# Will Marion Cook takes on H. L. Mencken, page?

By Ida M. Peters

Students of black music have heard of the great composer Will Marion Cook, who married the famous singer Baltimorean Abbie Mitchell when she was about 13...in Baltimore.

Students around the world know of his son Dr. Will Mercer Cook from Howard U. and Atlanta and perhaps Paris, France.

Was prompted by a copy of the original program of "In Dahomey" with lyrics by Paul Lawrence Dunbar and by Will Marion Cook, to write this column. Musical was produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, May 16, 1903 in London, England starring the great comedy team of Bert A. Williams and George W. Walker with Abbie Mitchell as daughter, Pansy.

Morgan State University performed a version of "In Dahomy" this spring which sent me scurrying for my priceless file of Will Marion Cook, especially some of the letters he sent my late father, Dr. Carl Murphy.

In October, 1927, Will Marion Cook, the living in New York became incensed when he read an article by Henry L. Mencken, published in the old New York World.

Mencken in those days was called "The Sage of the Sun" and in those days in Baltimore," The Sun shone for white people only". Therefore, the AFRO reported:

(An open letter to Henry L. Mencken, white, who in a recent news article declared that in "Listen to the Lambs", Nathaniel Dett of Hampton, has written the only real good Negro composition.)

My Dear Sir:

There is little real fun today and your column in the WORLD should add to the gaiety of the nations. True, you cover a vast amount of ground and, since no man knows everything, occasionally your superficial treatment of the subject gives me great joy.

"Listen to the Lambs" by Dett, is an old Negro melody elaborated and developed as if by a third rate white composer. The development is distinctly not Negroid. Maybe that is why you laud" The Lambs".

The superior white Americans took great pleasure in acclaiming Stephen Foster, the greatest writer of Negro songs, also "Swanee River", "Old Black Joe" etc. ae more Scotch than Negro.

Jim Bland, a Negro from Washington, D.C. about 1865 who wrote hundreds of real Negro folk songs such as "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia", "I'se Gwine Back to Dixie", "Christmas Dinner" etc. is not known, tho' I have heard his songs in France, Germany, Russia as well as the fairest of all nations.

Too long has this exploitation of Negro bodies and talent by white men seeking the limelight been tolerated.

Maybe "The Lambs" is the only Negro composition you have had time to hear. You are a very busy man. Maybe if you ask your song dealer for "Song of the Cotton Field" (Porter Grainger), "Rain Song," "Exhortation", "On Emancipation Day", "Lover's Lane" (by Will Marion Cook (ed) and others you might find them Negroid. The World has.

Please Mr. Mencken, stick to familiar subjects such as pawn shops, programs and pennies, and stop Van Vechton-ing and Mencken-ing my race.

Try and stop the growing degeneracy, the filty shows, the unspeakable pleasure of your "Smart Set" and forget my baby loving and baby producing race. Every race has worked out its own artistic development.

You come from Baltimore. Some of the greatest voices ever heard, Black Patti, Abbie Mitchell and others were born in Baltimore, but your descendants, Cavaliers living in Maryland, refused to teach black people and they had to go elsewhere. Ira Aldrich of Baltimore, had to go to England to receive recognition. (Ed. Note: Aldrich was the great Shakespearean actor; Like Eubie Blake says Peabody and the Hopkins would not accept blacks).

Write your World articles about your own race- or better still, the American people. Stop Van Vechten's filty "Nigger Heaven" and the filty parties in Harlem, that preceeded its writing and publication, and above all... LET MY PEOPLE GO.

Will Marion Cook ended his letter with a postscript:

A Negro composer, able to sit up and take nourishment or if your prefer, punishment, 232 W. 138th St., N.Y.

Will Marion Cook was a smart writer and composer. He was an early member of A.S.C.A.P. then at 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

In this letter Cook is also infuriated with Van Vechten's "Nigger Heaven" because it steals a sketch Cook wrote, "The right church, the right pew, the right time and the wrong mis-leaders."

