Easter sublime

Through the magical help of the wizard Merlin, King Arthur (Nigel Terry) achieves greatness as he leads the Knights of the Round Table.

Michel Serrault is Albin, a transvestite performer in "La Cage Aux Folles II."

'Excalibur'-romantic

"Excalibur" is a fine blend of action, romance, fantasy and philosophy beautifully filmed and strongly acted by a fine cast.

Nigel Terry is King Arthur; Nicholas Clay, his beloved friend, Sir Lancelot; Cherrie Lunghi, Queen Guenevere; Paul Geoffrey, Sir Perceval, sole survivor of the quest for the Holy Grail; Gabriel Byrne as Arthur's father, the savage warlord Uther; Robert Addie, Arthur's bastard son Mordred; and Corin Redgrave as the Duke of Cornwall.

The tale begins in the spectral forest which surround Castle Tintagel. There, at the end of a long, bloody war, Uther Pendragon pleads with Merlin to enable him to seduce the bride of his new ally, the Duke of Cornwall. Merlin consents but demands that "What issues from your lust must be mine".

On that night, Arthur is conceived.

Eighteen years later, the nobles of a kingless kingdom compete on the tournament ground, for the right to release the enchanted sword, Excalibur, from the stone in which it was imbedded at Uther's death.

They fail. But by accident, the young squire, Arthur, slips the weapon from its granite sheath.

Proclaimed the boy king, he sets out to unite the land, with Merlin as his mystic counselor. Victory follows glorious victory. Arthur woos the beautiful Guenevere and weds her in a luminous forest glade.

He forms the fellowship of the Round Table whose chivalric ideals of truth, courage, and purity of heart are personified by the loyal Lancelot. Camelot rises, a tower of silver turrets, reflecting the sun—like a beacon—across a peaceful countryside.

But the golden age tarnishes. The brotherhood of the Round Table decays into drunkenness and squabbling. Accused as Queen Guenevere's lover, Lancelot defends her honor in mortal combat. But when she comes to him in the forest, to bathe his wounds, the false charge becomes fact.

Merlin is powerless to help. He has taken Morgana into the caves below Camelot whose walls are a dragon's coils.

movies... to ridiculous

Having stolen a huge dinosaur egg, a group of cavemen struggle home in the prehistoric comedy "Caveman."

'Nighthawks'

In real life, not reel life, what Sylvester Stallone and Billy Dee Williams do to crooks on the streets of New York in "Nighthawks" would be called police brutality.

But, just as Stallone did in Rocky I and II where he had the audiences cheering for him as the underdog Italian fighter getting his brains knocked out by a black champion, so you have the audiences cheering for the cops in this flick.

On a dark night in the Bronx, N.Y. a young woman is about to be attacked by three men. Suddenly the guys with the knives discover the woman is Stallone on decoy duty and backed up by partner Billy Dee Williams.

Together they administer a dose of street justice that a decade ago would be police brutality but the response from the audience is that the muggers are getting just what they deserve. The scene ends with Stallone dragging the unconscious crooks behind him reciting his rights.

In "Nighthawks" Rutger Hauer plays Wulfgar, a European killer, who with his beautiful associate Shakka, portrayed by Persis Khambatta, operates on an international level which does not recognize normal political morality.

"Nighthawks" is R rated and has brutal, explicit violence.

SHOWTIME

Shirley Caesar ...first lady of Gospel

By Ida Peters

Shirley Caesar, first lady of gospel, The Mighty Clouds of Joy, Mattie Moss Clark, Voices of Supreme and the Pilgrim Jubilees are the headliners in the Easter Sunday Concert at the Civic Center.

Shirley Caesar talked with the AFRO last week from the Ardant Studios in Memphis, Tenn. where she and her talented musicians were laying tracks for her new album.

She will be bringing a group of 12 to Baltimore including the Shirley Caesar Singers; Charles Obie, keyboards; Michael Mathis, organist; Leroy Caesar, bass guitar and Keith Davis, drums.

"I thank the Lord, I'm a three-time nominee for a Grammy Award. I won twice, 1971, "Put Your Hand In the Hand of the Man From Galilee" and 1981 for "Rejoice".

She also told the AFRO she is proud to have been nominated for a Dove Award to take place in Nashville at the Grand Old Opera House.

When Shirley Caesar leaves Baltimore she will be conducting a "Jesus Rally" in Chicago, April 22-24 at Elder Richard Hinton's Church with Evangelist Ernestine Cleveland Reemes. During the rally she will be singing and giving away food for the poor.

On Sunday, July 19 she will celebrate her 13th Anniversary in Durham, N.C. at the Durham Civic Center.

