YOU KNOW BECAUSE YOU READ THE AFRO

Did Elvis steal Bo Diddley's stuff?

King of the rock 'n roll in the 1950's

By Ida Peters

Blues after all, is a way of thinking and as much an attitude toward the world as it is a musical form, its roots are buried deeply in the black man's struggle in America.

There have been 57 years of blues . . . . country blues, city blues, rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll and soul music . . . starting with Mamie Smith in 1920 to Aretha Franklin in 1977.

Elvis Presley, who died this week, in the 1950s was the giant figure of rock 'n' roll, a new music named by disc jockey Allan Freed which combined elements of rhythm and blues and country music.

Presley recently played the Baltimore-Washington area with sold-out concerts and the fans were described as middle-aged white fans.

I have to remember that starting in the 1950's and continuing well into the late 1960's, no other white artist so consistently dominated the R & B charts of the various record companies around the nation. And, the history bible in music, BMI, which keeps the records, says that Presley's records sold out to black audiences beginning with his first release for Victor, "Love Me Tender."

In 1952 and 1953, while high school and college students in the South started picking up on rhythm and blues songs to dance to.

The gospel-tinged groups of the late 1940's were groups like the Ravens, the Drifters, the Orioles, the Flamingos, the Penguins, the Crows, the Robins and Wrens.

The college generation of the 1950's were unaffected by the horrors of World War II, were not active politically and unlike their elders did not need the security of familiar, old-world "European" music.

They liked, for a while, diluted versions of black music—produced by white performers such as Kay Starr's version of Chords' "Wheel of Fortune" and Bill Haley's interpretation of Joe Turner's "Shake, Rattle and Roll"

Then came Elvis Presley's version of Willie Mae Thornton's "Hound Dog" and he was off and running with a solid white and black cross-over audience.

After Presley's contract was bought from Memphis' Sun Records (where he was on roster which included Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins) his new company brought him to New York City.

Bo Diddley

Elvis hung around the Apollo Theatre

As Samuel Charters says in "The Country Blues":

"He began hanging around the Apollo Theatre in Harlem watching the rhythm and blues singers, Bo Diddley in particular. They were using dance routines similar to the T-Bone Walker act.

"Whether he learned their steps and routines or worked out his own in the same style is not important. When Presley first became nationally known, Bo Diddley was asked if he thought Elvis had copied his routines. Diddley shrugged, "If he copied me, I don't care—more power to him. I'm not starving."

Charters also said in his book that Presley's first television appearance brought him into national prominence. He was a young good looking singer, shouting the blues and "getting around on stage like a strutting blues singer in a Southern night club."

Presley was ridiculed, bitterly attacked and idolized. A television show that had first called Presley "unfit for a family audience" was forced to pay his price of $50 thousand dollars for three short appearances and he sang a new ballad, "Love Me Tender." By the end of the month, Victor had orders for one million copies of "Love Me Tender" and they hadn't even recorded it yet.

. . . all that Jazz

By Bob Matthews

Have learned, as far as the Left Bank Jazz Society is concerned — to have a little faith and trust.

Say this, because there have been a great many occasions when the attraction at the Sunday afternoon has been a relatively unknown artist — to me, that is.

Such was the case this past Sunday when the stage was occupied by the Warren Chiasson Quartet.

The only thing I had heard about Chiasson was that he formerly played with the George Shearing group.

And so, approached the concert with a completely open mind.

Warren turned out to be a vibraphonist with the remainder of the quartet consisting of:

Chuck Wayne, guitar; Jack Six, acoustic bass and Sonny Brown, drums.

Naturally, was quite familiar with the work of Chuck Wayne, which let me know that the group was in a hard-swinging jazz mold.

First set opened with "Speak Low" and it became readily apparent that this was a musicianly group, in complete command of its instruments.

Warren proved he is well-schooled in the Lionel Hampton style of vibe playing, and using Hamp's style as a base, has moved forward.

Although he looks like an Ivy League athlete, Warren is right out of the bop era in his playing. The way he interpolated "Walking My Baby Back Home" into "Speak Low" was a beauty to hear.