And...he could prove it and did in "Hell of A Life", three volumnes, 1938 printed in U.S., England, France with the French version by Dr. Mercer Cook.

Last night, Thursday, William Henry Curry was guest conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra in a sold-old gospel concert at the Kennedy Center featuring the Walter Hawkins Family Singers, Edwin, Walter and Tramaine.

There is a connection today what Walter Hawkins is saying with his "O Happy Day" nd "Jesus Christ Is the Way" and what will Marion Cook szid in 1927?

Clifton Davis and Carol Jean Lewis in million dollar "Daddy Goodness"

# 'Daddy Goodness' opens Sept. 13 in D.C.

Clifton Davis and Carol-Jean Lewis are two of the dynamic talents in Ashton Springer's big new million-dollar musical, "Daddy Goodness," which has its Broadway opening at the Winter Garden Oct. 18, following its current run at the Forrest Theatre, Philadelphia, through Sept. 8, and another month at the National Theatre, Washington, D.C. beginning Sept. 13.

Also topcast in the lavish show directed by Israel Hicks are two-time Gold Record achiever Freda Payne ("Band of God," "Bring The Boys Home"); Ted Ross, the Tony Award-winning Cowardly Lion of "The Wiz" on Broadway and in the movie; and Rod Perry, who was 'Deke' Kay in television's "S.W.A.T."

The words and music for "Daddy Goodness" are by Ron Miller and Ken Hirsch, the Motown men who wrote many of Diana Ross's and Stevie Wonder's biggest hits.

## 'Making Waves' at Bolton Hill

Makin' Waves, a new musical comedy, is now at the New Bolton Hill Dinner Theatre. This all new show will glitter with the tazz-ma-tazz of the roaring twenties when Flappers were the rage and radio was young.

Featured in the production are David DeBoy, Dana Hart, Anthony Marx, Kathryn Futrelle Leavey and Nancy Krebs. The production is being directed by Paul Hjelmervik with set design by Sandy Severance, costumes by Jay Scott and choreography by Debbie Kloid Goetzinger.

## Corner Theater auditions

Corner Theatre will hold auditions on Saturday, Sept. 15 from noon till 2:00 p.m. at the Community College of Baltimore Liberty Campus for their fall production of "Mother Jones". The auditions will be held in the theatre located in the Fine Arts Building, 2901 Liberty Heights Ave.

"Mother Jones," an epic drama by Baltimore playwright Patricia Montley, is based on the true story of Mary Harris Jones, a 70-ish woman who became a labor leader out of her concern for the dangerous working conditions in the mines of Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania during the first decade of this century. Later, she crusaded against child labor in America. Mother Jones died in 1930 at the age of 100.

A large cast of twenty-five of all ages is needed, including children and older people.

Those interested in backstage work should come to the auditions.

## Prints on City's 250th

In honor of the City's 250th birthday, the Pratt Library will exhibit a selection of prints and watercolors from the Cator Collection of Baltimore views. The historic scenes, given to the library by George Cator, a Baltimore merchant, span the years from 1752 to 1931 and depict once-famous landmarks which have since disappeared, as well as many familiar today.

The prints may be seen during regular library hours from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday on the second floor of the central library, 400 Cathedral street.

## Free films

(Week of September 9-15)

Monday, Sept. 10

Pimlico Branch: Preschool films—"The Camel Who Took a Walk" and "Caps for Sale," 9:30 a.m.

Canton Center: Films—"The Great Silence" and "Mowgli's Brothers," 4 p.m.

Wed., Sept. 12

Pimlico Branch: Films—"Anatole" and "A Boy Alone," 1 p.m.

Clifton Center: Films—"Granny Lives in Galway" and "Pastern Than Witches," 1:30 p.m.

Thurs., Sept. 13

Light Street Branch: Films—"Sleeping Beauty, Brier Rose" and "The Gallant Little Tailor," 3:30 p.m.

## Radio-Thom

A radio-thon to raise money for the Douglass High School music department netted $3,220.13.

