Lou Jacobs at 78

Most famous face in clowndom

For well over half a century, Lou Jacobs, 78 - year - young funster, has tickled the funny bones of Big Top fans everywhere. A familiar face to parents and children alike, this revered resident of Clown Alley will be arriving on March 17 with the 111th Edition of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus at the Baltimore Civic Center.

Even counting the major heads of state and the top superstars of show business, Lou Jacobs owns one of the most famous faces in the world. His is the only face of a living American to decorate a U.S. postage stamp.

Says Lou, "I meet people who say, 'My father and mother used to take me to see you and now I am taking my children.'" And, as he goes into his 57th year with The Greatest Show On Earth, Lou finds that youngsters of today laugh at pretty much the same material that amused the children of yesteryear. "Even with all the things they see on television and everywhere, kids are still the same," reveals the beloved clown.

Lou is always devising new gags and contraptions to aid him in his mirthmaking. In fact, he has probably invented more comedy contraptions than any other clown in history. Lou's most important innovation - to clowning came during the Big Top years, when Lou Jacobs devised the rubber ball nose. "They always used to have putty," he said. "I figured a rubber ball would look good on me, so I got a rubber ball in a dime store and carved it out and it looked great." Recently, for coolness and comfort's sake, he switched to plastic.

For many years, Knucklehead, an adorable tiny terrier, was Lou's prankster pooch and partner in the spotlight. However, this year the position passes on to her pup PeeWee, who when dressed as either a curious rabbit or the world's smallest elephant, almost steals the scene.

Lou is aided in his comedy chores by more than two dozen other funnymen, all members of the clown contingent of The Greatest Show On Earth.

EUBIE BREAKS HIP — Eubie Blake, 98, one of this country's greatest musicians and composers was listed in fair condition in a Brooklyn, N.Y. hospital Wednesday, where he underwent an operation for a broken hip. He was admitted to Long Island Hospital last Friday after falling out of bed and breaking his hip.

Marguerite Campbell's Orchard St. Committee has raised $30,000

Are we fiddling while Rome burns?

The Committee for the Preservation of Orchard Street Church under Mrs. Marguerite J. Campbell, president and John Douglass, treasurer have raised $30,000 since November, 1980 and the money is in an interest bearing account at First National.

Mrs. Campbell and her committee have put in back - breaking hours asking people to solicit a dollar here and there in a sign - a - line campaign, thru candy sales and personal solicitation.

Orchard Street Church is an important link in Baltimore's black history and the city - published perspectus for the museum says that $750,000 is needed to cover costs of exterior restoration; $1 million to cover costs of the Church nave, balcony and basement support and acquisition of collections; and $750,000 to cover the cost of permanent exhibits."

Why can't the Orchard Street Museum be treated like the Peale, The Baltimore Art Museum or the Acquarium in the Inner Harbor" Millions in our tax dollars support these institutions each year.

Mrs. Campbell's committee needs $45,000 more to meet Mayor Schaefer's goal of $75,000 or turn part of the building over for seven apartments.

Maybe the whole museum concept ought to be re - thought. Maybe the committee should ask the Mayor to turn the building over to them for $1.00 find their own developer and get started shoring up the building with what money they have.

Or maybe they redesign to make part of the building into what this community needs most, a banquet hall with catering facilities so that the hundreds of black groups won't have to go out to the county to have their balls and parties.

Maybe then a coalition of groups would pledge for one year one - half of what they spend in the county. For instance a single group might spend $7,000 to hold their annual affair. In 1981 - 82 instead of holding their affair with food and drink, they would invite the same people, hold their affair at the Masonic Temple, bring their own drinks and food and give $3,500 to Orchard Street.

And with strong minds and backs leading the way Orchard Street would be a reality. Remember Bethel Church was built with nickles and dimes.

It's a thought anyway. Ida Peters.

