Weekend Treats

This Friday (February 26) at the Palladium, Keith Sweat, Kool Moe Dee, and Tony Terry give a benefit performance with proceeds going toward the homeless. Doors open at 8:00 p.m., and the performances begin at 9:00 p.m. For more information call (301) 367-6862.

The Manhattans

Keith Sweat

Kool Moe Dee

Tony Terry

Coming this Friday February 26 to the Chambers Night Club at 203 Bourbon Street in Baltimore, will be the Rhumba Club, Baltimore's own Latino, Calypso, Jazz Band, back by popular demand, kicking off the Third World Weekend Party. On this Saturday, February 27 (this weekend), Determination, Baltimore's number one reggae band will perform. The cover charge is $6.00 and for more information, call the Chambers at (301) 752-0058.

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Coming Soon

It will be a family affair when Levert opens up for the O'Jays March 5, at the Meyerhoff in Baltimore. The concert is sponsored by Dimensions Unlimited and includes two shows, 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. For more information, call the Meyerhoff at (301) 783-8110.

* * *

An upcoming event at the Alley will be sultry songstress, Angela Bofill, appearing from Tuesday, March 8 through Sunday, March 13. For reservations and more information, call (201) 337-4141.

* * *

Just announced! Coming to the Warner Theatre is Ziggy Marley on April 10. For more information call the Washington-based theatre at 201-626-1050.

* * *

In Georgetown at Blues Alley, listen to the sounds of Brazilian music with Flora Purim and Airto. They'll be there for a one-night engagement on Tuesday, March 1.

Angela Bofill

* * *

Also appearing at Blues Alley will be guitarist Charlie Byrd, from Wednesday March 2 to Sunday, March 6.

The O'Jays

Arena Stage

As a special offer to the Washington area community, beginning one hour before any performance of Lorraine Hansberry's "Les Blancs," patrons coming to the Arena Box Office may purchase half-price tickets to that night's performance, using CASH-ONLY as payment. This offer is subject to ticket availability.

Arena Stage is located at 6th and Maine Avenue, SW. "Les Blancs" performs through March 13 on Tuesday, through Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m., Sunday evening at 7:30 p.m., or Saturday matinee at 2:30. For more information call the Arena Stage Box Office at (202) 488-3300.

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Ray, Goodman and Brown get better with time

By Cynthia Novels

Washington is a ballad town as evidenced by the crooners who come to the city: Luther Vandross, The Dells, The Manhattans, Freddy Jackson and last but not least: Ray, Goodman and Brown.

Like a fine, mellow wine, the three gentlemen get better with time. Joining the Dells and The Manhattans at DC's Constitution Hall on Feb. 27th, the somantic balladeers will soothe the hearts of couples with favorite hits of yesteryear.

Explaining their popularity in the area, Billy Brown said, "We sing about love. The lyrics in our songs say to the ladies what they wish to hear from their men. The big turnouts at The Carter Barron and Constitution Hall amounts to the fact that when the ladies go to our concerts, naturally the men will follow."

In the early days of their careers, Ray, Goodman and Brown were working independently under the same record label when the owners dismissed the original "Moments" (from Washington, D.C.) and substituted them in their place.

From the 1960s to 70s, "The Moments" established themselves in the world of ballads beginning with the first hit that sold two and a half million copies: "Love On A Two Way Street." Other smash hits followed: "Look At Me, I'm In Love," "Happy Anniversary" and "Special Lady."

Ray, Goodman & Brown

In the midst of this success, it wasn't long that the entertainers decided to seek better opportunities with another recording company. That decision led to the losing of the name The Moments of which All Goodman said, "With that transition, we decided that by using our own names, Al Goodman, Harry Ray and Billy Brown, no one could ever again take anything away from us."

All three gents say they enjoy doing what they do best: being immaculately dressed on stage, using the sexy moves of Harry, the classy style of Al and the heavenly voice of Billy to console, entice and amuse their audience with their singing showmanship and comedy skits.