Chuck Wayne did most of the arrangements for the quartet and is more or less the cement which melds the group together.

The first impression on hearing this instrumentation is that something is definitely missing — piano chords.

Kinda remember the first time Gerry Mulligan-Chet Baker dropped the use of a piano in their work. The sound took getting used to.

This time, the bottom-end void created by the lack of a piano sound, was partially filled by boosting the volume of the bass.

Must say, while it helped considerably, it didn't quite fill the hole.

One thing in the Chiasson quartet's favor, they stuck to familiar tunes—classic ones. Such things as "The Way You Look Tonight" or "The Summer Knows."

Noted another interesting phenomenon — Sonny Brown took several drum solos.

Most of them were in the context of the chord structure of the piece being played, but when he took off on an extended solo — it was with snare drum only.

Outside of a steady beat with the sock-cymbals, cymbals were never used in the solo. It takes a master of drum fundamentals to do this.

Jack Six, on bass, is a true member of the "new" school of bass playing. By that, mean the ability to pluck and finger an upright acoustic bass with the facility used with the electric bass.

So — Have to credit the LBJS. Have never been to a bad concert — and whether you've heard of the artist or not — you can bet you'll hear topflight jazz. Never known it to fail.

Imperial stormtroopers interrogate Ben Kenobi (Alec Guinness) and Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) about their robots in the runaway film hit "Star Wars" now at area theatres.

Broadway musical 'Josephine' 1978

We vote for producer, Vinnette!

Gene Lerner and Hank Kaufman through their Deux Amours company have started the ball rolling for their Broadway musical "Josephine" based on the life of Josephine Baker who died in Paris, April 12, 1975.

The producers say rehearsals will start about August, 1978. Cast so far is Rosetta LeNoire, director of the AMAS Theatre Co. to portray the role of Josephine Baker's sister. She appeared on Broadway recently in the revival of "The Royal, Family".

A director has not been selected for the $1,250. million dollar production but the names of Vinnette Carroll, "Your Arms Too Short Too Box With God" and Lina Wertmuller, the Italian theatrical producer are being mentioned, according to Variety.

Hopefully, Vinnette Carroll gets the nod to direct the life of soul sister Josephine Baker.

Andre Levasseur, who designed the exquisite costumes for la Baker during her career will repeat that assignment on Broadway.

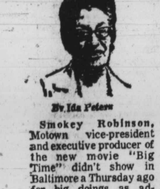
Casting for the title role has not been set according to the producers. They plan on using two performers. One would play the young singer-dancer and the other as the older Josephine.

What's Happening

Clown contest at Shady Grove

Here is your chance of a lifetime! Enter Shady Grove Music Theatre's clown contest. Come in complete clown costume and make-up to the opening performance of Paradise on Ice. Thurs., Aug. 18 at 11:00 a.m., and you will be given free admission to this delightful and dazzling ice spectacular!

During intermission, you can be part of the Parade of Clowns from which the Best Clown in the theatre will be chosen and awarded many exciting prizes—a giant pizza at Pizza Haven in Gaithersburg, Md., a $50.00 savings bond, a luxurious dinner for two at the distinguished Golden Bull Restaurant, and an audition with the choreographer-producer of Paradise on Ice, Barton Weiss!



By Ida Peters

Smokey Robinson, Motown vice-president and executive producer of the new movie "Big Time" didn't show in Baltimore a Thursday ago for big doings as advertised even though the stars of the show Christlpher Joy and Jayne Kennedy were on hand for AFRO Birthday parade and reception.

Smokey did show on Tuesday (Aug. 9) in Philly for two sold-out shows. The film actually had its world premiere in Philly and the press rep Warren Haskins is quoted in the Philadelphia Tribune as saying Philly has the most appreciative black movie audiences.

Aw come on Warren! Baltimore would have been just as appreciative if you folks had done a better job of promotion and advertising. The AFRAM Festival drew 200,000 persons Aug. 6-7 and you could have gotten a lot of mileage out of the AFRO 85th Birthday Parade on Aug. 12, 1977. Your concert on Thursday Aug. 11, was poor timing???