Editorial

Larry Patterson, a student at Harlem Park Junior High School, was one of the first place winners in a poster contest sponsored by C&P Telephone's Baltimore City Community Relations teams. The theme of the contest was The Telephone: It's Your Link, Don't Break It. Art teacher Loraine Brown (L), and art department head Patricia Richardson, (R), joined C&P officials Walter Clark, Michelle Lampkin and Charles Schmenner in congratulating Larry. Students from 34 city schools submitted more than 170 entries. First place winners received a $50 U.S. Saving Bond, a T-shirt and a certificate.

Benny Luke... saucy houseboy to the odd couple

One of the funniest and most memorable performances in the international comedy hit, "La Cage Aux Folies," was delivered by an American from Los Angeles — Benny Luke. He portrayed Jacob, an eccentric, saucy houseboy employed by the odd couple, Renato Baldi (Ugo Tognazzi), proprietor of a transvestite Riviera night club, and his companion and star performer Albin (Michel Serrault), known professionally as "Zaza Napoli."

Benny now re - creates the role in "La Cage Aux Folies II," sequel to the Edouard Molinaro film opening in April at arena theatres.

Benny Luke is no stranger to the role of Jacob. He was in the Parisian stage version of "La Cage Aux Folies" and played the role in more than 2500 performances over a continuous six - year period. Along with French star Michel Serrault, Benny was, the only one to repeat his role in Molinaro's wildly successful original film version.

Benny Luke began his career at a very early age as an amateur dancer and, after high school and four years in the U.S. Navy, took up dancing professionally. He subsequently moved to Paris where he attracted attention performing at the celebrated Lido and in several editions of the Folies Bergeres. He has appeared on television in France and Germany and toured extensively in West Germany with Lester Wilson in "Double Exposure."

He served as assistant choreographer of the German production of "Jesus Christ Superstar," and danced with the late Josephine Baker in a Red Cross Gala at Monte Carlo.

Luke makes his home in Paris.

Presented by Marcello Danon, "La Cage Aux Folies II" stars Ugo Tognazzi and Michel Serrault. It is a Film by Edouard Molinaro with Marcell Bozzuffi, Paola Borboni, Giovanni Vettorazzo, Glauco Onorato, Roberto Bisacco and Benny Luke with the participation of Michel Galabru.

Luke is Jacob the maid was in original French play and movie

'I Ought to Be In Pictures'

Alexa Kenin steals show

Theatre review

By Ida Peters

Neil Simon's comedy "I Ought to Be in Pictures" opened at the Mechanic Theatre Tuesday night before an audience that laughed a little but did not give but one curtain call and no famous Baltimore standing ovation.

Simon who has had more Broadway successes in the last 20 years than any other playwright seems to have recovered from his own writing block to throw this one together.

The action takes place in West Hollywood, Calif. in 1980 in the cluttered living - room of Herb played by Bill Macy. He's a middle-aged writer who hasn't done anything lately seemingly having a writer's block preferring to spend his days at the race track because he can make more money.

Don't look for Bill Macy to be playing Walter Findley as he did for six years on TV in "Maude" because there's no Bea Arthur.

However, Alexa Kenin plays his 19-year-old daughter. Libby is the saving grace of the play with her brassy, breezy manner, and walks away with the show.

Macy it seems deserted his wife and two children in Brooklyn, N.Y. 16 years ago because his wife had no sense of humor and would not laugh at his jokes.

Libby hitches more than she hikes to California to find her father. She gives the excuse that she wants to go into the movies with the help of her famous father but what she really wants is love and understanding and reasons why he deserted the family. As she says "it just so happens you owe me."

Patricia Harty is Stelly the Hollywood make-up artist with two kids who has been Macy's lover for two years. She mothers him and sympathizes when he assumes the worried parent role for the first time in his life.

Best running jokes in the play is where Libby talks to her dead grandmother and the play of works on the backyard trees... an Orange tree, a Lemon tree and one that grows pits.

The set by David Jenkins is typical California bachelor, missing light bulbs and all. In the second act, daughter Libby redecorates with plants, mod screen and new pots and pans.

