SHOWTIME

Sonny Til...

'Back to the Chapel Again'

By Ida Peters

It's been almost 30 years since Sonny Til and the Orioles travelled around the country with Perry Como, Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington, Redd Foxx singing their hits "At Night", "Crying In the Chapel".

And Baltimore - born Sonny Til, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tilghman, born in the 1000 blk. of Woodycrest St. between Riggs and Mosher and who grew up in the 1300 blk. of Whitefoat St. with members of the Swallows and the Flamingoes living nearby, may find his music coming back, in the 1980s.

Sonny was in town recently to play Bob Matthews' The Spot at Monroe and Eight and recalled the days he appeared on bills with Ruth Brown, Dinah Washington, Sarah Vaughn and Billie Holiday.

Sonny remembers graduating from School 112 where Mrs. Estelle Lee was principal and attending School No. 130 at Lafayette and McCulloh. His earliest memory of singing was with a quartet with William Wren and Lieveryn Wilson the music teacher at Douglass High School. He has a high tenor voice but never has had any formal music training.

He graduated from Douglass High School in 1940 and went into the Army in a Chemical War Unit, No. 162. He trained in Alabama, Camp Seibert, Camp Gordon Johnson, Fort Lee, Va. and served overseas in Patton's Third Army. Their job was to lay down smoke screens for the engineers to build the bridges over the Rhine River in Germany.

Sonny remembers his Captain, Maceo Turner of Atlantic City, who had him drive a jeep all over Europe singing in officers' clubs. Sonny remembers Captain Turner committed suicide recently.

He also remembers the beaches of Germany and how the men had him singing "Till Then".

When he came back from World War II all he wanted to do was sit on the front steps but his girl wanted to go down to the Avenue Cafe at Pennsylvania Avenue and Pitcher Street.

There Flink Johnson was M.C., Bill Lindsay the manager and George Nelson was rapping and singing. They had amateur nights and Tantell Hines did an "Open the Door Richard" routine. Johnny Reed was playing bass and the late Brooklyn Rock urged Sonny to enter the contest. With Alexander Sharp, Sonny won a $50 prize and Alex, $20.

Sonny was hooked on singing and he formed the Vibraires with George Nelson, Alexander Sharp, Tommy Gaither and Johnny Reed. Their first job was at Smith's Hotel, across from the AFRO at Paca and Druid Hill.

Then Bob Lindsay booked them at the Avenue Cafe and a Jewish girl, Deborah Chessler became their manager. Their first recording was "It's Too Soon To Know" backed by "My Barbara Lee".

Chessler took them to New York to appear on the Arthur Godfrey Talent Show. George Shearing won but fans all over the country wrote the Lipton Tea people asking to hear more of the Vibraires. They were called back to the Godfrey Show and in 1947 played the white Club Charles, the first black act ever.

Sonny remembers getting paid $1,000 - more money than I'd ever seen.

They recorded for Jerry Blaine and Natural Records then Jubilee. When they switched to Jubilee, the man said, "you cats from Baltimore, we'll call you The Orioles."

Deborah Chessler wrote all their hit songs "Tell Me So", "At Night", "Forgive and Forget", "To Be To You and Crying In the Chapel".

Sonny recalls he has paid his dues as he remembers traveling the chitterlin' circuit, riding in a black logging car with their manager, a white woman at that. He laughs and recalls a gig for the Ku Klux Klan.

What has Sonny been doing lately with new Orioles Gerald Holeman, Albert Russell, Billy Taylor? He's been overseas to Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland and England. And, he says it's good to be back in his hometown, Baltimore. His home base these days is Silver Spring, Md.

Pamoja Experience entertains for Mrs. Santa

Pamoja Experience will entertain for the benefit of the AFRO's Mrs. Santa when Park Way Records gives a party Sunday Dec. 21 at The Ritz from 4 to 9 p.m.

Park-Way Records International, Rod Armstrong and Ernest Donaldson, (Soft Tones and First Class) have thru the years entertained at AFRO Clean Block meetings. They will help Mrs. Santa by giving a party at the Ritz, Sunday, Dec. 21 with proceeds going to Mrs. Santa.