Muhammad Ali told an audience in London he will play the role of Hannibal in his next movie and if there is any justice in this world the Oscar is as good as his.

Ali said that after "The Greatest" "I'm going to play Hannibal with hundreds of elephants and then I'm going to be a black Egyptian warrior with 10,000 horses."

The Commodores, Motown's internationally popular recording stars, will make their feature film debut as special guest stars in "Thank God It's Friday," a Motown-Casablanca Record and Film-Works production for Columbia Pictures release now in production.

In the contemporary comedy, The Commodores appear as themselves as guest stars at a wild dance contest in an unusual disco nightclub. They will perform original material in the film, being directed by Robert Klane on location in Los Angeles.

Buddah Records singing star who was in Baltimore last week to sing "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and ride in the 85th AFRO Birthday Parade is just 27 is almost six feet, brown eyed and wore a see-through blouse in the parade. Needless to say she upset quite a few male hearts along the parade route and on the platform at War Memorial Plaza.

KiKi Shepard has assumed the featured role of "Norma" in Broadway's Grammy-Award-winning musical hit "Bubbling Brown Sugar" at the ANTA Theatre (52nd Street-West of Broadway.) The musical which celebrates the most famous people, places, night spots and music of Harlem from 1910-1940, has been a phenomenal success since its premiere on Broadway last March. The show has played well over 600 performances on Broadway.

KiKi Shepard appeared with the D.C. Repertory Dance Company in concert and in the T.V. Specials "Genesis, Juba and Other Jewels," "A Songster of Black America" and "Black Orpheus." She was seen this spring on the Academy Awards, "The Richard Pryor Special," and in a featured spot with Ben Vereen on the T.V. Critics' Awards.

"The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel" starring Al Pacino will end its run at the Longacre Theatre (220 West 43rd Street) on Saturday, September 3rd. The David Rabe drama is now in the last three weeks of its run and will have played 107 performances when it ends its run here.

"The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel" has been playing to capacity audiences since it opened. Mr. Pacino was awarded this year's Tony Award as "Best Actor." Featured player, Joe Fields, received a Tony nomination.

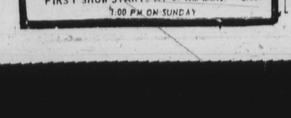
That was Anne Fitzgerald Sims Richardson with Rhea Feikin on the 32 different programs presented on the Public Broadcasting System by the Maryland State Department of Education. She was content coordinator for the series and is former Baltimore teacher and specialist in reading and learning problems.

Clarice L. Scriber has joined WJZ-TV 13, as Information Services Manager. She will act as liason between Channel 13 and members of the press.

Ms. Scriber was Assistant to the Director of Public Relations for the Baltimore Sunpapers from November, 1973, until April, 1977.

She is a 1971 graduate of Morgan State University, with a bachelors of arts degree in French, and she has earned a master of arts degree in Mass Communications from the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania. She is a member of The Association of Black Media Workers, Inc., and Sigma Delta Chi.

The Aberdeen Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. in conjunction with the Silhouettes have scheduled Sept. 4, for their 3rd Annual Kruise. The Port Welcome will depart Constellation Dock, Lombard and Pratt Streets, at 8:00 p.m. For additional information, please contact Tam Dixon at 301-679-9742, Margaret Boone at 301-879-3164, or any member of Kappa Alpha Psi.



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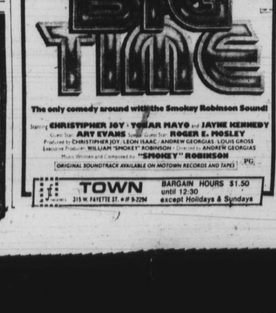

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Black men. . .white women white men. . .black women Ain't nobody's business

Bill Lane in Hollywood

ALICE TRAVIS kicked off her new syndicated television series, "For You, Black Woman," which has been set for a limited summer showing here in Hollywood on KABC-TV on Sundays at one o'clock. The show is admittedly aimed at black women, with Miss Travis explaining her show as being the "electronic answer to Essence magazine."