On Easter Sunday, she will be singing her hits from "Rejoice"... and "Faded Rose", "This Joy I Have" and "Don't Drive You Mama Away".

Melba Moore in new Broadway comedy

What's Happening

By Ida Peters

"Inacent Black", a new comedy by A. Marcus Hemphill starring Melba Moore, begins previews at Broadway's NYC Biltmore Theatre on April 23 with opening May 4.

The songwriting team of McFadden and Whitehead are writing new songs for the play which was originally presented at New York's Billie Holiday Theatre earlier this season for a sold-out run.

Ashton Springer is the executive producer. His credits include "A Lesson From Aloes", "Bubblin' Brown Sugar" and "Eubie".

The Boys Choir of Harlem will be performing at the Dunbar Performing Arts Theatre, Saturday, April 18 at 7 p.m. The talented group of 60, ranging in age from 7-15 have attracted an almost full house. Coming on the eve of Easter, this concert offers a wonderful chance to meet some talented youngsters who have their act together.

"Romare Bearden: A 1970-1980 Retrospective" opens with a press preview, Friday, April 24 at 10 a.m. at the Baltimore Museum of Art. During the first hour the artist will give an informal gallery talk. A 136 page catalogue, fully illustrated by novelist Albert Murray and art historian Dore Ashton, accompanies the exhibition.

On Saturday, April 25, the Director and Board of Trustees of the Museum hold an invitational black tie reception for Mr. Bearden.

"The Vision of Romare Bearden: A Panel Discussion" is Sunday, May 3 at the Museum. Dr. Leslie King Hammond is moderator Panelists are Carroll Greene, David C. Driskell and Dominique deLerma.

Mary Schmidt Campbell, director, The Studio Museum of Harlem lectures on "Mysteries: Women in the Art of Romare Bearden", Sunday, May 24 at 3 p.m.

Charles Productions held their grand reopening of the Tower Theatre on Wednesday with a champagne reception and showing of "Mon Oncle d'Amerique".

The trustees of The Walters Art Gallery hold a special members preview of "Afro-American Arts from the Suriname 'Rain Forest'", Sunday, April 26 at noon.

On April 27 at 8:15 p.m., Sally Price and Richard Price, the scholars who assembled the exhibition will present an illustrative lecture in Graham Gallery.

On May 2, 8:15 p.m. a performance of song, dance and drumming will be given by eight Suriname musicians.

Ernest Thompson's comedy hit "On Golden Pond" starring James Whitmore and Sada Thompson opens at the Mechanic on April 28. It's the story of a married couple spending their 48th year at the summer home in Maine.

AFRO visitors on Tuesday were Sound of New York (SONY) Records stars, Eric Isles and Jerry Miller, known in the trade as Trickeration.

They appeared on WWIN with Curtis Anderson and at Bob Clay's night at the Ritz singing their new tunes "Rap, Bounce, Rock, Skate" and "Western Gangster Town".

The fast-talking 19-year-old rappers from the Bronx are already celebrities in N.Y. Thursday night they appeared at the Club Distinction in D.C.

"Rap, Bounce, Rockskate" is the story of Willy Wheels, a country bumpkin making it in the Big Apple. The lyrics, "Point Your Toes; bend your knees, give a little twist from side to side; You're doing the Willie Glide".

Reminds you a little of the Madison, Hot Rod and master rapper, Fat Daddy. Only this time, it's roller skates.

Mayor William Donald Schaefer hosts breakfast next Tuesday in the Board Room of the Maryland Academy of Sciences to announce the first Pride of Baltimore Festival.

Terrance Prince, center, 12, is the featured boy soprano with Boys Choir

Romare Bearden, shown at work in his New York studio, will be in Baltimore April 24 to open his Retrospective at the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Jerry Miller (L) and Eric Isles, known as Trickeration, visited the AFRO this week.

Put City Hall sculptures... back in closet

By Ida Peters

The story of Baltimore: A Continuing Exhibit, A Patchwork Quilt of Neighborhoods" is an excellent idea and shows black and white citizens building the Baltimore of today.

The exhibit is housed at City Hall on the lower level in the Rotunda Gallery.

Two life-sized soft sculptures, commissioned for $1,200 by the city Art Commission for the Maryland Commission for the Humanities and assembled under the Mayor's staff, have been replaced in the exhibit, this week.

They were packed in a spare closet at City Hall after many viewers complained bitterly and "reacted negatively" after the exhibit opened Dec. 4, 1980. Vernon Wiesand, chairman says the Art Commission recently voted to return the sculptures. He is quoted as saying "if all hell breaks loose, all hell breaks loose, that's all".

The sculptures of the street A-rab is a dark brown vinyl or rubber with exaggerated lips and bucking eyes, seated on a wagon of fruits, and vegetables. This caricature is ugly, and an insult. We don't need this kind of insult at City Hall.