They are inviting their friends and associates to join them and help a worthy cause.

Paul Keene's work on display at Morgan

By James E. Lewis
Director
Gallery of Art
Morgan State University

In showing the works of the artist, Paul F. Keene Jr., the Gallery of Art at Morgan State University continues its historically unique efforts to provide a showplace for artists of color along with other artists.

The Gallery of Art began these efforts nearly 30 years ago and has annually shown such late artists as Joshua Johnston, Robert S. Duncanson, Edward Bannister, Henry O. Tanner, William Edouard Scott, Horace Pippin, Palmer Hayden, Hale Woodruff, Beauford Delaney, Alma Thomas and Charles White, and among the living Richmond Barthe, Joseph Delaney, Lois Mailou Jones, Hughie Lee Smith, Jacob Lawrence, Romare Bearden, Marie Johnson, Morgan State University graduate; Cliff Joseph, Richard Mayhew, Jack White (Morgan State University graduate), Robert J. Reed, (Morgan State University graduate), Norma Morgan, Sam Gilliam, Bill Hutson, Mel Edwards, William T. Williams, Dr. Randall Craig, (Morgan State University graduate), among many others.

We have never waited for the tide of popular approval in our presentations, rather, we have recognized the quality of these artists and have been supporting them. We have also presented imaginative and creative exhibitions which have later been duplicated by other, so - called major museums with million dollar budgets.

The works of Paul F. Keene Jr. at Morgan University.

Slowly our black community has grown in its recognition and appreciation of art in general and more specifically in the black American artists. There still could be more support coming from the more financially affluent black professionals. We continue to make efforts to influence them.

In our humanness, we must avoid the temptation to be more supportive of the more established arts institutions than of those quality institutions which constitute the backbone of our more immediate communities. There is the tendency for us to leap at the call of institutions which, though their doors are not closed to our visits, nevertheless do not support our quality efforts. Too often, in leaping, we deny our own existence for the sake of a one - night stand with others.

The Gallery of Art at Morgan State University has and continues to provide a forum for the contributions of Americans of color as well as other Americans. The record will show that we have done this with distinction.

Attendance at the opening of the Paul F. Keene, Jr. exhibition was excellent. Some of our guests came great distances to see this exhibition. Some works were sold. Many more are affordable.

The© Pierians, a Baltimore - Washington based cultural group, has worked with the Gallery of Art for over 20 years. Along with the Gallery collections and exhibitions, they too have grown tremendously. We would invite other such meaningful organizations to look at what the Pierians have accomplished as an art support group. A great deal can be learned from them. When people think of the Pierians, they see a distinguished group of ladies who have an unmatched record of being patrons of the arts.

Paul F. Keene, Jr., was an appropriate selection for the Pierians to support this year. In addition to his formal educational experiences at the Philadelphia Museum School of Art, Tyler School of Fine Arts and Academie Julien, Paris, France, Mr. Keene has taught at art institutions in America and abroad.

He has been in one - man exhibitions and group exhibitions in America, Europe and Africa. Another mark of his distinction can be seen by the collections which include his works - such as the John Hay Whitney Hirshorn collection - Dallas Museum - Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts - Philadelphia Museum of Art - Delaware Museum of Fine Arts, among many others.

Mr. Keene has received many awards ranging across a spectrum including, the John H. Whitney fellowship and the Afro - American Artists award. He has created a number of murals in several states and is presently working on a sculpture relief mural for the city of Philadelphia.

As an excellent colorist and superb draftsman, he is unsurpassed. Mr. Keene tends to be a low - profile person who lets his works speak for him.

If you are interested in seeing works of beauty, visit the Morgan State University Gallery I (lower level) of paintings and drawings by Paul F. Keene, Jr., a complete artist in the Carl Murphy building.

Bohannon... 'One Step Ahead'

By Ida Peters

Hamilton Bohannon, the artist, composer lyricist, producer and arranger, called the AFRO from Newnan, Ga. outside of Atlanta to tell us about his very own record label, Phase II Records, Ltd. and his new album "One Step Ahead" to be distributed by CBS Records this month.