This writer viewed the first showing of the program. Where Essence is truly a grand and beautiful and highly informative magazine, it does not, in this writer's opinion, compound any ethnic problems that might be held by some black women. The magazine supplies a reading and pictorial need of its readers, and successfully so, as it is the top magazine of appeal to black women ever.

But "For You, Black Woman," it appears the program at once falls into that tiresome category that has befallen so many black television shows aired in numerous U.S. cities over the past ten years, programs that come on some Sundays, like public service tableaus, discussing some more "problems" facing blacks, and telling how "different" black people are.

I am truly not a black woman, hoping in this case to be accepted as a neuter news person looking at a television program forecast in advance to be an answer to something. True, some TV programs have given out ideas and images of black women as being something fat, frumpy and feisty, moody and minacious. In some TV commercials she's the loud one with the Pearl Bailey sauciness of antebellum land. In many news programs she is the hard - talking woman on civic protest, evil and epicene with the sex appeal of a bad bear.

Only among the black women reading news on television stations around the nation does one more often find the complete black woman, possibly; one who moves in today's society with freedom, however with effort, mindful of and maybe inwardly affected by but not hung up by factors that may come her way because she is black.

IT becomes a blithering bore to see over and over again black women in public forums, and especially on TV, squabbling about the anger of "black women" about black men who allegedly "stray" and take up with white women. That's what the first "For You, Black Woman" was about.

This writer actually can never forget when some years back in Los Angeles black women writer, Almena Lomax Davis, won a journalism award for writing a newspaper article about how black males are allegedly strung out in their beliefs that they are walking sex machines, how black males are obsessed with notions that they are super studs.

And for years scientists, pontifs and writers have been stressing that all humans are equal, that there's always somebody to love somebody no matter what. Yet forever we hear these voices from the depths of dismal doom protesting that black women are truly different, that black men are different.

If there are black men who choose fairer lovers or mates, so be it. It takes two. The fairer woman evidently wants him. And so it goes also for the woman who chooses to regard herself esoterically as a black woman. Surely she is desired not just by black men but white males as well, on a wholesome and lasting plane—despite all those hoaxes foisted upon her psyche by probably envious black males that white males only want black women for sexual reasons. So be that, too. There again it takes two.

I have felt a long time that if many, many more black women would free themselves from those mental prisons and marry white men a lot of racial problems in this country would vanish swiftly. In some cases people could be a lot richer, too.

On the program "For You, Black Woman" it was pointed out by one panelist that for every black male taking a white mate there are equal numbers of black women taking white mates. A woman panelist quickly protested, saying the latter unions are few and far between, and suggested they might be oddballs at that. Poor woman. She should come to Hollywood where anything goes.

Maybe I'm wrong, but I feel that no matter how ugly or how beautiful or what color a woman is, there's always someone beneath the sun who's bound to find her the apple of his eye. And it ain't nobody's business but their own what they do next.

FOLKS wondering what's to happen to the two singers of Dawn, now that leader Tony Orlando is going thru trying times . . . Little Arthur Mathews, major domo at Ernie France's busy Parisian Room here, getting a lot of laughs from that pic of him in Sonja Dunson's new Hollywood casting magazine. . . . State Senator Nate Holden hosted scores of Hollywood entertainers at the Marina City Club, Holden toasting them for their steady willingness to aid civic and humanitarian causes . . . Sunbear brightened the Roxy with their first local showcasing, highlighting their new RCA album . . . News still persist that Cleo Laine will portray the late Dorothy Dandridge in a movie soon . . . Rose Royce, nine exciting show people, now recording on the Norman Whitfield label and releasing thru Warner Brothers, heading next month to England for a concert tour.

THE EMOTIONS, Lou Rawls and the O'Jays all saw their newest albums turn gold in sales, and Gloria Lynne is now starring at the Parisian.

