AREA ENTERTAINMENT

'The Unforgettable Nat Cole'

Almost completely overlooked in the makeup of jazz groups through the years is the fact that the Nat (King) Cole Trio set a style which remains today.

The trio came into existence when Nat got a booking for a quartet, and the drummer didn't show up—so, they went on as a trio without drums, an almost unheard-of format at the time.

This is just one of the revealing insights brought forth in the truly excellent PBS special "The Unforgettable Nat King Cole," airing March 10 at 10 p.m. on Maryland Public Television.

In DC, it will be seen March 2, 9:07 - 10:30 on WETA-TV.

For those who can remember the early days of Nat Cole's career, this special will clear up a lot of the mystery which surrounded many events in his life.

For example, little is known of his friendship with pianist Oscar Peterson which endured until Cole's death. It was Peterson who replaced Cole in the Norman Granz Jazz at the Philharmonic tours.

There is a little skit included in the special which purports to show how Nat started singing when a drunk demanded that he do so, and the club owner kinda egged him on.

And, of course, It was the singing that catapulted Nat into the Upper echelons of the entertainment world. So much so, that he abandoned the pianistics for the vocalizing.

With success, Nat sought to move his family into a house in an all-White, affluent neighborhood of Los Angeles. The hatred they encountered is vividly told by Nat's daughter who described her horror at finding a racial epithet burned into their lawn.

Then, there is the incident where racists attempted to drag Nat off the stage during a peformance with intent to do him bodily harm. He incurred the wrath of Black activists when he adopted what was construed as a passive role in the incident.

What the special has, is lots and lots of Cole singing the tunes for which he became famous. Besides his wife, Maria who gave her permission for the special, cameo appearances crop up by many people associated professionally with Nat.

There is Harry Belafonte, Mel Torme, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Oscar Peterson, daughter Natalie and a sister and brother.

Unfortunately, a lot of the songs are cut abruptly, and we can understand the desire of the producers to get as many snippets into the special as possible, but it is disconcerting to really start grooving with Nat, only to have it end suddenly.

An added plus to the proceedings is the use of some home movies of the family. There are many shots of Nat and Maria, vacationing, and just around the house.

Naturally, there are many scenes of the children, in a typical setting.

The segment on the Nat King Cole TV show is a good indication of what might have been. It was indeed an excellent presentation; we remember it was only a 15-minute show, as were most of the shows during this period.

The films, or kinescopes of the show portray the polished performance of Cole, and the outstanding array of guests who made guest appearances.

The National Broadcasting Company is lauded for carrying the show, despite the outcry from southern racists who forced a refusal of sponsors, thus causing the network to regretfully cancel.

All in all, this is a program for your archives. We strongly recommend recording it for future generations. And since it will be telecast during pledge time, it is also an excellent opportunity to show support for this type of programming.

In Balto: Monday, March 5, 10 p.m. MPT, Channel 22/67.

In DC, Friday, March 2, 9:07 - 10:30 p.m. WETA-TV, Channel 26. Don't miss it. — MATT.

Nat (King) Cole

Academy Awards nominations: Spike Lee overlooked?

By Frederick I. Douglass

Nominations for the 62nd Academy Awards were announced this past Wednesday morning.

Blacks receiving acknowledgement for their contributions to the film industry are as follows:

Morgan Freeman as "Best actor" for his moving role in "Driving Miss Daisy;" Spike Lee, "Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen" for "Do the Right Thing;" and Denzel Washington, as "Best Supporting Actor" for his role in "Glory."

"Driving Miss Daisy" headed the list of movies up for consideration at the 62nd Annual Academy Awards by receiving nine nominations; "Born on the Fourth of July" received eight nominations; and "Glory" tied with the import from Ireland "My Left Foot" for third place in the running by receiving five nominations.

"Driving Miss Daisy" is in the competition for "Best Picture of the Year" in a battlefield that includes "Born on the Fourth of July," "Dead Poets Society," "Field of Dreams," and "My Left Foot."

