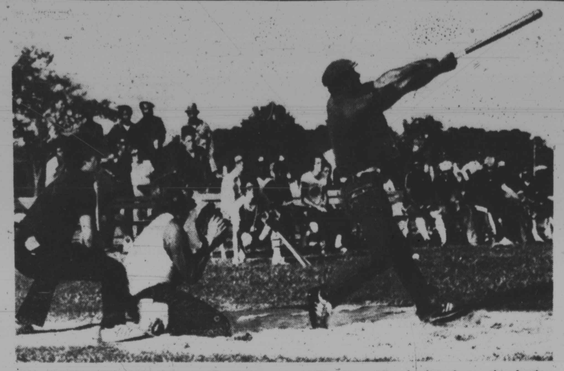

EX - MAJOR LEAGUER — Former Washington Senators and Phillies outfielder Hank Allen connects with high hard one in Pimlico Summer Softball League game. Allen, brother of one - time batting champion and American League MVP Richie Allen, is now a full - time racehorse trainer.

# Racetrack softballers a cosmopolitan group

Special to the AFRO

From the upper echelon horse owner to the hotwalker on the backstretch they congregate at 5:30 p.m. in the Pimlico Race Course infield after the last ecstatic fan has vacated the chashier's window.

Summer racing was instituted in Maryland in 1975 and, ever since Pimlico began hosting it's 48 alloted days in 1976, the Pimlico Summer Softball League has served as a much - needed recreational device for track employees, who earlier in the day put the show on for the racing fans.

Among the 10 teams entered in that first season five years ago, were the roots of the Very Gross dynasty, defending champions. The Blue Stable (trainer Leon Blusiewicz' team) folded in disarray after that initial campaign and trainer Mel Gross, a spectator at the time, saw the ingredients of what was to be a winner and it still holds true today.

"Somebody's got to beat them; they've won this league three times in a row," says a humorously frustrated Chick Lang, general manager of Pimlico who has unsuccessfully — in George Steinbrenner fashion — tried to assemble the team to dethrone the perennial champions.

At the midway point of the 1981 season, Very Gross once again rules the roost with a 5 - 0 record as Lang Hi Ho's, like always, leads the pack of also - rans with a 4 - 1 slate and. And, naturally, Very Gross, like in previous years, took the measure of their archivals in the first of two headed - to - head confrontations.

Gross has prevailed with a family - style operation.

"This is my third season with Gross and it gets better every year," says Kenny Taylor, a native Floridian who came to Baltimore to attend Morgan State.

"I work for First National Bank of Maryland and sometimes work at Mel's stable on the weekend because I like to be around horses," adds Taylor, who holds an economics degree.

"I play in two other leagues around the city, but this is a nice loose, relaxed league."

Taylor, the leadoff man, plays along the mold of the Orioles' Al Bumbry. He boasts gazelle - speed on the basepaths and also covers a lot of territory in centerfield.

Morris Gardner captains the Very Gross club. A fulltime groom, Gardner has rubbed on the Sly and Fine Prospect, both stakes winners, and he brings as much dedication to the diamond as he does in patiently hosing down a tender - shinned 2 - year - old.

"I've worked for Mel the past five years and our team has improved each year," says Gardner.

"Everybody around the league is surprised that we win every year, but not me. We don't sit still; we improve our team each seson like everybody else.

The 10 - game schedule which concludes July 3rd will be followed by playoffs beginning on Monday, July 6. The league is open to the public and spectators are requested to enter by the Rogers Ave. entrance.

# Chalmus, Scott score in Alpha net tourney

Maurice Chalmus and Eva Scott emerged with the major titles at the 1981 Alpha Phi Alpha tennis tournament on the Druid Hill Park courts.

Chalmus captured the men's singles crown, coming from behind to defeat Ray Gillian, 5 - 7, 7 - 5, 7 - 5, in the final.

Scott annexed the women's singles by virtue of a similar late-set rally, overcoming Geraldine Klauber, 1 - 6, 6 - 3, 6 - 4.

