'Dreamgirls': theatre delight

By Gregory A. King

A phrase used often to describe outstanding young blacks certainly describes Washington's newest "Diva" Roselyn White — she's young, gifted and black.

This 19 year old singer/actress is making a name for herself as she touches the hearts of many in her performance as Lorell in the former Broadway hit "Dreamgirls" now being performed at the Harlequin Theater in Rockville, Md.

This beauty got her start at the early age of 10, while in the glee club in elementary school. She later went on to perform for the DC Youth Ensemble. Roselyn said, "I was always performing, it came naturally."

With her primary experience she was excepted into the Duke Ellington School of the Arts where she studied voice. White said, "At Ellington students are put through a intensive arts program where you study one particular concentration— either: Literary Media Arts, Radio/Television and Film Production, or Writing."

At Ellington, "It's a curriculum that combines academics and arts," Ms. White said. "Between 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. I studied English, mathematics, science—academic courses. And 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. I had my arts classes."

"One thing I loved about High School is that I got the experience of being in a mixed environment," said Ms. White. "I don't think I would have gotten that from another school."

While at Ellington she was able to study dance, singing and acting, which helped her to get the role as Lorell. She said even-though she loves to act and dance, "My heart is music. I live, eat and sleep with my radio."

White said she feels she's been able to bring a lot to her character as Lorell because they have alot in common "I'm usually the youngest member in a group and I'm always laughing," said Ms. White. "Also, like Lorell, I always have it together, even when it seems I don't."

Aside, from acting and singing Ms. White is a student studying at the University of the District of Columbia. She said, "This year I will be traveling back and forth to New York visiting the AMDA Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts."

This down to earth young lady proclaims she like interviews because "a person reading gets to know me — you find out a lot about a person's level of intelligence," said White. "Face to face it's hard to lie."

One thing a friend has taught her is the importance of being humble. She said of her friend William Hubbard, a writer/producer who she met while working on a production at Ellington for starving children called "Get Hungry," he taught us (the students involved the Get Hungry project) a song he had arranged entitled "This Little Light of Mine, I'm Gonna Let it Shine" for the show.

"His arrangements were a knock out — he was able to sing each part: soprano, alto, and tenor, each with perfection," Ms. White said. "One day William and I began playing the piano. I sat beside him and there he composed a new song from the midst. After he finished he began to cry."

When asked why he was crying he said this was what God gave him, an ability to sit and play." Hubbard later told me "It's important to be humble, because there is always someone greater than you."

"That was very touching to me."

As for her future she wants to one day study at New York University, majoring in Theater.

Rosalind White

Faye Richie Rosaline White Justine Hall

VIDEO: The yellow brick road at 50

By Carl Matthews

With a total audience figure topping one billion people, "The Wizard Of Oz" is certainly one of the best-loved motion pictures of all time. And in honor of the 50th anniversary of its original release, MGM/UA Home Video has released a special Collector's Edition videocassette of the 1939 classic.

For this edition of "Oz" MGM used a recently-discovered, well-preserved Technicolor film print. The colors on the new print are somewhat brighter and more natural-looking when compared to the print shown on network television. There is a slight improvement in audio fidelity as well.

This special edition of "Oz" contains a few extras which should be of great interest to Oz fanatics and those who simply love the film. First, there's the promotional trailer (or "preview of coming attractions") for the 1955 re-release of the film. You'll notice that this trailer includes a bit of footage that was cut from the official release.

Also, we get to hear how "The Jitterbug," an elaborate dance number that was cut out of the official release, sounded when it was done by Judy Garland (Dorothy), Bert Lahr (Cowardly Lion), Ray Bolger (Scarecrow) and Buddy Ebsen (Ebsen was originally cast as the Tin Man, before he was replaced by Jack Haley).

Unfortunately, the actual picture footage of the "Jitterbug" number has been lost, so black-and-white stills and dress-rehearsal footage have been used to accompany the original soundtrack to this number. (What a shame! MGM spent more than $80,000 to film a dance number nobody's seen since 1939!)

