This Week

Baltimore

The **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra** performs the music of **Duke Ellington** and **George Gershwin** on Friday and Saturday, March 3 and 4 at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall at 8:15 p.m. Call 783-8000 for more details.

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And speaking of the **Symphony**, two "tiny tots" concerts will be held on Saturday, March 4 at 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall. Call the number listed above for further information.

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Expressions 9, the annual party held to benefit the **Baltimore School for the Arts** will be held on Saturday, March 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the School. Call 396-1185 for further details.

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Traditional crafts of Africa is the focus of a special demonstration at **The Walters Arts Gallery** on Saturday, March 4 from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Hair designer **Fana Smith Chisolm** will style traditional African braids and **Hama Arsan** will fabricate African-inspired basketry. Call 547-9000 for further information.

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In conjunction with the crafts, **The Walters** has **African Body Art: Selections from Regional Collections** on view at the Museum through April 16. Call the number listed above for more information.

Storyteller **Ed Stivender** who uses a mixture of humor, fantasy and improvisation to entertain the audience will perform at The Top of the World's Weekly "Saturday Stories at the Top" this Saturday, March 4 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Call 837-4515 for more information.

Leslie Drayton

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Jazz artist **Leslie Drayton** will perform at the Baltimore Fishmarket's Club Eubie through March 5. For more information The Fishmarket's Entertainment Hotline at 385-4949.

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Julie Hall will perform at **Blue Alley** on March 7, 14 and 21 as the opening performer of Blues Alley's new concept "A Month of Tuesdays" which will feature local talent for the whole month of Tuesdays unless another booking overlaps. Call 837-2288 for more details.

Julie Hall

V-103's V.I.P. Awards program will be held on March 5 at **Blues Alley** from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Call 653-2200 for more information.

* * *

William-John Tudor and **Associated Artists** will perform "Chapters Turned Every Which Way" on Wednesday, March 8 through Saturday, March 11 at the **UMBC Theatre** at 8 p.m. Call 455-2936 for more information.

Marvin Winans

Gospel superstars **Marvin** and **Vicki Winans** are set to star in the musical "Don't Get God Started" at the **Lyric Opera House** on Thursday, March 9. This performance kicks off the musicals 2nd national tour. Call the Lyric for more information.

* * *

Washington, D.C.

Beginning March 3 and continuing through April 9, **Arena Stage** will present the latest of Sam Shepard's dramatic works, "A Lie of the Mind." Call 488-3300 for further details.

* * *

Auditions will be held on Friday, March 3 at 1:30 p.m. for the **Certificate Program of the Alvin Ailey Dance Center** at the **Duke Ellington School.** Call Denise Jefferson, director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center at 212-997-1950 for more information.

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The **Program in Black American Culture** and **Saturday After Noon** is presenting **"The Historical Legacy of Madame C.J. Walker"** with a program related to the exhibition **"Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration 1915-1940"** on Saturday and Sunday, March 4 and 5. For more information of the films, discussion, tour, demonstration, and jazz concert by Mary Lou Williams, call 357-4176.

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Toast and Strawberries is presenting a Spring Fashion Celebration at **Eugertha's Restaurant** and **Lounge** on Wednesday, March 8 at 6 p.m. Call 234-1212 for more information.

* * *

The **Walters Art Gallery** is hosting an adult workshop **"Applique the African Way,"** a hands-on class taught by Joyce Scott on Saturday, March 4 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the museum. Call 301-549-9000 to register.

* * *

The **Columbia Community Players** will hold open auditions for **"Little Foxes"** by Lillian Hellman on March 5 and 6 at Slayton House at the Wilde Lake Village Center in

(Continued on Page 3)

Coming Soon

Washington, D.C.

Comedian **Robert Townsend** will perform at the **Warner Theatre** on Friday, March 10 at 8 p.m. Call 626-1050 for further information.

* * *

Carmen McRae will perform at **Blues Alley** Thursday, March 16 through Sunday, March 19. Call 337-4141 for more details.

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Phyllis Hyman and **Ahmad Jamal** will be in concert at the **Kennedy Center** Concert Hall on Saturday, March 18 at 8:30 p.m. Call the Kennedy Center Box Office for more information.

* * *

Ringling Brothers and **Barnum and Bailey Circus** comes to the **D.C. Armory** beginning Tuesday, March 21 through Monday, April 3. Call 544-7469 for further information.

* * *

The **New Brass Ensemble** will appear in the Terrace Theatre of the **Kennedy Center** on Thursday, March 9 at 7:30 p.m. Call 202-254-6470 for more details.