Had the movie industry ignored the tremendous recent achievements of Morgan Freeman, Denzel Washington, and Spike Lee, there would have been just cause for rioting in the streets on a greater scale than the turmoil that occurred in "Do the Right Thing."

Their talents transcend race and are on par with the achievements of any other actors or movie directors.

Morgan Freeman, the powerful actor who starred as Joe Clark in "Lean on Me," is involved in two other compelling movies that are currently being shown in the — "GLORY" and "Driving Miss Daisy."

His competition at the Academy awards for "Best Actor" for his role in "Driving Miss Daisy" are Kenneth Brannon, who starredin the title role of "Henry V;"

Tom Cruise in "Born on the Fourth of July; Daniel Day-Lewis who starred as the cerebral palsy victim in "My Left Foot;" and Mr. "Mork from Ork" himself, Robin Williams as the goofy literature teacher in "Dead Poets Society."

Denzel Washington

Morgan Freeman

Spike Lee

Denzel Washington's competition for Best Supporting Actor for his role in "Glory" includes: Danny Aiello for his role as the Italian pizza shop owner in "Do The Right Thing;" Dan Akroyd in "Driving Miss Daisy;"

Marlon Brando in "A Dry White Season;" and Martin Landau in "Crimes and Misdemeanors." Washington's other current film is entitled "Heart Condition."

Spike Lee's competition in the category "Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen" are Woody Allen, "Crimes and Misdemeanors;" Tom Schulman, "Dead Poets Society;" Steven Soderbergh, "Sex, Lies and Videotape;" and Nora Ephron, "When Harry Met Sally."

I predict that Morgan Freeman will win an Oscar as "Best Actor;" Denzel Washington will be robbed with Dan Akroyd taking the statue for "Best Supporting Actor."

And Spike Lee will lose to Nora Ephron who wrote "When Harry Met Sally . . ." in the category "Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen."

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Cotton coming to D.C.

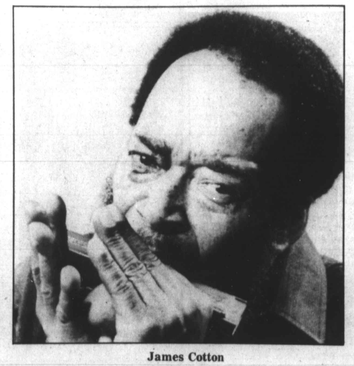
James Cotton, the legendary, hard rockin' blues harmonica player, brings his "Take Me Back" tour line-up showcasing traditional 50's electric blues to Alexandria, VA on Sunday, February 25 to Birchmere, 3901 Mt. Vernon Ave.

For the first time in 20 years, Cotton has returned to performing the original classic Chicago blues that he helped create.

He shares the stage with a special hand-picked group of seasoned Chicago blues veterans.

Joining Cotton on this special line-up are Luther Tucker, guitar; Bob Margolin, guitar; Ike Anderson and Ray Allison, drums.

Cotton's life is steeped in the blues. He was raised down south by Sonny Boy Williamson, and brought to Chicago by Muddy Waters in 1954.



James Cotton

ENTERTAINMENT/ LIFESTYLE

SOUNDS
By Carl Matthews

BARDEUX
"Thumbs Up" (Enigma)

Acacia Smith and Melanie Taylor are ready to burn up the dance charts with their latest 12-inch single release on Enigma.

Two years ago, Bardeux released their first album, "Bold As Love," which included three top-10 dance chart hits: "Three-Time Lover," "Magic Carpet Ride" and their biggest hit to date, "When We Kiss."

"Thumbs Up" is the latest single from their second album "Shangri-La" (which also includes the rap-oriented "I Love To Bass"). If you like Janet Jackson-style funk, try the South Side Remix on side one. But don't ignore the souped-up 7:35 Dream House Club Mix for your next party.

