Pioneers in Restoration of Black Heritage

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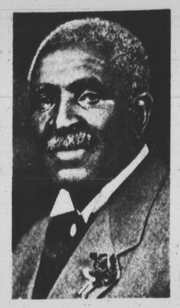
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Teacher and expert in marine biology

IMPORTANT DATES

March

1. The Abyssinians defeated the Italians at Adowa, 1896.

1. B.K. Bruce, United States senator, born, 1841.

1. Cudjoe, leader of the Maroons in Jamaica, brought the Jamaican Government to terms in 1738.

5. Cripus Attucks, a seaman, fell in the Boston Massacre, 1770.

7. Little Stephen, set out to explore the South-western part of the United States, 1539.

10. El-Hadj Omar, Tukulor Conqueror, started his empire with the capture of Segu, 1861.

12. Benjamin Banneker with L'Enfantt to lay out Washington in the District of Columbia, 1791.

14. Menelik became ruler of Abyssinia, 1889.

17. Texas, as a republic, abolished the slave trade, 1836.

18. Gabriel de la Concepcion Valdes (Placiod), poet, born in Havana, Cuba, 1809.

23. The abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, 1873.

25. Slave trade abolished by British

April

1. Thomas Powell Buxton, British emanicpationist, born, 1786.

3. Edward Everett Hale, anti-slavery writer, born, 1822.

3. James Madison Bell, poet, born, 1826.

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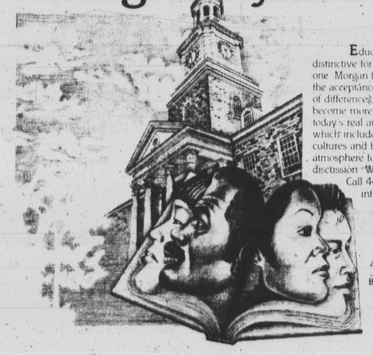

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SHOWTIME

Arena Players' 'Virginia Woolf' ...on games married people play

IDA PETERS

Jay Butler is making his debut as a guest director at the Arena Playhouse with "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

Arena Players go interracial with their production of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" by Edward Albee. Jay Butler makes his debut as guest director playing weekends starting Feb. 19. Guess if we're ready for the movie "Making Love" about two guys and a gal we're ready for black and white couples changing off. Penny Demps and Adam Wright are one couple and Scott Elliott and April Inloes, the other.

It's kind of sad, that the Arena Players, one of the oldest black theatrical groups in our city could not have found a black playwright to showcase during Black History Month. The only way our black youth can aspire to all facets of theatre is to have role models such as Micki Grant here last year presenting her own musical "It's So Nice To Be Civilized." It was a smashing production.

Out at Towson State we've got the celebrated playwright Joseph Walker ("River Niger" fame) and in early January we had James Baldwin's "The Amen Corner" at Center Stage.

The AFRO can't buy the excuse that none of Walker's plays are available for Arena production. What about Ed Bullin's plays already available in book form?

Can we afford to allow Towson and Center Stage and even The Mechanic Theatre to do a once a year number on us and our leading black company not actively raising our consciousness and exalting our gifted playwrights during Black History Month?

ARENA PLAYERS and Channel 2-TV feted playwright Kermit Frazier, New York University professor at a press reception this past Thursday to preview his play "Sacred Places" for Black History Month presentation starring Cheryl Pasteur and Harold Cornish. TV drama will air Saturday, Feb. 27 on Ch. 2.

The S. Randloph Edmonds Players of Bowie State College presents "Teach Me How To Cray", a drama in three acts by Patricia Joudry. Saturday Feb. 27 thru Tuesday March 2 in the Martin Luther King Auditorium. This family drama is about two people striving to overcome obstacles that hinder their happiness.

Bowie State College will host the National Association For Dramatic and Speech Arts conference at the college March 30 thru Bowie is vice-president of the association.

More than 20 schools will be represented including Grambling, Hampton, Howard, Morgan Delaware, Savannah State. The schools will be participating in play competitions and workshops.

Martha (Penny Demps) and Nick (Scott Elliott) enjoy a party while spouse Honey (April Inloes) look on in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

At the recent gala opening night party for "Sophisticated Ladies" in Los Angeles, star Hinton Batite was in good hands with two of Hollywood's most sophisticated ladies, Debbie Allen and Aretha Franklin.

Members of the executive board are Dr. Robert Stevenson, Savannah State, president; Joseph Stevens, Hampton, executive secretary; Mrs. Sandrell Lindsey, Kalimba Players, Miami, assistant executive secretary; and Dr. Winona Fletcher, Indiana University.

The Maryland Historical Society will present the oral histories of outstanding black Baltimoreans compiled by Mrs. Louise Kee Hines. She has been a voluntteer tour guide for five years at the Society.

