What's Happening

By Ida Peters

The fourth annual "Ride-A-Bike for the Retarded Day," organized in conjunction with the Baltimore Association for Retarded Citizens will be held Sun., April 4 from 12 noon to 5 p.m.

The theme of this year's ride is "Bike Safety" and routes are set throughout Baltimore City and Baltimore County for youngsters and adults.

The honorary co-chairman for Baltimore City is Earl Banks, athletic director of Morgan State University.

A special free performance of "The Clown's Corner Concert will be presented at Center Stage, Mon., April 5.

The production is part of the Center Stage Young People's Theater and has been traveling to all thirty-five Baltimore City junior high schools during its two month run.

Written by Ray Aranha, winner of the 1974 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding New Playwright, the play is an exuberant new slapstick comedy in the finest clown tradition, set in the context of the vibrant rhythms, moods and themes of a big city.

* * *

Now in their Twelfth year, the Center Stage Young People's Theater was expanded after the 1974 school year and played to more than 110,000 children.

The production is directed by Jeffrey O. Rodman, and features Larry Riley as Snail; Amandina Lihamba as Flower; Thelma Carter as Flea and Ed Hambleton as Drone. Artistic director for the YPT is Stan Wojewodski Jr. who is the director of Center Stage's current mainstage production, Harold Pinter's OLD TIMES.

The upcoming Baltimore County Fair (to be held June 17-27, 1976 at Glenn L. Martin State Airport in Middle River) is now renting booth space to all those interested in selling a product or fund-raising for their particular group or organization.

* * *

Michele Nelson, artistic director of the Susquehanna Festival Theater, recently announced that the off-Broadway musical, "Godspell," will be the last scheduled production for the 1975-1976 Bicentennial season.

"Godspell" will open at the Susquehanna Festival Theater on May 12 for a week run.

* * *

Darielle Linehan and Nell Stanley, co-chairwomen of the Center Stage Hands, announced today that Center Stage will receive part of the proceeds from an art sale by the Ferdinand Roten Galleries Sun., April 4, at the Hunt Valley Inn, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

* * *

Charlies Byrd will be appearing at the King of France Tavern of the Maryland Inn through Sat., April 3.

* * *

Fred Bailey is in the midst of coordinating the Black Expo to be held Aug. 7 and 8 in Hopkins Plaza under the auspices of Urban Services.

"Countdown At Kusini," a new movie presentation by D.S.T. Telecommunications Inc. for Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. will have a benefit premiere April 7, 8 p.m. at the Charles Theater. The $15.00 tickets include admission and reception after the show.

The topical melodrama of political intrigue and revolution in modern-day Africa is the first American motion picture to be filmed in Africa by black American professionals. It is also the first major motion picture to be produced by a black service sorority.

Benefiting the premiere is the Madison Avenue branch of the YWCA and other charities. The Baltimore Deltas have chosen the branch because they wish to see it continue as it has since 1896 as a vehicle for social services for black women and children.

The movie stars Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee and Greg Morris. Davis directed the movie as well as co-scripted it with Al Freeman Jr. and Ladi Ladebo. Ladebo produced "Countdown to Kusini" with Herbert Lannard as associate producer and Mrs. Lillian Benbow, Housing Program director for the state of Michigan, as executive producer.

Mrs. Benbow was in Baltimore this week having lunch at the Chesapeake Restaurant promoting the premiere of the film.

* * *

Mrs. Coretta King will speak April 6 at the Washington Press Club luncheon. That same evening as drama, she is associated with "I Have A Dream" opens at Ford's Theater.

Ossie Davis, actor-director-writer, in a scene from "Countdown to Kusini" a major film presentation of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will have its benefit premiere April 7.

Blocks on Move

By Arnetta Lottier

Poppleton Poster Contest

The Poppleton area, Lombard St., Carey St., Mulberry St. and Fremont Ave. just completed a poster contest.

The purpose of the contest is to develop an awareness of the Poppleton neighborhood. The theme of the posters was the ABC's of good living. A — Awareness; B — Beautification; C — Clean-up. Participating in the contest were the elementary, junior high schools in the Poppleton area.