When we go to City Hall, we need to be reminded of a new day, the 20th Century, and not the old shuffle, jive and discrimination of the past.

Tamsin Jaramillo, artists of the A-rab, also designed the Highlandtown housewife scrubbing her steps. Have to be fair, she is the ugliest woman I have seen and I can see why liberated women would protest. She has a hooked nose, frizzly hair.

The A-rab horse and wagon opens the exhibit which leads into a very informative display on the history of Baltimore's commerce and industry.

Mrs. Margaret Daiss, curator for City Hall explained that her research shows that the A-rabs were the first independent business men in Baltimore.

Editorial

She is a native of Vermont and graduate of Wellesley College in Massachusetts with a major in fine arts and English.

To illustrate a business and commerce exhibit why not something on Bejamin Banneker 1732-1806; or Frederick Douglass 1817-1895; John Henry Murphy, newspaper publisher; Harry O. Wilson, banker founder of Mutual Benefit.

In a commerce exhibit, why not something about Isaac Myers 1835-1891 who organized a shipyard and marine railway and employed 300 black caulkers and mechanics.

At 20, he was superintending the caulking of some of the largest clipper ships ever built in Baltimore. In 1860, he was chief porter and shipping clerk for Woods, Bridges and Co.

In 1865, when a strike against black mechanics and longshoremen formed 1,000 men to lose their jobs, he organized his own shipyard and railway. He called meetings in all the black churches and organized a company. He raised $10,000 cash in shares of $5 each and purchased from John N. Muller his yard and railway for $40,000. He also secured a government contract of $50,000 against the combined competition of ship builders of Wilmington, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Alexandria. The entire debt of the shipyard was paid off in five years.

In 1888, Myers organized the Maryland Colored State Industrial Fair Association and he was organizer and president of the Colored Business Men's Association.

The story of Isaac Myers, and others are easily obtained from the Maryland Historical Society or the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History.

The exhibit on people and neighborhoods is a start in the right direction. The problem is, that with $20,000 they could have done a little more research or employed some native black people who know black history.

The AFRO's suggestion is to put the sculptures back in the closet. Take my word for it, they are offensive and insulting.

Don't complain to Vernon Wiesand or Mrs. Daiss. They think the sculptures are works of art. Complain directly to Mayor William Donald Schaefer, City Hall, Baltimore, Md. 21202.

Lyric to repay loans with tickets for poor

New item: Under the terms of an agreement approved by the Board of Estimates last week, the city's Department of Housing and Community Development will lend the Lyric Foundation, Inc., $300,000 from an urban development action grant to renovate the Lyric Theatre's lobby, extend the stage and install a freight elevator.

The federal money will be used with the $1 million industrial revenue bond and $200,000 in private pledges to the Lyric Foundation.

The $300,000 will not be repaid in cash. Instead, the Lyric Theatre Inc. will write into its contracts that the city will receive 20 tickets, with an average value of $10 a ticket- to each performance for 10 years.

And 30,000 tickets will be distributed by the housing departments Division of Social Services, which works with the city's public housing tenants. The Lyric would have to book at least 150 performances a year.

Does the above news item bother you?

When you heard it repeated on news casts on all three television stations, did you wonder?

What's wrong with this?

The agreement is written that 30,000 tickets be given to low income people.

How are they going to do that? Over ten years will these tickets be lost in the system and they'll end up a bonanza for city and state workers?

How can city and state officials justify a giveaway of $300,000 in action development grant funds?

Couldn't the Lyric have waited for a freight elevator and a larger stage while block grant money was used to save CETA jobs; renovate existing public housing; hire more trash collectors; fix ailing trash trucks; repair some of our run down housing?

Did this news item bother you? If it did, call or write me.

If it didn't bother you, why not?

Night Scene Seen

By Bob Matthews

'Tis shaping up to be another topflight weekend musically in Baltimore, starting with The Sportsmen's Lounge which has a couple of top attractions.

For the Saturday afternoon jazz jam, guitarist O'Donel Levy will headline, along with the various sit-in artists who always drop by.

The last time he played the jam, it was wall-to-wall, and Levy proved it was all worth while. That's just a clue to get there early. The set goes from 4 to 8 p.m.

Incidently, O'Donel will play weekends (Fri. and Sat. nights) at The Gatsby's through the month of April.

The weekend artist in residence at The Sportsmen's Lounge will be Art Tatum, Jr. who has kinda fallen in love with our city.

You hate to make comparisons, but if you are familiar at all with the work of his father, you'll have no trouble identifying with Jr., for he is right in that Tatum mold.