— —

The Dorsey brothers, Chip and Peter, took a straight set, 6 - 1, 6 - 3 final match from Alvin "Deke" Jones and Greg Ogle in men's doubles.

Charlotte Robinson and Jackie Jackson downed Greer Shorter and Linda Jones, 6 - 3, 6 - 2, for the women's doubles title.

— —

Joseph Parham's 6 - 4, 7 - 5 victory over Llewellyn Davage decided the men's senior competition. And William and Chris Kamenoff teamed to turn back Leonardo Johns and Berita Parson for the mixed doubles honor.

Bernard Smith scored a 7 - 5, 6 - 0 win over Jeff Thomas in the junior vets' final, and Murl Coplin and Ronald Harris beat Fred Oliver and Samuel Dublin, 6 - 2, 6-3, for honors in junior vet doubles.

Maurice Chalmers (R) lauded singles trophy presented by Al Hairston


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# SHOWTIME

## Baxter Theatre cancelled — Alternate Fest successful continues this weekend

By Ida Peters

Picketing, protests and an Alternate Cultural Festival sponsored by 20 organizations, under the banner of the Coalition in Support of the Liberation Struggles of South Africa have forced the cancellation of "Waiting For Godot" at Center Stage by the Baxter Theatre of South Africa.

And, the Baltimore International Theatre Festival after an expenditure of $800,000 is playing to half-full houses. The Baxter Theatre was supposed to have played eight performances at the 300-seat Center Stage starring Tony Award winners John Kani and Winston Ntshona.

The South African players arrived in the city last Saturday. They demanded a meeting with the Coalition and on Sunday met for five hours with Anthony Robinson and Mankekolo Mahlangu co-chairs, Selaelo Maredi, exiled South African playwright at the home of Dr. Samuel Hay, chairman of Theatre Arts, Morgan State University.

Kani and Ntshona instead of appearing at a press conference on Monday at the Mechanic Theatre announced their withdrawal from the Baltimore International Theatre Festival on George Collins' "Straight Talk" Show, Monday night.

The Coalition, pulled together by members of the Henry McNeil Turner Society of Bethel A.M.E. Church co-chaired by Robinson and Mankekolo in letters to the Mayor and City Council, Mrs. Sandra Hillman and Mrs. Hope Quackenbush and to South African Newspapers called the invitation to the Baxter Theatre an insult to Baltimore's majority population.

The Coalition also said that their protests and picketing highlights the intolerable conditions in South Africa and pinpoints the lack of black Baltimore's involvement in cultural decisions.

There has been a great outcry because the black community has been very vocal and supported the Coalition. And, Baltimoreans, black and white have been condemned for not supporting the International Theatre Festival.

Other critics have told the AFRO that the Baltimore Festival is poorly planned and the selection of some of the troupes who perform in Hebrew and Spanish without written explanation of what is happening on stage leaves much to be desired. And poor planning is highly visible when the International Theatre opens during Billy Graham Week, graduations, exam week and closing of schools.

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"A Simple Tale" by Israeli writer Shai Agnon performed by the Habimah National Theatre of Tel Aviv, Israel at the School for the Arts June 6-14, is a case in point.

The Habimah Theatre is the world's first professional Hebrew-language Theatre and Baltimore critics each said they couldn't understand what was happening or told a different version from what I thought I saw.

The Baltimore School for the Arts while it has a large stage is not fully renovated and is like an old barn. The temporary seats are uncomfortable.

"A Simple Tale" is the story of a young man, Hirshel, forced by his family to abandon study of the Torah and the orphan girl he loves. He is forced to join his family's wholesale chicken feather business and marry a wealthy landowner's daughter.

That's what the press release says. My view: On Hirshel's wedding night he castrates himself and refuses to sleep with his bride. When his bride turns up pregnant, he goes mad. The next part is confusing. You see his mother sharpening a knife and then the son is cured.

At the show this reporter caught, the absence of laughter and the complete silence of the audience proved that not one person in the half-filled auditorium understood what was going on.

