'On Golden Pond' delights audience

Review

By Ida Peters

"On Golden Pond" is that rare theatre experience, often sought, seldom found.

For two hours Wednesday, James Whitmore, the 79-year-old husband on the eve of his birthday holds the audience in the palm of his hand with his underatited, relaxed genius.

Sada Thompson, as his 69-year-old wife, gives an equally inspired performance, supported by an talented cast which seemed to catch up the capacity audience and involve them in the life of the Thayer family on stage.

Ernest Thompson's play is the story of a married couple spending their 48th year on Golden Pond, a lake in Maine.

Underneath their laughter is the fear that this is their last year and they are trying to come to grips with what they are going to do with the rest of their lives.

Steve Rubin has designed a marvelous set with backlighted sunporch, stone fireplace, bookshelves and mantel covered with forgotten mementoes. The nondescript furniture is reminiscent of summer cottages whether in Maine or on the Magothy or Highland Beach in Maryland. The play is in two acts with live scenes from May to September.

James Whitmore, in his baggy pants, has the audience laughing from the time he enters and crooks his little finger. He reads classified ads to keep from doing housework and quips "I don't want crowds watching me grow old".

Sada Thompson adds the good humor and tenderness ignoring her husband's constant talk of old age and death.

Rebecca Taylor is excellent as the much married daughter who is one of those persons who goes through life unable to express love for her father. You know the kind who even in their forties and after their parents die complain "my father never liked me". This kind of child remembers her fat days and how she hated to fish with her father.

Louis Bedford... you saw him in "Death Journey" with Fred Williamson and in "Gordan's War"... adds great humor as the daughter's dentist fiancee and husband.

His son, Billy Ray, played by Eric Brown delights the audience. Left with the old folks for the summer he adds "BS" and "sucking lips" to their vocabulary while providing an anchor and direction to their lives.

Charlie Slack is the mailman and neighbor with a simple-minded infectious laugh who relieves the tedious lives of the old folks with his visits. A bachelor, he didn't marry the daughter because "the old man wouldn't let me".

This inspired performance of "Golden Pond" may hit different audiences in different ways whether they have older parents or grandparents.

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Bar-Kays coming...full of fire

The Bar-Kays are no strangers to the East Coast and Baltimore in particular. Remember when they played regularly at the Crystal Ballroom. Then they blew thru here with Patti Labelle when "Light of Life" was popular and about two years ago with Parliament at the Civic Center in a wild and wooley concert?

The group will be in town Friday, (tonight) for a concert with Yarbrough and Peoples, Slave and the Gap Band and Harvey Henderson the saxophonist called to chat.

The Bar-Kays will be singing their hits "Move Your Boogie Body", "Today is the Day", "Body Fever", "Raise Up," "Deliver Us" and "Say It Through Love".

The Memphis based group gained fame with their 1967 hit "Soul Finger"; was discovered by Otis Redding and all but one of the members were killed in a plane crash with Redding. James Alexander the bass guitarist and surviving member has led the new group to higher and higher success.

Harvey Henderson, 28, has been with the group 10 years. He is married and has two boys, 2 and 3-years-old. Only other married is Larry Dobson, the lead singer.

"All the rest of the guys are wild, loose and free" he laughed. "All musicians I've known have to be, to stay on the road year after year," he says.

Other members of the Bar-Kays are Winston Stewart, piano; Charles Allen, trumpet; Mark Bynum, keyboard; Sherman Guy, percussion... all from Memphis. Also Lloyd Smith, rhythm guitar, Philadelphia and Frank Thompson, trombone, Michael Beard, drums, Cleveland.

Henderson wanted to know if this columnist would be backstage to greet them. We replied we didn't like the crush backstage last time. When they all autographed a T-Shirt for Mrs. Santa and we posed with them in our Mrs. Santa costume.

Asked him what was the wildest thing that ever happened to them on the road. Henderson reclass a hotel in Columbus, Ohio. Their lead singer, Larry Dobson, used to travel with a pet snake. The snake got loose and lodged in a wall outlet. The fire department had to tear down the wall to get the snake out.

