SHOWTIME

Diana great...but?

Gap Band tops charts

By Ida Peters

Ronnie, Charles and Robert Wilson of the Gap Band.

Records

Diana Ross' new album "To Love Again" debuted on the Pop charts at 91 this week. Most of the songs are those building, string-filled ballads, "Theme From Mahogany", "It's My Turn" and "Touch Me In the Morning". "One More Chance" is an undiscovered gem. Which brings up Diana Ross' TV Special "diana". Some newspaper critics who attended the live concert in L.A. were disappointed and others who got an advance look said the show was over-produced.

If you have ever attended a live Diana Ross show you're bound to experience some disappointment. Especially if you get stuck in the crowd, miles away from the action and can't see what's going on. Or if you have a floor seat you can't enjoy the artists because the audience is putting on the show.

However, Diana did put on a great show but the critics were right. She should stick to music, the show was cluttered and over-produced.

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The segment with Barry Hagman (J.R.) was obscene. Diana Ross pawned all over him, half-naked with what little she had standing at attention. She acted like one of her own fans.

Black reporters on the West Coast scream "bloody marys" at a black reporter on a white daily who said the same thing but the fact of the matter is he called the shots right on this.

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The Gap Band with their album "Gap Band III" heads the Black-Contemporary chart this week. Ronnie, Charles and Robert Wilson are The Gap Band and they hail from Tulsa, Okla.

Undeniably inspired by a heavy gospel background it is no surprise to learn that the Wilson brothers got an early start in music, in church, under the driving direction of their father, a Tulsa minister and their mother who led the church choir.

Ronnie Wilson is the oldest and plays trumpet, fluglehorn, piano and percussion. Middle brother Charles, is the lead vocalist and keyboard player. Robert, the youngest plays bass.

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Most people could care less in what category a record is listed in trade magazines. If they like it they buy it. The Grammy Awards rascist overtones last week made us take a closer look at categories in Cashbox.

Cashbox has dropped R & B, or Rhythm and Blues and now calls music by black artists, Black Contemporary. Jazz and County lists black and white artists on the same chart. Gospel has black artists in Spiritual and white artists in Inspirational.

The only other category is Pop mostly reserved for white artists. This is what is known as the "crossover" chart. Currently black artists account for 21 per cent of the Top 100 Pop Singles and 26 per cent of the albums.

Crossover Pop Charts reflect airplay on so-called Top 40 "white" radio stations. Insiders in the music business say these stations have been having a hard time maintaining their ratings and are programming more black music whether R & B, Country or Spiritual to attract more listeners.

This week Kool & The Gang's-Celebration" is 5 on the Pop Singles Chart; "I Ain't Gonna Stand For It", Stevie Wonder, 13; "Just The Two of Us", Grover Washington Jr., 30; and "Heartbreak Hotel", The Jacksons, 33.

What's Happening

By Ida Peters

The Lord moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform. It was by chance that Jerry Toronto happened into our office last December while we were busy with the Mrs. Santa program.

While waiting for his wife, Ivy who is on kidney dialysis at nearby Maryland General Hospital, we chatted and he told us about his Jerry Toronto Productions. He's been in show business 43 years and knows personally Joe Louis, Frank Sinatra and the late Nat King Cole.

Lloyd Marcus sang pop, ballads and gospel for Briscoe students.

The next thing we knew, he had volunterred his troupe for the AFRO's Mrs. Santa Christmas benefit at School 177. Mrs. Santa contributed refreshments and gifts and Jerry Toronto put on the show. His troupe performs in hospitals, nursing homes, jails, building up to a big Kidney Foundation benefit to be held April 11 at Woodlawn High School with such guest stars as Tobie Marsh, Lenny Moore, Bob Turke and Johnny Waters.

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The program at School 177, led the Jerry Toronto troupe to be asked to perform at the Joseph C. Briscoe Junior High School where Lloyd Parham is principal last week.

On the bill were Bill Young, blind pianist and accompanist; Johnny Joyner, pop, ballads and gospel; Minnie Bailey, singer; The Night Hawks, dancing group and Lloyd Marcus, tenor singer.

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Lloyd Marcus is a Graphic Designer at Ch. 13, WJZ-TV and just happened to meet Jerry Toronto at the Pimlico Hotel Monday Night Talent Show.

The Lord does move in mysterious ways which is how the AFRO learned about talented Lloyd Marcus who when he served in the U.S. Army became hooked on drugs and alcohol and in 1976 became a born-again Christian.