VIP's watch AFRO's 85th Birthday Party at War Memorial Plaza last week. Above, D. John Peters, Don Brooks, WWIN, George Collins, Ch. 2, Miss Black Maryland, Marcia Lee, Hot Rod Hulbert, Ed Snowden, Bethlehem Steel, Mrs. Billy Paul from Philly, Pattie Boyd, Holbrook Street; Mrs. Maggie Quille, Druid Heights, George Dozier, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Douglass, J. Terry Edmonds.

Cicely Tyson and Robert Hooks star as a married couple from Detroit whose vacation in the South leads to some surprising changes in their lives, in "Just An Old Sweet Song," a "GE Theater" drama special to be rebroadcast Thurs., Aug. 25 (8:00-9:30 PM, ET) on the CBS Television Network.

Week-end TV watching

By Vanessa Johnson

Saturday: Aug 20

..Pat Albert: The evils of narcotics are spelled out to the gang. 12:00-12:30 p.m. CBS.

..Soul Train: Guests not known at presstime. 1:00-2:00 p.m. Channel 11

..Baseball: The Orioles vs. the Twins at Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington, Minn. 2:15-5:00 p.m. ABC.

Starsky and Hutch; Lynn Anderson portrays a country singer being victimized by a deranged murderer who blames her for an incident several years before in which he was stabbed. 9:00-10:00 p.m. ABC.

..Switch: Pete and Mac baby-sit a 4 year old African boy who was left at Malcolm's door along with a note warning that the child would need protection but giving no hint of his identity. Guests are Iola Falana, and Moses Gunn. 10:00-11:00 p.m. CBS.

Sunday: Aug. 21

..Soul of the City: 12:30-1:30 p.m. Channel 45.

..Baseball: The Orioles vs. the Twins at Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington, Minn. 2:15-5:00 p.m. ABC.

..ABC Movie: "Lawrence of Arabia", an obscure British Army intelligence man, T. E. Lawrence became a legend as the leader of the Arab revolt against the Turks during World War I. 8:00-12:10 a.m. ABC.

Monday: Aug. 22

..Disco 77: Performers Melba Moore, Carol Douglas and the Ritchie Family join host George McCrae. 7:30-8:00 p.m. Channel 9.

..The Jeffersons: Even George is embarrassed by his latest bigoted remark, and seeks to make amends by throwing a good - will bash for the Willises and another interracial couple. 8:00-8:30 p.m. CBS.

..CBS Movie: a strong cast heads "Attack on Terror", part 1 of a 1975 TV-movie about the FBI's investigation into the Mississippi murders of three civil - rights workers, allegedly at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan. 9:00-11:00 p.m. NBC.

Top jazz albums

1. Free as the Wind . . . The Crusaders
2. Lifestyle "(Living & Loving) . . . John Klemmer

Top R & B albums

1. The Floaters
2. Rejoice The Emotions
3. Commodores
4. Right on Time The Brothers Johnson
5. Go For Your Guns . . . The Isley Brothers

Long live the AFRO

By Frederick I. Douglass

Phyllis Hyman! Billy Paul! Bobby Humphrey! Members of AFRO Clean Blocks! Mayor Schaefer! AFRO staff members! Black Baltimoreans by the thousands! What do they all have in common?

They all came out in droves to celebrate the observance of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper's 85th anniversary as the nation's leading black publication of any kind. I was there too. I was truly proud to participate in this event—not just because it was a festive occasion, but because I realize the importance of the AFRO to the black community. Without the AFRO we would have no record of social events and achievements in the black community. Black politicians would have a much harder time of communicating their platforms, goals and objectives to the public. And, we would be deprived of the intellectual pearls of wisdom which adorn the editorial pages in the columns of Sam Yette, Vernon Jordan, William Worthy, Benjamin L. Hooks and Roy Wilkins as well the nitty gritty political cartoons of Tom Stockett.

The celebration day began for me and my wife with a coffee hour in the office of Ken Wilson, the AFRO Vice President in charge of Advertising, where many of Baltimore's prominent blacks were gathered. Notables continued to stream into Wilson's office as the participants of the parade began to arrive. Miss Black Maryland several other lovely ladies who were queens of schools and organizations arrived, awaiting the moment that they would bejewel the floats. The room was charged with electricity as the beautiful black people conversed with one another, reflecting on the significance of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper.

