Contents

Best Bets ..... Page 2
A Night at the Opera ..... Page 3
Steppin' Out ..... Page 4
Delectables ..... Page 4
Musical Notes ..... Page 5
In Performance ..... Page 6
Flicks ..... Page 7
Kid Stuff ..... Page 7
Miscellany ..... Page 7
The Tube ..... Pages 9-14

Friday Plus

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Best Bets

This Will Be a Fantastic Show

The Association for Sickle Cell Services Education, Research and Treatment, Inc. is proud to present, in concert, the incomparable **Natalie Cole.** Along with the **Duke Ellington Orchestra,** under the direction of **Mercer Ellington.** Natalie Cole will entertain the Baltimore crowd at the **Meyerhoff Symphony Hall** on Wednesday, March 23.

The recent target of many vague rumors concerning her physical and mental health, Natalie Cole is apparently up and around and ready to dispel them all. Her performances are always dynamic, and this one is certain to be no less.

"This Will Be," "Sophisticated Lady," "Inseparable," the list of hits goes on and on for Natalie Cole who has proven herself time and time again as more than just the daughter of famed vocalist Nat King Cole. As one of today's top female performers, she has carved a name for herself justly in the music industry.

Tickets are currently on sale for the Natalie Cole performance at Assert, P.O. Box 7025, 21210, Meyerhoff Box Office, Mondawmin Mall Modern Music, Telecharge: 625-1400. Prices are $21, $18 and $15 (Tax Deductable).

Mellow Music at Painters Mill

In a world that is perpetually bombarded with heavy metal music, electronically produced dance music, and a never ending war for control of the ultimate decibel level, Earl Klugh has mastered the acoustic nylon string guitar. His stylistic presentation of both his instrument and his music distinguishes him from a horde of other guitarists. And, to present his simplistic stylings to the area, **Earl Klugh** will appear in concert at the **Painters Mill Star Theatre,** Friday, March 25 at 8:00 PM.

Not a Top 40 performer, Earl Klugh has achieved most of his success from his many album releases—*Heartstrings, Fingerpaintings,* and his latest, *Crazy For You.* Totally instrumental, these albums always manage to capture and set a quiet, romantic mood. With influences from greats like Bob James, George Benson and Chet Atkins, Klugh is successful in creating a style that is completely unique and exceptionally popular.

Tickets for the show are on sale at the Baltimore Civic Center, the Towson Center, Painters Mill Box Office and Modern Music in Mondawmin Mall. All tickets are $12.50.

Basketball Magic At The Cap Centre

The Harlem Globetrotters, the world's most popular sports team, will bring their legendary basketball wizardy and hilarious antics to Capital Centre for three marvelous performances on Saturday, March 19 at 2 and 7:30 PM and Sunday, March 20 at 2:00 PM.

Currently in their 57th season, the Globetrotters have long enjoyed a love affair with children around the world. No one is ever sure who has more fun during the games, the players or the kids.

The familiar strains of "Sweet Georgia Brown" and the amazing "Magic Circle" are the kinds of Globetrotters traditions that allow young and old to enjoy their performances again and again.

Tickets are $9.50, $7.50, and $6 with discounts of $2.50 offered to youths (12 and under) and senior citizens (65 and older) on all prices for all performances. Tickets are available at the Capital Centre box office, all area Hecht's department stores, the Crystal City Underground and the downtown ticket office at 1801 K Street, NW.

A Night at the Opera

story by C.T. Goodman
photographs by P.A. Greene

Thoughts of the opera, often times generate images of wealthy patrons dressed in elegant formalwear viewing overweight performers vocalizing in foreign tongues. It's an image that has no specific origins but has had much encouragement by television satirist like the incomparable Bugs Bunny. Nevertheless, the institution of the opera has continued with all its majesty, pomp and circumstance, dramatic fervor, musical genius, yet selected audience that has traditionally always enjoyed it.