Co-sponsored by Mondawmin Mall and Radio WEBB, the event was held toiraise funds to replace band instruments, music and equipment destroyed by vandals during the February 1979 blizzard. The music department suffered a loss valued at $20,000.

Contributions can be mailed to Douglass High School, 2301 Gwynns Falls Parkway, Baltimore, Md. 21217.

In Who's Who Leda Anne Fuller, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. Edward Fuller and a Goucher grad and well known dancer is now doing graduate study at the University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign.

## Jesse Walker in N.Y.

. . . And Now a Word

### Gossip

NEW YORK — Cheryl Lundy, 22, of Montgomery, Ala., was chosen the first Miss Black United States in a beauty contest held at the Westchester County Center in White Plains, N.Y., a benefit for the New York Council of NAACP Branches. Mrs. Hazel Dukes, Council president, was one of the judges.

"3-2-1 Contact," a new nationally distributed magazine about science and technology for elementary school age children, will be launched this fall by the Children's Television Workshop, publishers of the Sesame Street and Electric Company magazines.

Con Edison is one of the supporters of the forthcoming Whitney M. Young Football Classic between Grambling and Morgan State, to be held at Yankee Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 8. It'll be the only football game allowed in the Stadium during the baseball season. Some 50,000 are expected with the proceeds providing ten $1,000 college scholarships for NYC high school seniors.

Warner Bros.' "Blazing Saddles," the featuring a hilarious performance by Cleavon Little, has entered the third year of its uninterrupted engagement at the Cafebiagrafen Theatre in Copenhagen. More than 25,000 people have paid their way in to see the smash comedy hit at the 70-seat specialty theatre since it began its run there in July, 1977.

Interest is reported sky high for the Second New Harlem Ten Kilometer Foot Race, with at least 1,000 runners expected to toe the starting line at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 16, according to Al Ford, whose club-sponsors the race. Entries will be accepted up to 9:45 a.m. the day of the race, but penalty fees will face late entries. Headquarters for race are 22 west 135th Street restaurant.

The Universal Jazz Coalition presented Sarah McLawler at the organ and the UJC "Big Apple" Jazzwomen in a free concert on Thursday at Mullaly Park in the Bronx. Members include Bernadine Warren, drums; Jean Fineberg, and Jane Bloom, sax; Jean Davis and Nancy Hildegard Pratt, trumpet, Sherry Winston, flute, and Evelyn Blakey, vocals.

"Richard Pryor is Back Live in Concert" isn't too funny to those who see it, since it's a repeat of the original movie with only a few minutes of new material thrown in to keep the FTC fraud squad off producer Bill Sargent's back. Released in 38 national markets ads must carry, at Pryor's lawyer's insistence: "Most of the material in this film was in the first concert. This concert was filmed on a different date." Film grossed $22,000,000, netting $7,000,000. Pryor has 12½ percent of the take.

# Enoch Pratt Events for children

England destorys the mighty-Armada of Spain in "Elizabeth R: The Enterprise of England" at 1 p.m. on Wed., Sept. 12, at the Pratt library's Waverly branch, 400 east 33d st.

Starring Charles Laughton and Maureen O'Hara, "Jamaica Inn" follows an innocent girl's search for her aunt amid a den of shipwreckers and murderers at 6 p.m. on Wed., Sept. 12, at the Canton center, 1030 south Ellwood Ave.

In French with English subtitles, "Rififi" is an action-packed crime film based on the novel by Auguste le Breton, to be shown at 7 p.m. on Wed., Sept. 12, at the Fells Point center, 606 south Ann St.

The English Sir Percy Blakeney schemes to save the nobles of France from the Revolution's guillotine in "The Scarlet Pimpernel" at 1:30 p.m. on Sat., Sept. 15, at the Light Street branch, 1251 Light St.

Two Viennese opera singers find themselves living the roles they sing in Puccini's opera in "The Charm of La Boheme," a German language film with English subtitles, to be shown at 2 p.m. on Sat., Sept. 15, at the central library, 400 Cathedral St.