If you wonder why you haven't heard too much about Tatum, Jr., it is because he adopted a nom-de-plume, and spent a great deal of his time in Europe.

He came back to Baltimore to have surgery at The Hopkins Hospital, and during his convalescence, kinda adopted Baltimore. He played a cocktail-hour piano at the Soul Shack in Lexington Mkt. for a short while, but this will be his first full-time nightclub stint in our town.

The Left Bank Jazz Society this Sunday will present the Ted Curson Quintet, which should be a smoker.

Ted will be bringing in his own group from New York, so you can look for a tight, solidly swinging aggregation.

Curson, in case you wondered, was in the vanguard of the experimental jazz forces, having played stints with Charlie Mingus, Cecil Taylor, Philly Joe Jones among others.

If we had to make a classification, we would say he is one of the hard bop trumpeter players, in the same category as Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw or Art Farmer.

At The Ritz, the Pamoja Experience will be the headliners in the Penthouse, while Dave and Marlene Ross will be on hand in the living room.

Thursday nights are still devoted to the Damita Jo, along with Carlos Johnson sets.

Over at The Bandstand the Buck Hill quartet will be holding forth, including Reuben Brown, piano and Hugh Walker, drums.

This will mark Buck's second appearance in Baltimore this year, with his last trip being recorded and played on PM Magazine TV series just this past Wednesday.

We always get a bit amused in watching Buck work in Baltimore, since he and Mickey Fields look enough alike to be brothers—plus they both play tenor sax.

They are good friends, but Buck has really branched out, with two successful albums under his belt. The latest one was just recently released.

His first one, "This is Buck Hill," merited 5 stars in Downbeat Magazine—and rightly so.

He and Reuben have been teaming up for quite some time, so they are no strangers to each others play. Result is a meshing of ideas that sometimes really soar. Hearing these two together is an unforgettable experience and should not be missed.

At Gatsby's as we mentioned earlier, O'Donel Levy is the Fri. and Sat. night artist in the Billie Holliday Room, and Sunday nights are still devoted to an "after Left Bank" jazz session.

Was told that there is always live entertainment for these sets, with the Williams Brothers on tap for this Sunday night.

Interestingly enough, Sunday afternoons have become jazz time it seems with the Club Or having their "It's Jazz" sessions from 4 - 10 p.m.;

Henri's is presenting Johnny Polite with Mickey and Shirley Fields from 5 to 10 p.m. Sundays. Pat's Lounge has its Sunday Afternoon Jazz with Reggie K. from 3 p.m.; Club Or has a Sunday "It's Jazz" set from 4 to 10 p.m.

Marley has brain cancer

Kingston, Jamaica- The wife of reggae superstar Bob Marley revealed Saturday that the Jamaican singer is undergoing treatment for brain cancer at an exclusive West German clinic.

Rita Marley told Jamaica's Daily Gleaner Newspaper that her husband was expected to return home at the end of the month.

She said Marley is being treated at the clinic of cancer specalist Dr. Josef Essels for brain cancer, but added: "They still aren't too sure what it is, so Bob is undergoing a series of tests and treatments".

Marley was "dealing with the problem very positively" and is on a strict diet of tropical fruits and juices in an exclusive winter resort in Rottach Egern, near Munich, she said.

"He's lost quite a bit of weight", she said, explaining that the treatment included "frequent blood washes, heat treatment, constant pressure checks".

At a ceremony organized by the newspaper to honor Marley for his contribution to popular music, Mrs. Marley said that she expected he would return to his home in Jamaica by the end of April.

Top Hits

Jazz albums

1. Winelight — Grover Washington Jr.
2. Magic — Tom Browne
3. All Around the Town — Bob James
4. Voices in the Rain — Joe Sample
5. The Dude — Quincy Jones

R & B Albums

1. Gap Band III — The Gap Band
2. Being With You — Smokey Robinson
3. Grand Slam — The Isley Brothers
4. Winelight — Grover Washington Jr.
5. The Two Of Us — Yarbrough & Peoples

R & B Singles

1. Being With You — Smokey Robinson
2. Don't Stop The Music — Yarbrough & Peoples
3. Sweetness — A Taste of Honey
4. Just The Two Of Us — Grover Washington Jr.
5. It's A Love Thing — The Whispers

Spiritual

1. The Lord Will Make A Way — Al Green
2. Cloudburst — Mighty Clouds of Joy
3. The Hawkins Family Live — Walter Hawkins
4. Rejoice — Shirley Ceasar
5. Rise Again — Gospel Keynotes

..more

Manhattans into the Lyric with Star Point, Sunday, April 26. The recital by Veronica Tyler scheduled for 3 p.m., Sunday, April 26, has been cancelled.

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