Bobby Womack here

Brandi Wells . . . here with Bobby Womack

Bobby Womack at Painters Mill.

What is the secret of Bobby Womack's staying power?

"If you put a little R & B on the bottom and a little rock and roll on the top, you've got a groove that'll last forever" says the master who comes into Painters Mill this Saturday.

Back in the early 1950s, a gospel unit called the Womack Brothers was as familiar a name in Cleveland as the Sottones are in Baltimore.

Bobby Womack and his four brothers, not only harmonized and praised the Lord at neighborhood churches, they also were engaged as the opening act for leading gospel recorders booked in their hometown's top halls and auditoriums.

As their modest fame spread, the Womack Brothers wound up on a tour with a group called the Soul Stirrers. Singing an impressive lead in the Soul Stirrers was a man named Sam Cooke. When Cooke moved to California and began recording pop and soul music on his label, SAR, he asked the Womacks to join him.

Reasoning that there was more than one way to stir souls, the Womacks changed their name to the Valentinos in the 60's, and "Lookin' For A Love" became their first release on SAR. In 1964, the group recorded Bobby's composition, "It's All Over Now," a tune that was covered by the Rolling Stones and became a smash hit.

The death of Sam Cooke marked a tragic ending to that year, and the Valentinos disbanded. After the breakup of the group, however, Bobby who had been Cooke's prodigy as well as guitarist kept on singing, writing and playing independently.

He composed "I'm In Love," and "Midnight Mover" for Wilson Pickett and played on sessions for, among others, Janis Joplin, guitarist Gavor Szabo and Aretha Franklin.

"I used to have a lot of problems with other people wanting to sing my songs," recalls Bobby. "I figured, 'Let them write their own songs. I wrote these. I want to sing them.'"

Vicki Sue Robinson ("Daylight") and George Benson ("Breezin") are but two of the recipients of Womack's penmanship, who are grateful that he turned his thinking around.

Of course Bobby has been highly successful as a performer as well, although his big break as a solo act did not come about until 1971.

In 1968, Womack signed with Minit Records, then a subsidiary of Liberty. He recorded two albums, had his first "crossover" hit single, "Fly Me to The Moon," and then moved to the parent label, United Artists.

Womack's first album on UA, "Communication" (1972) produced another hit single, "That's The Way I Feel About 'Cha." His follow-up LP, "Understanding" was an even bigger success, containing three hit singles, "Woman's Gotta Have It" (later recorded by James Taylor) "I Can Understand It" (recorded also by New Birth) and "Harry Hippie."

In 1973, Womack's music reached the screen when he did the soundtrack for "Across 110th Street." Although he made his big strides with United Artists, Bobby left the label after eight years, citing the lack of a million-seller album as the ultimate reason for his departure.

Today with 18 LP's and 700 compositions to his credit, peers declare that Bobby Womack is singing, producing and playing guitar better than ever. His new album, "The Poet," on a new label (Beverly Glen Music) has also produced a new single, "If You Think You're Lonely Now."

Is Redd cleaning up his image?

Letters

Dear AFRO:

What's this we hear about Redd Foxx planning to clean up his 'dirty old man' image?

J.G.

Dear J.G.:

Reports out of Hollywood and Las Vegas are that Redd is telling friends he's going to act his age and not go around courting strange kinds of lawsuits. Word is that Redd is talking to various press agents about getting his "dirty old man" image cleaned up.

Dear AFRO:

I read that Baltimore's Howard E. Rollins, Jr., has been nominated for an Oscar in the Best Supporting Actor category. In the "Ragtime" I saw Howard E. Rollins, Jr. in the role of Coalhouse Walker was the STAR. Why wasn't he nominated in the Best Actor category? A.S. Baltimore.

Dear A.S.:

The answer is very simple. Rascism is part and parcel of America and Hollywood, and money is the name of the game. While Howard E. Rollins, Jr. did a tremendous acting job in "Ragtime" and was the star, Hollywood can make more money promoting Warren Beatty in "Reds", Henry Fonda, "On Golden Pond", he's so old he'll probably win because he's sick and fellow actors think he ought to have one last tribute; Burt Lancaster, "Atlantic City"; Dudley Moore, "Arthur" and Paul Newman, "Absence of Malice". Rollins is lucky to get nominated at all.

(Continued on Page 25)

Howard...

On Redd...

