ENTERTAINMENT/ LIFESTYLE

Superfest tour sets 23 cities

ST. LOUIS — The Budweiser Superfest, the nation's premier rhythm and blues concert series featuring many of the nation's top R&B performers, will tour 23 cities across the country this summer, including four stadium shows.

Luther Vandross, After 7, Bell Biv DeVoe, Regina Belle, Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, Pattie LaBelle, Tony! Toni! Tone!, Stephanie Mills and other greats will perform on the revolving stage of the Budweiser Superfest tour, which will mark its 11th season.

Supported with Budweiser radio, television and print advertising, the Superfest starts June 15 at the Charlotte Coliseum in Charlotte, N.C., and concludes August 19 at The Scope in Norfolk, Va., according to Budweiser Senior Brand Manager Joseph V. Corcoran.

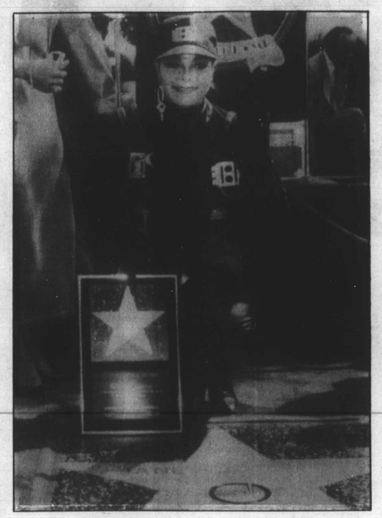
"With the talent lineup on this year's tour, the Budweiser Superfest will simply be fantastic," he said. "The mix of legendary performers like Luther Vandross, Maze and Frankie Beverly, Patti LaBelle and Stephanie Mills, coupled with new artists like BBD, Regina Belle, After 7, and Tony! Toni! Tone; will make this year's tour the best ever."

The Budweiser Superfest has grown from a two-city show in 1980 to this year's 23-city extravaganza.

More than 500,000 people are expected to attend this year's Superfest, which is produced by Alan Haymon, president of A.H. Enterprises.

Stephanie Mills

Luther Vandross



Pop singer Janet Jackson became the second member of the famed Jackson clan to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Janet, promoting her "Rhythm Nation 1814" album, told a crowd of 2,000 not to forget "what's going on in the world." Brother Michael received his star in 1984.

Atlanta is ready for Arts Festival

The second National Black Arts Festival, to be held in Atlanta, July 27 through Aug. 5 will celebrate the tremendous contributions made by artists of African descent in eight artistic disciplines.

The 1990 Festival has a new international dimension with artists from Africa, Jamaica and Brazil participating with American artists.

The 10-day, $2.4 million event will feature more than 60 concerts, plays, dance performances, films, art exhibitions, musicals, late night cabarets and symposia by some of the world's most distinguished artists.

The 1990 NBAF is sponsored by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, the Fulton County Arts Council, the City of Atlanta, Bureau of Cultural Affairs, the National Endowment for the Arts, foundations, and corporations.

The NBAF was originally conceived by Michael Lomax, Fulton County Commission chairman, who in 1987 led the Fulton County Arts Council to earmark a $350,000 planning budget for the Festival and later a $350,000 working budget.

His initial idea and leadership in providing funding resulted in a successful 1988 inaugural National Black Arts Festival with over 500,000 people participating from across the United States.

This year, corporate support for the $2.4 million event is coming from over 35 major national and Atlanta-based corporations. AT&T, Coca-Cola, Southern Bell/Bell South and Ford Motor Company, among others, are repeat sponsors who join with other major corporations in supporting the Festival.

The Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs is providing cash and in-kind support in the areas of film, local artists' projects, visual arts space, a national mural commission, the Atlanta Jazz Series, venues and city support services.

Atlanta was chosen to host the NBAF because the city is blessed with a vibrant arts community and a long, gratifying tradition of Black achievement, prosperity and bi-racial cooperation.

Parks, theaters, shopping malls, arts institutions, galleries, night clubs and unusual venues throughout the city, more than 40 locations, will offer entertainment by notable local and national artists for the 10-day period.

Led by actress Cicely Tyson and actor/singer Harry Belafonte, a Blue Ribbon Panel of eight renowned artists will support and help publicize the event. For more information call (404) 730-7319.

The Festival is under the direction of A. Michelle Smith, Executive Director and Stephanie S. Hughley, Artistic Director, along with strong support from staff and numerous consultants.