He hasn't done many concerts recently because he says "I've been getting my company together. I've got 15 years experience and know how, and when you write a song and produce it, you've got to be involved in the business end."

"I wrote, arranged and produced the entire album and did the whole thing, recording, mixing, in 40 hours" he said. "I can write a song in five minutes. When it comes time to do something, I do it. I'm involved in other things. I'm operating a 26 - acre farm down here, all paid for, and I'm operating a Transportation Service with a coupe vans and limousines.

Plus I'm married to Andrea and have two kids, Hamilton B. 2nd, 4 and April, 2.

Bohannon, a Pisces, graduated from Clark College in Atlanta where he majored in music and education. He taught in the public schools in LaGrange, Ga. before touring the concert circuit with Gorgeous George and later with Jimmy Hendricks.

He joined Motown and his first job was as Stevie Wonder's drummer. He later became leader of the Motown Band, touring from 1967 - 70 with all the top stars including Gladys Knight, Diana Ross and The Spinners.

In 1972, he went out on his own and his hits include "Stop and Go", "Keep On Dancing" and "Doing My Thing".

On the lighter side: Asked Bohannon what age group he was in. "I'm not going to tell you. You don't ever tell your age. If you tell, some folks might say you're too old and you turn folks off. No matter, we're looking to see Bohannon in our area in the Spring.

Hamilton Bohannon talks about his new album from his home in Georgia.

Night Scene Seen

By Bob Matthews

Although the holiday season is just about upon us, most of the bars and clubs in the area are pointing ahead, making plans for gala New Year's eve celebrations.

Christmas season is traditionally the time when neighborhood bars seem to reap the benefits of continued patronage.

Over the past six months, a trend started to develop which has blossomed into full maturity.

It could be called the working women's syndrome, for men have traditionally stopped off from work to have a "taste" on the way home.

A spotcheck in the waterfront area, which includes Rahsaan's Bar on Hilton and Gwynns Falls, and The Garrison Lounge on Clifton Avenue indicate that the stop-off by female workers has become the "in" thing.

Part of this can be directly attributable to the establishment of the Social Security complex on Greene St., which means a lot of workers go through the Walbrook area on their way home.

The net effect of this type of activity is the proliferation of the many "happy hours" and the reduction in bar prices that this engenders.

The two for one policy, as exemplified by the Garrison's new policy, is taking hold and being repeated around town.

While some of the newer Sceners may think this is a new policy, it goes way back to the days when it was de riguerer for owners to give a drink on the house each time you bought two.

In fact, around New York City, a "shortie" was the way drinks were ordered at a bar. This was a shot which contained about 1½ normal shots and qualified you for "one on the house."

On the jazz scene, this is the weekend to hear three of Baltimore's top sax players.

It's being called the "Battle of the Horns," and happens at the Famous Ballroom Sunday, from 5 to 9 p.m. The time usually occupied by the Left Bank Jazz Society.

Featured will be Harold Adams, who was the winner of the sax slot on the AFRO And All That Jazz local band for 1979. Harold, who usually plays with Jimmy Wells, will square off with two other notable sax players.

Marvin Cabell, who is the entrepreneur behind the Full Moon Coffee House out on York Rd., will occupy the other tenor sax position.

He is one of the more innovative sax men in the city, and in our opinion is one of the premiere soprano saxists around. Am told that Ira Sullivan showed up to jam with Marvin recently, and it was a set to be remembered.

The other horn player will be Arnold Sterling, whose alto sax evokes reminiscences of Sonny Stitt and Cannonball Aderley.

Arnold, is of course, a student of Sonny, and on many occasions has accompanied the jazz great on the stand.

The rhythm section will have Marc Cohen, piano; Willie Barber, drums, and Donald Bailey, bass.

Another swinging set will take place this weekend when David Schnitter makes a return engagement to The Bandstand.

This should be a spectacular, though abbreviated set, for Dave will only be on hand tonight and Saturday.