The Bar-Kays have been on a successful tour thru Texas, Mississippi, Boston and Springfield, Mass. with Yarbrough and Peoples, and Slave. They were called in at the last minute for this bill with Gap Band.

"Money is hard to get and groups are finding it hard to fill 12,000 seat auditiums, so promoters have to offer four and five groups with top hits to fill the hall. If you don't have hits, the public won't buy the concert", he said.

"Baltimore, we're gonna be there full of fire and we think we'll be able to hold our own and draw a separate audience from the Tremaine and Walter Hawkins Show, Sunday at the Civic Center."

Morgan Choir... sensational

(Continued from Tuesday's Afro)

By Sue Williams
AFRO Staff Writer

The Morgan State University Concert Choir sang to a capacity crowd at the Lyric Theater Sunday evening, bringing the audience to its feet several times with music that ranged from the very classical to more familiar religious selections.

The soloists displayed as much versatility as did the music selected for the concert. Soprano Elizabeth Hogue, a freshman student, showed her ability to maneuver her voice to sound as though she could sing for the Met, or be a part of any recording group, in her performances in "Moses" and later in the singing of the popular "Jesus is Love".

Student director Stanely Thurston and graduate assistant J. Allen Thomas likewise displayed a rare ability to work their voices to whatver purpose was called for, be it classicism or the singing of the most familiar spirituals. And Gretchen Starks, whom this reporter has followed for several years, showed a deep richness and growth in her singing, especially in her rendition of "What is this Feeling."

Nothwithstanding the quality of the choir displayed, one could not help but notice how the director - conductor, Dr. Nathan Carter, pulled the music from his singers. From a sprightly bounce when the music called for it to a sudden and abrupt waving of the hand when he wanted quietness or a mood change, Dr. Carter demanded from his singers the last bit of musicality that could be pulled. Unable to hide his involvement even when his soloists were singing, Dr. Carter could be seen moving his head or body as if to indicate that more here and less there should be given to effect the message of the music, even though it appeared he tried desperately to remain still.

The evening was highlighted by presentations made to the choir and to Dr. Carter by the city of Baltimore and the state's General Assembly. Delegate Hattie Harrison presented the state award, and a representative was on hand to present a proclamation by Mayor William Donald Schaefer.

William Sykes, deputy director of the peace corps, was given a special presentation, and Dr. Carter was presented a music stand by the choir members.

In remarks to the audience, Dr. Carter thanked the community for its support and explained that their money the would provide the choir's budget for the upcoming school year.

If it can be believed that the words of Quincy Jones' song are true: that a song is not a song unless it inspires—then it can be said that the Morgan Choir did indeed render song.

Top Hits

R & B Albums

1. Being With You — Smokey Robinson
2. The Dude — Quincy Jones
3. Bye Bye! III — The Gap Band
4. Wheelight — Grover Washington Jr.
5. Radiant — Anantic Starr

R & B Singles

1. Being With You — Smokey Robinson
2. Sebiyati — A Taste of Honey
3. When Love Calls — Atlantic Starr
4. A Woman Needs Love — Ray Parker & Raydio
5. Al No Corrida — Quincy Jones

Top Jazz

1. Wheelight — Grover Washington Jr.
2. The Dude — Quincy Jones
3. Heads — Tom Browne
4. Voyeur — David Sanborn
5. Mountain Dance — Dave Grusin

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Al Green here for aide's wedding

World famous soul and gospel singer the Rev. Al Green will be in town to officiate at the wedding ceremonies of his area promotion manager.

The aide, Joseph R. Wellsey Jr. will marry Miss Zelma Brown, a senior at Morgan State University at the Holiday Inn downtown at 1 p.m.

Miss Brown is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Luther C. Brown of Dolfield Avenue. Wellsey, who has been handling area promotion for Al Green for many years is a graduate of Community College of Baltimore.