A Princely move

Home - grown rock star Prince is giving St. Paul, Minn., fans a preview of his European "Nude" tour, which begins June 2 in Rotterdam. At almost the last minute, Prince scheduled an appearance last week at the St. Paul Civic Center. A spokeswoman called the concert Prince's response to the "phenomenal" support for his $100-a-ticket benefit at a suburban nightclub for the family of a former bodyguard and friend who died last month.

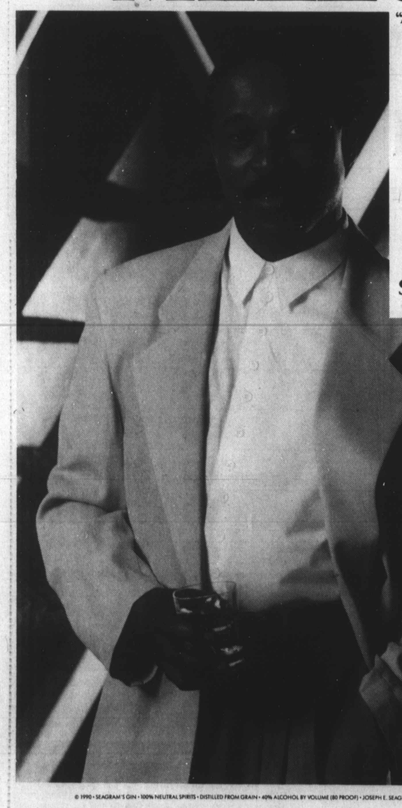
Tickets for the concert were $10, but patrons were asked to bring a donation for a food bank for the poor as well. We've gotten so many calls from kids upset that, even if they had raised the money, they would not have been allowed at the (nightclub) show because no one under 21 was allowed in," the spokeswoman said.

"Prince really felt like he was offending a lot of kids, and it certainly wasn't intentional."

Marking his 45th anniversary as a professional musician, Ray Charles received an honorary doctorate of fine arts degree from the University of South Florida recently.

MELLOW

"A personal statement"



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Abdul sports new contract with L.A. Gear

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Pop star Paula Abdul announced she has signed a deal with fast-growing L.A. Gear Inc. to promote a line of women's footwear and sportswear.

Neither Abdul nor the company, the nation's third-largest athletic shoe maker, would disclose the value of the endorsement contract, which Abdul said covers two years. But L.A. Gear executives indicated the contract was similar to a deal the company signed last year with pop star Michael Jackson.

Industry analysts have estimated the value of the Jackson contract at as high as $20 million.

The line of footwear carrying the 27-year-old Abdul's endorsement could hit the market by the end of this year. Her sportswear line won't be available until next year.

"The association with L.A. Gear will allow me the opportunity to see my own design ideas produced with care and quality," Abdul said at a news conference. "Where they (the company) won my heart when they approached me was that I would be able to develop my own line."

Paula Abdul

"They presented me with an opportunity to get involved from the get-go," she said.

Abdul, who won an Emmy for her choreography on "The Tracey Ullman Show," said she wants to focus on footwear that can be worn for dancing.

Abdul previously endorsed shoes for Reebok, the second-largest athletic shoe maker, but that agreement concluded several months ago, said Gil Schwartzberg, L.A. Gear's exectuive vice president and chief administrative officer.

Abdul also has a major endorsement contract with Coca-Cola. She got her start in show business as a member of the Los Angeles Lakers cheerleading-dancing squad, the Laker Girls.

Her debut album, "Forever Your Girl," sold more than 7 million copies in the United States and had four No. 1 singles.

During the past two years, L.A. Gear has been focusing heavily on celebrity endorsements, including Michael Jackson, football star Joe Montana and retired basketball star Kareem Abdul Jabbar, in an effort to pass Reebok and industry leader Nike.

It earned $55.1 million on sales of $617.1 million, both well over double its 1988 levels, and expects to reach $1 billion in sales this year.

THEATRE REVIEW:

'Purlie'

By Joy M. Tyler
AFRO Staff Reporter

Photo by Will Marshall

The cast of Purlie, featuring Shango Jamal Lewis as Purlie and Anya Audette Randall as Lutiebelle (third from left, seated).

Purlie, one of stage's most soulful, funniest and successful Black musicals, is the pearl of the Harborlights dinner theater. The story line uses humor, fantastic singing and music to tackle the sensitive issue of racial tensions in early post-slavery.

Sarcasm is used well in portraying the resourcefulness and crafty ways Blacks successfully masked their motives while seeming to comply to the "Jim Crow" mentalities of the day.