But another dance number, included here, has survived: the Scarecrow's extended dance which was also cut from the official release. Watch how Bolger tumbles in the cornfield, soars through the air and bounces back and forth between portions of the fence like a dazed boxer. The dance sequence was choreographed by Busby Berkeley.

So if you're thinking of bringing "Oz" home, this is the one to watch. Sure, you can tape it off TV for nothing, but keep in mind that the TV version is far from the definitive version. After all, the networks always, for example, stick a commercial after Dorothy says, "Now we can go back to the Wizard and tell him the Wicked Witch is dead!," which means you never see the dissolve that follows or the Wizard's line "Can I believe my eyes?" on network TV.

And keep in mind that the TV version is broadcast utilizing video "time-compression," which means that everything happens at a slightly faster tempo than originally filmed, although the difference is probably too small to notice. This effectively shortens the movie on TV, which increases the amount of commercial time available.

The opening and closing Kansas sequences have always appeared in black-and-white on TV. But when the film first came out in 1939, those portions were in sepia tone. This new edition restores the sepia tone to the Kansas portions.

And if you plan on reading "The Wizard Of Oz: The Official 50th Anniversary Pictorial History" from Warner Books, you should get this tape. That way, as you read the interesting anecdotes and trivia about the movie, you can wind the tape to appropriate spots and discover certain things about the film you may not have noticed the first time you watched it.

Example: Next time you see the movie, when it gets to the scene in which our heroes are in the Palace of Oz, when the Guard says "Orders are: nobody can see the Great Oz, not nobody, not nohow!," look carefully at the Guard's mustache, and watch what happens to it in the following shot.

At The Movies with Frederick I. Douglass

'Nightmare on Elm street 5' is Jive!

Freddy Krueger is really dead! Although the first "A Nightmare on Elm Street" movie was a contemporary horror classic, the current movie is dismal and dreary. It sends you directly to the very land of dreams where Krueger attacks his victims.

And should the vilely evil Krueger manage to come back from the extremely boring and jive "A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child," it will be a miracle of modern filmmaking or a testament to the gullibility of the American moviegoing public.

Of course, Krueger dies at the end of each of the five movies that comprise the "Nightmare on Elm Street" saga yet somehow gets resurrected for yet another mega-buck generating horror flick.

The slasher genre of movies is popular: throngs of people will probably flock to see Jason in episodes 20 through 30 and "Leatherface: Texas Chainsaw Massacre III" expected to do a brisk box office business when it opens this fall.

Conceivably, if the public keeps spending dollars to see Krueger in action, the "Nightmare on Elm Street" series will continue ad infinitum.

Freddy Krueger was first summoned into existence in 1984 and was portrayed by Robert Englund, the very talented character actor who created the wise cracking ghoul.

Krueger invades the dreams of Nancy Thompson, a bright, middle class teenager living in a typical American suburb. Krueger, who is horribly disfigured and has fingernails like long razors, soon penetrates the dreams of her friends and begins to destroy them in her sleep.

Coming to grips with the reality that Krueger dwells in the land of slumber, Nancy determines to combat him directly in the midst of her nightmares.

Nancy also discovers that Krueger is haunting her neighborhood because — despite the fact that he was a child murderer who escaped punishment by the law — he is seeking revenge against the children of the people who burned him alive.

As the end of the first "Elm Street" movie approaches, we are convinced that Krueger has been beaten and the world is back to normal. However, the final seconds of the film give a hint that he will be back to haunt our dreams again.

Kelly Jo Minter (L) plays Yvonne in the movie. Also shown are alice (Lisa Wilcox) and Nick Mele look on.

Indeed, Krueger returns to torment us in our sleep numerous times in "Freddy's Revenge"; "Dream Warriors"; "The Dream Master"; and now for the fifth time in "A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child."

Freddy Krueger returns to this movie wearing his trademark fedora and striped sweater while doing his famed routine of scraping his razor sharp claws on blackboards and cracking jokes as he murders his victims.