But, as of late, opera promoters have decided that these false images need to be rectified, for the benefit of the opera, as well as the public. They want to instill the belief that the opera is not some kind of rich man's artform that mysteriously combines an upperclass social status and a certain intellectual prowess, but instead, is an artform that can be enjoyed and understood by anyone willing to take the time to experience it. In an attempt to bring that philosophy to the Baltimore/Washington area, the Baltimore Opera Company is proudly presenting an extravagant production this week. With a cast of 60, a fantasticallydesigned and erected set, and an unquestionable classic, the Gershwin opera "Porgy and Bess" has begun its five day run at the Lyric Opera House.

According to a spokesman for the Baltimore Opera Company, Tim Cockey, "'Porgy and Bess' was chosen to broaden the base of the company for a variety of reasons--its familiarity for one, it's in English, for two. Also, the story is easy to understand as are the songs which are very recognizable. "Summertime," "It Ain't Necessarily So," and "I Got Plenty of Nuthin'"--they are all popular tunes, tunes that you could possibly find yourself humming as you leave the theatre. 'Porgy and Bess' combines the best of both musical worlds."

Donnie Ray Albert and Esther Hinds, 'Porgy' and 'Bess', sing of their new found love in 'Bess, You Is My Woman, Now.'

In this production, a cast of professional and amateur actors, singers, and dancers (many of which are students from Baltimore's School For The Arts), tell the dramatic story of life and love in the Catfish Row section of Charleston, South Carolina. It is here that a crippled beggarman, Porgy, finds his first love in the "immoral" Bess. Previously the 'woman' of the renegade Crown, Bess learns a truer meaning of love through her relationship with the cripple. Yet, despite a continuous weakness of character and will, Bess becomes the frequent cause of problems between the male characters of the opera.

In the starring role of Porgy is Donnie Ray Albert, a performer frequently heralded as the finest interpreter of the role today.

"'Porgy and Bess' is a love story, a love triangle," he says. "It's a good piece for novice opera goers to start with. This is my fourth production as Porgy, and I very much enjoy the role. I think anyone watching would be able pick up the flow of action pretty easily."

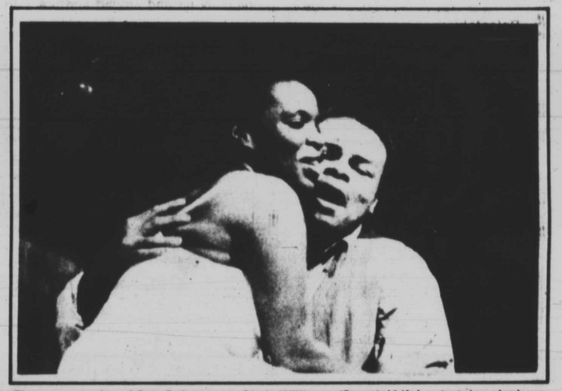
Barbados born Esther Hinds, is Donnie Ray's troubled Bess.

"I've played Bess to Donnie's Porgy many times. It's a wonderful opera. It's easy to follow because of the music and simple story line, but to get the most out of it, I would suggest to someone who is totally unfamiliar with it to listen to a recording first."

Also in the cast are Jonathan Sprague as Crown, Betty McDonald as Serena, and Ivan Thomas as Jake. Todd Duncan, the original Porgy of 1935, will also be on hand for this production, though not as an active participant. The Opera Company is dedicating this production of 'Porgy and Bess' to him in celebration of his 80th birthday.

In this, the 32nd year of the Baltimore Opera Company, actors and administrators alike realize the importance and advantages of appealing to a wider audience.

"At a given performance, you may walk in the door of the theatre and see people dressed in tuxedos and gowns, turn the corner and see a couple in blue jeans, " continues BOC's Cockey. "We presently have a healthy cross section of the public but not as extensive as we would like. We really want to reach out and show people that we want their company. With 'Porgy and Bess' on our schedule, we hoped to accomplish that, and, I think we will."



There are shades of Cab Calloway as Clyde Williams, 'Sportin' Life', entertains picnicers with his opinions of The Bible in 'It Ain't Necessarily So.'

Although a cripple, an angered 'Porgy' frightens Sportin' Life momentarily into leaving Bess alone to live with him in peace.

Bess skeptically watches as she awaits her $1.50 'divorce' from Crown, a man to whom she was never married.

Todd Duncan, the original 'Porgy', is celebrating his 80th birthday this year. The Baltimore Opera Company dedicated this production to him on opening night.