The play opens with the funeral of old "Cap'n", the servants former slave owner who manages to dominate his workers and thrives on the old south slave mentality.

Those attending the funeral are the servants of the dead man who had controlled a large part of their lives that turns into an old time revival of sarcastic remorse for old "Cap'n".

The plot focuses on the return of Purlie, (played by Shango Jamal Lewis), the Black preacher to his hometown to help deceive the old man and save his people from his tyranny.

The production is full of high strung, hand clapping, and toe stomping musical numbers that have the character giving one hundred percent of their vocal ability to give that same musical quality that you will find on the Broadway stage.

Although it was well timed, the choreography of the musical numbers was somewhat simplistic and could have been a little tighter. Some of the steps used were too cute, and lacked serious direction.

Sets used in the scenes were appropriate to the time period. Displayed were modest dwellings for servants of the southern plantations.

Lead female character Lutiebelle, (played by Anya Audette Randall), a love struck woman that Purlie dragged from Alabama, was one of the most adorable, funny and believable actresses in the production.

Although her character is gullible, the actress was convincing in her shyness, as well as in her devotion to Purlie and her willingness to help pull off a ruse against old "Cap'n" (played by Fred Isgrig).

With an all Black cast with the exception of two members, the Cap'n's son, Charlie, (played by John Doty) was perhaps the funniest character.

The closing of the musical was a rendition of the opening sequence, and ended with Purlie giving a quick dose of how Blacks should feel about their heritage.

The musical Purlie is a high strung, vocally uplifting night out in the theater. If you enjoy good dining in a warm atmosphere, and a musical play that will leave you singing long after the curtains have closed, then Purlie is the play to see.

The production will be running at the Harborlights Dinner Theater until July 22nd.

AND ALL THAT JAZZ

With Bob Matthews

Just a reminder that the Theolonious Monk Institute of Jazz, along with the Beethoven Society and the Smithsonian Resident Associates program are holding the Louis Armstrong International Jazz Trumpet competition.

It is open to all trumpeters who plan to pursue jazz as a career. The applicants must be under 35 years of age and have never recorded commercially as a leader.

Prize money is $10,000, first place; $5,000, 2nd, and $3,000 third. The competition will be similar in nature to the Thelonious Monk piano competition for jazz pianists, which is in its third year.

Deadline for entries is August 31. Applications and information: Theolonious Monk Institute of Jazz, 500 Klingle St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20016.

* * *

Looking down the road a piece, Sojourner-Douglass College in Baltimore is celebrating its 10th anniversary, and part of the festivities include a jazz concert series.

The first one will happen Thursday, June 28, at 8 p.m. at the Dunbar Community High School auditorium, 1400 Orleans St., Baltimore, MD.

The concert is being called **Jimmy Heath** and the Jazz Legends, which features Jimmy on tenor sax; **Donald Byrd**, trumpet; **Barry Harris**, piano; **Rufus Reid**, bass, and **Art Taylor**, drums.

Should be a goodie.

* * *

Further down the road: We neglected to include the lineup for Artscape 90, which kicks off in the Mt. Royal Cultural Corridor Friday, July 13.

This is one DC jazz lover you should keep in mind also, for the right price is right and the lineup fabulous. (It's free).

Friday, July 13 — 7 p.m., **Carl Filipiak**; 8:30, **Roberta Flack; Tom Principato**;

Saturday, July 14 — 1 p.m. **Trinidad and Tobago Steel Band**; 5:45, **Bela Fleck** and the Flecktones; 6 p.m. **Lady Rebecca** and Moments Notice; 7:15, **Gary Thomas** the Seventh Quadrant; 8:30 **Chick Corea** Elektric Band.

Sunday, July 15 — 4:45, **Moon August**; 5:30, **Peabody Underground**; 6 p.m., **Buckwheat Zydeco**; 9 p.m. **Mongo Santamaria.**

Sunday, June 10, the Charlin Jazz Society joins with groups all across the country in a celebration of the Jazz Centennial.

It will be held in the Kennedy Center concert hall, and musicians to perform include: **Dizzy Gillespie, the Count Basie Orchestra, Marlea Shaw, James Moody, Monty Alexander, Stanley Cowell, Joe Kennedy** and students from the Duke Ellington School of the Arts.

Renee Poussaint along with Leonard Feather will emcee the proceedings. ASCAP will make its prestigious "Duke Award" to a major jazz figure who is recognized as a "living legend." They have not yet announced who it will be.

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