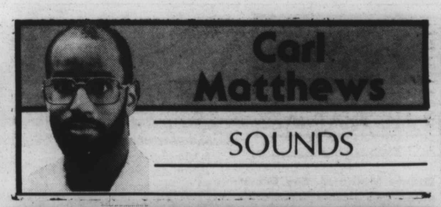


SURFACE
"Surface" (Columbia)

Here's the debut album from the trio of David "Pic" Conley, David Townsend and Bernard Jackson, who are currently on the charts with their single "Let's Try Again."

David Townsend is the son of producer/songwriter Ed Townsend, who co-wrote the music on Marvin Gaye's classic "Let's Get It On" LP. David Conley is a sax and flute player formerly of Mandrill ("Fencewalk," "Hang Loose"). He recently produced Rebbie Jackson's current hit single, "Reaction," with all three members of Surface getting writing credit for the hit.

Mellow pop/R&B lovers, will find it easy to unwind with the relaxing sounds these three put forth, sounding much like Ready For The World (who had the hit "Tonight") on the single, "Let's Try Again." Their music takes on the qualities of most of the ballad singers and groups that are currently hot, so no surprises here, just lots of good solid easy listening.

RONNIE LAWS
"Mirror Town" (Columbia)

One of the more popular names in fusion returns with his latest album, which also features some guest spots by Paulinho Da Costa, Jeff Lorber and former Earth, Wind And Fire member Larry Dunn.

Ronnie, who turned 36 exactly two weeks ago, was born in Houston, Texas. He spent a year and a half as a member of Earth, Wind And Fire ("Last Days And Time") before forming his own quintet in 1975.

After the success of 1976's "Pressure Sensitive," Ronnie was hailed as a pioneer in the field of fusion. Naturally he was inspired by his brother, Hubert Laws (who played with Quincy Jones on his "Walking In Space" album, among other things).

Ronnie handles the lead vocals on all of the tracks on his latest, sharing the lead with Debra Laws on "You Have To Be In Love." His singing is improving but not outstanding. However, it is more than adequate for the simple structure of a song like "Come To Me," which has an uncomplicated arrangement that is easy to manage for a musician of Ronnie's caliber.

Ronnie's sax gets a little workout on the similar sounding "Misled" (not the Kool And The Gang hit) and the upbeat title track, both of which are much more R&B and rock oriented than jazz fusion.

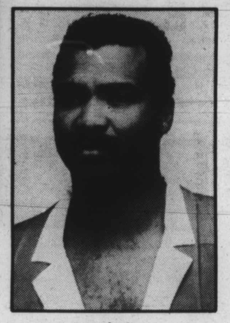
"Like A Crazy Man," with some hot percussion action by da Costa, recalls that old Ronnie Laws verve from the "Pressure Sensitive" with a different twist courtesy of the DX 7 and Larry Dunn's moog bass. I would not classify Ronnie's latest work, as a whole, a jazz album.

Another solid performance by Ronnie Laws.

Jean Albert Renaud

V-103's Top Twenty

1. Word Up	Cameo
2. Earth Angel	New Edition
3. I'm For Real	Howard Hewett
4. Typical Male	Tina Turner
5. Shake You Down	Gregory Abbott
6. Human	Human League
7. Non-Stop	Skyy
8. Shangra-La	Teena Marie
9. Temporary Love Thing	Full Force
10. Love Always	El DeBarge
11. A Little Bit More	Melba Moore & Freddie Jackson
12. I Want To Be With You	Maze
13. Can't Wait Another Minute	Five Star
14. Time Of Your Life	Stephanie Mills
15. When I Think Of You	Janet Jackson
16. Hungry For Your Love	Hanson & Davis
17. Always	James Ingram
18. Nail It To The Wall	Stacy Lattisaw
19. Midas Touch	Midnight Star
20. Kisses In The Moonlight	George Benson


Ronnie Laws

RENAUD
"The Way You Look At Me"
(Vision Quest)

Jean Albert Renaud's new single, "The Way You Look Tonight," is the first release on a new Baltimore record label, Vision Quest.

Renaud, a versatile model, actor, and dancer, has written songs for such notable artists as Lou Rawls, Deodato, and Teddy Pendergrass. Renaud wrote, produced, and sang on his latest single.

On this mellow number, Renaud's personal warmth and sophistication of style shines through, and no one should be surprised at the large female following he's sure to acquire.

Although the percussion is a bit heavy for my tastes, this is a chart-bound single if there ever was one.

Music Notes

Rock and roll and do-wop lovers, Chess Records, distributed by MCA, have some interesting re-issues in store. Among them is the re-issue is the "Rock, Rock, Rock" album, a compilation album featuring somgs from the motion picture of the same name.

This re-issue sports a recreation of the original cover and contains classics by The Moonglows, The Flamingos and Chuck Berry. "Happy Days" are here again!

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Deborah Branch (left) from Washington, D.C. receives the first prize trophy from Roy Sampson of V-103 for winning the Whoop! Goldberg Look-A-Like contest held recently. Seen in the background are judges Trina Blackledge and Bonnie Matthews Butler.

"For why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would?"

Tennyson
"Idylls of the King"

CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD, once proclaimed the Tony Award Best Play of 1979-80, has now come to the screen. This reviewer's question is, "What took you so long?"

The movie stars Academy Award-winning William Hurt and newcomer Marlee Matlin. Hurt is excellent in his role as James Leeds, a driven man drawn to the puzzling place hidden somewhere between the "noisy" and the silent worlds, a place of humor, passion, frustration and sometimes love.