During the assembly and talent show at Briscoe Junior High, he talked to the students about drug addiction.

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Marcus is from Pumprey, Md. and attended Brooklyn Park High School and the Maryland Institute of Art. Before going into the Army, he had a happy drug free home life, a loving mother and a concerned father who was assistant pastor of Holy Temple of Truth Church; Andover Methodist Church and currently pastor of St. John's Methodist Church.

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He spent two years in the Army where he was a member of the Green Beret Chorus and served as artist with the 13 Psyop Battalion at Fort Bragg, N.C.

He was introduced to Marijuana at a party. He started smoking about once a month and next he tried pills and acid which led him more and more to seek dope for an even higher high.

One day in 1976, he felt his life going "down the toilet". He remembers he was going to be evicted and he had sold all his furniture to buy dope.

His father came over to give him money to pay the rent and told him "You'll never have peace until you have the Lord in your heart".

Marcus remembers getting on his knees and praying to the Lord for help. He says it was really strange he suddenly felt relief and peace and he went into the bathroom and flushed away all of his dope.

From that time good things started happening to him. A guy called out of the blue and told him about a job at Park Sign Company. He worked there a year and somebody told him about his present job as Graphic Designer at WJZ where he has been for three years.

In 1976, he won the Mr. Baltimore Talent Contest. He has played Judas in "Jesus Christ Super Star" at Towson State; and was a regular panel member on "For the Moment" on Ch. 13, WJZ.

He is currently a member of the Trinity Assembly of God on Joppa Road a member of Disciples In Action, a Christian acting company the Truth Players and the Jesus Save Ministry.

Lloyd Marcus fantasy is to record some of the many original songs he has written.

Entertainers at Briscoe School

Photo by Vanessa Johnson

Jerry Toronto (L) entertained students at the Joseph Brisco School where Lloyd Parham is principal. His next show is April 11 at Woodlawn High School to raise money for the Kidney Foundation. Ms. Minnie Bailey sang "Bill Bailey" and "St. Louis Blues".

Bill Young, blind pianist, entertained at Briscoe School and accompanied the Night Hawks from School No. 177 and Lloyd Marcus, tenor.

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Gary in 'On The Right Track'

Movies

It was like a vacation for Gary Coleman, the 12-year-old star of TV's "Diff rent Strokes". He was starring in his first theatrical motion picture, which couldn't exactly be called a holiday from the rigors of TV filming. But, it was taking place in Chicago, less than 40 miles from the Coleman family home in Zion, where Gary was born.

He could go home weekends and days when he wasn't required for scenes, to romp with the pals he has grown up with, play with his electric trains, his two dogs and golf with his dad.

As for starring in "On the Right Track", the comedy-drama for 20 Century-Fox release, yes, that was work. It was far more demanding on his acting talents than anything he had tackled in his young acting career. It was cutting into his vacation between TV seasons in Hollywood.

But, it also was fun for a fun-loving little boy.

"Making a movie is easier than a TV series", Gary said in answer to a question. "You have more time doing it, more time for fun. You just have to do one thing at a time. Hey, man, it's been fun".

Besides, he liked being back near and able to get to Zion. He prefers it to the West Los Angeles home where he lives half of each year, during the video season. Even though half his many electric train sets, both of his pet dogs, his favorite books and games—and his parents— make the trek to Hollywood with him.

The fun Gary found in the filming of "On the Right Track" largely could be found in the boy himself—his unlimited energy, his fondness for spinning imaginative tall stories, his love of practical jokes. But, he had a few helpmates among his co-stars.

Like Norman Fell, a comedy star himself from "Three's Company" and "The Ropers". Like Herb Edelman, a practical joker himself. Like Bill Russell, the basketball great making his motion picture acting debut and also a witty story teller. Even like Maureen Stapleton, the celebrated, oft-honored Broadway and Hollywood actress who enjoys her work to the hilt.

In "On the Right Track", Gary plays a little orphan boy who has lied an unfriendly world "out there", where he has known nothing but hardship from foster home to foster home, to find peace and good friends in a big city train station. He lives there, sleeping in a locker, shining shoes and picking "tripies", three winning horses at the races.

It's that astonishing "grit" that touches off the comedy and the drama in "On the Right Track", turning the little orphan boy's life—and those of all his friends — topsy, turvy.

Gary's career provides a remarkable success story now climaxing with his step from established TV star to movie star.

