What's Happening

By Ida Peters

There's no reason to stay home and be lonely this week-end. Johnnie "Disco Lady" Taylor is at the Civic Center this Saturday.

Van McCoy will be the speaker at Morgan University when the National Association of Radio and Television Arts presents the Business side of Show Business from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The 5th Annual Golden Radio Bufs of Maryland will honor Hot Rod Hulbert (Maurice) for his '50's show, "Rocket Ship" and "Maurice the Moon Man" on Saturday at North Point Gardens. Chuck Richards will M.C.

Other folks will be at Center Stage for Anton Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard."

Godfrey Cambridge has his own brand of nonsense this week-end at the Playboy Club.

If you want to hustle or bump try Mr. K's Golden Nugget. Or, if you want to hear a world-renowned jazz saxophonist catch Zoot Sims at the King of France Tavern in Annapolis.

Hats off to Laura Daughtery, Editor of the Morgan University Spokesman. In the April 12 issue she lashes out at faculty and administrators who have the attitude "I've got mine, you get yours."

She scores "instructors who use the same notes for twenty or thirty years in a row, cancel classes for personal reasons etc. . ." Also, instructors who "are not teaching us things that we need to know for ourselves, but. . . teaching us things we need to know for them."

Lovely Kathy Sledge (Sister Sledge) Atlantic Record artist was escorted to her Senior Prom when she graduated from Olney High School in Philly by Sterling and Chuckie Henderson son of Billy and Barbara Henderson of The Spinners.

• • •

Tamara Dobson has been signed by producer-director George Schlatter for a top role in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Norman. . .Is That You?." screen adaptation of the long-running stare comedy hit starring Redd Foxx and Pearl Bailey.

The 6'2" former high fashion model who gained international prominence as star of "Cleopatra Jones and the Casino of Gold," joins the previously announced Dennis Duran, Vernee Watson and Mike Warren, who plays the title role.

These are the principal performers in "Sparkle", the Warner Bros. musical drama with score by Curtis Mayfield. Top row, Dwan Smith, Philip M. Thomas and Irene Cara; below, Dorian Harewood and Lonette McKee. The picture was written by Joel Schumacher, produced by Howard Rosenman and directed by Sam O'Steen.

Trammps cancelled

Talked with Ken Gaston out at Painters Mill Music Fair. He's very excited about all the changes made for the upcoming 1976 Bicentennial Year.

They've got a new revolving stage and Ken says they had planned to open this weekend with Trammps the Atlantic disco group ("That's Where The Happy People Go") plus Touch of Class and the Crown Heights Affair.

At press time learned that the disco party has been cancelled this Friday and Saturday because only 20 tickets were sold, in advance.

It's too bad! This column thinks the affair should have been held anyway since it was so widely advertised. In this B-More market folks are leery of shelling out hard-earned dollars before any disco-type affair. Many times folks have bought tickets at a lot of well-known places in advance and the big-name groups have dropped out at the last minute and they have a hard time getting their money back.

Girl Scouts

Junior Troop No. 255 of Grace Presbyterian Church is 58 girls strong this year, so they decided to take on the huge task of selling 7,500 boxes of cookies during the recent Girl Scout Cookie sales period.

This group of dynamic, energetic girls has accomplished many things during the four years of their troop's existence. For example, each year the group, along with the Brownies and Cadettes in the cluster, sponsors a carnival in June to raise money to defray expenses for camping trips and other trips. One of the most important aspects of the success of the troop according to Mrs. Jennette Dates, mother o fGirl Scout Karen Dates and the leader of the Juniors, is the enormous amount of work which has been put into the troop by most of the parents.

Girl Scouts of Grace Church

Mothers help

The troop is able to function so smoothly because Mrs. Evelyn Faulk, mother of Girl Scout Joy, does all correspondence, while Mrs. Jean Smith, mother of Girl Scout Karen, takes care of the cookie sales, and Mrs. Norma Kimball, mother of Jeanine, handles registrations, as Mrs. Gwendolyn Roney, mother of Tanya, makes contact with people outside of the troop, Mrs. Sylvia Brown, mother of Tanya, keeps track of and records the badges which each girl earns.

Most of the mohter can be counted upon to transport girls, help to sell cookies, go camping with the group or help the girls to make crafts as did Mrs. Connie Hankins, mother of Laura, who recently helped the girls to make pocketbooks to be sold at the carnival. Fathers are counted upon heavily to help out on Carnival Day.

At Timonium . . .

The girls will dance at the Girl Scout Bicentennial Celebration entitled SHE '76 to be held at Timonium Fair Grounds on May 1 and 2. They will demonstrate four national dances and four folk dances from other lands in costumes which they made-up. They will also teach dances to other Girl Scouts who'll be attending the fair. In a joint venture with the Girl Scout Troop at Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church, the Grace Presbyterian Junior Troop made name tags to be used at the SHE '76 Festival.

