MUSEUM EXPLORES THE BAGA



The Baga of Guinea, West Africa hold the "dance of the spirit Sorosrne," as Dr. Frederick lamp takes the photograph.

Reconstructing the traces of a lost civilization can be one of the 1986-87 attempting to reconstruct most rewarding aspects of a a view of the Baga's former armuseum curator's work. On Sun- tistic magnificence and their day, January 24 at 4 p.m., Dr. culture which abruptly ter-Frederick Lamp, Curator of the minated in th 1950s with their these performances as audience Arts of Africa, the Americas, and dramatic conversion to Islam. Dr. appreciation nights. The regular Oceania will share his ex- Lamp will use slides and \$8 tickets will be \$4. Curtain will perience studying the art of the videotapes to illustrate this free be at 7:30 p.m. on both nights Baga people of Guinea, West lecture.

COMING SOON

Earth, Wind and Fire is back! See them February 7, 1988 at the Capital Centre in Landover, MD. For more information call (301). 350-3400.

"A Night For Lovers" features Phyllis Hyman and Glenn Jones at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore, February 14, 1988. For more information call (301) 783-8110. * * *

The Heritage Players will hold auditions for their spring musical production, "Fiddler on the Roof," on Sunday, January 31 and Monday, February 1 at 7:00 p.m. The auditions will be held at Ames United Methodist Church, 9 Walker Avenue, in Pikesville.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the director, Sharon Weaver at 655-3627, or by calling the producer, Jeane Bigus, at 484-9591 after 6:00 p.m.



Dr. Lamp spent six months in

Phyllis Hyman

WEEKEND TREATS

Jazz Vocal Festival

Come hear local jazz artists January 24th at 2 p.m. in the University of Baltimore Auditorium, on the corner of Oliver and Maryland Ave. Tickets will be sold at the door. For more information call (301) 467-1344. * * *

Max Roach appears at Ethel's Place January 22-23, 1988. With the drummer will be Odean Pope on tenor; Cecil Bridgewater on trumpet; and Tyrone Brown on bass. For more information call (301) 727-7077.

Richie Havens performs Blues Alley in Washington, D.C., (Georgetown), January 21-24, 1988. For more information cal (202) 337-4141.

Arena Players half-price nights

s celebrate the Arena Players' 35th year, the January 23rd and 24th performances of "Day of Absence," "Happy Ending," and "Contribution," three one-act comedies, will be half

The Players wish to extend Tickets may be purchased at the box office or by calling 728-6500 for reservations.

The Walters Art

Gallery

On January 26th and February

will feature the lecture series, "A

MEDITERRANEAN ODYSSEY: Art

of the Middle Ages in Southern

Italy and Sicily, Spain, North

Africa, and the Near East."

4, 1988, the Walters Art Gallery



Ernie Watts

"Black Music on Film: Boogie, Be-Bop and the Blues" continues t be shown in Washington, DC. The UDC Van Ness Campus of the University of the District of Columbia is the site for the January 26th films to be viewed at 6:00 p.m. They are free and open to

The Eubie Blake Cultural Center

"The Avenue," a photographic display of Connecticut Avenue Washington, D.C., depicts that town's architecture and social as captured photographer Brian V. Jones.

The exhibit ends Sunday January 31. Free admission Gallery hours are noon to 6:00 p.m. Closed Saturdays and Mondays. The Eubie Blake Cultural Center, operated by the Urban Services Agency, is located at 409 N. Charles in Baltimore. Phone: (301) 396-1300 or 396-3192.

Symposium features Ernic

Saxophone Symposium hosted by the United States Navy Band on Friday and Saturday, Januar 22-23 at the Washington, Navy Yard "Sail Loft." The event includes concerts, clinics and displays showcasing the saxophone in both classical and jazz

Watts will be a guest soloist with the Navy "Commodores" jazz ensemble at the closing concert on Saturday at 8 p.m. He will also present a clinic-recital on Saturday at 4 p.m.

United States Navy Band on Friday at 8 p.m. features James songs like "Divin' Duck Blues," School of the Arts, Dale Underwood of the Navy band, and Brian Sparks of the U.S. Coast Guard band.

Saturday's activities include a clinic by Houlik at 9 a.m., o recital by the U.S. Air Force band saxophone Quartet at 10 a.m., a clinic by the Navy Commodores' Martin Nau at 11 a.m., and at 1:30 p.m. George Wolfe of Ball State University, Muncie, IN, will perform works by William Karlins with the composers in attendance. In addition, instrument and literature displays will be available throughout the day.

All events are free and open to the public with no tickets or reservations required. For more details, call the Navy Band at (202), 433-2394.

In This Issue

628 N. Eutaw St. Baltimore, Maryland 21203 (301) 728-8200 John J. Oliver, Jr.

director Robert Bergman will explore the great Mediterranean, from the colorful Islamic and Byzantine masterpiece of Spain, North Africa, and the Near East to the fascinating hybrid cultures of southern Italy

and Sicily. The gallery is located at 600 N Charles St. in Baltimore. For more information call (301) 547-9000.

the Baltimore-Washington area. Published by the AFRO-AMERICAN NEWS-

Chairman of the Board/Publisher Frances M. Draper, President Benjamin M. Phillips IV

Deborah Johns Moir Editor Misty Brown Carl Matthews Robyn-Denise Yourse **Deborah Quinerly**

Cover Story 3 All That Jazz.. 5 1 Sounds 6

Friday Plus, January 22, 1988

COVER STORY

Bluesman Taj Mahal hits the Right notes at The Barns

Traditional black American music has been almost exclusively researched and reinterpreted by young white musicians. One of the outstanding and most delightful exceptions to this pattern has been Taj Mahal. Taj will be appearing Friday night (22nd) at the Barns of Wolf Trap at 8

With the dedication of a musicologist and the engaging energy of a master showman, Taj has dug time after time into the soil of the black musical experience, coming up with timeless gems. Because of his wonderful versions of classic has been widely thought of as a revitalizer of country blues.