There were 10 schools participating in the contest. They were Lexington Terrace Elementary, Stuart Hill Elementary, Harlem Park Junior High, Edgar Alan Poe Elementary, Franklin Square Elementary, Johnston Square Elementary, James McHenry Elementary, Holins Square, Intellectual Limited and the Moorish Science Temple of America.

Judges for the poster contest were: Alonza Kilgore, representative for the Franklin Square Elementary School; Carroll Wagner, representative from Region Eight; Susan White, WMAR-TV; Stu Kerr, WMAR-TV; Gary Rothberg, representing West Baltimore Street Merchants; Bernard Rosenweig, West Baltimore Street Merchants and Mrs. Arnetta M. Lottier, deputy director, Public Relations, AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers.

Other guests at the judges included Ms. Geraldine Goldstein, community organizer, Housing and Community Development (HCD) of the Poppleton area; George Barrett, program manager, Housing and Community Development (HCD); Kenneth Strong, director, Youth Diversion Project of Communities Organized to Improve Life (COIL, Inc.); Leland Cooley, chairman, Poppleton Area Committee (PAC).

Working on the Poppleton Poster Contest Committee are: Ms. Brenda Cooper, chairman, representing Urban Services Agency; Ms. Judy Armalis, vice chairman; Bob Jones, Youth Diversion Project (COIL, Inc.;

Also, Sister L. Alston-Bey, Moorish Science Temple of America; Garey Rothberg, West Baltimore Street Merchants; Brother N. Pleasant-Bey, divine minister, Moorish Science Temple of America; Sister Elaine Jennings, Moorish Science Temple of America and Darnell Moore, Potential Business, Brendel Assoc.

Poppleton Poster Winners

There was much discussion among the judges because the posters were so very good. All of the contestants had worked very hard and the posters showed it.

The posters were judged on the basis of originality, neatness, color, art and development of theme.

They selected a first, second and third prize in the primary level (grades 1-3); the intermediate level (grades 4-5) and the junior high level (grades 7-9). There was also an overall poster picked for the very best of the groups.

The top prize went to class C of the Hollins Square school. Intelectual Limited. Mrs. Myrtle Johnson, teacher and Mrs. Delores House, aide. These children had to work hard in order to make their poster since they are handicapped. This was the only school where a class was allowed to work together.

The winners in this class were: Joseph Godsey, Robert Hamilton, Garry Harris, Danny Hooten, Gregory Mullens, Charles Shelton, Jerome Webb, Diana Laverdale, Helen Richardson. Congratulations for a job well done. The poster is most outstanding.

Winners in the different categories were: First to third grades — Ramona Jacobs, James McHenry, elementary; Mrs. Cromer, teacher; Anthony Morgan, James McHenry Elementary, Mrs. Cromer, teacher and Jeffrey Elliott, Steuart Hill Elementary, Mr. Coger, teacher.

The four to six age group winners were: Irvin Luacs, Lexington Terrace Elementary, Mrs. Jesse Johnson, teacher; Adrian Pleasant, Franklin Square Elementary, Ms. Cathy Carr, teacher; Ronald Christian, Johnston Square Elementary, Mr. Shephard, teacher.

The seven to nine age group winners were: James Diggs, Junior High, Mrs. L. Brown, teacher; Von Hammond, Harlem Park Junior High, and Gary Matthews, Harlem Park Junior High, Mrs. Brown, teacher.

The Intellectual Limited winners were: Larry Herns, Vera Hicks, Bryant Bell, Annabelle Miles, Denise Carberry, Ms. Delores Dickey, teacher; Ms. Wendy Gary, aide and Morris Pinkett, Hollins Square Elementary.

Poppleton Awards Ceremony

The awards ceremony for the winners of the Poppleton Poster Contest was held last week at the James McHenry Elementary School.

Included on the program were Sister Jeannette, St. Peter's Christian Life Center; Carroll Wagner, contest judge, superintendent, Region VIII; Charles A. Noon Jr., director, Neighborhood Development; Brother N. Pleasant Bey, divine minister, Moorish Science Temple of America;

George Barrett, Housing and Communication Development program manager for Poppleton Area; Ms. Brenda Cooper, chairman of Poster Committee;

Ms. Judy Armalis, vice chairman; Royal Parker, WBAL-TV; Mrs. Arnetta M. Lottier, Public Relations, AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers and Ms. Geraldine Goldstein, Housing and Community Development organizer.