At Morgan

The Girl Scouts from Grace Presbyterian Church will also do their folk dances at the Morgan State University Bicentennial Festival on Friday and Saturday, May 14 and 15.

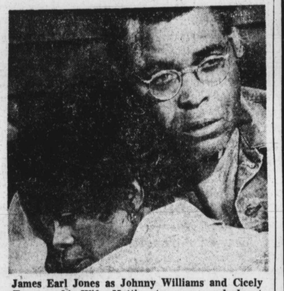
Cicely makes 'River Niger' in 10 days

When viewers see "The River Niger," the Sidney Beckerman/Ike Jones production for Cine Artists release, they will little suspect that Cicely Tyson, who stars in the film with James Earl Jones, Lou Gossett, Glynn Turman, Jonele Allen and Roger E. Mosely, underwent one of the most hectic oddesys imaginable in order to appear in the film.

Cicely first saw "Niger", written as a screenplay by Joseoh A. Walker from his own award winning Broadway play of the same title, as an off-Broadway production in New York. She was accompanied to the play by Paul Winfield, her co-star in the movie "Sounder." She later viewed stage productions of the powerful play on Broadway and in Los Angeles.

Cicely's agent had tried to get her to consider playing the role of the young girlfriend if and when the work ever made it to the Silver Screen, but Ms. Tyson was intent on playing the part of Mattie Williams, the strong and loving mother of a close-knit urban family. But Cicely was soon off for a nine-month trek to Lenningrad, Russia to co-star in the movie. "The Blue Bird," and discussion regarding "The River Niger" became a somewhat moot question.

When her old friend Ike Jones, for whom she had made her motion picture debut a few years ago in "A Man Called Adam," called long distance to Lenningrad to see if she would consider being in his upcoming film version of "Niger," she was hesitant until she learned he was referring to her much cherished role of Mattie. Not knowing how it would be worked out logistically, Cicely accepted anyway.



James Earl Jones as Johnny Williams and Cicely Tyson as his Wife, Mattie, star as a couple beset with problems both domestic and within their community in the screen adaptation of Joseph A. Walker's award winning play, "The River Niger," also starring Lou Gossett, Glynn Turman, Jonelle Allen and Roger E. Mosley.

Jones and co-producer Sidney Beckerman jugled shooting schedules deftly so that Cicely's demanding role could be filmed during a ten-day period included in a brief leave of absence from "Blue Bird." She came to Los Angeles, did her part, completed it on a Friday and boarded a plane for a return trip to Lenningrad the following Saturday. It was a demanding, strenuous schedule allowing for absolutely no mistakes. Not even a half-day of bad weather. Luckily, everything went according to plan. The performance audiences will view on screen in "The River Niger" attest to commendable artistic control and matchless professionalism on the parts of both Ms. Tyson and a devoted production crew.

Mail Bag

In the mail- A note from Elvin H. Archibald former AFRO Mailing Room employee now at P.S.C. No. 4 Sqdn, 3720, Lackland AFB, Texas 78236. He writes;

You probably won't remember me, but I am the person who always said won't you put my picture on your wall?" (AFRO public relations has wall of stars). But, you said I had to do something. Well I have. On Tuesday, April 27 I graduated from Basic Military Training from the United States Air Force.

Editors Note: Right on! Send us a pic and we'll put it on our wall.

A note from Mrs. Pauline Lennon re her nephew William Bill Griffin, Baltimore - born lead singer with the Miracles.

She says they are so proud of Bill because he has accomplished so much in the entertainment field with so little backing (his parents are dead and the only push he got was from his brother and sister).

Remember that Bill Griffin wrote and arranged "Love Machine" that went to the top of the charts. The Miracles have another hit "City of Angels" and make their home-base Los Angeles.

Bill will be home next week to be best man when his sister Diane Griffin marries Paul McGowan on June 27 at Augsbury Lutheran Church. The reception is being planned is being planned for the Howard Room of the Civic Center.

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Ross, Taylor, Summers

By Frederick I. Douglass

What would happen if Diana Ross, Johnnie Taylor and Donna Summer became involved in a love triangle

The result would be a nerve shattering "Eargasm" with a "Disco Lady" who would "Love To Love You Baby" but would also leave you with a "Love Hangover!" You would also have three chartbusting hit makers who are making fortunes by recording songs with suggestive and sexy lyrics that probably could not have been played on the radio five years ago.

The whole erotic trip in music began last summer when sexy, sultry Donna Summer seduced the public in making her 16 minute trick on "Love to Love You Baby" a world-wide million selling album long before a shortened version was released on a 45.

Miss Summer moaned and groaned herself into some big money with a record that simulated love-making to the beat of a funky bass drum and symphonic orchestrations. The record was kind of naughty, but hardly raunchy. Nevertheless, "Love to Love You Baby" was banned from the airwaves in England which merely served to briskly increase sales in the country.