While "I Ought to Be in Pictures" is not "Plaza Suite" or "California Suite", it is a pointed comment on today's families.

Island in Alexandria

By Dorothy Pritchett

An exciting, new group has invaded the musical scene, and its refreshing, exhilarating sound has already won it a following. Led by Eric Jackson, Island delivers top 40 tunes in a smooth, soulful manner that indicates the group will be around for a long time.

Currently, Island is enjoying a two - week engagement until March 14 (except Sundays) in Theodora's Lounge at the Ramada Inn in Alexandria, Va. Following this, the group will head for Weirton, W. Va. where it is booked for two weeks.

Island was formed nine months ago, when Eric Jackson, lead singer; Rick and Jack Bergman, guitarist and drummer; Chuck Simon, bass player; and Lon Estes, keyboard player, decided to put their musical talents to use.

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Atlantic Starr tops charts; Black byrds at Morgan

ATLANTIC STARR — Front (L - R) Porter Carroll, Sharon Bryant, Wayne Lewis, William Sudderth. Rear, Jonathan Lewis, Joseph Phillips, Clifford Archer, David Lewis and Koran Daniels.

Records

By Ida Peters

Atlantic Starr is not an Eastern asteroid or a starship in the night but a musical force out of White Plains, N.Y.

Their "When Love Calls" from their new A & M album "Radiant" with lead vocals by Sharon Bryant has an infectious track that grooves from beginning to end.

We chatted with Porter Carroll Jr. who called the AFRO during a break from White Plains. Atlantic Starr says they have been in the studio since last July and the completed album "Radiant" was released three weeks ago. It has taken off on the East Coast especially in Baltimore-Washington and Richmond.

The average age of the group is 24 and they all attended Woodland High School in Hartsdale, N.Y. where they all live within a 10 block radius of each other.

When they decided to go big time, they tightened up their act and made up Atlantic Starr from the best members of three groups, Exact Change, Unchained Youth and New Bands.

The group includes three brothers, David, Jonathan and Wayne Lewis playing guitar, trombone and keybroads; Bill Sudderth III on trumpet; Koran Daniels on Saxophones; Joe Phillips on percussion and the incredible Sharon Bryant... she of the awesome voice... sharing lead vocals with David, Wayne and Porter.

The "Radiant" album is produced by James Carmichael who wrote many successes for The Commodores.

Tom Browne heads show at Morgan.

"Mystery Girl" has a classy dance rhythm sung by Porter Carroll Jr. A party must is "Under Pressure" featuring Wayne Lewis' funky vocals. On "Think About That" Wayne sings with his preaching voice and in his begging voice on "Send For Me".

David Lewis is lead on "Does It Matter" and duets with Sharon Bryant on "Am I Dreaming".

Porter Carroll Jr. ends the interview with the hopes that they are sending positive vibes to their listeners and "we're happy about playing and want to be influential".

When Paul Simon, hosted the Grammy gala recently, introduced the gospel awards by tribute to Jessy Dixon and others by saying, "I've always felt that gospel people are particularly loving and generous in Spirit. For years gospel music has been divided into two categories, inspirational and contemporary, which is essentially a euphuism for black gospel and white gospel music." Simon received heavy applause when he added, "Of course it seems God doesn't make the same distinction" . . . and that's the man's exact words on National TV.

When jazz drummer Cozy Cole died recently it recalled the big "Topsy" jazz recording Cole made back in the early Sixties. It was a giant seller. And it came about when then greatly popular deejay Magnificent Montague took Cozy Cole into Sid Nathan's recording studio in Cincinnati and did the taping. The result was a windfall of money for a drummer who many had said was outmoded after the demise of the big bands.

The Blackbyrds are back home in the BaltimoreWashington area after winding up a successful month-long series of coast-to-coast club dates... their first in several years.