On piano with this group will be Reuben Brown, which is incentive enough for a lot of people. Frank Smith will handle the bass chores, and Baltimorean Harold White will be on drums.

Incidentally, The Bandstand is planning a gala celebration beginning Christmas night when Houston Person and Etta Jones will take over the stand.

The Baltimore tradition of Sunday morning breakfast shows seems to still be in the forefront.

Out on Orleans St., Tracey is having a breakfast each Sunday, with food prepared by Odessa. It happens at Tiger Lil's.

Big Wooten's on W. Saratoga St still has its Sunday morning Disco breakfast beginning at 6 a.m.

Night Scene has been accused of neglecting the many bars and clubs in East Baltimore, and perhaps there is a smidgeon of truth in the accusation.

So, you can look for a concentration on the many clubs in E. Baltimore, some of which are featuring live entertainment on weekends.

We'll let you know.

What's Happening

By Ida Peters

It's been quite a trip in 1980 raising funds for the AFRO's Mrs. Santa. We've had our ups and downs and our arches have permanently fallen.

However, we've met some wonderful people and if you read the Mrs. Santa's pages you'll read all about the great outpouring of love from Baltimoreans.

Most heartwarming were the folks from General Electric, Employees fund in Columbia, Md. who donated $1,200 for Mrs. Santa. By AFRO press time folks all over town were wearing flowers for Mrs. Santa. Mrs. Louise G. Murphy has sold $637.00 worth and thanks all you wonderful people.

Mrs. Santa's flowers are on sale in Mondawmin at Pauline Brooks, Mondawmin Photo and at Ann and Bernard Lacewell's.

A big thank you to Dr. Uthman Ray Jr., his wife and his sons for a contribution of $500. He was also instrumental in getting his friends Hunter and Reuben Fedderman of the Furniture Connection on Baltimore Street to also contribute $500.

Jerry Toronto will MC a show the AFRO's Mrs. Santa is giving at 1 p.m. at the George W. Mechen School No. 177, Dec. 23.

Jerry Toronto has been an entertainer all of his life and recently he has been encouraging young talent. He will help Mrs. Santa give a party for children at School No. 177, the George McMechen School at 4411 Garrison Boulevard, Dec. 23 at 1 p.m.

Entertaining will be Tommy Carter, tap dancer; Toni Lane, Jennifer Jones, Bill Young, the blind pianist and the Night Hawks.

Sunday, Dec. 21 at 6 p.m. the AFRO's Mrs. Santa is giving a party for more than 200 children at City Jail and she has already sent toys, purchased gifts and goodies.

Mondawmin Merchants who contributed $2,000 to AFRO's Mrs. Santa were Great Cookie, Jerry Miller, Everyman's Son, Pauline Brooks, Klein's, One Hour Valet, Mondawmin Wigs, Charley Rudo's, Baltimore Gas and Electric, Sixteen Plus, Esquire Barber Shop, Sach's Junior Shoes;

Also Music Liberated, Hendin's, Kiddie Kloset, Kazin, Hyatt's, Shoe World, Rodman's Modern Music, B and B Liquors, Tom's Shoe Repair;

Also Yogart Tree, Lexington Lady, Beauty Outlet, Maryland National Bank, Barry's Men's Shop, Burdell's, Kim's Mart and Calvert Liquors.

The Warm Coat Project of Grace United Presbyterian Church completed their goal of 50 coats for Mrs. Santa. Mesdames Elizabeth Taylor and Mary E. Smith brought in some. Dr. Lonnie Greene is chairman.

Keyen and Robert Lee, sons of Mrs. Bobbie Lee broke open their piggie bank of pennies and brought $20 worth to help Mrs. Santa.

The Centennial Methodist Church at Monument and Ensor sent car loads of good toys and clothes for Mrs. Santa's families.