* * *

John Eaton will play **Fats Waller** favorites at the National Museum of Natural History's Baird Auditorium on April 16. Call 202-357-3030 for further information.

Baltimore

Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, Jr. Walker and the All Stars, The Drifters and J. B. Brown of V-103 are just some of the stars scheduled for the Pre-Easter Cabaret and show scheduled for Saturday, March 25 at the **Gentlemen Ten** on Edmondson Avenue. Call 301-728-8970 for further details.

* * *

The **Cystic Fibrosis Foundation** is hosting Maryland's first bachelor and bachelorette auction fundraiser, "The Executive Revenue" in May. They are still looking for people to auction. Call 301-771-9000 if you are able to help.

* * *

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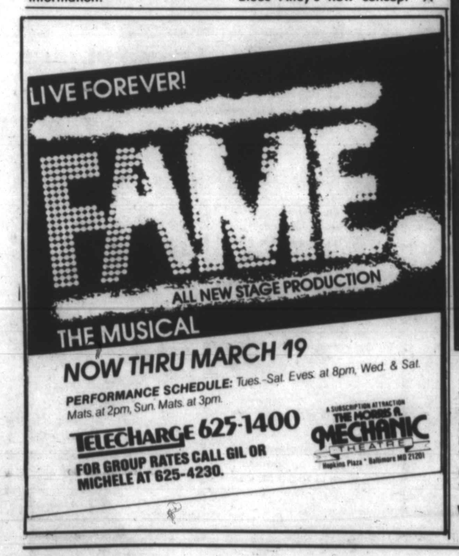

THE NIGHT LIFE

Service is key at 'Happy Hour'

By Bonnie Matthews Butler

Unless a monopoly exists, the key to satisfying the private sector is to employ a very simple, tried and tested mechanism called — "GOOD SERVICE."

From time in memoriam, civilized humans have responded to courteous, warm welcomes of service.

The point here is now that the race is on to capture the untapped "Happy Hour" business, night club impresarios looking for their share of the business would do well to stress service first.

Unfortunately, the "Happy Hours" of the past placed the emphasis on offering lower priced drinks or more drinks for the price of one!

The lowest drink imaginable is not going to attract a consistent gathering in the absence of decent service.

Two of the oldest Black-owned membership clubs, The Tilghman Family's Sphinx Club and the membership-owned Arch Social Club come to mind as being at the top of the list of niteries that cater to the customer.

The above observations are the result of a visit to Martin's Champagne Room last Friday to see what all the "rig-a-ma-rol" was about concerning their newly-instituted "Happy Hour" promotions.

It ran from 4 p.m. until 9 p.m. and they offered for the paltry sum of $5, two excellent drinks of your choice, succulent food (all you could eat), good dance and grind music, clean, wholesome surroundings and what mattered most, the quality of service which let you know your business was valued. The service was excellent!

Consider the fact that nearly 1,000 participants found their way out to Patapsco Avenue and bought their own drinks after the first two, the investment was minimal. And, the most impressive aspect — GOOD SERVICE — was free!

As a Black woman (a double minority to some), I couldn't help but complain to management about the absence of any visible Black help (including the D.J.), except Michael Snowden who is a night manager. I was assured that upon my return, equal opportunity employment would be highly visible. (May I suggest you start with the D.J.?)

I can hardly wait to see this economic distribution for of those nearly 1,000 patrons observed that night, ninety percent were Black.

My hat's off to Alex Tarasco, Larry Cake and the amiable Paul Carbe.

All is not lost, however. Starting this Friday, (March 4), our own Palladium on Liberty Heights Ave. will be offering their own special "Happy Hour" celebration. Will be checking it out, and the quality of service will be topping my list.

It would appear that a city of our size could afford "Happy Hours" all over town that would make the customer happy no matter the size or location of the facility.

Emmy award winner Bobby McFerrin suggests "Don't Worry, Be Happy!" There's no reason not to be happy at a "Happy Hour" that offers food and drinks accompanied by the best in service.

With the anticipated personnel balance at Martin's, they should continue to draw their happy ones; but, this should only encourage others to also go for the gold and with good service, garner their share of happiness.

Have a happy, "Happy Hour" and perhaps we'll meet some Friday at a watering hole where the service is excellent!

Enjoying the "Happy Hour" at Martin's Champagne Room are: Marcie Martin, Sherman Conigland, Myrtle Conigland, Linda Bumgardner, Zanetta Barham, Sylvia Cooper, Gary Ringgold, Brenda Savoy and Rose Wilkens.