The hour of the parade was approaching quickly, and the excitement kept building to higher levels. And then the recording stars began to arrive. First came Bobbi Humphrey, the nation's premier lady flautist. Next came Billy Paul, the gentleman who rose to fame and fortune with the ballad of infidelity "Me and Mrs. Jones." Then came Phyllis Hyman, who is well on her way to becoming one of the leading ladies of song.

The room was jammed to the brim with talent, personality and positive vibrations.

We all departed from the AFRO like one big happy family and boarded the floats and vehicles that would take us on a parade through downtown Baltimore to War Memorial Plaza where Mayor Schaefer paid tribute to the AFRO as a viable and vital publishing company.

During the rest of the day there were myriad events and festivities which I enjoyed to the max, especially the opportunities to rap with Bobbi Humphrey, Phyllis Hyman and Billy Paul. It was a big day. There were stars and luminaries from everywhere, but none shown as brightly as the AFRO - AMERICAN Newspaper on its 85th anniversary.

I was honored and gratified to participate in the festivities that were held in honor of the AFRO, the only publication in the nation that tells your story like it is. Long live the AFRO!

No Mommy ... no pappy on 'Good Times'

CBS TV sent a notice to the press, this week, that Esther Rolle has asked for her release from "Good Times" because of ill health and that her release has been granted.

"Good Times" directors Austin and Irma Kalish announced: "We will not replace Esther with another actress. We will deal with her absence in a way we believe is both dramatic and realistic".

I don't know what that means. I know how they handled the missing Daddy, John Amos, and that was disgusting. How CBS is going to handle a "missing mommy" is not going to be worth holding your breath for.

Here's how they handled the missing Daddy, John Amos, this week. The boy friend (Aug. 17) Carl (Moses Gunn) surprises the young children when he tells them he's going to propose to Florida and then shocks Florida with another announcement.

In the Aug. 24 episode, while Florida (Esther Rolle) has her hands full with two wacky house painters, the family finds out that Carl (Moses Gunn) has cancer.

His head's on straight

Pictured in costume and holding the head mask he utilized in portraying one of the Humanimals TM in American International Pictures' major film, "The Island of Dr. Moreau," head animal trainer Carl Thompson is a young man with his own handsome head on straight in achieving his career goals.

Holding the unique distinction of being the only black head trainer of exotic animals in the country, Thompson began his career by handling the animal actors for the popular "Daktari" television series.

Using the "affection" training methods he developed with Ralph Helfer at the latter's Enchanted Village, a tourist attraction in Buena Park, Calif., where he holds the permanent position of head trainer, Carl has trained every kind of animal from "The Birds," for the Alfred Hitchcock thriller to literally thousands of animals for television commercials — including the Mercury Cougars.

In "The Island of Dr. Moreau," shot on location in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, he held down the complex, multiple tasks of training the lions, tigers, bears and the various other exotic animals used in the film plus teaching the human and animal actors how to work together, particularly in that realistic fight scene — all this in addition to playing a part himself. Now playing at area theatres, the picture stars Burt Lancaster, Michael York and Barbara Carrera.

Carl Thompson

And now a word . .

The road company of "Bubbling Brown Sugar" left Baltimore last weekend to open at North Shore Music Theatre in Boston while the national company opens the same time at the Colonial Theatre only 30 minutes away. Somebody goofed.

Flop of the year was Sammy Davis Jr. according to a spokesperson at Painters Mill Music Fair outside Baltimore and reported in Variety.

Sammy's act cost $160,000 for seven performances and grossed under $200,000 at a $15. top. Concessions, parking and restaurant put painters snugly in the black. But, he says it was worth it because Sammy kicked off the season in grand style and helped boost season ticket sales.

AT CBS Records, Win. Wilford has been named press information and artist affairs director.

Donna Summer, Casablanca Record and FilmWorks' internationally popular recording artist, will make her film debut as special guest star in "Thank God It's Friday," a Casablanca-Motown production for Columbia Pictures release now filming.

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