As before, the backbone of the band is the formidable rhythm section of drummer Keith Killgo, guitarist Orville Saunders, and bassist Joe Hall III. These three original 'byrds, however, have considerably expanded their stage roles. Killgo, clearly the ringleader and driving force, also handles lead vocals with an abundance of grace and charm. Saunders, in the "Festus Willy" segment of the show, tries his hand at stand-up comedy and turns out some serious blues guitar work. Then there's Joe Hall, the Scorpio of the group, working with the dexterity of a jazz player and avoiding funk cliches at every turn.

There's also new vocalist James Garrett, who has a silky-smooth personality and a voice to match.

The Blackbyrd's current lineup also includes percussionist Dan Stewart, who takes over the drums when Killgo is center stage; keyboardist John Uzment and Harold Barney; and a dazzling horn section known as the Lien Squad... Curtis Pope (trumpet), Ronald Thompson (trombone), and saxophonists Howard Burns and Lenny Harris.

Mode of transportation for this tour was bus, but the Blackbyrds had been plagued by mechanical breakdowns and narcoleptic drivers till they met their match in Nashville: a dynamo of a driver named (get this) Black Byrd, nee Eddie Byrd. Black Byrd will be at the wheel when the band heads back out mid-March for more club and college appearances, including al concert with Tom Browne at Morgan U. this weekend.

Light Records artists Andrae Crouch, Walter Hawkins and Tramaine Hawkins all received nominations for "Best Selling Gospel-Spiritual Album" for the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) Gift of Music Awards with award Winners to be announced at the National conventional, April 11-15 at the Diplomat Hotel, Hollywood, Fla.

The award is based on sales according to the public.

Crouch was nominated for "I'll Be Thinking Of You", with Walter Hawkins and the Love Center Choir for "Love Alive II" and Tramaine Hawkins for "Tramaine".

Other named were Mighty Clouds of Joy for "Changing Time", James Cleveland, "It's A New Day" and Bob Dylan for "Saved". The Hawkins will be in Baltimore May 10 before going to Europe.

A new album from The Spinners "Labor Of Love" is being released this week by Atlantic Records and includes the current hit single "Yesterday Once More/Nothing Remains The Same".

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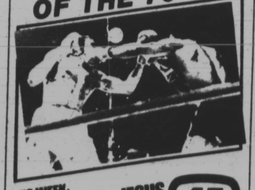
THIS WEEK: DURAN/DeJESUS
5 p.m. Saturday
45 WBFF-TV

Jesse Walker's N.Y.

NEW YORK — Radio station WLIB-AM, the first all Black News and Information station, was off to an auspicious start its first week when Pubelo Urubu Gossman had Ben Vereen as a guest on his 2 - 4 p.m. interview show. Vereen, who also answered calls from listeners, tried to explain that his widely - criticized pre - Inaugural black face act of Bert Williams was my contribution against racism and discrimination. It was part of history that made it possible for us to be where we are," he explained, while pointing out that the show had been taped and edited and much left out. Vereen, who said he'd performed the complete act on his own TV show and with the Boston Pops with the late Arthur Fieider, said he'd received a letter from President Reagan saying he'd caught the message Vereen was trying to put over and would keep it in mind.

After a federal judge set aside a $5,822 award to playwright Ed Bullins for the cash compensation for the killing of his son by an out-of-control Philadelphia police car, a second trial before the same judge resulted in an award of $201,792.

Two dancing brothers are not performing on Broadway in long-awaited musicals. Gregory Hines is "the star" of "Sophisticated Ladies" at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, and Maurice Hines is stopping the show nightly in "Bring Back Birdie," the Donald O'Conner starrer at the Martin Beck Theater.

After its long journey from rehearsals in NYC, tryouts in Philadelphia and Washington and previews in NYC — "Sophisticated Ladies," the "musical" based on the music of Duke Ellington, finally opened to some very good, some good and some not-so-good reviews. The big question: Will this show enjoy an extended run long enough to recoup the heavy investment it cost? Tickets are $24.50 top weeknights, $27.50 weekend nights.

Novella Nelson and Joe Seneca have the roles of the family servants in Lillian Hellman's "The Little Foxes," the revival of the hit drama starring Elizabeth Taylor and now trying out in Florida and due for an April bow in NYC after a stop in Washington.

