"The Jesse Owens Story"

Darian Harewood has been signed to portray American Olympic track star Jesse Owens in Paramount Television Domestic Distribution's four-hour, two-part major television event, "The Jesse Owens Story". The announcement was made by John E. Goldhammer, Senior Vice President Programming. It is presently being filmed on location in Columbus, with further productions scheduled for Dallas, Texas.

Harewood starred as Doctor Nate Taylor in "Trauma Center" and as Simon Haley in "Roots: The Next Generation", the largest role in the "Roots I & II" saga. His other TV credits include "Panic in Echo Park", "An American Christmas Carol", "I, Desire" and the six-hour mini-series "Beulah Land".

Joining Harewood in the role of Jesse Owens' wife, Ruth, is Debbi Morgan. She currently is a popular star of the soap opera "All My Children" and is a veteran of numerous television programs including "Good Times", "The Love Boat", "Roots", "The White Shadow" and "The Incredible Hulk."

Georg Stanford Brown, cast as Lew Gilbert, co-starred in "The Rookies" and became an integral part of TV history when he portrayed Tom Harvey in both "Roots I" and "Roots II". He has made many appearances at the New York Shakespeare Festival and the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. Two of his feature film credits are "Bullitt" and "Stir Crazy".

Greg Morris, a television favorite since "Mission Impossible" and "Vega$" will portray Mel Walker, one of Jesse Owens' teammates at Ohio State University.

LeVar Burton, perhaps best known for his portrayal of Kunta Kinte in "Roots", is Slade Preston. Other TV credits include "Almos' A Man", "Billy: Portrait of a Street Kid", "One in a Million: The Ron LeFlore Story" and "Battered". Burton also hosted public TV's "Rebop" and "Reading Rainbow" series, starred in the title role in "Dummy", and appeared in "The Guyana Tragedy: The Story of Jim Jones". His motion picture credits include "Looking For Mr. Goodbar" and "The Hunter".

Ben Vereen will portray Herb Douglas. On Broadway, Vereen starred in "Sweet Charity", "Hair", "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "Pippin", for which he won a Tony Award and Drama Desk Award. His TV credits include "Louis Armstrong—Chicago Style", "Roots", and the special, "Ben Vereen—His Roots" which was honored with seven Emmy Awards. Other TV credits are "Tenspeed and Brownshoe", "Webster", "Night of 100 Stars" and "Here's Television Entertainment". Vereen's motion picture credits include starring roles in "Funny Lady", "All That Jazz" and "The Zoo Gang."

Lynn Hamilton is featured as Mama Solomon. Miss Hamilton's TV credits are many and include "Roots: The Next Generation", "Sanford and Son", "Room 222", "Gunsmoke", "The Waltons", "Rockford Files", "Barnaby Jones", and "Mannix". Her motion picture appearances are "Lady Sings the Blues", "Lead Belly", "Buck and the Preacher", "The Learning Tree" and "Shadows."

"The Jesse Owens Story" is scheduled to air nationally in July of this year. Harve Bennett is the executive producer and Richard Irving is the director. Harold Gast is the producer and screenwriter for the production.

Darian Harwood and Debbie Morgan star as Olympic track hero Jesse Owens and his wife Ruth in a new major four hour, two-part television series "The Jesse Owens Story" currently filming on location in Ohio and Texas due to air in July.

Black stars on "Saturday Night Live"

Mr. T, Robin Williams and Stevie Wonder are the special guests in "The Best of Saturday Night Live", a first-time gathering of the show's most acclaimed comic moments during recent seasons — including Eddie Murphy as Buckwheat, Joe Piscopo as Ted Koppel and Jim Belushi as Jennifer Beals ("Flashdance"). The program will be telecast on NBC March 24.

In addition to the special guests, "The Best of Saturday Night Live" features the SNL repertory company: Jim Belushi, Robin Duke, Mary Gross, Brad Hall, Tim Kazurinsky, Gary Kroeger, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Eddie Murphy and Joe Piscopo.

Eddie Murphy

Included in this lauded collection of SNL comedy segments is the two-part TV network "new journalism" satire on the murder and funeral of "Our Gang" legend Buckwheat (Murphy) anchored "live" and in "instant replay". The sequel, "Buckwheat Dead: America Mourns", covers Buckwheat's funeral and the untimely demise of his infamous murderer, John Davids Stutts (also Murphy).

Among the critics who applauded the "Buckwheat" series was Marvin Kitman of Newsday who said, "This was the best single piece of satire done about the media in the 1980s so far, 'The Shooting of Buckwheat' deserves to be in a time capsule".

Other "Best of Saturday Night Live" highlights include:

-In "Flammability of Black Entertainers" in the '80s, William F. Buckley (Robin Williams) and a noted black psychologist (Murphy) discuss the consistently "hot" status of such entertainers as Richard Pryor and Michael Jackson, with some smoking consequences.

-Mr. T and his wife, Mrs. T (Duke), use a soft sell in pitching their new "Mr. and Mrs. T's Bloody Mary Mix"-"Buy it or we'll kill you".

-Singing sensation Linda Ronstadt (Louis-Dreyfus) updates her latest social activities in "What's New".

An intimate look at Muhammad Ali

For years he told the world he was "the greatest", and many agreed with him. Today, Muhammad Ali is described as "bored" and without "a real single purpose" by people close to him. And there is also the persistent rumor of brain damage.

Correspondent Bill Kurtis offers a revealing profile of Muhammad Ali—the shape he's in financially, emotionally and physically - in a feature segment of THE AMERICAN PARADE, Tuesday, March 27 on the CBS Television Network. Charles Kuralt is the anchorman on the weekly CBS News series, which premieres with this broadcast.

Kurtis was with Ali at his home in Los Angeles and in Chicago, where the headquarters of the American Muslim Mission is located. Ali is alone a great deal, Kurtis notes, the constant entourage of his boxing days gone, along with the limelight. "He will tell you that boxing was just a preparation for his real life to come, that his gretest triumphs are yet ahead", says Kurtis, "but when you are with him now, you are struck by the silence."

There is also the persistent rumor that the countless hard punches Ali took in the ring have left him brain damaged.

Muhammad Ali

Ali's doctors; other experts in the field of neurology; close associates, including his wife, Veronica, his former trainer Angelo Dundee, his manager and principal advisor Herbert Muhammad; and Ali himself talk to Kurtis and that rumor and the facts that may have led to it.

Maurice Murad is the producer of 'Ali". Robert Northshield is the senior executive producer of "The American Parade".

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