$10. The top winners also were taken to the Children's Theatre as special guests to see "King Midas." Additionally, there will be Goldren passes for the youngsters to go to the B and O Railroad Museum free of charge.

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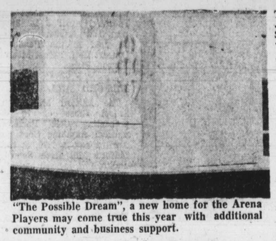
Bicentennial Highlights: The Arena Players

By MEL RICHARDS

The flame of freedom that is being celebrated in this, the bicentennial year of our country is burning brightly. And here in Baltimore, that fire has had a little added glow because twenty-four years ago another candle was added to the display. This addition to the cultural heritage of our country began as the flickering hope of seven dedicated people. These seven were consumed with a strong desire, and a need to create. Unselfishly, they burned their own energy to insure that precarious spark they had lit would not go out; and through hard work, perseverence against sometimes insurmountable odds, and a sincere belief in their cause, they managed to survive. And not only to survive, but to grow stronger, until those original seven have become a small army. The spark they ignited became a flame that now glows with a great light, and warmth.



"The Possible Dream", a new home for the Arena Players may come true this year with additional community and business support.

Those seven, the founders, were in the beginning the back-bone of the new theatrical organization that would become known to Baltimoreans as The Arena Players. They are Jimmie Bell, Harvey Denmark, Doris Dilver, Irvin Turner, Joseph Wilson, Julius Eilbert Wilson, and Samuel H. Wilson Jr.; all working toward one goal—black theatre at the highest possible level.

* * *

The Arena Players had a very humble beginning. An organization that seemed like a nomadic band of gypsies, presenting their productions where they were able. Places such as a building at the Coppin State College campus, the Druid Hill Ave. branch of the YMCA, the great hall of St. Mary's Church in Walbrook, or Carl Murphy Auditorium on the campus of Morgan State College. The first production ever performed before the public by The Arena Players was, "Helio, Offi There," a one act play by William Saroyan. This was 1953.

The group caught on; it took hold, and began to grow. And as it grew, it pursued an ever more and more ambitious course toward theatrical excellence. More people began to lend a help, and work on the productions. And an ever growing audience came to see this new group perform.

Nine years after its inception, The Arena Players, through the untiring efforts of a core of totally involved members, moved into a home of their own. The Arena Playhouse, at 406 Orchard St., became a reality in 1962. But this was still not enough for the hard driving leaders of the organization.

A Board of Directors had already been formed, to conduct community relations, and business dealings, pursuant to incorporation. In 1963, only one year after moving into the Arena Playhouse, the group officially became The Arena Players, Inc. In 1964 a ladies auxiliary was formed, to whom fall such responsibilities as, hostesses and ushers at performances, assisting at auditions, play reading and contributing suggestions to the committee that selects the plays to be done each season, as well as a host of other varied activities, not the least of which is fostering artistic creativity in the community.

* * *

Responsibility to the community has always been very deeply felt, and as their ability to perform a greater variety of services to that community was realized, those services were forthcoming. One of these services comes in the form of the touring shows they produce. Through the road-show company, The Arena Players have reached many people. They have been to schools, hospitals, churches, recreation centers, clubs, military installations, and even private homes in bringing entertainment to as may people as possible

Another service performed, comes through their unique profit sharing program. By means of this plan, The Arena Players have also returned over $20,000 to charitable and service organizations in the area, who co-sponsor the productions and support many worthy causes here in Baltimore.

Still another, is the annual scholarship award. One thousand dollars is given, each year, to a community high school senior, who is judged to exhibit the foremost aptitude and interest in the theatre, so that he or she may continue to pursue further studies in that field.