His evil game plan in this movie is to be reborn through the pregnancy of his arch nemesis from the "Dream Master," Alice Johnson payed by Lisa Wilcox.

Alice brought "Nightmare 4" to a grisly climax when she freed the souls of Freddy's past victims and then left the ghoul to "rest in pieces" after she tore him apart limb by limb. But now that Alice is pregnant and is carrying a child who dreams, Freddy is able to begin resurrecting himself while attacking Alice's friends and taking over the mind of her offspring.

Alice learns that the only way she will be able to defeat Freddy Krueger this time is to tap the powers of Freddy's long dead mother, Sister Amanda Krueger who gave birth to the ghoulish fool after being raped by 100 maniacs in an insane asylum.

The movie plods along slowly to its inevitable climax and Freddy Krueger is slain once again, but we all know that he will be back again next summer to haunt our dreams.

The movie falls short of the excitement generated by previous "Nightmares" because it lacks action and the special effects are not really that interesting. Robert Englund plays Krueger with typical skill and does manage to get off a few good scenes wherein the Krueger wit is deftly displayed, but the plot is lacklustre.

Hopefully, the inevitable next edition of "A Nightmare On Elm Street" will recapture some of the electricity that powered the first movie and had millions of people around the world afraid to go to sleep.

By the way, there is just one Black actress in this movie, but the sound track does feature music by Kool Moe Dee and a few other black musicians.

SOUNDS By Carl Matthews

FINEST HOUR
"Make That Move" (Polydor)

Look out New Edition and New Kids On The Block! Another quartet from your hometown of Boston is on the new jack music scene, and they "Make That Move" with their first album on Polydor.

Troy Sanders, Jamaal Seymour, Carlos P. Munoz and Vaughn Burks are the four voices of Finest Hour. Troy and Jamaal, both 18 and friends from the project playgrounds of Boston's Roxbury section (where they grew up with New Edition), were formerly the lead voices of local groups Star Struck and The Ambassadors, respectively. Nineteen-year-olds Carlos and Vaughn were the main attraction in such groups as Novelty and Young Generations.

In mid-1988, after "differences" split all four groups, producer Larry Woo brought the four lead singers together to form Finest Hour.

Fans of such groups as New Edition and The Boys will appreciate the exuberant vocal style and solid production on such tracks as the single "Make That Move," a tune with the new jack vitality of The Boys' recent hit, "Dial My Heart."

The ballads are equally catchy: "When Ya Comin' Home," "Invincible" and "Take Care Of My Heart" sound like potential radio hits as well.

SOUL II SOUL
"Keep On Movin' " (Virgin)

Right now, Soul II Soul is one of the hottest British black groups on the dance music scene, and copies of this debut album are expected to "Keep On Movin' " out of the record racks for many months to come.

26-year-old Jazzie B. (also known as Beresford Romeo) wrote and produced the album, which in England is known as "Club Classics Vol. 1."

The single "Keep On Movin'," which features singer Caron Wheeler, has sold more than 500,000 copies in America without the help of pop airplay, and is currently still moving up the national singles charts.

Finest Hour

About the "Keep On Movin' " album, Jazzie B. says, "The idea was just to re-create the whole club scene in your front room."

Unlike producers such as Stock, Aitken and Waterman, Jazzie B. and crew doesn't feel the need to overload the tracks with layer after layer of synths and special effects or take a "hit-factory" approach to the arrangements by making them sound as "commercial" as possible.

That's why such tracks as "Fairplay" (featuring Rose Windross) sound warm and natural, with a freshness that doesn't fade even after repeated listenings. My favorite two tracks are the mostly acappella "Back To Life" (the new single) on side two, which segues into the infectious "Jazzie's Groove." The solid bass line on the latter, exquisitely decorated with an occasional flurry of P-Funk-esque brass, is a real winner in my book.

Other cuts: "Holdin' On," "Feeling Free," "African Dance," "Happiness."