It began in Chicago, when he was only five and coming off three major operations, including a kidney transplant. He began modelling and soon became a favorite of Chicago - filmed commercials.

(Continued on Page 30)

16 U.S. Gov't. Reports:

Since 1970, the United States Government has issued 16 reports on the tar and nicotine content of cigarette brands. In these 16 reports no cigarette has ever been reported to be lower in tar than CARLTON.

Today's CARLTON has even less tar than the version tested by the Government for its latest report.

In fact, many new brands have been introduced since, including some "ultra low tars." But despite the new entries, CARLTON has maintained its leadership position—CARLTON still lowest.

Carlton is lowest.

Box: less than 0.01 mg. tar, 0.002 mg. nicotine.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Box: less than 0.01 mg. tar, 0.002 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.
Soft Pack: 1 mg. tar, 0.1 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Dec. '79.

Night Scene Seen

By Bob Matthews

Always happy to report any resurgence on the live entertainment scene, and am overly delighted with reports this week.

Monday nights at The Birdcage in East Baltimore, has long been acknowledged as a try-out place for new acts, singers, instrumentalists, etc.

But this past week, a new dimension was added. Organist with Mickey Fields, Johnny Polite and Shirley Fields, who are the standard Monday night house band and vocalist, was the return of Sonny Fowlkes.

Sonny was laid low by a heart condition and forced to drop out of the music world until some of his digital dexterity returned.

Well, he replaced Dennis Fisher on organ for the set this past week and really demonstrated that he is definitely moving forward toward complete recovery.

Now having Sonny back on the scene is topflight, but equally good news was the large crowd that turned out for the Monday night session at the Birdcage.

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Another SRO performance was the appearance of Sonny Till at The Sportsmen's Lounge last weekend, as Bob Haynes, Maxine Smith et al prepare for the great experiment.

Top attraction this weekend is vocalist Dakota Staton, who demonstrated during a set at the Famous a month or so ago that she still has it.

She is bringing down her own pianist from N.Y., and the local rhythm section will consist of Terry Plumeri, bass, and Jerry McCardell, drums.

Was chatting with Ruby Glover, who will emcee the proceedings, and indicates it will be like the old days of "showtime" with a warmup group slated to "hit" at 9 p.m.

There'll be Charlie Covington, piano; Andy Ennis, tenor; Jerry McCardell, drums, and Ruby Glover, vocalist, as warmup for the Staton set.

Showtimes for Dakota are at 10 and midnight. The Saturday afternoon jazz jam will beat the Battle of the Horns III, with Lee Jeffreys, alto sax; Dave Smith, tenor and Andry Ennis tenor.

Might note for future reference that O'Donel Levy, with Bob Butta and Gary Richardson, will be on tap for March 14.

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Our spies report that another Baltimore landmark is about to undergo a change as the Club Harlem goes on the block. We are told that club is up for sale, and negotiations are going forward briskly.

No matter what happens, the Club Harlem will always have a warm spot in our hearts, for it was here that we first discovered bock beer on draft in a frosted mug.

There have been many experiments in an attempt to keep the club in the mainstream of the night scene. We can remember when Sylvia's Lounge was established—a place which went through many transitions.

The last incarnation was called Helen's Lounge, which featured live entertainment, but Helen has moved on.

Her latest is Sonny's Tavern, another place struggling to create an identity, located at 20 S. Caton Ave., at Baltimore St.

They'll have live entertainment on weekends, featuring a group called Just Us, featuring "Rabbit" at the keyboard.

There was some controversy over George Jackson's work with the band, but we are assured that George is back in the fold, and things are cooking.

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This is also the week where fans of Reuben Brown get a chance to hear him in a trio setting where he can really stretch out, and call all the shots.

He will be in residence at The Bandstand, Friday and Saturday nights, along with Hugh Walker, drums, and Victor Sproles, bass.

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The Left Bank Jazz Society is presenting The Eddie Harris Quartet, but we have no advance information on who will be in the rhythm section.

Eddie, of course, is best known for his work with electronic attachments to his horn. In fact, when he played LBJS a few months ago, there were loud wails asking him to remove the devices.

He didn't—and frankly, shouldn't—since what and how he plays were known entities prior to his booking.

Although we prefer the acoustic sound, we don't find the electronics objectionable, our only disparagement comes when Eddie, as a lot of musicians do these days, insists on singing.

To his credit, his delicious sense of humor will keep you in stitches for he is as much a comedian as a musician—with that dry wit that literally convulses you.

