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This Week

BALTIMORE

The 11th anniversary celebration of the **Ed Block Courage Awards,** the most prestigious award in the NFL, will be held on March 14 at Martin's West. Recipients from the twenty-eight teams in the NFL have been chosen by their teammates and trainers to receive the award. Plus "Hall of Famers" **Raymond Berry, Paul Warfield** and **Lenny Moore** are some of the honorees. ABC's **Frank Gifford** will be the special guest. Call 377-2222 for more information.

* * *

U.M.B.C.'s avant-garde arts festival, **"Progressions,"** will present the modern dance company **Dan Wagoner** and **Dancers** on Wednesday, March 15 at 8 p.m. in the Fine Arts Building Studio 317. Call 455-2476 for more details.

* * *

The Maryland Science Center is presenting its new IMAX film, "To The Limit" on March 18. This will be its world premiere. Call 685-5225 for further information.

* * *

The Cloisters Children's Museum will open on Sunday, March 19 in combination with the **Marty Kurland Clown Shows.** The opening is free with regular Museum admission but the clown performances are $4 for non-members and $3.50 for members listed. Call 823-2551 for more information.

Levert (pictured) along with Bobby Brown and Karyn White, will perform at the Baltimore Arena on Wednesday, March 22. Call 301-347-2010 for more information.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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

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.

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THE NIGHT LIFE

By Bonnie Matthews Butler
Entertainment Editor

As promised a couple of columns back, we've been on the "Happy Hour" trail and I'm happy to report that last Friday at the Palladium on Liberty Heights Ave., those responsible are providing great "Happy Hours" for the tipplers and the nibblers.

The drinks were adequate and the food was tasty and plentiful but the quality of service could do with a little more polishing.

On the whole, though, elbow benders agreed that "Happy Hour" at the Palladium is off and running and if they improve on the quality of service, it will be the "in" place to hang after 5 p.m.

Spotted in the crowd were: **Stephanie Brown, Tessa Hill, Sylvia Kyler** (who looked dynamic in that black and rhinestone dress). Coach **Earl Banks,** Capital Auto Insurance prez **Norman Watkins, Bill Spencer,** former councilman **Nathaniel McFadden,** Kronheim's **Ray Speights, Toni Workman, Milo Flowers,** former delegate **Nathaniel Oaks,** Senator **Larry Young,** Rev. **Willie Ray, Lorenzo Simpson** (who looks absolutely gorgeous with the mixed gray hair), Michael Giles and Washington Green.

* * *

Downtown at the Baltimore Fishmarket, the goodies were also good and plentiful. We stopped by the club "Rooftops" to chat with **Tisha Campbell,** star of new motion picture "Rooftops" scheduled to open Friday (March 17). More on this at a later date.

But back to the info about the Fishmarket. The service attitude of the servers, however, needs more than a "little polishing." Except for my good friend **John,** who is now behind one of the bars there (and in the future, I'll make a point to bring my business to him), they could use the "whole shine."

In all fairness, could be this reporter just happened to be served on more than one occasion by neophytes in the service arena. Would suggest the management offer a crash course on courtesy before opening the "happy" doors.

Polishing and shining will move both establishments to the top of my "must" lists of happy spots. We'll let you know the details in a future column.

* * *

OTHER HAPPENINGS: The **Sphinx Club** on Pennsylvania Ave. is really going all out for its members on a daily basis. On Sunday's from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m., they are sponsoring live entertainment with special guest artists for only $2; on Tuesday's, their happy hour version featuring, Social Security and Social Services Nite with 2 for 1 drinks and free food and the game "Win, Lose or Drink" being played and on Fridays,Saturdays, you'll find **Earlene Reed** with the **Chico Johnson** Trio on tap.

You won't want to miss their Easter Sunday All Day Music Celebration Champagne and Fashion Show from 3 p.m. until 8 p.m. featuring the return of **Donald Lane** with **Mickey Fields** followed by the **Dave Ross Show with new singing star Tracy Curboom,** from 8 p.m. until 1 p.m.

Jimmy's Place on Abbottson St. is hosting a 5th Anniversary celebration on Saturday, March 18 and Monday is their customer appreciation nite free food, and a bowling tournament with champions invited to compete. Tuesday is movie and balloon night and Wednesday is spaghetti nite.

