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Friday Plus

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Best Bets

Chaka Khan

Following on the heels of the lovely Jean Carne, and the outrageous Tina Turner, comes the Queen of Sass, **Chaka Khan,** appearing in Baltimore at **Painters Mill Star Theatre** on Sunday, Jan. 23 at 8 PM and in Washington at

Appearing with Chaka Khan this week at Painters Mill by the Wax Museum will be the always debonair Manhattans. Never failing to please Baltimore audiences, The Manhattans will perform their extensive list of hits of the past two decades.

Blue Lovett, Kenny Kelley, Sonny Bivens and Gerald Alston are The Manhattans. Having been together for over 20 years, the group has enjoyed such hits as, "Kiss and Say Goodbye," "Shining Star," "There's No Me Without You" and many, many more. Combining resonant vocal harmonies with flashy choreography, The Manhattans deliver a unique elegance unmatched by other groups of their genre.

Providing the perfect balance for the dynamic spectacle of Chaka Khan, The Manhattans will cool you out before Chaka emerges to burn you up. Don't miss this winning combination.

Manhattans

Coming Attraction. . .

. . .The Godfather of Soul

Nancy Wilson

It's been quite a while since she has been in our area, but we are more than happy to welcome her back. For almost a week-long engagement at **Charlie's** of Georgetown, **Ms. Nancy Wilson,** premier songstress, will be in performance from Tuesday, Jan. 25 through Sunday, Jan. 30.

Nancy Wilson has been a staple in the music industry for many years. Usually categorized in the pop/easy listening areas of music, a few of her latest offerings, have crossed over into the soul/rhythm and blues charts. Yet, whichever way she chooses to go, the stigma of quality always is always sure to follow.

Charlie's is located at 3223 K Street, NW. For reservations, call 298-5985. Don't miss Nancy Wilson, January 25-30.

The Play's the Thing

by C.T. Goodman

In Baltimore, the play's the thing, despite all the talk by New York critics that this year has not been a good year for the theatre. Possibly on Broadway, that is the case, with five out of seven of the latest shows closing within a week, But around this town, things are different. Granted, Baltimore is not exactly the place for premieres and consistent big names, but for quality entertainment on the stage, be it musical, drama, or comedy; little theatre company or large; new literary work or revered classic; high ticket prices or free, Baltimore has it all. As an alternative to the 'boob tube', and, the impersonality of the 'silver screen', consider shedding those pre-conceived hautey views of the "theatre" and give it a try. Discover a new world of total entertainment.

"It's Showdown Time" for the Arena Players

The Arena Playhouse is presently running the award winning play, "It's Showdown Time". The story of one woman's obsessive anger and fear of black men, "It's Showdown Time" showcases the current trend in black male/female relationships where "trust" is merely a word that no longer applies.

Cheryl Pasteur portrays Rosa, "Ms. Bitch" as she is known around the neighborhood, and she does an exceptional job. Very attractive with her piercing stares and animated actions, she is today's cynical black woman.

Opposite her is Harold "Butch" Cornish as Adam Poindexter, the farm boy/Prince Charming who is bent on restoring Rosa's faith in his fellow men, but primarily himself. Cornish is also good, adding a little Billy Dee effect to the role. A standout however, in the play, is Earl Burton who portrays Jeremiah, the neighborhood wino. Although his character is minor, he emerges as a star of the production, nonetheless, delivering on of the funniest speeches in the entire play. Joan Coursey pulls double duty as actress, portraying neighbor, Mrs. Morrison, and director. She is to be especially commended on the latter. The play moves well and is staged effectively. The ending is a little rushed, but otherwise it is a smooth production.

The Arena Players, Inc. is currently enjoying its 30th season making the organization one of the oldest theatre groups in the city. Over the last few years, their homebase, the Playhouse, has undergone massive renovations with the final result an attractive edifice at 801 McCulloh Street, between Madison and Monument Streets.

"It's Showdown Time" had its successful opening last week and will continue its run at The Playhouse throughout January, ending Feb. 6.

Cheryl Pasteur as Rosa disdainfully considers the present statusof black men.

Edward Christopher as Rosa's father and Joan Coursey as the next door neighbor discuss Rosa's plight.

Trazana Beverly directs "Of Mice and Men"

It's hard to go wrong with a piece as strong as John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men"; the classic simply has what it takes–in-depth characterizations, subtle suspense, a little humor, and one of the most emotionally charged plots ever conceived. Thus, the current production sponsored by the Urban Service Cultural Arts Program, is a fine example of doing an author proud by improving on a theme.

The production is hard-hitting and superbly acted by a small cast with impressive reputations. Directed by Tony Award winning actress Trazana Beverly ("For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf"), the talent involved in this production is simply overwhelming. Unfortunately, most of it has gone to waste as the attendance thusfar has been sparse, to say the least, probably due to a lack of good publicity.

"Of Mice and Men" is the story of George and Lennie, two friends who share a long time dream of owning their own place and "living off the fat of the land." Large, strong and somewhat retarded, Lennie is the informal charge of the smaller, more intelligent George who has basically given up his "normal life" as a young man to look out for Lennie. Throughout the play, the bond between the two men is explained and explored until it can no longer be maintained for the good of anyone.

With a heart-tugging performance as Lennie, Archie Williams manages to escape the tendency to overdue the retarded act. He successfully captures the physical characteristics of Lennie, making him loveable, sympatheitic and humourous simultaneously.

(Continued on p. 15)

Archie Williams and Gordon Parks as Lennie and George, respectively, portray best friends searching and working toward the realization of a dream.