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Premiere

# 'Lazarus Syndrome' new TV blockbuster

By Ida Peters

ABC-TV launched a sneak preview of one their six new series this pastTuesday, "The Lazarus Syndrome" and its clearly a blockbuster.

It stars Louis Gossett, Jr. in a compelling drama about a dedicated surgeon Dr. MacArthur St. Clair pitted against a hard-hitting investigative reporter, Ronald Hunter as Joe Hamill.

Black people have been screaming for years about getting away from series that show black people as pimps, hustlers, and Uncle Thoms.

You have to see this series to believe it. It's daytime soap operas warmed over, fleshed out juicy and gossipy. And, you're going to have hospitals and doctors, screaming and tearing their hair out.

You might call this a different kind of "Dallas" that fascinates you about the lives of rich Texans or the same kind of story that held you spellbound about the wealthy of Detroit in "Wheels."

Certainly, we have all read exposes about doctors who schedule unnecessary operations andtheex-perimentations with heart transplants especially the ones done on blacks in South Africa.

Clearly, these characters and their lives could be black or white but Louis Gossett Jr. fresh from his role as Fiddler in "Roots" has been selected for the role of a dedicated surgeon who saves the life of a white newspaperman.

The opening segment shows him jogging on his beautiful estate while his wife exercises in their spacious pool. It's Sunday. We don't see the kids because "they're watching TV"

You're going to get some flack from parents who want to know why the kids are watching TV and not in the pool os in church.

Sheila Frazier, Ron O'Neal's love interest in "Super Fly" and currently starring with him in "The Hitter" is the beautiful neglected wife.

So now we've the TV hassle for kids and the father who neglects his family who works on Sunday.

The white newspaper man on that Sunday is having a tennis match with his girlfriend while his wife is away on vacation with the kids.

After the newspaper reporter is saved he discovers the white head doctor is popping pills and scheduling unnecessary operations to fund the hospital.

Dr. MacArthur St. Clair, (Gossett) is upset with his patient's dual lovelife, scheduling different times for his wife and lover to visit.

This is almost a ridiculous attitude to take knowing life as it is and finally "half way thru this pre-premiere, you hear Louis Gossett as Dr. St. Clair tell Ronald Hunter (Joe Hammill) you have the "Lazarus Syndrome."

Meaning, look man I'm treating you for your heart. I don't want to ve involved in your love life.

He went on to say that many people regard their doctors as God and expect them to cure their bodies and soul.

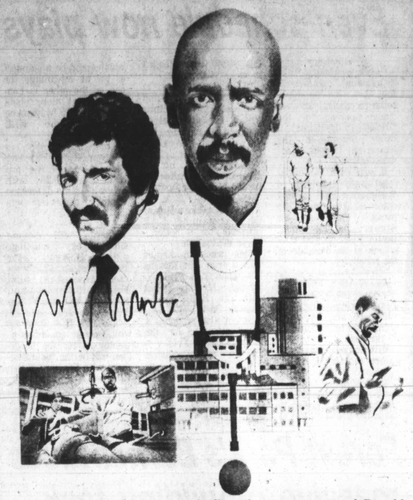
Of course you know that Lazarus was a brother of Mary and Martha raised by Jesus from the dead. In the biblical paraable, the diseased beggar pitted against the rich man.

The plot for the future is set when Dr. St. Clair forces the white head doctor to step down in the midst of an unnecessary heart operation on an immigrant.

Coming up Tuesday, Sept. 11, "Pamela Quinn." She's played by Olivia Cole of "Backstairs at the White House" fame. This episode is about when Pamela, a nurse and former love interest of Dr. St. Clair is assaulted in the hospital parking lot.

The premiere has Bill Blinn and Jerry Thorpe as Executive Prioducers and a salt and pepper cast. Walter Burrell is the Hollywood ABC press rep.

In the weeks to come, time will only tell if "The Lazarus Syndrome" will be written as offensively as some of the pap we've endured in the past. One sure thing, they didn't check it out with any doctors...black or white.



