ENTERTAINMENT/ LIFESTYLE

Making the rounds

By Bonnie Matthews Butler

When the invitation came to help celebrate Biddy Wood's birthday at the Sphinx Club last week, I didn't put it aside for I knew that if **Biddy Wood** was throwing a party, a party it would be.

And we weren't disappointed for his champagne birthday party was "the" place to be that evening.

Over 300 guests jammed the club to pay their respects to this cheerful PR man about town. This time, his role was reversed for Mr. Wood was the honoree and recipient of all of the birthday goodies.

Musicians from all over the state came by in with **Bobby Ward**, drums; **Mickey Fields**, sax; **Clayton McClendon**, guitar, **Shirley Witherspoon**, vocals and **Earlene Reed**, vocals.

Some who performed were: **Johnny Polite, Marshall Booze, Marvin Cabell, George Johnson, Morris Dow**, and singers **Larzine Terry** and **Debbie Haines.**

Spotted enjoying the festivities were: Judge **Solomon Baylor**, judicial candidate **Paul Smith**, Senator **Larry Young**, Councilman **Carl Stokes**, Councilman Lawrence Bell, Paula Cullins;

Victor Marcus, Wayne Poulson, Helen Glover Cook, Jimmy Allen, Dwight Pettit, Adrian "Smurf" Pleasant, Rosa Pryor, Fred Charleson, Pam McCurley, Bob Brueing;

Ronnie Lowery, Frances Tilghman, Walter Carr, Rodney Orange, Sharon Bryant, Leroy Dvett, Herbert Sledge, Harry Jackson, Sr. and **Robert Ford.**

For those of you looking for some good ole fashioned "soul food," then look no further for a new restaurant has opened called Ideal Restaurant, located on Laurens St.

While we ewre tyhere, cook **William Gee** was extremely busy for the crowd kept coming and never, for one minute, let up. He served every one in a timely and friendly manner. Incidentally, the portions are ample and the prices won't hurt your pocket.

ON THE GRAPEVINE: Word is that **malcolm** is getting into jazz again. Bumped into him at Club 2300 but he was mum on the subject.

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Don't forget that **Marvin Cabell** and Company are on the line-up for Tuesday night at the Lorman House. This innovative group is one that must be heard. Check them out. You'll be surprised.

* * *

Our spies tell us that the Regatta on Reisterstown Rd. continues to play host to national entertainment from time to time. Last week, **Lonnie Liston Smith** was on the bill and we hear he "tore the roof off the sucka'."

Members of the audience were encouraged to participate and the AFRO;s **William Marshall** got up and sang, like he's never sang before. Does this mean a contract is in the offering?

* * *

Tracy Curbeam, who made her professional singing debut some time ago at the Bird Cage on North Ave. is back. She took some time off to have a baby and is now hitting the circuit again.

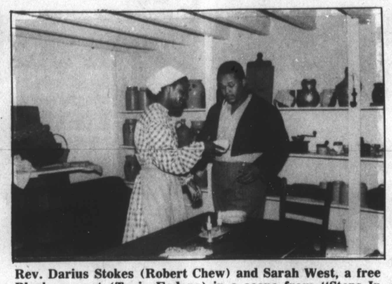
Her first "second" debut is scheduled for May 6 at the Sportsmen's Lounge for **Eleanor's** cocktail sip.

Moon August is scheduled to perform on Tuesday, May 8 at 7:30 p.m. as part of the CCB's Jazz series. The concert is at the Liberty Heights campus in the cafeteria. Admission is free.

* * *

ON THE CONCERT TRAIL: The Dells, the Manhattans, Jean Carne, the Intruders and **Billy Paul** perform at the Fifth Regiment Armory, May 12. The **Winans** play Painter's Mill Music Theatre May 4 and **Najee, Randy Crawford** and **Alex Bugnon** are due May 12. **Barry White** steps in on June 10.

Roberta Flack comes to the Maryland Theatre in hagerstown on May 12. The **Temptations** and the **Four Tops** will perform at Merriweather Post Pavilion on August 24 and a Reggae Sunsplash is scheduled for June 27.



Rev. Darius Stokes (Robert Chew) and Sarah West, a free Black servant (Toyin Fadope) in a scene from "Steps In Time."

'Steps in Time' at City Life

By Joy M. Tyler
AFRO Staff Reporter

You are traveling through the late 1840's at a time when Black men and women were not yet free. However, freedom was a double-edged sword if one could attain it.

Put yourself in this situation. Slavery still exists in the southern states and the only way to escape is through two routes.

One, option would be to escape. Many slaves took this passage, risking not only their lives, but the lives of those left behind.

The most drastic alternative, because many were a second generation of slaves born in the United States, was to be shipped back to Africa, the mother land.

The reasoning behind this option of sending slaves back to Africa was to make way to bring over "new" Europeans to prosper, and to put all the freed slaves in their own type of homestead.