* * *

The awards banquet was an innovation that was initiated if 1966 which brough to frution, an idea conceived by Mrs. Camilla M. Sherrard, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, and has since become a highly popular, and successful occasion. Recipients of The Arena Players Awards have varied from civic and community leaders, and deserving Arena Players members, to internationally known personalities. Those who have been honored include, playwright Langston Hughes, and Ed Bullins; civic leaders Samuel M. Hecht, Mrs. Morris Mechanic, Allen Quille, and Edward J. Golden. Cab Calloway, Brock Peters, and Esther Rolle of the entertainment world, and Arena members Samuel Wilson, Verna Day, Irvin Turner, June Thorne, and Mrs. Camilla M. Sherrard

(Continued Next Week)

The McKenzie report

"Shaft" is dead!

By Vashti McKenzie

The super black New York private eye, John Shaft, has turned in his fast cars, sexy women and bachelor apartment for a different way of life.

Richard Roundtree, the star of three box office hits ("Shaft," "Shaft's Big Score," "Shaft in Africa") has shed his glamor image for a new character in the new movie "Man Friday" now at area theaters.

In "Man Friday", Roundtree protrays Friday, the native servant in Daniel Defoe's classic story of the shipwrecked Robinson Crusoe".

His character survives on the beaches and jungles the way John Shaft survived in the asphalt jungle.

Unlike in his three hit movies, which started a whole new trend of movies featuring super black men and women, "Man Friday" according to Roundtree tested his acting ability. He had a chance to broaden himself and reach deep within the depths of life's lessons to add another dimension to his acting.

In this new presentation of an old classic, modern day racial overtones exist and are often treated humorously. It was this humor aspect that turned

Roundtree on about doing "Man Friday".

The story is told through the eyes of Friday this time, and so the movie is like a whole new story. It addresses itself to deepening the meaning of the word, civilization. The question is raised who is civilized, Crusoe or Friday?

Whether Roundtree is happy with his evolution from commercial and fashion model (Toured with the Ebony Fashion Fair one year) to super stud on the silver screen and TV to native servant remains to be seen.

Roundtree said he wanted to drop his image of Shaft and get on with his career. Ron O'Neal, star of "Superfly" movies stated the same thing a year ago. He wanted to return to Shakespearean acting and had to start all over again.

* * *

Seals and Crofts, a very successful pop-folk act have added a bit of soul and color for their new "Get Closer".

She's Carolyn Willis and is touted as adding a new dimension to their repertoire. Besides soul, it seems they're looking trying to get people up on the floor and dance. Unusual.

* * *

ABC has done it again and NBC is mad!

The International Olympic Committee assured NBC that 'A full study and inquiry is being made into the situation following NBC's objection to the Lake Placid Olympic Committee's awarding of rights to the 1980 Winter Olympic Games to ABC

Last week NBC was informed by IOC by telegram that it was prepared to bid higher for the TV rights of the 1980 games than the ABC bid. The bid was reported in the media.

NBC sought to make another bid but ABC was awarded the rights by the Lake Placid Olympic Committee which is subject to approval by the IOC.

* * *

The O'Jays perform Sat., April 3 in the "Family Reunion" Concert at the Baltimore Civic Center featuring guests, The commodores.

* * *

Blue Magic, Tavares and Eddie Kendricks headline concert at Lowe's Palace Theater in Washington, D.C. Fri., April 2 through Sun., April 4.

TV Notes

By Vashti McKenzie

A trio of talents are scheduled this weekend on "Soul Train." Appearing with The Supremes, the most popular female group on the musical scene, are singer Al Wilson and Ossie Davis, noted actor.

Susan Green, the newest addition to The Supremes, joins the world-renowned group on "Let My Heart Do The Walking," "Dont Let the Teardrops Bother You" and "You Are What I've Been Missing In My Life," all from their latest Motown album.

Al Wilson revives memories with his smash hit from a few seasons back, "Show and Tell," then, in his earthy style, renders his current success, "I've Got A Feeling We'll Be Seeing Each Other Again."

Natalie Cole, winner of this year's Grammy Awards for Best Rhythm and Blues Performer, Female and Best New Artist, will be the guest host of "The Midnight Special" following the Fri., April 2 presentation of "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson."