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You might get the impression from all this that live music is staging a comeback in our town, and you would be absolutely correct. In fact, there is so much going on, that club owners might do well to give us a call.

Bill Lane's Hollywood

Sammy Davis Jr., swears there's a shortage of money, for him. Not enough to take care of the demands. That's why Sammy followed the route taken by numerous other performers and companies, filed for a form of bankruptcy. Now he sings, "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?"

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Tim Reid, the somewhat versatile actor who plays the cool deejay, Venus Flytrap, on CBS-TV's "WKRP In Cincinnati", has added the title of author to his list of credits, it says here. Reid has brought out his new book of poetry, prose and photos titled "As I Feel It".

The other evening they held a press preview party for Reid and his book at the Improvisation, coupled with a musical presentation of a Touch of Class...It should be said here that Reid's book is a thing of beauty. One reading it could say, of Reid, "I didn't know he had it in him", but that could be said of anyone.

One bit of prose in "As I Feel It" is entitled, "Who Am I, Really?"—"Sometimes I don't know if I'm the dream or the dreamer. If I'm the scheme or the schemer. There are times when I express myself in ways that I am not . . . then there are times when my soul will reveal a virtue that my mind has long forgot; I've felt the presence of a greater something. And yet . . . I was alone. I am a reflection of many images, none of which is truly my own."

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Arthur Prysock moved into the Parisian Room here for a singing engagement last week, and was joined by his "little brother" Red Prysock, the tenor and joke man. Golf pro Charley Sifford was in for Prysock's opening, along with countless women audience members who lingered on every note of the veteran ballad man's songs. Manager Little Arthur Mathews told us Prysock and Joe Williams bring the crowds in every time they're on the show bill. Comic Reynaldo Reynolds forth nightly.

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Sidney Barnes is now A & R for George Clinton's new record label, Uncle Jam Records here...Lou Rawls' regular Oriental date, a real charmer, but a lady who baffles photographer Willie Dooley, who says the lassie "runs everytime she sees me and my camera coming". Dooley says he'll be looking for her at the Grammy show.

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Marvin Gaye, who has lost many pounds and much spirit of late, still making London, England his temporary abode. His new record album is enjoying brisk sales in the U.S., in the meantime. And also in the meantime, Gaye might like to know that the snappy little 1974 Mercedes coupe he once owned was sold at an office furniture auction here last Sunday for $15,900, with 44,000 miles on the speedometer. The little blonde who bought it is a furniture manufacturer in the San Gabriel Valley. Some local deejays were on hand to bid, and to sadly watch the car go.

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Getting tiptop acclaim is the new PBS TV series, "With Ossie & Ruby", Ruby Dee, and which kicked off with Della Reese singing with the Dallas Concord Baptist Church Choir.

Up in San Francisco the Rev. Cecil Williams, the outspoken and modern pastor of that city's popular Glide Memorial Church, told us he and a hearty band of followers have organized the Moral Minority. The first target for the group is the Moral Majority, a faction of which in San Francisco last week announced it would spend up to three million dolloars in the media to get the public to equate homosexuality with murder and other heinous crimes. Williams says it's hard to get much help from other black ministers for many of them also adhere to the practice of condeming gay people. "The Anita Bryants and the Moral Majority", said Williams, "have a lot of believers in the black church."

Top Hits

Top Jazz Albums
1. Winelight — Grover Washington Jr.
2. Voices In The Rain — Joe Sample
3. All Around The Town — Bob James
4. Late Night Guitar — Earl Klugh
5. Magic — Tom Browne

Spiritual

1. The Lord Will Make A Way — Al Green
2. The Hawkins Family Live — Walter Hawkins
3. Rejoice — Shirley Ceasar
4. Miracles — Jacksons Southernaires
5. Rise Again — Gospel Keynotes

Inspirational

1. Thank You For The Love — Mike Adkins
2. Best of B.J. Thomas — B.J. Thomas

Evie Tournquist
4. Never Alone — Amy Grant
5. Forgiven — Don Francisco

R & B Albums

1. Gap Band III — The Gap Band
2. The Two Of Us — Yarbrough & Peoples
3. Nothin Than July — Stevie Wonder
4. Imagination — The Whispers
5. Fantastic Voyage — Lakeside

R & B Singles

1. Don't Stop The Music — Yarbrough & Peoples
2. Burn Rubber — The Gap Band
3. Fantastic Voyage — Lakeside
4. I Ain't Gonna Stand For It — Stevie Wonder
5. Watching You

TV Watching

By Vanessa Johnson Findley

Benson: A mansion manslaughter party for an ambassador is crashed by revolutionaries from his country, one of whom is wearing the same costume as Benson. Starring Robert Guillaume. 8:30-9:30 p.m. Ch. 13.