A reception will be held on Thursday, Feb. 25 at 2 p.m. for the press to meet the various subjects. Oral histories inclu Mrs. Anita K. Williams, winner of the Papal Cross; Mrs. Edna DeCoursey Johnson, specialist in Consumer Education; Mrs. Mary West Miller, teacher-actress; Alphonso Butler, blind musician; Dr. C. Edward Ward, linguist and musician; Mrs. Dorothy Coleman Lymas, biographer of her father, past national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; Mrs. Olivia Bates, teacher, past grand matron Order of Eastern Star; and Mrs. Mae Wright Peck, teacher, first curriculum specialist with PBS and Mrs. Ethel Day, administrative assistant at Coppin and YWCA board member.

Pieces of a Dream, teenage jazz trio from Philadelphia. Curtis Harmon, drums; James Lloyd, keyboards and Cedric Napoleon on Bass at Coppin Homecoming, Feb. 19 at 8 p.m.

The second company of "Sophisticated Ladies" opened in Los Angeles with Hinton Battle, Gregg Burge and Terri Klausner recreating the roles they had on Broadway. Original cast star Gregory Hines is teamed with Paula Kelly and is joined by Dee Dee Bridgewater leading a cast of 40 and a 25-piece stage band.

Raves are coming in about football great Frank McRae's performance in "Cannery

(Continued on Page 10)

AFRO readers select Grammy winners ... vote 'Endless Love', 'The Dude'...tops

For the past two weeks AFRO readers have been voting for Grammy nominees by clipping a ballot out of this newspaper and mailing to AFRO Entertainment.

We here at the AFRO know that our readers have definite preferences as to their favorite records and performers. When the 24th annual Grammy Awards show with John Denver as host is broadcast live from the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, Wednesday, Feb. 24 on the CBS Television Network, we'll know how AFRO readers stack up against the 5,000 members of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

James Brown, Shirley Caesar, the cast of "Sophisticated Ladies" are among the performers and presenters.

Here's how AFRO readers voted:

-Record of the Year - Endless Love - Diana Ross and Lionel Richie

-Album of the Year - The Dude - Quniey Jones

-Song of the Year - Endless Love - Diana Ross and Lionel Richie

-New Artist - Luther Vandross

-Pop Vocal Female - Physical - Olivia Newton-John

-Pop Vocal Male - Tie - Breakin' Away - Al Jarreau and Just The Two Of Us - Bill Withers

-Pop Vocal Duo-Group - Endless Love - Diana Ross and Lionel Richie

-Vocal Pop Instrumental - The Theme From Hill Street Blues - Mike Post featuring Larry Carlton

-Rock Vocal Female - Cold Love - Donna Summer being pushed by Who's Foolin' Who - Lulu

-Rock Vocal Male - Super Freak - Rick James

-R & B Vocal Female - Stephanie - Stephanie Mills

-R & B Vocal Male - Never Too Much - Luther Vandross

-R & B Duo-Group Vocal - Tie - Lady - Commodores and Let's Groove - Earth, Wind & Fire

-R & B Songs - Tie - Just The Two Of Us - Bill Withers and She's A Bad Mama Jama - Carl Carlton

-R & B Instrumental - East St. Louis Melody - Noel Pointer

-Jazz Fusion - Winelight - Grover Washington Jr.

-Soul Gospel Contemporary - Tie - Don't Give Up - Andrea Crouch and Edwin Hawkins Live - Edwin Hawkins

-Soul Gospel Traditional - Where Is Your alth - James Cleveland & So. California Comm. Choir

-Inspirational - Tie - Amazing Grace - B.J. Thomas and I Believe in Jesus - Donna Summer

Grammy performers and presentors

James Brown

Shirley Caesar

Cast of "Sophisticated Ladies"

Westsiders Marching Band kicks off Children's Fair

Sixty members of the Baltimore West Siders Marching Band will lead fair goers into the Children's Fair at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 21, at the Timonium Fair Grounds, Home Arts Hall, to open a day of activities relating to the arts for children.

The Westsiders is a group of approximately 130 young people, aged 5 to 25, who have been playing their rousing music for the past 15 years in the Baltimore area and regularly participate in the AFRO Clean Block parades. According to Jeff-W. Pitts, Commander and original organizer of the group, the band also travels yearly to play in the Annual Fish Bowl Parade in Norfolk, VA; and to other places in Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Rehearsals are held every Tuesday and Thursday evening in the Cade Armory, West Baltimore Al Bundy is music instructor. Experienced majorettes have been hired to train the corps in the past. At the present time, young women who have been trained by the West Siders in turn train younger girls. Many of the participants attend Walbrook and Carver Senior High Schools and Calverton and Pimlico Junior High Schools.

A family affair, Mr. Pitts began the Westsiders with his own five children; now the youngest Pitts child is 20 and the family is beginning to assume some of the responsibility. Mrs. Dorothy Pitts is coordinator. Mrs. Yvonne Adams, mother of three children who participated many years, is administrative assistant.

Some young people have stayed with the group for 15 years. At the end of each year, every participant receives a trophy in a ceremony held at the Winchester Armory, filled to its 600 seat capacity.