PAUL RUTHERFORD
"Oh World" (4th + B'Way)

Back in the early 80's Paul Rutherford and Holly Johnson were the founding members of Frankie Goes To Hollywood. In 1984, their debut single "Relax" was released in England and, spurred on by its controversial banning by the BBC, was a big hit in Europe. Their "Welcome To The Pleasuredome" album was also a big European hit.

Before long, however, the group was beset by serious conflicts of interest regarding their musical direction. Rutherford expressed discontent as the band moved away from their dance roots to a more mainstream rock sound.

"At one point I did consider leaving music altogether," says Rutherford. But Paul's discovery of something called House music renewed his enthusiasm for creating music, and in October of 1988 Rutherford hit the U.K. charts with "Get Real," which is included on his latest album.

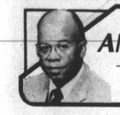
"What we need is unity/a friendly deed for a friend in need" sings Paul on the album's title track, a significantly less sophisticated disco number than "Relax."

Listening to this album, I can't help but be reminded of George Michael's "Faith," but even though Rutherford sounds a bit like Michael on some of the cuts here, I don't predict that Rutherford's face will appear in as many American teen magazines as Michael's has. Of course, I could be wrong.

Recently Released Singles

■ *"Soul To Soul"* THE TEMPTATIONS (Motown)
■ *"What Goes Around"* REGINA BELLE (Columbia)
■ *"Notorious"* DONALD-D (Epic)
■ *"More Ways Than One"* PETER FRAMPTON (Atlantic)
■ *"The Pass"* RUSH (Atlantic)
■ *"Love You Honey"* RANDY AND THE GYPSYS (A&M)
■ *"Come Together As One"* WILL DOWNING (Island)
■ *"Got To Get"* LEILA K WITH ROB 'N' RAZ (Arista)
■ *"The Heart Of The Matter"* DON HENLEY (Geffen)
■ *"Fly High Michelle"* ENUFF Z'NUFF (Atco)

Bardeux



AND ALL THAT JAZZ
With Bob Matthews

The Left Bank Jazz Society kicks off its 1990 season Sunday, February 25 in the Tawes Center Ballroom of Coppin State College, 2500 W. North Ave., Baltimore.

Featured will be the Jimmy McGriff-Hank Crawford duo which is currently riding high with a new album recently released. Concert is scheduled for the regular time 5-9 p.m.

One added dimension, there will be food available at the concert site, and beverages also. The caterer who has handled the last two LBJS events, will set up shop at this one.

Of course, the usual BYOB and picnic baskets are welcomed. Was chatting with Leon Manker on future concerts, the next one is scheduled for March 18.

While Leon hedged a bit, saying things were not absolutely firm, he did indicate that the Ray Mantea group would probably be it. That is a famous name in Latin jazz circles. And, the trend these days is for more recognition of Latin jazz, with dances to go with it.

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Over at Blues Alley in Georgetown, the McCoy Tyner group is in place through Sunday, Feb. 25. Alto saxophonist Bobby Watson is appearing with McCoy on this one.

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The Community College of Baltimore's Progressive Jazz Series — Spring '90 will present vocalist Bill Harris and his group on Tuesday, Feb. 27.

It is a part of the CCB Student Life Office's continuing program, and will be held in the CCB classroom building-cafeteria, 2901 Liberty Heights Ave.

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The Jazz in the Palm Court series at the National Museum of American History, Constitution Ave. between 12th and 14th Sts., NW will present its final session, March 4.

It's entitled, "Ivy Anderson: The Definitive Ellington Vocalist." The focus, naturally, will be on Ivy Anderson who was with the Ellington orchestra for many years in the 30s and 40s.

This musical salute will be handled by Arnae, vocals; Charlie Young, alto sax; Mark Batson, piano; Clarence Seay, bass, and Rod Young, drums.

Performances will be 1:30 - 2:30 and again 3:30 - 4:30. Admission is free.

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Jazz Expressways will present a Jazz Breakfast at Five Mile House (upper lounge), 5302 Reisterstown Rd., Baltimore on Saturday, February 24.

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