Being on the road constantly is as normal to them as drinking water. The men see their life in music as a necessity to their minds, bodies and souls. Their togetherness has lasted well over 19 years due to the right combination in personalities, objectives, and more importantly, the fusion of alto, falsetto and bass harmony that arises from each individual.

The trio came together after all three had served as lead singers for other bands. This perfect marriage at one time witnessed a separation period when Harry Ray decided to test his wings and pursue a solo career. From 1982 to 1984, Kevin Owens successfully filled in Harry's shoes during his absence.

After this experience, Owens decided to join Luther Vandross as a back-up singer. Harry in the meantime realized that the solo venture did not reap the satisfaction and success desired and of course Billy and Al who were always supportive of Harry's solo effort, always kept the door open should he decide to return to the fold.

Last year the same ticket with crooner Freddie Jackson, Ray, Goodman and Brown introduced their new LP "Take It To The Limit" to loyal fans. They also incorporated past tunes. As seasoned performers they have the ability to feel and interpret the mood of the crowd from city to city.

Always interested in pleasing the fans, Al noted that they have been labeled a ballad group and feel no pressure or need to conform or modify their image to cross-over standards.

Al said, "To cross-over would put us at risk regarding losing our main base, (past and current fans)."

"In other words, we know where our support is and we have no plans to abandon them (our fans). Many artists today tend to forget those fans who got them where they are."

Billy interjected, "It's not surprising that through the years as new trends come and go (go-go, rapp, etc) in the music industry, Ray, Goodman and Brown manage to survive the test of time."

Ray, Goodman and Brown apparently know how to market a concept or commodity that never goes out of style. That concept is love.

Ruth Brown is back in town!

By Alisa Samuels
AFRO Staff Writer

Blues singer/actress Ruth Brown, known to many blues admirers as the "Queen of Rhythm and Blues" in the 1950's, stars in Baltimore-born director John Waters's film, "Hairspray."

Brown, who recently turned 60, portrays flamboyant disc jockey, "Motormouth Maybell" in the satiric movie set in Baltimore in 1962.

She wears outlandish costumes and a blonde bouffant wig, both of which Brown said she had trouble with initially. The entire cast is weirdly coiffed and costumed.

When she saw the screening at last week's premiere, she said, "Oh my God, my children are going to disown me!" She was stunned by her costumes and hairdo.

As Motormouth Maybell, she deejays a popular radio show that teenagers love. At the same time, the city is undergoing integration. Many of the blacks in the movie want to appear on dance programs and to attend amusement parks, but they are unable to because of racial discrimination.

With Motormouth Maybell's help, blacks are able to eventually dance on the shows. "If the music was good enough for the white kids, it was good enough for blacks," she said.

During her earlier years in the entertainment industry, Brown, too, encountered racism when she toured the country. She has been in the business for 42 years.

Brown described her character as a combination of Stokeley Carmichael, H. Rap Brown and a younger Jesse Jackson rolled into one woman.

"Hairspray" is a funny story about a very serious situation. It makes people look and laugh and it shows how silly peoples' attitudes were," Brown said in her suite at the Tremont Plaza Hotel.

The native of Plymouth, VA, landed the role in the film when the movie's casting director saw her appear in the off-Broadway play, "Stagger Lee," named after a R&B hit in the 1950s in New York.

On several occasions, the woman who sang "Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean" and "Oh, What A Dream," was flown to Baltimore from New York to shoot the Waters's film.

"The first day I wasn't all that sweet. I came on the set as Ruth Brown, the singer, instead of Motormouth Maybell," she said. "I've never been outrageous (like Motormouth). I'm laid back."

Although, she did not know Waters, she said she had known of him. When they met, he told her he had grown up listening to her music, Brown said. "Waters is a very intuitive and professional person."

Waters, 41, has made 10 films before the eccentric "Hairspray." In 1964, he released his first film, "Hag in a Black Jacket."

"Hairspray" which will be released nationally on Feb. 26,

(Continued on page 8)

Ruth Brown