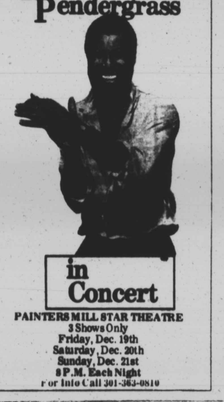
The folks over at Mass Transit on Washington Boulevard have been wonderful to Mrs. Santa. Mrs. Mary Turc, supervisor of the Informatign and Service Department baked cookies for Mrs. Santa. Ed Bowen sent a TV and AM-FM Radio; Tyrone Saunders, toys. Officer Clowney of the MTA Police Department donated canned foods, clothes from his family and friends. He won the lucky 50-50 raffle with $118 going to Mrs. Santa.

The Park Circle Club of group of neighbors in the 2500 blk. of Madison Avenue presented Mrs. Santa with $50. Formed 35 years ago Mrs. Buena Vista Prettyman is president; Mrs. Mamie Peterson, treasurer; Mrs. Elizabeth Martyn, secretary; and Mesdames Lillien Young, Annie Faulkner, Isabella Jackson and Alverta Ennis.

Also helping Mrs. Santa was the Women's Auxiliary of Frontiers International with $75. This group visits nursing homes, Redeemer's Palace, Mrs. Santa and the Negro College Fund.

Officers are Mrs. Carlene Gundy, president; Mrs. Claudine Snowden, vice-president; Mrs. Althea Cornish, recording secretary; Mrs. Beatrice Pitts, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Buena Vista Prettyman, treasurer; Mrs. Irene Dotson, financial secretary and Mrs. Thelma Moore, chaplain.

Teddy Pendergrass



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Francie Mendenhall as Miss Mona and Jenny Lee Wax as Angel in "The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas" coming to the Mechanic.

The Bronco Bull... raging

Two fights with Sugar Ray Robinson featured

Jake LaMotta (Robert De Niro) is ordered to his corner by referee (Martin Denkin) after knocking out Tony Janiro (Kevin Mahon) in "Raging Bull."

"Ladies and gentlemen . . . Marcel Cerdan is unable to answer the bell for the tenth round . . . The winner and new Middleweight Champion of the world — The Bronx Bull, Jake La Motta" 1948. We are in New York's Madison Square Garden and, upon hearing the above announcement, a frenzied crowd of boxing fans cheer Jake La Motta as their hero.

Raised in the slums of the Bronx, the son of an Italian immigrant, Jake La Motta's first lessons in life were how to steal and how to fight. Jake learned early that if you wanted to survive you had to be tougher than the next guy. A loner by nature, trusting virtually no one, Jake slugged his way through life, beating his wife, his friends, and anyone who stirred his vicious temper, including the mobsters who for years kept the championship title just out of his reach.

The same forces that made Jake a hoodlum — a combination of fear, rage, self — hatred and guilt — made him a winner inside the ring. And Jake was indeed a winner, earning in over a decade as a prize fighter millions of dollars.

But he squandered on houses, cars, women he did not love and friends he could never really trust. And when Jake lost the title and fell apart as a boxer, the compulsion to fight remained with him, a compulsion he ultimately "directed" at himself.

Abandoned and filled with loathing for himself and his past, Jake began a quick decline that led him to public humiliation and imprisonment. Here in an ignominious hole in a Florida prison, the Bronx Bull confronted himself and his race for the first time.

But Jake was not defeated, and after pursuing a career as a nightclub performer and sometime actor, he emerged in 1970, his wit and wisdom intact, with his autobiography, "Raging Bull."

More than a portrait of a colorful individual, "Raging Bull" is a study of the fighter — why he fights, why he wins, and why he loses. In its own way it is also the story of the corruption of the American dream, the everpresent lure of wealth and fame, and the legacy of brutality which, in one way or another, becomes a way of life for us all.