...and Leon

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Black Dance Festival at Gallery 409

The Nicholas Brothers, 1930's

A weekend program highlighting Black Dance on Film will include a special tribute to Duke Ellington, poetry and live music at Gallery 409, Feb. 26-27-28.

Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. the following films will be shown:

Black Dance on Film: The Nicholas Brothers, Bill Bojangles Robinson, John Bubbles, Baby Laurence, Whitey's Lindyhoppers, Dorothy Dandridge and many others will be featured.

Sepia Stars on Parade: Bill Bojangles Robinson, The Mills Brothers.

St. Louis Blues: Bessie Smith's only filmed performance, featuring James Mordecai, dancer and leading man. 1929.

Black and Tan Fantasy: Duke Ellington's first film introduces dancer and leading actress, Freddie Washington, precision dancers The Five Step Brothers. 1929.

Jammin' the Blues: Academy Award nominated film featuring Lester Young and an all-star jam session with an unforgettable "Lindy Hop" performance by Archie Savage and Marie Bryant. 1944.

Symphony in Black: Features Duke Ellington and His Orchestra introducing a 20 year old Billie Holiday and Baltimore dancer, Earl "Snakehips" Tucker. 1935.

Paper Doll: The Mills Brothers introduce dancer, actress, Dorothy Dandridge in her first film. 1942.

Rhythm in a Riff: Features Billy Eckstine and his Orchestra of '46, introducing great steps from the period. 1947.

Black Music in America: Introduces Josephine Baker and others.

February 28 at 8 and 10 p.m.

The films of composer, Duke Ellington from 1929-1962. Ellington made over 30 films during his career, introducing singers, dancers and soloists from his orchestra.

A Baltimore Black Musical Film Committee Inc. Nyumburu Center Production.

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TV Watching

By Vanessa Johnson

Friday

NBC Magazine: "Latch Key Children" are the estimated 2.4 million youngsters ages 6-13 who return from school to an empty house because their parents work. 8:00-9:00 p.m. Ch. 2.

Benson: Katie is struck by a sudden attack of puppy love for Pete, while the Governor is bedeviled by a public relations man sent to polish his image. Starring Robert Guillaume. 8:00-8:30 p.m. Ch. 13.

Open All Night: Gordon's parents pay the Feesters a visit, carrying their only necessities: two lawn chairs and an endless supply of cigarettes. Starring Bubba Smith. 8:30-9:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

Old Houseworks: How to plan a kitchen, freeing painted or nailed shut windows. 9:30-10:00 p.m. Ch. 22 & 67.

Strike Force: A mobster's right hand man uses Murphy's ex-wife to contact him about becoming a Government protected witness. Starring Donan Harewood. 10:00-11:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

Saturday

Weekend Special: Two determined dogcatchers endanger Dorothy and the other strays she lives with in the conclusion of this three-part cartoon. 12:00-12:30 p.m. Ch. 13.

Sugar Ray Leonard's Golden Gloves: Arizona vs California. Also a look at the career of host Sugar Ray Leonard. 2:00-3:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

CBS Sports: Former WBA welter-weight champ Thomas Hearns (33-1) makes his second foray into the middleweight ranks with a scheduled 10-round bout from Las Vegas. 4:30-6:00 p.m. Ch. 11.

Tony Brown's Journal: Tony Brown reports on the relationship between black leaders Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad in the 1960's. 6:30-7:00 p.m. Ch. 22 & 67.

Solid Gold: Guests singers include George Benson ("Turn Your Love Around" and "Aretha Franklin ("Hold On I'm Comin'" 7:00-8:00 p.m. Ch. 20.

Black Horizons: Segment on a salute to black music. Hosted by Dwayne Wickham. 7:30-8:00 p.m. Ch. 11.

Love Boat: "Love Boat Follies", with Della Reese as Isaac's mom Millie, and Cab Calloway as Millie's do or die admirer. Starring Ted Lange. 9:00-10:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

American Playhouse: Author Ntozake Shange's award winning play "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf", about what it's like to be black and female. With Trazana Beverley and Crystal Lilly. 10:00-11:30 p.m. Ch. 22 & 67.

Sunday Live

Sunday Live: Guests unknown at press time. 3:00-2:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

Thanks For the Memories, Ladies: A two hour salute to what Bob Hopes calls the women he loves, beautiful but funny. Ladies include Pearl Bailey, Diahann Carroll and many others. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Ch. 2.