Hurt is blessed with the common man's good looks, he is neither the rugged macho type, nor does he resemble the routine matinee idol. His "look" is that of a casual, man-of-the-world. Disillusioned but driven, he's a man who's seen it all and would do it again. A man who always seems to be on the brink of either bursting into tears or uncontrollable laughter. Plus he's got sex-appeal. Very important.

Marlee Matlin is her own success story. Besieged with the high fever of roseola, or baby fever, at 18 months, Marlee was afflicted with severe hearing loss. Her entire family learned to communicate by sign language. Marlee, like the character she plays, (Sarah), in CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD, was fiercely independent and non-accepting of her hearing loss as a handicap. This movie marks her film debut.

James Leeds, (Hurt) an unorthodox teacher whose newest assignment is at a remote school for the deaf, involves himself in a complicated affair with a beautiful, isolated, proud, but angry woman named Sarah (Matlin).

With Matlin cast as the mysterious, exciting object of Hurt's passion, her character's profound deafness serves as a metaphor for the barriers people face in communicating their deepest emotions. What James and Sarah discover together becomes stronger than the sounds of his "noisy" world and more overpowering than her silent shell.

However, CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD is definitely not about the handicap of deafness. It is about the universal difficulties of communication innate in human relationships. Actually, this powerful movie is a touching love story combining sensitivity with need and passion with frustration.

The motion picture also stars Piper Laurie as Sarah's estranged mother, a confused individual who sent her daughter away because of the inadequacy of her husband to cope with his deaf child.

An interesting note to consider: only hearing-impairing performers were hired to play deaf characters which heightened the ordinary difficulties of turning a script into film entertainment. Unique challenges were faced and a deaf technical advisor, in addition to several interpreters, was employed.

Seven young performers, who range from hard-of-hearing to profoundly deaf, are seen as the teenagers who both complicate and enrich James Leeds' life as he settles into his work at the Gov. Kittridge School For The Deaf.

Those actors are William Byrd, Frank Carter, Jr., John Cleary, Georgia Ann Cline, Allison Gompf, Philip Holmes and John Limnidis. William Byrd, plays Danny, a shy and sensitive young man with loads of positive energy.

He soon plans to attend California State University at Northridge. His goals are to explore dance, music and fashion. Of the seven, 20-year-old Byrd is the only black actor in the production.

Movie-goers will notice that sign language is used extensively throughout the production. Hurt is usually the one being spoken to and therefore, the only one audiences can rely on to interpret. This feat is carried out flawlessly, in fact, you don't even realize that he is constantly verbalizing every "signed" move.

Although CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD was created for the entertainment of the mainstream hearing audience, probably no cultural event of this decade has done more to create understanding of those who cannot hear than this amazing movie.

Produced by Paramount Pictures, it carries an "R" rating.

— On Stage

Continued from page 3

his fiancee Mary. He gets to the license bureau and finds that his wallet has been stolen by a pickpocket. The rude and procedure bound clerks give Mike and Mary the run around.

Eventually Mike ends up in heaven because an irate clerk gives him a death certificate instead of a birth certificate. In heaven he discovers that there is bureaucratic red tape as well.

The audience found the play to be very amusing and it brought out reactions from them to the familiar figures on stage.

The play was somewhat flawed because the character Mike who is supposed to be the protagonist is not developed enough a character to juxtapose against the callous bureaucrats. All that is known about him is that he wants to get married.

We never get to know what his job is or why he is so anxious to get married. The relationship between Mike and Mary is not developed either so that his frustration would be more clearly delineated.

The performances were generally good. Gordon Parks, who directed the play, did a fine job as Mike. Carolyn Marcus as Mary, Kelly Ward who played two roles, Archie Williams who played two roles, Darryl Taylor as Roy and Pamela Annette who played two roles acquitted themselves well.

The performances were not polished but they were good and they conveyed the basic ideas of the play. After the actors get accustomed to the space they will give stronger performances. After all this was the opening night.

Encore Dinner Theater is a very pleasant evening and hopefully it will receive the support of the black community because this is the only black owned dinner theater in this city.

The play is showing every Wednesday through Nov. 19.

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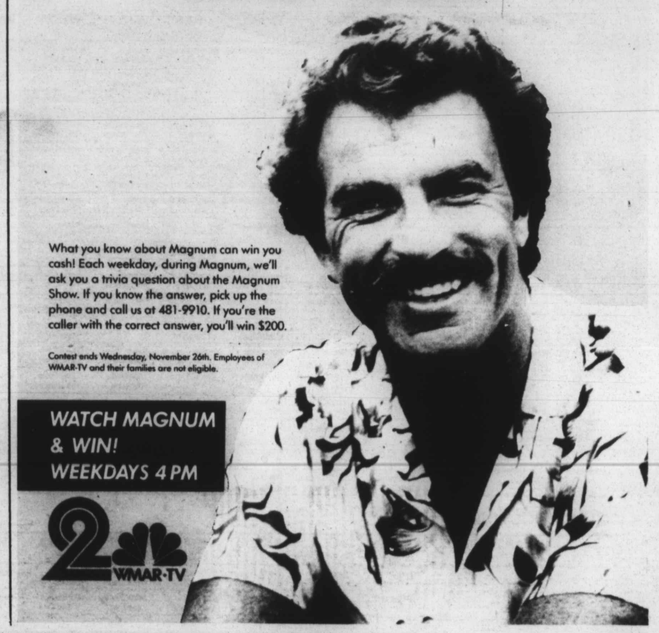

What you know about Magnum can win you cash! Each weekday, during Magnum, we'll ask you a trivia question about the Magnum Show. If you know the answer, pick up the phone and call us at 481-9910. If you're the caller with the correct answer, you'll win $200.

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