* * *

Finally, that's all I have room for in this issue but I'd like to hear from you. Tell me what's going on for your "Night Life" fun. Drop me a line at the AFRO or give me a call. Or, if you see me at one of your favorite watering holes, be sure to say Hi. See you next week.

DANCE THEATRE of HARLEM: THE EXCELLENCE CONTINUES

By Sherri Milner

At a time when the District has been declared "the murder capital of the world" with drug-related crime at an all-time high, the art world responds. Here in the midst of turmoil, the Dance Theater of Harlem has arrived for their yearly sojourn at the Kennedy Center — bringing a soothing, if only temporary healing balm to the city's mean streets.

It has been more than two decades since Arthur Mitchell founded the troupe following the nationwide bedlam after the assassination of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Here I was on my way to Brazil," said Mitchell, the first black principal dancer with the New York City Ballet. "But after I heard about Dr. King's death something inside would not let me go."

Instead, Mitchell returned to Harlem, and in the smoldering hurt of its riots and despondency following King's death, carved a company — along with the late Karel Shook — which has not only established world class status, but has served as a catalyst in the forefont of ballet.

DTH also became an open door for creative explosion and professional opportunity in dance, music and related theater activities.

"I simply would not buy the idea that blacks were incapable of performing classical ballet because of body type and other racial stereotypes," Mitchell said. He added that once this barrier was crossed, choreographers often barred blacks from ballet companies because they wanted a uniform look to their lines.

But for Mitchell, the solution was simple — in his company it would be taleht, and not looks that were on the line. And the sea of pale pink tights and pointed shoes would soon be changed to adequately reflect all the various hues of the black race.

These days, DTH's professional company consists of more than fifty dancers from 15 states and five foreign countries, most of whom were trained through the Theatre's rigorous school curriculum which offers training to potential dancers as early as the age of three.

The Company performs thirty to forty weeks each year, appearing on many of the world's most prestigious stages.

More than 80 ballets have entered the repertoire and currently approximately 50 are actively performed. These works span choreographic styles from ethnic, to Romantic, to jazz, to neo-classical.

Today, more than ever, Mitchell's determination and faith may very well prove to be the shot of optimism in the arm of an ailing DC. This time, although perhaps unbeknownst to them, DTH is at the forefront of a cry for direction— artistically answering to the call for peace.

In a series of premiere performances and an engagement of firsts, the Dance Theatre of Harlem returns to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts March 14 through March 26 in celebration of its Twentieth Anniversary Season with five new pieces to enthrall the eyes of Washington.

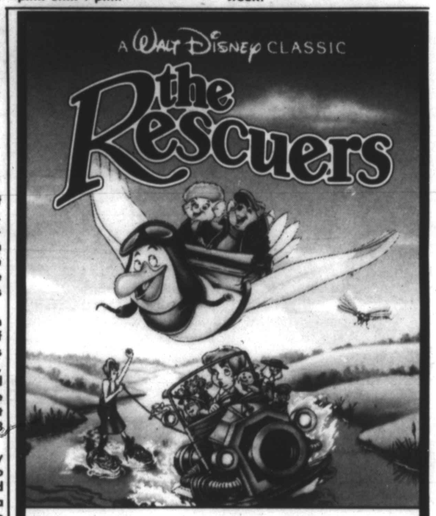
The company — which features an abundance of hometown talent that includes prima ballerina Virginia Johnson, and dancers Fabian Barnes and Kellye Gordon— will premiere "John Henry," the first new ballet Mitchell has choreographed in 13 years.

Based on the legendary African-American folk hero whose muscles, heart and sledgehammer outpowered a railroad steam drill, "John Henry" is a stirring story symbolic of a potentially strong in combat with a potent force. Much to the dismay of those who cheer for the underdog, John Henry dies of a heart attack immediately after claiming his victory.

"I think it will be a surprise to see the company dance in this kind of jazzy thing," Mitchell said. "And they're wonderful in it. It's a good, fun ballet. The dancers love it. They can let go. I hope they don't get carried away."

Set to gospel music, the piece was conceived as a homage to Paul Robeson, a black actor and singer who sang "John Henry," the folk song. It was created at the request of Martin Segal, the founder and chairman of the First

(Continued on Page 4)



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