Today's FBI: After 10 years underground, anarchists plan to announce their resurgence by killing a "judge." Starring Harold Sylvester. 8:00-9:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

Mike Douglas: Guests include singer Mary Wells. 4:50-5:30 a.m. Ch. 13.

Monday

Phil Donahue: Guests include Chicago teacher Marva Collins, whose inner city private school was praised on a "60 Minutes". 9:00-10:00 a.m. Ch. 2.

Private Benjamin: Benjamin can't convince anyone that she saw a big missile smuggled onto the base. Starring Hal Williams. 8:30-9:00 p.m. Ch. 11.

Tony Brown's Journal: A report on blacks in the U.S. military, from the American Revolution to the Vietnam War. 10:30-11:00 p.m. Ch. 22 & 67.

—More letters—

(Continued from Page 24)

Dear AFRO:

What's happening with Leon Isaac Kennedy and his lovely wife Jayne? Are they still getting a divorce? Hetty M.

Dear Hetty:

Leon Isaac Kennedy and his beauteous Jayne after 10 years of marriage are still getting a divorce but both are quoted in news releases as saying they will remain friends.

In Los Angeles, recently for the premiere of "Body and Soul", a benefit for Compton Sickle Cell Foundation, Leon and Jayne kissed for the press leaving one columnist Dorothy Gipson of the L.A. Sentinel to comment the divorce "will probably be added interest and bringing viewers to the theatres just for controversy". Another commented that the divorce is just hype anyway.

"Body and Soul" is No. 20 on Variety's 50 Top Grossing films for Feb. 17, 1982. It's playing in three cities on 15 screens averaging $7,388 per screen. Flick has grossed to date, $2,268 million.

Leon is not doing too badly with "Penitentiary" either. It averaged $31,000 week of Feb 17. It has grossed $3,560 million. It is playing in one city on 14 screens averaging $2,214 per screen.

Leon is slated to produce "The Dorothy Dandridge Story", starring Jayne Kennedy for Cannon Films.

Baby Laurence

Bill Robinson (Bojangles) 1935

Free events for children

Sunday, Feb. 28
Central Library, Children's Department: Films — "The Little Prince" and "The Hundred Penny Box," 2 p.m.

Monday, March
Canton Center: Films — "Tap Dance Kid" and "The Five Chinese Brothers," 4 p.m.

Tuesday, March 2
Light Street Branch: Films — "Anansi the Spider" and "Andy and the Lion," 3:30 p.m.

Admission to all film programs is free.

"Cosmos (part 8)": Journeys in Space and Time. Dr. Carl Sagan's introduction to Einstein's theory of relativity, interstellar and time travel, will be screened at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 1 at the Light Street Branch, 1251 Light St.

"Bicycle Thief," with Rome as the background of Vittorio de Sica's statement on the tragedy of poverty, will be screened at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3 at Carl Sagan will be screened at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3 at the Enoch Pratt Center, 400 S. Paul St.

"Steamboat Bill, Jr.": Buster Keaton comes to the rescue with perhaps the greatest flying sequence in film history. Silent film will be screened at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3 at the Light Street Branch, 1251 Light St.

"Bicycle Thief," with Rome as the background of Vittorio de Sica's statement on the tragedy of poverty, will be screened at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3 at the Enoch Pratt Center, 400 S. Paul St.

"Number Seventeen": an early suspense thriller by Alfred Hitchcock with pre-movement at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 4 at the Enoch Pratt Center, 400 S. Paul St.

"Room at the Top": John Braine's gripping drama of an British "self" in conflict with Laurence Harvey, Simone Signoret, and Heather Sears.

Free films

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Top Hits

Soul Singles

1. That Girl — Stevie Wonder
2. If You Think You're Lonely — Bobby Womack
3. Call Me — Skyy
4. I Wanna Hold Your Hand — Lakeside
5. Let the Feeling Flow — Peabo Bryson

Soul Albums

1. The Poet — Bobby Womack
2. I Am Love — Peabo Bryson
3. Something Special — Kool and the Gang
4. Skyline — Skyy
5. The Time — The Time

"I'm Kermit Frazier, and Channel 2 is producing my play tomorrow night!"
My play "Sacred Places" has just been produced for television by Channel 2 and Baltimore's Arena Players. It's all part of Channel 2's celebration of Black History Month. I hope you enjoy it!
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"Sacred Places" is sponsored by McDonald's, Maryland National Bank and Gay Kiddies Super Kids