Natalie's guests will be the Bee Gees; Earth, Wind and Fire; K. C. and the Sunshine Band; Gwen McCrae; and Charo.

Valerie Harper, Pearl Bailey, Rep. Bella Abzug, Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Sylvia Porter will serve as special presenters at the fourth annual "Women of the year" awards, honoring 10 women of outstanding achievement, to be colorcast live from New York City, Thurs., April 8.

The Supremes featuring newcomer Sasay Green, singer Al Wilson and actor Ossie Davis are appearing on "Soul Train" Sat. April 4.

* * *

Rich Little welcomes special guest Bing Crosby to "The Rich Little Show," Mon., April 5. Comedian Bill Cosby will make a cameo appearance.

* * *

"Basin Street Blues," "Way Down Yonder in New Orelans," "When the Saints Go Marching In" and "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans" are among the songs sung by Perry Como during his newest musical special, "Perry Como's Seving in New Orleans," Wed., April 7.

The show spotlights guest star Leslie Uggams and special guest star Dick Van Dyke.

* * *

Redd Foxx, who stars in the series, "Sanford and Son," will make a special guest appearance on "The Comedy in America Report," to be colorcast on NBC-TV Friday, April 9.

For The Record

Lonnie Liston Smith

By Frederick I. Douglass

Lonnie Liston Smith, the Jazz-Rock keyboard wizard who blew away the Top-40 charts in 1975 with songs from two albums entitled "Visions of a New World" and "Expansions," has just hit the market with another blockbuster LP bearing the name "Reflections of a Golden Dream." Brother Smith gets down, around and catches on this album, particularly when it comes to wailing on the jam "Get Down Everybody

It's Time for World Peace!" which is destined to be Smith's biggest hit.

It almost seems strange to be talking about Jazz musicians having hit records. But it is happening to people like Donald Byrd, Freddie Hubbard, Smith and a few others who have been paying beaucoup dues for days. And just because Smith is finally starting to gain recognition for his artistry does not make him less of a musician or a cop-out. Lonnie Liston Smith really knows what he's doing when it comes to whipping on accoustic and electronic keyboards. He has proved his musicianship time and time again in the band of jazz greats like Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Gato Barbieri, Leon Thomas, Stanley Turrentine, Art Blakey, Norman Connors and the inimitable Miles Davis.

The truth of the matter is that Smith has discovered a musical formula that transcends all so-called musical categories. The album "Reflections of a Golden Dream" has something for everybody to get down on. If you want some music to dance to there is the funky, jam "Get Down Everybodo" which radio stations like Howard University's WHUR and other progressive FM stations have started blasting over the air waves. "Get Down Everybodo" will probably be breaking on the AM stations this month.

"Peace and Love" is another jam on Smith's new LP that has considerable top 40 potential. The lead vocal on this cut is crooned by Donald Smith. Lonnie's brother, who truly has a cello mellow voice, and who also plays a pretty slick flute. Donald's voice is hard to best advantage on the track "Beautiful Woman" which gives him a chance to display the strength of his tonsils and larnyx.

If you are in the market for some music that is suitable as a background for Transcendental Meditation

TM) or a yoga session. then Smith is the man that can set the mood for you. Before you contort your body into the lotus position, place the needle on one of the album's more tranquil tunes like "Goddess of Love" or "Inner Beauty" which evoke moods similar to those created by the ragas of India's greatest sitarist Ravi Shanker. Other gentle mellow-tunes on the album include "Meditations" and "Quiet Dawn."

Smith picks up the tempo again with a Latin-tinged jam named "Sunbeams" which has a happy, at peace with the world type of sound. This cut features some super acoustic piano work by Smith and a crisp soprano sax solo by Donald Hubbard who attended Morgan State University with Smith.

I predict that a lot of people will be grooving this soring to the Lonnie Liston Smith's new album "Reflections of a Golden Dream," dancing back to Smith's universal invitation to "Get Down Everybody." A lot of people will buy the album because they dig the single release "Get Down Everybody." They will be pleasantly suprised when they spin this platter on their stereo or quad system and find out that Lonnie Liston Smith 'Gets Down" on everything he plays.

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