Miss Summer is trying to turn yet another trick with the record buying public with a new album entitled "A Love Trilogy" which features more lyrics about love and a strong disco beat. The album is not particulary good but is getting a lot of airplay and a strong advertising blitz that will make a hit despite the fact that Miss Summer fails to get down. When Donna's first album was reviewed in this column a few months ago, the question was raised by the author as to whether "Love to Love You Baby" was just a freak hit or if the lady could really do it again. Listening to this dull and trite album will immediately tell you that the answer is no.

Diana Ross

Donna Summer

While Donna Summer's new album is a bit of a drag, other people are making a killing by using the unique orchestrations that made "Love to Love You Baby" a killer hit. The prime example is Diana Ross whose recording "Love Hangover" is rapidly escalating to the peak of the Top-40 charts. You don't have to be a musical genius to realize that "Love Hangover" is a xerox copy of Donna Summer's love song. It is really a good record and the public is picking up on "Love Hangover" as fast as copies can be printed.

The biggest and baddest sex-trip record is Johnnie Taylor's "Disco Lady" which is the number one record in the country. "Disco Lady" is also available on Taylor's album "Eargasm" which is the number one album nationwide on all charts. As you know, the AFRO has to tell the truth. Well the truth about Johnnie Taylor's album is that other than "Disco Lady," the album contains dull, tired, drag music that will definitely not arouse you.

But it's Disco Lady" that's the hit. It's another sex trip that let's you know from jump street that Taylor is not just talking about the lady's movements on the dance floor. The record really deserved to be a hit because it features a tight arrangement, a solid beat, catchy lyrics and the funky bass lines of Bootsy Collins of Rubber Band fame. I wonder if we will see a time where records have to be rated like movies. If this comes to pass, then the recent recordings of Johnnie Taylor, Donna Summer and Diana Ross would definitely be X-Rated.

... and all that jazz

By Bob Matthews

When the Left Bank Jazz Society announced last year that the featured attraction at the 12th Anniversary Dinner Dance would be Stan Kenton and his 20-piece band...I scoffed.

"Kenton" we said, "is strictly a concert band. How on earth are people supposed to dance to such things as 'artistry In Rhythm' or Peanut Vendor"?

"Worry thyself not," officials of LBJS told me, "you'll be surprised."

I did.

Kenton and his entourage took the stand an hour late, and announced that he would play a little concert-style music while the guests were enjoying dinner.

This went on for about two numbers, until finally one venturesome couple took the floor to swing out in the old classic jitterbug style.

This set the tone.

From then on, Stan Kenton played strictly for dancing.

He trotted out from his repertoire such goodies as Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady", and "Take the A-Train", plus danceable classics such as "It Might As Well Be Spring", and others.

Just as it happened last year when the Count Basie Band was the featured attraction, "touch-dancing" was the order of the day.

And, it was rather fun, to see people smiling as they danced rather than looking as if they were putting on a boxing exhibition.

As to the Kenton group, he featured five trumpets, five trombones, five saxes, conga drums, trap drums, bass and piano.

With such a huge aggregation, you might suspect you would be blasted out of the hall. But, not so.

It was as smooth-as-silk performance, which made for a thoroughly enjoyable evening. It's difficult to remember that this was the 12th Anniversary of LBJS. Believe it or not, the very first concert was held at the Al Ho Club on Frederick Ave. on August 8, 1964.

About six months later, LBJS began holding its weekly concerts at the old Madison Club, at Madison and Chester Streets until a fire forced a relocation.

The Famous Ballroom was picked, and the weekly concerts have been held at the Charles Street edifice ever since.

Present officers are Leon Manker, president; Elford Jackson, vice-president; Judy Webber, secretary; Ruth Wise, financial secretary; and Veron Welsh, treasurer.

There are a total of 38 members, and we wish them all a happy anniversary and best wishes for continued success in spreading the jazz word.

'Music Man' at Douglass

The Music Department of Frederick Douglass High School is presenting Meredith Wilson's "The Music Man" on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, May 6, 7, and 8 at 8:00 p.m. in the Douglass High School Auditorium, Gwynns Falls Auditorium, Gwynns Falls Parkway and Pulaski Street.

Tickets are available at the door, or may be reserved by calling 396-0348.

Meredith Willson's "The Music Man," the story of a con-man's affect on a turn-of-the-century Iowa town, is being presented as a Bicentennial Salute to American band and show music. It is the spring project of the Douglass High School Music Careers program and the state-wide famous Douglass High School Concert Band.

"The Music Man" stars Claude Lambert and Stephen Boyette on photo left, as the con-man Harold Hill; Angela Weeks and Tammy Palmer center as Marian the Librarian. Also featured but not shown are Bernard Roberson, Willie Burgess, Thomas Williams, and Frederick Griner as the Barbershop Quartet; and Steve Watkins and Adrienne James right, as Mayor and Mrs. Shinn. Also not shown is Tina Rhem as Mrs. Paroo

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