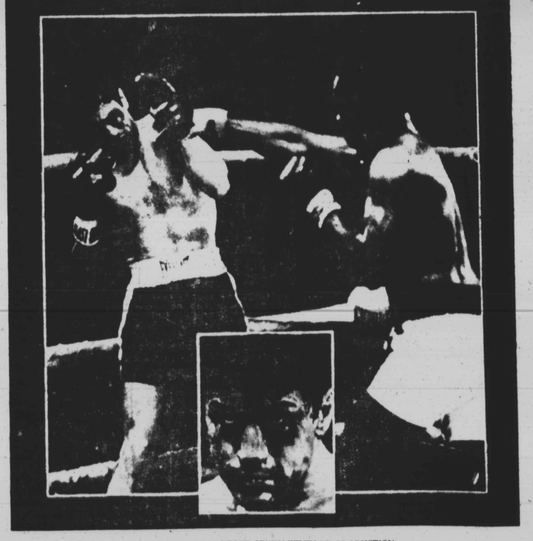
"Raging Bull" was filmed from a screenplay by Paul Schrader and Mardik Martin, based on the book by Jake La Motta with Joseph Carter and Peter Savage. Savage, a lifelong associate and friend of La Motta's, entered film production in 1969 and starred La Motta in two of his films, "A House in Naples" (1969) and "Cauliflower Cupids" (1970).

At age 56, La Motta served as technical advisor on the film, teaching super - star Robert De Niro how to fight like him and how to speak like him. For La Motta, a man whose crowning moment came 30 years ago, "Raging Bull" will be something most retired prizefighters only dream of — a second chance at fame.

Starring Robert De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, and Joe Pesci, "Raging Bull" was produced by Irwin Winkler and Robert Chartoff and directed by Martin Scorsese. Johnny Barnes plays Sugar Ray Robinson in La Motta's two fights with the Champion Sugar.

Robert De Niro (Jake La Motta) considered to be the consummate actor of his generation and an Academy Award winner as Best Supporting Actor for his striking interpretation of young Vito Corleone in "The Godfather, Part II", brings Jake La Motta's story to the screen in a vivid and seething portrayal.

The women... The money. The power.
He knew it all. He blew it all.



A ROBERT CHARTOFF-IRWIN WINKLER PRODUCTION
ROBERT DE NIRO
in A MARTIN SCORSESE PICTURE
"RAGING BULL"
Produced in association with PETER SAVAGE Screenplay by PAUL SCHRADER and MARDIK MARTIN
Based on the book by JAKE LA MOTTA with JOSEPH CARTER and PETER SAVAGE
Director of photography MICHAEL CHAPMAN Produced by IRWIN WINKLER and ROBERT CHARTOFF
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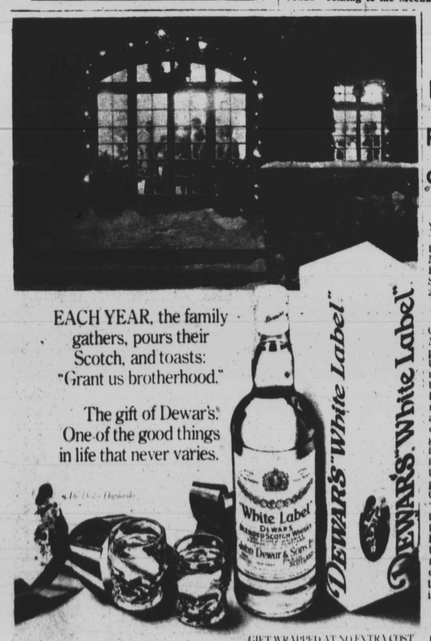
Arena Players perform at Cloisters



The Arena Players Youtheater will perform "Babes In Toyland" at the Cloisters Children's Museum, 10440 Falls Road, Brooklandville on Sunday, Dec. 21, 1980 at 2:00 p.m.

Performing at the Cloister's Children's Museum will be a positive experience for the Youtheater. The 35 inner - city youth will see the Cloister's, one of Baltimore's beloved landmarks that is designed to arouse the artistic creativity of children, gave a thrilling performance of excerpts from "Tom Sawyer" at the Cloisters. This year's presentation of a Christmas adaptation of "Babes In Toyland" by the group will also attest to one of the Arena Players' greatest contributions to the community: instilling cultural awareness into the hearts and minds of inner-city children.

For more information regarding performances phone 823-2551 or 728-8557.