CELEBRITY LOOKOUT

By JASON:

The Reddings

Q. — What's the story on The Reddings?

M. Kelly
Cincinnati, Ohio

A. — The Reddings are 20-year-old Dexter Redding, 16-year-old Otis III and their 23-year-old cousin, Mark Lockett. The trio, whose first LP, "The Awakening," contains the hit single "Remote Control," live in Washington, D.C. where Otis is a senior at St. John's College, a military school. They are sons and nephew of the late Otis Redding and wife, Zelma, who owns a Macon, Georgia nightclub, New Directions. According to Dexter, young Otis wants to get into engineering. In the meantime, The Reddings are writing songs for their second LP on Believe In A Dream records. Otis Redding died in a plane crash over Lake Monoma in Wisconsin on December 10, 1967.

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Q. — Is it true that Muhammad Ali, like Teddy Pendergrass, has a new line of jeans?

B. Dennis
Richmond, Va.

A. — Yes. Ali, like Melba Moore, the late Minnie Riperton and the Teddy Bear, has introduced a line of sportswear bearing his name. Come the Spring of '81, sportswear lovers who've been sporting alligators on the breastbone and swans on their hips will have another choice, the stinging bee (a boxing glove with pincer and wings). Ali's logo will appear on jogging and warm-up suits, shirts, jackets, shorts and six styles of jeans. As always, he swears they "will be a knockout."

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Q. — Do you believe that Miles Davis will come out of retirement to record and tour again?

A. Washington
Fayetteville, N.C.

A. — No. Despite recent rumors that Miles has returned to the studio, he, in fact, would have to return to the gym if he planned to record and tour. He has always trained like a boxer before tours and recording sessions. Since he says he has neither been to the gym nor played the trumpet in over five years, it is unlikely that he would have either the chops or the stamina to record or take on the grueling task of a tour in the near future. Friends and musicians close to him say that, although he is brilliant musically, he shows no interest in playing again.

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Q. — My kids and I never missed an episode of "From Jumpstreet," with Oscar Brown Jr. But now I hear that the series has been discontinued. Can you tell us why?

C. T. Wright
Washington, D.C.

A. — "From Jumpstreet: A Story of Black Music," was produced by WETA in Washington, D.C. as a 13-part limited series. The series was funded by a $1.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education for viewing nationally on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). The series resulted from extensive research in black history and musicology by Dr. James Standifer, professor of music at the University of Michigan and Dr. Vada Butcher, ethnomusicologist and former dean of the Howard University College of Fine Arts. Poet - playwright - singer - actor Oscar Brown Jr. was chosen as host of the show because of his "long-standing, active familiarky with black music" and the fact that he "relates easily to teenagers," according to executive producer, Charles Hobson. At present, there are no plans and no funds to reproduce the show. However, to express your views on a possible continuation, write to Hobson at WETA/26, Box 2626, Washington, D.C. 20013.

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Q. — Who are "The Guardian Angels?"

A. — Contrary to some misconceptions that they are a new rock band, The Guardian Angels are a self-styled group of vigilantes who patrol the subways of New York City and act as escorts for the elderly and women traveling alone. Founded by 23-year-old Curtis Sliwa, the group claims membership of 700 teenagers. Although the youngsters carry no weapons, Sliwa claims that many are proficient in the martial arts. Since the group began in 1979 as the "Magnificent 13," they have grown tremendously, and have come under increasing criticism from the police, who fear they could get hurt, and the press. Still, Sliwa claims to be dedicated. "I'm an Angel to the heart," he said. "If I died doing this, at least it's doing something good."

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Q. — Is it true that trumpet player Donald Byrd is a collector of academic degrees? Does he still teach at Howard University?

M. Clark
Los Angeles, Calif.

A. — That's an interesting way of putting it. Dr. Byrd received his Ph.D. from Columbia University, after he earned a bachelor's and a master's from the Manhattan School of Music, and two master's degrees from Columbia Teachers College. He left Howard University in 1977, where he founded the Jazz Studies Program. Presently, Byrd teaches at North Carolina Central University, which will be the first institution to exhibit his collection of black memorabilia, dating from the 1700s. Byrd's collection includes 20 pieces of artwork by such artists as Henry Owasa - Tanner, Romare Bearden and Charles White. He has also organized a new band, as he did with the Blackbyrds at Howard, called 125th Street. Look for 125th Street's new LP in March.

Oscar Brown, Jr.

Q. — Is it true that singer Sylvester has separated from his back-up group, Two Tons of Fun?

G. Brighton
Newark, Del.

A. — Yes. Sylvester and the Two Tons have gone their separate ways, amicably, we're told. Both the falsetto voiced singer and his former back-up group have new LPs on the Fantasy label. Sylvester does the funkiest rendition of classics "Fever" and "Cry Me a River" ever on his new one "Sell My Soul." Listen out for the Two Tons, on "Back Atcha."

Sylvester

The Blackbyrds

All letters should be addressed to Jason, DAWN Magazine, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, Md. 21201. All questions are welcome, but while Jason cannot provide individual answers, questions of general interest will be used in this column.

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