The group receives no outside financial assistance. All expenses of trips are paid for by the children and their families. The families also act as supervisors on the group's frequent trips and cooperate with the

(Continued on Page 11)

Black History Month Events

February 1-22: "A Life in Art," offered by the Musuem of American Art, 8th and G Streets N.W., Washington, a show including 47 paintings, sculptures and works on paper, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily.

February 1-28: Works of Violet Hill Whyte, shown at Lillie Carroll Jackson Museum, 1320 Eutaw place Monday through Friday, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Special tours for large groups by calling 523-1208

February 1-28: Black history as seen through the history of the postage stamp, items from the collection of Milton E. Stanley, retired school principal. Shown in the second floor gallery of the Enoch Pratt Free Library daily during regular library hours.

February 7-26: "Afro-American Art," works by Gordon Parks, William H. Johnson, Paul Collins and others exhibited at Gallery 409, 409 N. Charles Street. Reception at 3 p.m. February 7 with exhibit continuing through February 26.

February 19

February 19: "Finally Got the News," a documentary of black auto workers contesting the leadership of the UAW. Noon in the Fine Arts Room 306, University of Maryland Baltimore County. Repeated at 7:30 p.m. in Gallery 409, 409 N. Charles Street.

February 20

February 20: Paul Robeson - The Tallest Tree in the Forest" - This excellent documentary directed by Gil Noble was begun shortly before Robeson's death in 1976, and features film sequences from "Saunders of the River" and "The Emperor Jones" at Gallery 409.

February 21

February 21 Hampton Institute Alumni Association presents the Hampton Institute Concert Choir in recital Sunday, Feb. 21 at 5 p.m. at Poly-Western Auditorium, Cold Spring Lane and Falls Road. Chairman, Atheda Lusk; Eleanor Tildon.

Night Scene Seen

By Bob Matthews

Nightsceners have been strictly divided over the issue of what kinds of music should be presented at the Left Bank Jazz Society concerts.

Twas sparked by the appearance of Chico Freeman last Sunday, who prudently rode the fence between mainstream and avant garde Jazz. What it all produced was an "all or nothing at all" attidude on the part of the patrons.

Some declare this was one of the best concerts LBJS has put on—others claim the music was more cacaphony than euphony, and was totally foreign to their ears.

The question is, will Baltimoreans support the "modern" sound, such as that produced by Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, Sam Rivers, etc. The cold hard facts are that the majority of LBJS goers cling to mainstream music.

The regulars who support the music each week lean toward mainstream music, with the Dexter Gordons, Horace Silvers, Art Blakeys and the rest drawing capacity audiences.

Would be interested in taking a kind of unofficial poll, to see just how much interest there is in bringing in more avant garde or modern-styled music.

Give us a call here at the AFRO, or drop a note—we'll be totting up reactions over the next couple of weeks.

Speaking of Left Bank, this week there is a salute to Pres, tenor saxaphonist Lester Young, with a concert entitled, "Three Saxes for Lester."

The saxes, all from D.C., are Byron Morris, also; Ron Holloway and Clyde (Watergate) Dickerson, tenors. They will be accompanied by Reuben Brown, piano, Hugh Walker, drums, and Steve Novosel, bass.

Haven't heard this group together, but have heard all of the artists individually on other occasions. My assessment—this should swing from the rafters.

There will be competition for the jazz dollar this weekend, for the Smithsonian is presenting a weekend of jazz beginning tonight with the Art Blakey Jazz Messengers.

You don't have to worry aaboout this one, for it is completely sold out. Tomorrow, Saturday, there will be jazz movies—free—at 3:30 in the afternoon. 'Twill be at Baird Auditorium, in the Museum of National History on Constitution Ave.

Sunday afternoon at 3 p.m., Joe Williams will lead his quartet in a concert, followed at 8 p.m. by Mel Lewis, and the big band.

At the same time, the Maryland Inn is presenting pianist Monty Alexander through Sunday night in the King of France Tavern, complete with his group, which includes topflight percussionists.

Closer to home: The Sportsmen's Lounge is presenting the Dennis Fisher trio, Dennis, organ; Jerome McCardell, drums, and Lee Jeffers, sax, along with vocalist Jennifer Jones.

They are on hand for the evening shows. The Saturday afternoon jazz jam has The Graingers scheduled. A conflict prevented their appearance the last time they were billed at the club, so we hope they can make this set. This is one of the top fusion groups around—check it out.

The Closet is presenting what has become their "house" band this weekend, consisting of Tim Murphy, piano; Billy Murphy, drums, and Larry Kingling, bass.

Henry was telling me about the vocalist with the group, Tim Sheppard. Had to confess we haven't heard him yet—but we will.

Over at Gatsby's, Seido continues through Saturday night. Bobby Ward is in place at the Club Astoria...and we have gotten word that a new nightspot is scheduled to open later this year. 'Tis called La Sheika's Palace, and will feature live entertainment and disco. More as details become available.

FEB