NBA Basketball: The Washington Bullets take on the Rockets at the Summit in Houston. 9:00-11:30 p.m. Ch. 20.

Saturday

Fat Albert: A tale about a car buff who "borrows" a neighbor's auto for a joy ride. Hosted by Bill Cosby. 12:00-12:30 p.m. Ch. 2.

Soul Train: Musical guests include Michael Henderson. 12:30-1:30 p.m. Ch. 11.

Tony Brown's Journal: A discussion of Black College Day includes clips from a march to Washington, D.C. in 1980. 2:00-2:30 p.m. Ch. 11.

From Jumpstreet: Guests include Pearl Bailey, L.D. Stone's Jubilee Minstrels help Oscar Brown Jr. explore the history of black music in theatre and film. 3:00-3:30 p.m. Ch. 22 & 67.

Muppet Show: Amid the theatre's rowdy renovation, a cluster of groovin' grapes get down with Gladys Knight in "I Heard It Through The Grapevine". 7:30-8:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

Hill Street Blues: LaRue and Washington play a practical joke on Hunter who's peroling the city sewers for alligators. Starring Michael Warren. 10:00-11:00 p.m. Ch. 11.

Don Kirshner's Rock Concert: Performances include A Taste of Honey. 1:30-2:00 a.m. Ch. 4.

Sunday

Solid Gold: Co-hostess Roberta Flack sings "Killing Me Softly With His Song" and presents Peabo Bryson. The Whispers. 1:00-2:00 p.m. Ch. 45.

Superteams: The Oakland Raiders and the Philadelphia Eagles, the Super Bowl XV combatants, test their versatility in the first of the "Superteams". Among the players are: Lester Hayes, Wilbert Montgomery and Carl Hairston. 2:00-3:15 p.m. Ch. 13.

Movie: "The Deep": the illicit quarry, 99,000 ampules of morphine lodged in a sunken World War II freighter discovered on a scuba dive in Bermuda waters by vacationing lovers. 8:00-11:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

Tonight: Guests include singer Johnny Mathis. 11:30-12:30 a.m. Ch. 11.

Mike Douglas: Guests include singer, Natalie Cole. 1:10-2:40 a.m. Ch. 13.

Vega$ star hurt

GREG MORRIS
Hurt in crash

Actor Greg Morris, who plays a touch but fair police detective on the ABC-TV series "Vega" was injured when his car went out of control and flipped over as he was driving from California to his Las Vegas home, on March 3.

Morris suffered lacerations to his face, right arm and shoulder and was reported in stable condition following surgery.

The 47-year-old actor, driving alone in the fast northbound land of Interstate 15, was about 2 miles from Nevada when he drifted into the center divider and apparently overcorrected, said California Highway Patrol Officer David Bergman.

The car slid broadside across the highway before rolling over on the side of the road, Bergman said. No other cars were involved.

Bergamn said the officer at the scene of the accident believed the cause was fatigue. He said the officer described Morris' lacerations as "severe" but said the actor would survive.

Morris was rushed the 40 miles to Sunrise Hospital by ambulance.

"He looks surprisingly terrific, considering what he's been through, but I would imagine he's going to be in quite a bit of pain for a while, 11 said Sunrise spokeswoman Rena Ruby.

Michael Warren in "Hill Street Blues"

The Jeffersons: George makes a play for the financial big leagues by attending a hycoons' club fund-raiser. Starring Isabel Sanford and Sherman Hemsley. 9:30-10:00 p.m. Ch. 2.

Trapper John, M.D.: Gonzo is able to mend injuries a homeless 14-year-old sustained in a traffic accident, but he is at a loss to explain the cause of her mental deterioration. Starring Gregory Harrison. 10:00-11:00 p.m. Ch. 2.

Mike Douglas: Co-host Bill Cosby is joined by singer Rick Nelson and others. 12:45-2:15 a.m. Ch. 13.

Monday

John Davidson: Guests include actress Isabel Sanford. 4:30-5:30 p.m. Ch. 13.

White Shadow: Twelve years at Carver leaves a teacher burned out and he starts to give up on his students and his career. Starring Joan Pringle. 8:00-9:00 p.m. Ch. 2.