Louis Gossett Jr. (C) stars as a brilliant heart surgeon and Ronald Hunter as a tough, idealistic newspaperman

# TV Watching

**Mike Douglas:** Co-host Gloria Gaynor is joined by Bob Hope, Kukla, Fran & Ollie and rock group Asleep at the Wheel. 4:30-6:00 p.m.-Channel 13.

**Baseball:** The Orioles take on the Red Sox at Fenway Park in Boston 7:30-10:00 p.m.-Channel 2.

**Diff'rent Strokes:** Open hostilities flare between the brothers when Willis demands total privacy to work on a class project. Starring Todd Bridges and Gary Coleman. 8:00-8:30 p.m.-Channel 4.

**Soap Factory:** Musical highlights by Carol Douglas and Anita Ward. 11:00-11:30 p.m.-Channel 45.

**Fat Albert:** This series begins its ninth season by introducing the Brown Hornet, an animated character who solves problems relating to each week's episode. The gang members difficulties making friends at a new school. 11:30-12:00 p.m.-Channel 2.

**American Bandstand:** Guest Bonnie Pointer performs "Heaven Must Have Sent You". 12:30-1:30 p.m.-Channel 7.

**Baseball:** The Orioles take on the Red Sox at Fenway Park in Boston. 2:00-4:30 p.m.-Channel 2.

**Us Against The World II:** American celebrities meet foreign competition in this third annual athletic tournament. The U.S. team includes LeVar Burton, Lou Ferrino and many others. 8:00-10:00 p.m.-Channel 11.

**Greatest of All-A Tribute to Ali:** Tonight Muhammad Ali is feted by an all-star cast. Ate press-time guests slated to appear included Diana Ross, Louis Gosseet Jr., Lou Rawls, Richard Pryor and others. 11:30-1:30 a.m.-Channel 13.

**Baseball:** The Orioles take on the Red Sox at Fenway Park in Boston 2:00-4:30 p.m.-Channel 2.

**Movie:** "Claudine", fine acting highlights this richly textured film about a black welfare mother of six and her garbageman-boy freind. Starring James Earl Jones and Diahann Carroll. 3:00-5:00 p.m.-Channel 5.

# 'Mother Courage' opens

Center Stage will open the 1979-80 season, its seventeenth, with a record breaking number of over 16,000 subscribers. The first production of the season will be Bertolt Brecht's epic masterwork "Mother Courage and her children".

Trazana Beverley and Avon Long head the outstanding cast under the direction of Center Stage Artistic Director, Stan Wojewodski, Jr. with previews starting Sept. 7, opening Sept. 11 through Oct. 14.

In "Mother Courage and her children," Brecht chronciles a family's progress during twelve years of travel through seventeenth century Europe during the Thirty Years' War. Pulling her wagon of wares Mother Courage, accompanied by her children, a Chaplain, and a Cook, follows the mercenary armies while bartering relentlessly for her survival.

Avon Long

Bertolt Brecht, dramatist, director, and poet, wrote "Mother" in 1939 and with its appearance in the repertory of the celebrated Berliner Ensemble in 1949 Brecht became universally recognized as one of the most influential and important figures in contemporary theater.

The title role of Mother Courage is played by Tony Award-winning actress Trazana Beverley. Native born, Ms. Beverley returns to Baltimore for the first time since her national tour of "For colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf."

The role of the 'godless' Chaplain is played by Baltimore born veteran actor Avon Long who was recently seen as Chicken George in Roots: The Next Generation" and has just completed 93 weeks in the Broadway and national companies of "Bubbling Brown Sugar." Michael McCarty, who returns to Center Stage after his appearances as Pompey in "Measure For Measure" and Boris Kolenkhov in "You Can't Take It With You", plays the Cook.

Drama Desk Award-winner, Seret Scott, plays Kattrin, Mother Courage's mute daughter.