Mico Robinson and Greg Thomas at Howard Inn's 'Joplins'

By Sherri Milner
AFRO Staff Writer

The threat of a 10 inch snowfall was not enough to keep Eastern High School principal Ralph Neil from celebrating his birthday last week with a few good friends and family, and the musical duo of Mico Roberts and Greg Thomas at the Howard Inn's Joplins Restaurant.

"Haaappee, birthday, haaappee birthday," crooned Roberts and Thomas in the reggae-tinged Stevie Wonder beat dedicated to Neil.

The duo's observation of the "little things" the guests prefer, coupled with their willingness to entrance the audience in rip-rousing fun has made the twosome a popular attraction at the District's Georgia Ave. nightspot.

With a repertoire of top 40 hits, jazz, oldies, and even go-go, they have fun doing what they love and they love watching the audiences share that fun with them.

"There are only two of us, but we sound like a big band," said Thomas, a saxophonist and vocalist who brings with him a wealth of experience from his musical background that includes professional affiliations with Bootsy's Rubber Band, Parliament Funkadelic, the Gap Band, and Stephanie Mills.

While no two sets are ever alike, the performances are always complemented with musical improvisation and lyrical ad libs. Roberts' rich, alto expression blends with the falsettos and bass growls Thomas has perfected to produce an electrifying fusion. The high wails of the saxophone and the rapid scatting they use add a bit of the extemporaneous. The two amuse the spectators as they play with the lyrics and enthrall them with an emotional realism that brings the songs to life.

Although Thomas, who describes himself as a "jazz-funk artist," has been on the road for years, he decided to come back home to Maryland's Prince George's County where he and Miko teamed up after singing background with another local group.

"We developed our styles individually. There is a natural chemistry between us. We don't even need a whole lot of rehersal. I feel so comfortable performing with him," said Roberts, a vocalist, electronic drummer and keyboardist who started her musical career playing in church as a little girl in Amarillo, Texas. Throughout the 14 years she has spent in the District she has sung back-up for Major Harris and local recording artists.

Although the group has performed in Atlantic City and the Bahamas and extensively in DC and in Baltimore at favorite spots like the Thirty-second Street Plahza and The Pavillion, they are each looking to bigger and brighter things ahead—solo acts included.

Now beginninig their second year at Joplin's — with its plush, mauve carpeting, crisp linen and crystal chandelier — Roberts and Thomas continue to draw customers from all over the metropolitan area who relish the elegant atmosphere. Patrons enjoy a fanfare of New Orleans style cuisine; thick steaks, stuffed flounder, soul food, and mixed drinks as they became an intricate part of the Joplin's atmosphere that thrives on pleasing its clientele.

Members of the audience laugh, applaud, dance and sing along to original and familiar tunes like Bobby McFerrin's Grammy award winner "Don't Worry, Be Happy," golden oldie's like Donny Hathaway's "Someday We'll All Be Free," and classics such as Judy Garland's "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."

"DC is not really an entertainment town. It's more of a blue-collar government town. It's hard to make it here," said Thomas of his attempt to make it big as a solo act. "As long as I've been listening to people I know what's good. I've got some stuff that's going to blow some of this other stuff that's out here out of the water! I can't wait."

As the two prepare for future success in the competitive music business they keep abreast of the changes in the industry. With Tracy Chapman's and Bobby McFerrin's songs proved to be winners at the recent Grammy Awards cermony, it is evident that music with a message is back in vague, Roberts and Thomas contend. Their favorites are ballads and jazzed-up renditions of old favorites.

They both agree the District is the center of attraction for domestic tourists and conventioneers, and they could enjoy working the entertainment circuit here and do well. However, the lure of big-time stardom beckons, but the sometimes negative trappings do not. The duo plans to maintain the earthiness that has become the trademark of their performances. "We are not into drugs and we won't be," said Roberts. "It makes our partnership work a lot better. We don't have to worry about sudden mood changes or worry about whether the other will be reliable."

"What we have is unique," she continued. "I can't put my finger on it. We're adventurous, and we feel at home on the stage."

—This Week

(Continued from Page 2)

Columbia. Call 301-992-9634 for further information.

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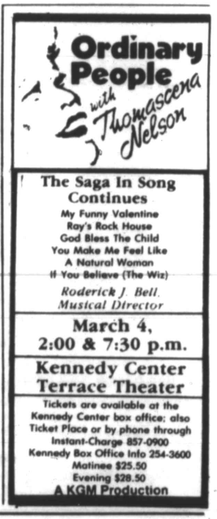
The **Children's Theatre Association** is hosting its 9th annual Children's Fair at the **Timonium Fairgrounds Exhibition Hall** on Sunday, March 5 from 11 to 5 p.m. Call 301-225-0052 for more information.