Ms. Black American Awards Show: Black women ages 21 to 35 compete in three categories of acting, singing and dancing in the first annual event held last Dec. 27 in Philadelphia. 11:00-12:00 a.m. Ch. 45.

FOSTER CONTEST WINNER — Kevin Watkins, a student at Calverton Junior High School, was one of the first place winners in a poster contest sponsored by C&P Telephone's Baltimore City Community Relations teams. The theme of the contest was The Telephone: It's Your Link, Don't Break It. Counselor Ida M. Thomas, left, art teacher Elliott Richardson and principal Richard Holley, second from right, joined C&P officials Walter Clark, Michelle Lumpkin and Charles Schmenner in congratulating Kevin. Students from 34 city schools submitted more than 170 entries. First place winners received a $50 U.S. Savings Bond, a T-shirt and a certificate.

Jesse Walker's N.Y.

Communications, a subsidiary of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Co., has reached aggreement with a Virginia group to purchase two Williamburg, Va. radio stations, WBCR-AM-FM, company president William J. Kennedy III said at Durham, N.C. headquarters.

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Rep. Cardiss Collins (D., Ill.) is a member of the new House Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Consumer Protection, and Finance which will soon be hearing objections to the recent FCC radio deregulation ruling.

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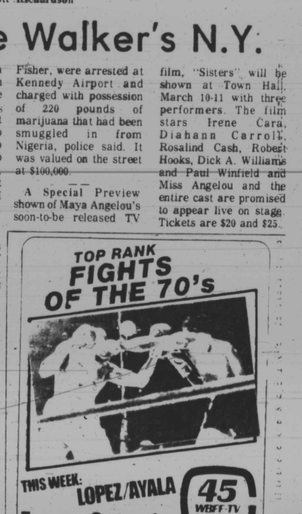
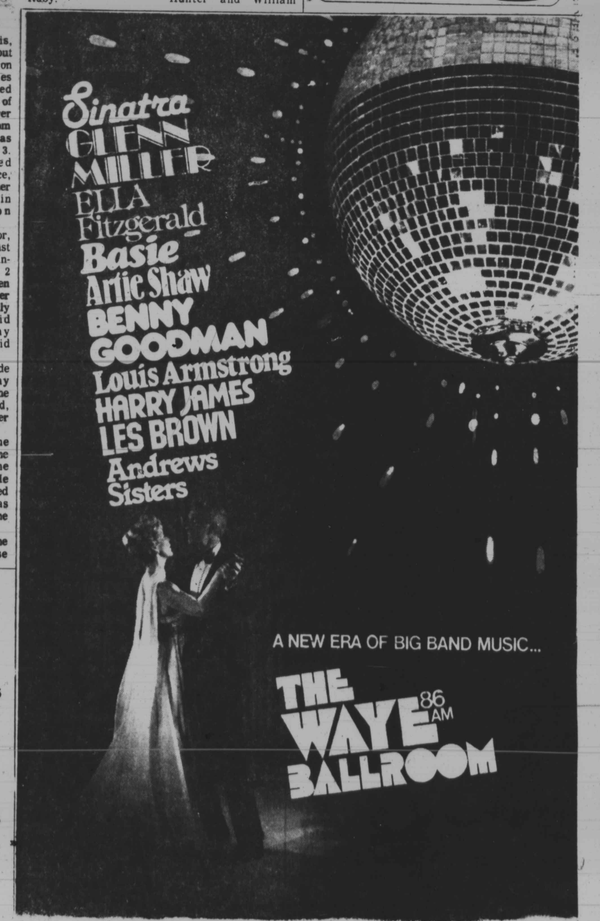
Dr. Frank Bannister, former sportscaster for the National Black Network and now director of career development and education for the Paterson (N.J.) Board of Education; Maurcice M. Martinex, an associate professor of education at Hunter and William Fisher, were arrested at Kennedy Airport and charged with possession of 220 pounds of marijuana that had been smuggled in from Nigeria, police said. It was valued on the street at $100,000.

A Special Preview shown of Maya Angelou's soon-to-be released TV film, "Sisters" will be shown at Town Hall, March 10-11 with three performers. The film stars Irene Cara, Diahann Carroll, Rosalind Cash, Robert Hooks, Dick A. Williams and Paul Winfield and Miss Angelou and the entire cast are promised to appear live on stage. Tickets are $20 and $25.