For a student of theatre arts especially those studying theatre design, sets and lighting "A Simple Tale" could be a must see. For the average theatre-goer, it has no appeal.

The cluttered stage was designed as an early chicken feather shop about 1918-20. Ladders on tracks moved about the stage: mounds of feather pillows, blown up family portraits and hanging bags of feathers were other decorations. Wooden boxes were opened and closed to form various tables and scenes.

Most masterful scene was Hirshel's dance of madness during which he covered the stage with a mound of feathers. He was accompanied by a half-naked maniacial figure who danced his frenzied contortions with him pulling him deeper and deeper into his own hell.

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The Els Joglars of Barcelona, Spain are performing at the Baltimore School for the Arts from June 15 - 20.

They will perform "Laetius" in "Visual Language" through movement and expression. It tells the story of a new form of life born on earth after a nuclear explosion.

### You have a choice!

"God's Trombones", James Weldon Johnson's sermons in verse opens at the Arena Playhouse, 801 McCulloh St. tonight (Friday) and continues weekends through July 26. For information call 728-6500.

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Saturday, June 20 the Free Spirit Theatre under Dr. Percy Thomas presents "Praddle" at the Little Theatre at Morgan State University at 8 p.m. For information call 358-7629 or 444-3343.

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The Alternate Cultural Festival sponsored by the Coalition in Support of Liberation Struggles of Southern Africa opened Sunday at Bethel A.M.E. Church.

The Rev. John Bryant preached before full houses at 9 and 11 a.m. on "South African Liberation." Members of Bethel's Henry Turner McNeil Society were sponsors.

Monday, "For Better Or For Worse" by exiled South African playwright Selaelo Maredi was performed at Morgan State University Little Theatre. A full house saw an emotion-packed realistic portrayal of life in South Africa.

Tuesday, June 16 the Coalition held a Rally in War Memorial Plaza in Commemoration of the Soweta Uprising.

Ignoring the 100-degree heat the rally composed of black and white members of the Coalition held solemn moments of silence for their brothers killed in Atlanta, the 800 children killed in 1976 in Soweto, South Africa.

The group held hands and to rhythmic clapping and beating of drums poured a libation to fallen black comrades everywhere.

Daki Napata was master of ceremonies and a participant on stage was Mercy Djeng, of Botswana, a member of the Soweto 10.

The Rev. John Bryant in referring to the victory of the Coalition in having the Baxter Theatre of South African withdrawn from the Baltimore International Festival congratulated the group for taking a stand and sticking with it.

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The Alternate Theatre Festival continued Wednesday African Dance Festival and Thursday, "Cooling The Fires of Hell" by the Psychiatric Department of Provident Hospital at Morgan State University.

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The Fest closes with the Arena Players on Friday and the Free Spirit Theatre on Saturday.

It is clear that this Festival organized without city funds and on a limited budget is an indication that professional talent is available in Baltimore and should be showcased the same as foreign groups from other countries.

# Arena Players Possible Dream' realized

Mrs. Ethel J. Day, charter member of the Arena Players was cited for her 28 years of service as treasurer. She's shown above with Terry Boston, - Rhodes Scholar, Patrick Lansey and Cliff Sherrard.

Henry G. Parks Jr. chairman of the Arena Players Possible Dream Committee announces that fund is over the $250,000 mark. He pays tribute to the creative minds of Mrs. Camilla Sherrard, Board Chairman; and Mrs. Catherine Adams, Honorary Chairperson.

Dr. Ernest O. Brown, member of Arena for 25 years was cited for his creative writing and scripts and was presented the Arena Players Civic Award.

Mrs. Loraine Gravatt Brown, head of the Art Department of Harlem Park Junior High School, has appeared in more than 20 Arena Plays. She was presented the Arena Player Artistic Award. Above, she is congratulated by her husband, George Barrick noted artist and teacher and her daughters.

(Photos by Ben Phillips).

Marty Brown, 1981 graduate of Woodlawn High School is presented the $1,000 Lorraine Hansberry Scholarship from Arena Player Board Member, Ms. June Thorne.