Bill Lane in Hollywood

A lot of praises from all over for the remarkable and commendable job of public relations done by Ella Kay Mays during the last rites for the late Joe Louis... Ms. Mays, a longtime business associate of Atty. Martha Louis, widow of the fallen champion, fielded and handled press relations about just how much so. Some said it accounts for about one-third of the four billion grossed annually by the big record companies. Others said one-fourth. And yet some others, not speaking too loudly, insisted it was closer to fifty percent. It must be safe, though, for the delegates are now all set to concentrate more heavily on video disco and super fidelity soundtracks. Some music people are said to be video-taping their own concerts, with views towards selling the tapes, or leasing them in the fast growing video markets, including cable television. In the very near future companies producing half-hour and 90 minutes concert tapes, and other subjects, will be finding a ready and rich market for syndicating tapes on not only cable but commerical TV stations all over the U.S. and Canada, and blacks not getting into such fields now can't blame anybody but themselves when they wake up soon and find they've been "left out'again".

Singer James Brown has found he can no longer perform those wild athletic leaps he did as of yore. He's not that young now. But he knows it since he tried some of his historic stage leaps in a concert at the Lone Star Cafe in N.Y. The split left him prone, and reputedly too injured to open a slated concert at Ripley Music Hall in Philadelphia. "I'm 47 years old now", Brown told this writer in New York during the premiere of the movie "The Blues Brothers", and said he was going to change his music thrust and projection. It now appears Brown will have to change other things, too.

A new book out called "The Buffalo People", written by Lee Davis Willoughby, for Dell Publishing, and about a black hero named Birdwell Jacobs, a member of the historic Buffalo Soldiers, and his love affair with a non-black beauty, and so on.

Frog Hop May 13

The frog is truly an American tradition, for this slimy leaping creature has served to bolster the competitive spirit for over a century. Back in the California gold rush days, Mark Twain's tale of gambling and race fixing recorded history's most famous frog hop in "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County". A local gambler named Smiley boasted that his frog, Dan'l Webster could out leap any other competitor. But the braggart lost when his challenger loaded the champion leaper with buckspot.

This fictional frog frolic has inspired the modern day championship, The International Jumping Frog Jubilee which is held annually in Angel's Camp, Calif. Baltimore's initial entrance into the competition attracted national attention, though not for displaying winning caliber.

In 1967, Mayor Theodore McKeldin requested Virginia S. Baker, then Supervisor of Children's Activities for the Bureau of Recreation to send a Baltimore bred entry to the International Competition. A call went out for area four legged amphibians and the first Baltimore Frog Hop was held at Patterson Park.

The winner, a robust creature named Ridge Road, offered a good luck flipper to the Mayor, saluted his challengers and was promptly shipped off to California.

Alas, Baltimore's Best never got a chance to leap for his maiden try at the world title. When brought from It cage to compete, Ridge Road was promptly disqualified—for being a toad. Frog officials croaked across the nation, "Baltimore's Frog is a fraud!" Yet, many around the world sympathized—the Mayor received frog biology books and offers for instructions in the art of distinguishing frogs from toads.

However, times have improved for Baltimore's frog trainers. In 1969 the Preakness Hop entry placed eighth in the International Jump, the best ever in our string of local champions.

In 1974, the Frog Hop moved to War Memorial Plaza, a central downtown location that attracted office workers on their lunch time break. Yet, Baltimore has suffered through hard times in order to send a representative to California each year. One reason may be the hard winters endured by East Coast amphibians—the longer and colder the winter, the less likely our frogs will match their West Coast counterparts in size and endurance. As a result no Baltimore Bullet has ever come close to the world record set by Palace Club Four, a distance of 20 feet, 10 inches.

Ribbitt, Ribbett! Attention frog followers! The Mayor's Office of Special Projects is now accepting applicaitons to the annual Preakness Frog Hop. The Hop is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13, in War Memorial Plaza. Jump off time is noon.

TV Watching

By Vanessa Johnson

Friday

John Davidson: Guests include singing group The Spinners. 4:30-6:00 p.m.Ch. 13.