Completing the Cast are: Keith David as Eilif, Keith Esau as Swiss Cheese, Reej Johnson as Yvette, and Gregory T. Daniel, Brent Dickey, Judd Jones, Rosemary Knower, Thomas Kopache, Walter Pearthree, and Scott Schofield as members of the ensemble.

The award-winning designers are: Henry Millman, sets; Carrie F. Robbins, costumes; and Paul Gallo, lighting; with incidental music composed by Don Swartz.

## FLASH

At AFRO press time, Center Stage announced that Avon Long has had to return to New York because of a strong committment to the his Broadway musical, "40 Acres and a Mule." He will be replaced by Robert Jackson.

## Top Jazz

1. Street Life Crusaders
2. Morning Dance Spyro Gyra
3. I wanna Play For You Stanley Clarke
4. Heart String Earl Klugh
5. Lucky Seven Bob James
6. An Evening of Magic Chuck Mangione
6. Mingus Joni Mitchell
8. New Chautauqua Pat Metheny
9. Paradise Grover Washington Jr.
10. Livin' Inside Your Love George Benson

## Top Spiritual

1. Love Alive II Walter Hawkins & The Love Center Choir
2. Legendary Gentlemen Jackson Southernairs
3. The Gospel Keynotes Salute Paul Beasley
4. Love Alive Walter Hawkins & The Love Center Choir
5. I Don't Feel Noways Tired Rev. James Cleveland & Salem Inspirational Choir
6. Push For Excellence Various Artists
7. From the Heart Shirley Caesar
8. Changing Times Mighty Clouds of Joy
9. Everything Will Be Alright Rev. Clay Evans
10. Gospel Fire Gospel Keynotes

## Top Disco

1. This Time Baby Jackie Moore
2. Here Comes Sound Again Love Deluxe
3. The Boss-No One Gets The Prize Dina Ross
4. Get Up and Boogie Freddie James
5. I've Got The Next Dance Deniece Williams
7. Found A Cure Ashford & Simpson
7. Undercover Lover-Don'tYouWant My Love Debbie Jacobs
8. Come to Me-Don't Stop Dancing France Joli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# Kevin Hooks in Freddie Prinze story

Reminders of the late Freddie Prinze were never far from the set of "Can You Hear the Laughter& The Story of Freddie Prinze."

The new motion picture-for-television, which will be broadcast on "The CBS Tuesday Night Movies," Tuesday, Setp. 11, was filmed entirely on location in New York City, Los Angeles and Las Vegas, in neighborhoods where Prinze lived, worked and played.

Many of Prinze's friends visited the set during production, advising the actors who were portraying them in the drama. For example, Kevin Hooks, who plays Prinze's New York pal, musician Nat Blake, was coached by the real Nat Blake. And, Randee Heller, who plays Prinze's secretary, Carol, met often with Prinze's actual secretary, Carol Novak.

Also, 20-year-old Michael Binder, who portrays comedian Alan Bursky, was coached by the real Alan Bursky. But unlike Hooks, Heller, and, for that matter, Ira Angustain, who portrays Prinze, Binder had met his real life counterpart many times before "Can You Hear the Laugher. The Story of Freddie Prinze" began production.

Both Binder and Bursky are comics, and have appeared many times at the Comedy Store, a Los Angeles nightclub where many of the movie's scenes were filmed and which Prinze frequented while starring in the television series, "Chico and the Man."

"I didn't know Freddie well, but he was always cordial to me," recalls Binder, who was the Comedy Store's youngest perfromer when Prinze was a ringside rdgular and occasional headliner. "I'd see him there freque tly, when he was breakin in the material, or maybe just hanging out."

Binder remembers those painful finals months in Prinze's life, when drugs and other problems were taking their toll and the Comedy Store faithful began to fear that Prinze was really "hurting himself."

Then the tragic night in January 1977, when word came that Freddie Prinze eas dead.

At the Comedy Store, where young comics still gravitate, looking for their big break, Freddie Prinze is remembered. "They liked him a lot there," Binder reflects. "They miss him."


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