desert area.

While that was going on, right here in River City, in blase old Hollywood, a lovely married lady had to flee screaming into the streets as her hubby, a world famouse retired puglist, reportly began acting like he was in the ring again and she was his opponent. But police settled the matter, quietly.

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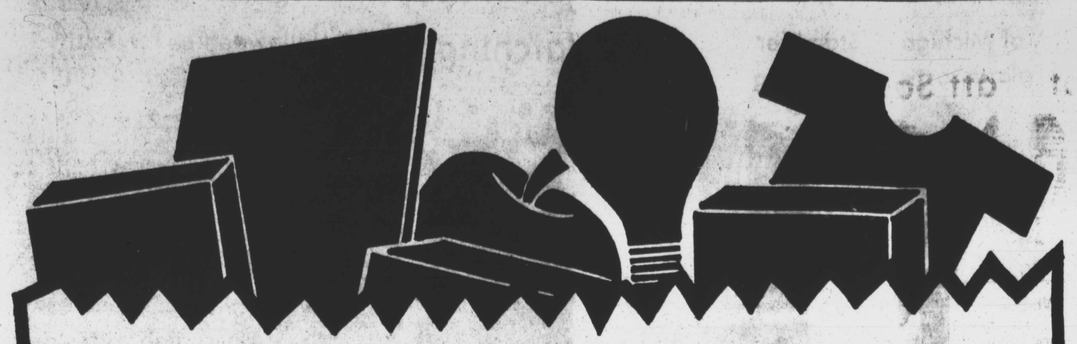

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