Dennis the Menace: Dennis makes special plans to honor his mom on Mother's Day, but a disastrous attempt to serve her breakfast in bed starts the day on the wrong foot. 8:00-8:30 p.m. Ch. 11.

Happy Birthday, Charlie Brown: The show features Schultz's favorite scenes from past productions and animated musical sequences produced for this show. 8:00-9:00 p.m.Ch. 5.

Benson: A practical joke traps the Governor, Benson and Clayton at a posh bordello with a muckraking columnist as firefighters and TV crews deal with a fire across the street. Starring Robert Guillaume. 8:00-8:30 p.m.Ch. 13.

Battle of the Network Stars: ABC, CBS, NBC celebrities square off in swimming and running events: football; baseball dunk; kayak racing; obstacle course competition. Celebrities include Gregory Harrison from "Trapper John, M.D.". 9:00-11:00 p.m.Ch. 13.

Movie: "Woodstock Relived", an edited version of the Oscar winning documentary "Woodstock", about the legendary rock-music festival. Held in August, 1969 with such artists as Jimi Hendrix, Sly and the Family Stone and many others. 12:30-2:30 a.m.-Ch. 11.

Saturday

Fat Albert: A story about a new schoolmate who smokes marijuana. Hosted by Bill Cosby. 12:00-12:30 p.m.Ch. 2.

American Bandstand: Guests include singer Dee Dee Sharp Gamble. 12:30-1:30 p.m.Ch. 7.

Soul Train: Guests include singing groups Sister Sledge and Atlantic Starr. 12:30-1:30 p.m.Ch. 11.

30 Minutes: Guests include Thomas Carter of "The Whole Shadow", who is interviewed in a behind-the-scenes look at the series. 1:30-2:00 p.m.Ch. 2.

NBA Championship: The third game in the NBA championship series is telecast from the site of the Western Conference team. 3:30-5:30 p.m.Ch.2.

Sha Na Na: Guest James Brown sings "It's Too Funky in Here". 7:00-7:30 p.m. Ch. 2.

Baseball: The Baltimore Orioles take on the Rangers at Arlington. 8:30-11:30 p.m.Ch. 2.

Movie: "The Exorcist", this TV version retains the graphic shocks: only the possibility has been muted. A 12-year-old girl named Regan MacNeil inexplicably becomes the helpless host and hideous personification of a demon. 8:30-11:00 p.m.Ch. 9.

Movie: "The Graduate", an Oscar winner about a 21-year old grad who's seduced by an older woman. 11:45-2:45 a.m.Ch. 7.

Flip Wilson: Guests include Harry Belafonte. 12:00-1:00 a.m. Ch. 2.

Movie: "Helter Skelter", part 2. Vivid TV movie about Charles Manson's lethal "family" and the Tate-LaBianca murders of 1969. 12:30-3:15 a.m.Ch. 13.

Sunday

For Our Times: The fight for independence in Namibia (South West Africa) is discussed. 10:30-11:00 a.m.Ch. 2.

Kids Are People Too: Guests include singing group Sister Sledge. 10:30-12:00 p.m.Ch. 13. 3:30-5:30 p.m.Ch.2.

Top Rank Fights of the '70s: In this eighth pro fight, Olympic gold medalist Leon Spinks shocked the boxing world with a 15 round split decision over heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali. 11:30-12:00 p.m.Ch. 4.

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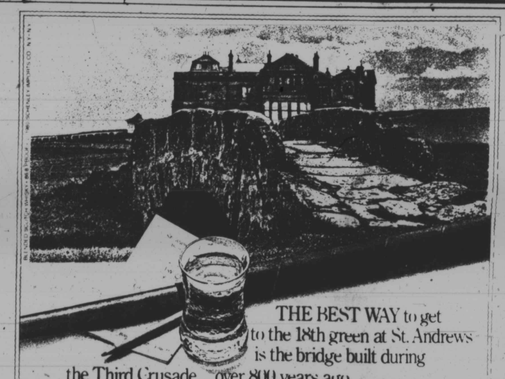
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