Allen Marshall has announced the Phil Black Funmaker Ball will be held Friday, April 24 at the Hotel Diplomat with Eddie Moore emcee and the music of Lonnie Youngblood. This is the city's famous Drag Masquerade ball, once a Harlem institution at the old Rockland Palace.

TV Watching

By Vanessa Johnson

Friday

Benson: Clayton winds up on a mob's hit list after blowing the whistle on a corporate front that tried to buy his influence with the governor. Starring Robert Guillaume. 8:00-8:30 p.m. Ch. 13.

Tonight: Guests include actor Byron Allen of "Real People". 11:30-12:30 a.m. Ch. 11.

Midnight Special: A segment on singer Donna Summer is shown. 12:30-2:00 a.m. Ch. 11.

Saturday

Fat Albert: A young ballet dancer named Dimitri is ridiculed by the gang, who think boys shouldn't wear leotards. Hosted by Bill Cosby. 12:00-12:30 p.m. Ch. 2.

American Bandstand: Guests include singer Jermaine Jackson, who sings "All Because of You" and "You Like Me, Don't You". 12:30-1:30 p.m. Ch. 7.

From Jumpstreet: The links between jazz and blues are explored in a show with bassist composer Willie Dixon, trumpeter Roy Eldridge. Hosted by Oscar Brown Jr.. 3:00-3:30 p.m. Ch. 22 & 67.

Barbara Mandrell: Guests include singer Teddy Pendergrass who sings "Is It Still Good To Ya?". 8:00-9:00 p.m. Ch. 11.

Hill Street Blues: Despite his imminent promotion, Furillo pushes an investigation linking a city councilman to a prostitute's murder. Starring Michael Warren. 10:00-11:00 p.m. Ch. 11.

Saturday Night Live: Guest host tonight is Robert Guillaume of "Benson". 11:30-1:00 a.m. Ch. 11.

Blackbyrds at Morgan

Donna Summer on Midnight Special

Teddy Pendergrass on "Kids Are People Too" and Barbara Mandrell.

Don Kirshner's Rock Concert: Music by Rufus and Chaka Khan and comedy by Jimmie "J.J." Walker. 1:30-3:00 a.m. Ch. 4.

Sunday

Kids Are People Too: Guests include singer Teddy Pendergrass, gymnast Kurt Thomas and others. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Ch. 3.

Solid Gold: Co-host Leo Sayer presents Sister Sledge and Jermaine Jackson. 1:00-2:00 p.m. Ch. 45.

Superteams: The baseball champion Philadelphia Phillies take on their World Series foes, the Kansas City Royals in the second preliminary of the "Superteams". Among comparisons are Lonnie Smith and Willie Wilson. 2:00-3:15 p.m. Ch. 13.

Movie: "Doctor Zhivago", a love story played on a grand scale, encompassing World War I, the Russian Revolution and the scenic splendor of Russia itself. 8:00-12:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

The Jeffersons: An employee's death puts George in the uncomfortable position of delivering the eulogy, for a man everyone hated. Starring Sherman Hemsley. 9:30-10:00 p.m. Ch. 2.

Monday

PM Magazine: Segments on singer Grammy award winner Aretha Franklin. 7:30-8:00 p.m. Ch. 9.

White Shadow: An alumni game returns four former regulars, Reese, Hayward, Goldstein and Gomer to Carver High. Ella Fitzgerald appears as a former jazz great. 8:00-9:00 p.m. Ch. 2.

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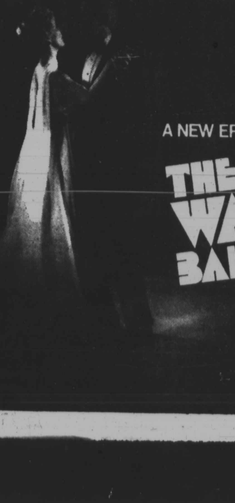
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