Soundcaptivating? The play is entitled, "Steps in Time: Scenes from 1840 Baltimore." You can see such dilemmas in real life here in downtown Baltimore at the Baltimore City Life Museum.

What makes this museum so different from any other? It is Baltimore's only museum exclusively devoted to living history. Now in it's fifth season, "Steps in Time" explores in a sensitive and creative manner the joys and struggles of everyday life in mid-19th century Baltimore.

Through the magic of theater, professional actors are unique in the way in which the play is presented. The audience is divided into two groups and escorts then leads them on separate paths through the museum, with each party seeing a different set of scenes.

The track the AFRO took focused on the dilemma of a free slave woman (Sara) who must decide weather to follow her fiance back to Africa, or stay in the U.S., the only real home they knew.

Through a series of carefully crafted scenes written by playwright Kermit Frazier, directed by Donald Hicken , and preformed by professional actors, the audience is directly involved with the action of the play.

Having the audience pick the ending they want to see focuses on a variety of concerns still relevant today, including race relations, women's issues, health and money matters, family, and human rights, says BCLM educator Dale Jones, who also performs with the production.

Space is cramped during the view, but the action is fun to follow, a guide leads you into each scene, and who better to pick an ending than you?

Morgan choristers in Spring concert

Morgan State University's twelfth annual spring concert of its Choir will be held at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, Sunday, May 6, at 7 p.m.

Featured will be guest soloist Gregory Hopkins, as well as six singers who will leave later in the month with conductor Nathan Carter for a government-sponsored tour of Africa.

The tenor soloist will appear in "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes" by Adolphus C. Hailstork. Mr. Hopkins has been distinctly active in recent years on the East Coast in recital and opera, and has been termed by an enthusiastic Philadelphia critic as "the Black Pavarotti."

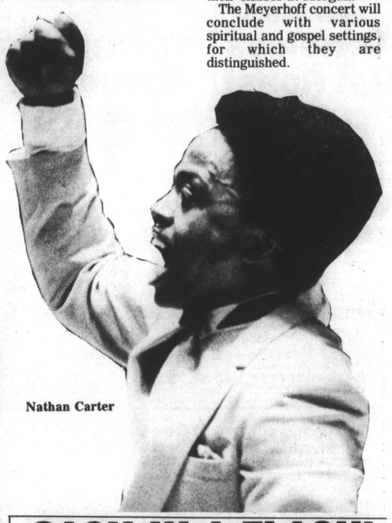
The three-movement cantata has been heard in the Choir's tours this year. It is a recent work of Dr. Hailstork, professor at Norfolk State University, whose music has been performed by most of the nation's major orchestras.

The concert will partially anticipate the African tour, to be undertaken under the patronage of Arts America.

The singers participating on that trip will offer excerpts from Gershwin's "Porgy And Bess" at the Meyerhoff event.

Then, they will be giving concerts in various cities of Mauritius, Rwanda, Malagasy, Tanzania, and Kenya, as well as relaxing with stays in Paris and Brussels before returning to their classes at Morgan.

The Meyerhoff concert will conclude with various spiritual and gospel settings, for which they are distinguished.



Nathan Carter

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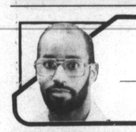
SOUNDS

By Carl Matthews



ALISA RANDOLPH
"Alisa Randolph" (Atlantic)

"I love to sing. **Really** sing. I think that the pendulum is swinging back to more serious vocalists. The public is not stupid: they know what real singing is."

So says Alisa Randolph, a New Orleans native whose self-titled cassette has been released by Atlantic.

Alisa's cassette was produced by Bernadette Cooper, who first made her mark in the early 80's as the founder of Klymaxx ("Never Underestimate The Power Of A Woman," "The Men All Pause," "I Miss You").

After seven years with Klymaxx, Bernadette masterminded the formation of the female trio Madame X, which included Alisa, Iris Parker and Valerie Victoria. Those three took turns as lead vocalist on the group's debut album, "Madame X," which yielded the top 5 R&B hit "Just That Type Of Girl."

When it came time for Madame X to record a follow-up album, Bernadette decided that Alisa should front the group. The project gradually evolved from a Madame X project to an Alisa Randolph solo album. "Bernadette wrote the songs with my voice, my style, and my personality in mind," says Alisa.

On the album's first single "The Entity," Alisa, sounding a lot like her favorite singer Teena Marie, gives it all she's got. The love vs. sex theme of the lyrics, as well as the synth-textured arrangement by Cooper, reminds us of some of Prince's slow jams. The upbeat "How Can A Girl Get To Know You Better?" is in the same sort of groove as Janet Jackson's "Rhythm Nation."

Other cuts: "Put That Thang On Me," "Guilty Of Loving You," "Pretty Face," "Man Stealer," "Through My Eyes."

Alisa Randolph

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