But he is much more than that. His interests in root-music have expanded into international grounds (mainly Caribbean and West African) and he has evolvthe point where—with a new record company—he is embarking on a fresh journey.

Taj's recordings and in his popular stage shows has been the rhythms of the West Indies calypso and reggae. But neither musical form — or the ways of life that engendered them — are

He was born in the Jamaican community of New York City, and his father — a noted jazz ar-West Indian parentage. His South Carolinian mother taught school and sang gospel music.

His family (which eventually cluded nine children, of which Taj main interest was music, but it wasn't his only one. He earned a the University Massachusetts in Anherst. Still music called him.

Someone sometime during Taj's childhood made the mistake instrument, telling him he would world of black blues. And began to develop a voice worthy of interpreting old Mississippians he

But the feeling that he was liv-



TAJ MAHAL (center) with band members (left ed as an artist and composer to to right) Rudy Costa, Kestear Smith, Earl Lin-

do, Larry McDonald, Ray Fitzpatrick, and Hoshal Wright.

ing in a foreign culture, somehow displaced and out of tune with time Taj heard the blues. "The kind of blues that I first got knocked out on was big band blues and it had almost gotten to be bop music by the time I heard

Taj Mahal's personal excursion into blues began with a small record collection and the collecting led him to search out the elderly bluesmen like Willie Brown; Charlie Patton; Robert Johnson and Kid Bailey. His appetite and curiosity whetted, he delved into Chicago blues and began listening to Jimmy Reed. Bo Diddley. Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters and Howling Wolf.

While attending the University of Massachusetts, he became a member of Pioneer Valley excellent blues musicologist. Folklore Society, studying the early roots of American black music. It was during this period, Taj Mahal says, that he "got an life and my ancestral culture that insight into the relation of blues was beginning to be pieced music as a whole."

continued to study blues music. When not occupied with playing and practicing on different in- have any backlog of information struments, he haunted obscure on. record shops, continuing his yourself is to start from the traditen lyrics in the Library of Con- tion that you came from . gress. He searched out blues find a thing to do for the rest of

not because this is just what I really want to do."

So, fortified with a knowledge of the blues, finding his special place within the blues, and gifted with a natural music artistry, Taj Mahal began to be heard.

He moved to California in 1965 and helped form — with guitarist Ry Cooder — a group called the Rising Sons. Later that year he signed as a solo artist with Columbia Records.

His first two albums, "Taj Mahal" and "The Natch'l Blues, and initial performances (with a band featuring guitarist Jesse Ed Davis) established him as, words of Rolling Stone, "one of the most enjoyable and entertaining performers around." Taj's appeal, Stone went on to say, was "direct and immediate; he's one of the few people you can ac-

tually hear smiling." Several albums followed: "Giant Step/De Olds Folks At Home," "The Real Thing," "Hap- on the popular NBC television py Just To Be Like I Am, ed in a big gap and helped me to "Recyclin' the Blues," "Oooh So understood and did not seem to represented a progression, as Taj not only ventured into the areas of various ethnic types of music (in addition to his original song

guitar, even an all-tuba section behind songs like "Happy Just To Be Like I Am."

"In yet another demonstration of his diversified talents, Taj, scored the motion picture "Sounder" and played the part of Ike. His music helped give the film its authentic, moving

Among Taj's first projects for Warner Bros. was the score for the film "Brothers," a study of the injustices of the prison system. The solo album followed, "Music Fuh Ya' (Musica Para Tu)," which musicological the delightful calypso tune "The Four Mills Brothers" and the blues classic "Freight Train," "Baby You're My Destiny," "Curry," "Truck Driver's Two-Step" and "Sailin' Into Walker's

January of '78 saw the release of Mahal's second solo LP on Warners. Entitled "Evolution (The Most Recent)," the album represented one more giant stepping stone in Taj's musical explorations. From the funky salsa/blues/R&B flavored songs "Southbound With The Hammer Down" and "Why You Do Me This Way," to the engagingly sophisticated tones of the 'Philadelphia sound' in "Lowdown Song," to the festive rhythms of "Salsa de Laventile" complete with its choral arrangements "Evolution" was a cornucopia o' musical delights.

But always with the blues at its cernter core: the country style blues of Taj's own love song "Queen Bee;" the harmonica wail of "The Big Blues" and the intriguing textures of the complex in strumental "The Most Recent (Evolution) Of Muthafusticus

What makes Taj Mahal's music such a unique pleasure? "Always at the bottom of whatever I do," reveals the man who brought the show "Saturday Night Live," "is at least a bit of humor." That touch the backing or the song — in his acrobatic voice, a voice that plays with lines the way only special singers like Fats Waller, Sly Stone and George Clinton can do. You can hear Taj Mahal smile in his

For more information on The Barnes call 938-2404.

AFRO File Photo

developing his own artistry, he

was gaining a reputation as a

The country blues were

final piece in the puzzle. "There

was a whole part of my cultural

understand my own feelings,

things I felt or knew or

"A great way to discover