Nancy Barrick, wife, mother, teacher, actress was presented the Arena Players Artistic Award. Above, she is congratulated by her husband, George Barrick noted artist and teacher and her daughters.

# Annual jazz festival set for Wolf Trap

The third annual Jazz Festival at Wolf Trap is peppered by two afternoons of high voltage jam sessions, June 20 and 21, featuring a Saturday evening triple bill of Herbie Mann, Oscar Peterson and Stanley Turrentine.

Beginning at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, artists will participate in three hour-long improvisatory jam sessions on the Band stand and Children's Theatre stages. The personnel of each ensemble will change each hour at each location, reuniting musicians who perfo rmed together in years past and are looking forward to showing off the tricks they've learned in the meantime.

By Ida Peters

The announcement by Henry G. Parks, Jr., chairman that the "Possible Dream" Fund Raising Committee had passed their goal with a total of $182,000 was the highlight of the 15th Annual Awards Presentation at Blue Crest North last Friday.

Ever since the Arena Playhouse received a challenge grant of $250,0000 in May, 1979 from the State of Maryland and a matching grant of $100,000 from the City of Baltimore, the Arena Players have conducted an intense campaign to raise $150,000 to complete Phase III, the second and third floors of the Arena Playhouse.

Parks gave credit to his committee, Mayor William Donald Schaefer, honorary chairman; Joseph D. Minutilli, Commercial Credit Co.; Mrs. Catherine Adams, honorary chairperson and Acknell M. Muldrow, II of the finance committee.

Parks also cited Mrs. Camilla Sherrad, chairperson of Arena Players' Board of Directors saying it was a pleasure to work with her and Mrs. Adams because of their "creative minds toward fund raising".

Samuel H. Wilson, Jr. presided and honored Ethel J. Day, a charter Arena Player for her work as treasurer over 28 years. A moment of silent prayer was offered in remembrance of George Simms and Eleanor Welch, two recently deceased members.

The $1,000 Lorraine Hansberry Scholarship Award went to Marty Brown, a 1981 graduate of Woodlawn High School. He obtained his acting experience at Woodlawn as member of the Thespian Troupe where he starred in the school's production of "MASH" and the one-act play "The Sandbox". He plans to attend Towson State University.

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Loraine Gravatt Brown, who has appeared in 20-odd Arena plays, was presented the Arena Artistic Award. She is presently head of the Art department at Harlem Park Junior High School. She is a member of the Chums, Chi Wives, the Spocketts and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

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Dr. Ernest O. Brown, husband of Mrs. Brown was presented the Arena Civic Award. The Baltimore surgeon has served the Arena Players for 25 years.

Nancy Barrick who has played many sane and insane women in Arena plays also received an Arena Artistic Award. She most recently appeared in "Wind Between The Houses" and served for three consecutive years as editor of the Arena Player Yearbook.

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To close out the program, the Arena Players presented a stunning show with excerpts and reviews of their 1981 musical shows. The performance was electrifying proving that Baltimore Arena Players have first-rate professional talent that will stand up against just everybody.

Bill Johnson and his tremendous voice was M.C. doing excerpts from "Simply Heavenly". He was joined by Sylvia Herdison, Joan Coursey, Barbara Hudson, Bernadine Winston, Hugh Howell in excerpts from "Tambourines To Glory" and "The Amorous Flea". Miss Shirley Watson accompanied on the piano.

The group gave a rousing finale "There's No Business Like Show Business" accompanied by standing Arena Players all over the banquet hall.

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Phase III of the "Possible Dream" will enable the Arena Players to complete their creative Arts Center and Youth Theatre. Plans call for a memorial lobby on the first floor. The second floor will contain an upper level theatre lobby, a dance studio, band room, classroom and stage for rehearsal. The third floor will contain rooms for set construction, costume design and storage.

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Mrs. Camilla Sherrard emphasized, along with Henry Parks, that inflation has increased the costs of many services and while they have met their goal, funds are needed to set up a firm operational budget.