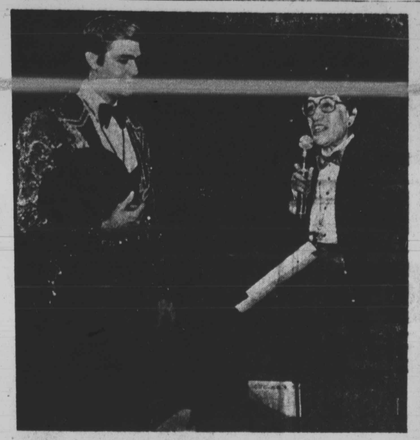


Ladies and gentlemen and children of all ages says AFRO's Entertainment Editor Ida Peters as she serves as Honorary Ringmaster at AFRO Night at Circus. She's wearing black velvet with formal shirt and red bow tie. Left, Dinny McGuire who has just presented her with whistle and certificate.

(All photos by J. Greene)
Clown Dave Hein starts makeup on winner Dana Williams.

Dana's in a playful mood as she pulls on Hein's false nose.

Dana is made up with white eyes, red nose as Lisa Law (L) watches with proud parents, Mr. and Mrs. James M. Williams.

Dana Williams AFRO Coloring Contest winner honorary clown at Circus

IDA PETERS What's Happening

AFRO Night at Circus

Tuesday night was AFRO Night at the Circus sponsored by the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers. On hand were 200 AFRO employees and their families plus 18 winners and their 54 friends in the AFRO Circus Coloring Contest which has been running in this newspaper for the past three weeks.

To win 10 free tickets and a chance to serve as Honorary Clown, a contestant had to color Satin, the first black aerial act with the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Dana Williams 12, sixth grader at Roland Park Elementary School turned in the winning entry. She was thrilled and her school broadcast the happy news over the intercom. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James M. Williams. Both of her parents are art teachers in city schools.

But Dana, who loves art, writing, did the winning entry all by herself and didn't consult her parents at all. She attends Northwood Appold Church.

Dana, her parents and her grandmothers including Mrs. Ada Wright were on hand at the Civic Center at 6 p.m. Tuesday night where we were met by Mrs. Gerry Kreml, Public Relations Coordinator for Ringling Bros.

Going in we were greeted by Kenneth Feld, president of the circus. Then Mrs. Kreml took Dana to Boss Clown Wayne Sidley. He in turn assigned Dana to Dave Hein.

On this page you'll see Dana being made up and costumed for the Mexican Hat caper. While backstage in Clown Alley, Dana watched Boss Clown Sidley apply his white makeup ending up with red lips, false red nose and a sequin on his chin.

Dave Hein, a Wisconsin native who attended the University of Wisconsin before joining the Circus, completed Dana's makeup, then put on his own face. In the acts, he's one of the men on stilts.

Boss Sidley blew a whistle for the clowns at 7 p.m. and the whole horde went into the half-filled arena to shake hands with youngsters and play pranks.

Dana was assigned to Clowns Randy Barnes and Kip Reynolds who took her into the stands where she greeted her parents and grandmothers then went into sections where AFRO employees and other winners were seated.

At 7:30 p.m. sharp, Ringmaster Dinny McGuire said "Mrs. Peters, you are now on". He advised he would present me with a certificate as Honorary Ringmaster and then turn the microphone over to me.

No big deal. We've been Honorary Ringmaster on four occasions. Mrs. Arnetta Lottier and Mrs. Vashti McKenzie have also represented this newspaper. This night before 12,000 people my knees went weak. We think that Dinny's advice that we had 60 seconds threw us. We're glad our notes were typed on small cards. And, Dinny's outfit was blinding. His sequinned jacket with top hat and ruffled shirt drew comments from the crowd in the stands.

He told me he was glad my name was simple because in many cities he gets radio personalities and complicated call letters.

Then we went into our spiel.

Ladies and Gentlemen and children of all ages Welcome to the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Show. Tonight is AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper Coloring Contest and 200 AFRO employees and their families. The AFRO is celebrating 91 years of continuous operation in Baltimore, Washington, New Jersey and Richmond. Dana Williams, Roland Park Elementary School is the winner and she is guest clown tonight. And, now, on with the show".

Back in Clown Alley, Dana was surrounded by clowns, given bongos to shake and off she went to Ring No 1 to participate in the opening act. Then we all stood in awe as the elephants almost stepped on us.

The most amazing thing about Circus folk is that they are all friendly. Satin gave Dana a hug. And Clown Stephanie Parks gave her a smiling welcome. Dana says she was nervous but she was a happy child when it was all over.

And how did Ida Peters and the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers get to be an Honorary Ringmaster and have a Clown Coloring Contest?

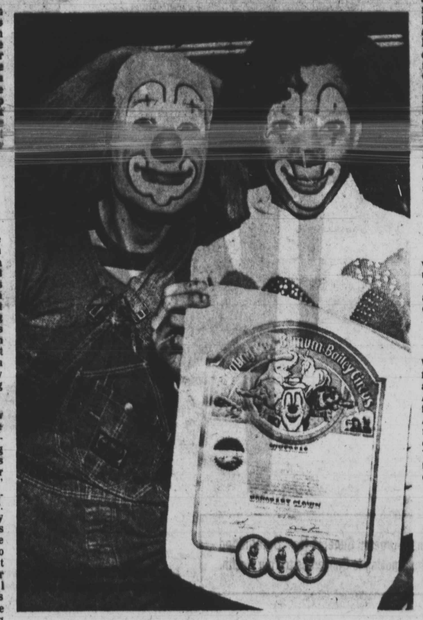
Well, it all goes back to the 1950's where we first sold advertising for the AFRO to the Feld Brothers and we first met Mrs. Gerry Kreml, their PR coordinator.

She retires after this show in Baltimore and we'll miss her wonderful warm personality as every year she called to invite us to participate in all the Circus hoopla.

About seven years ago, an advance circus man (his name is lost in history) called on us in December during the height of the AFRO's Mrs. Santa program. Our office was bedlam as groups came to donate money for Mrs. Santa and needy families came in to be outfitted. He recognized the deep roots of the AFRO in the black community and that's when the coloring contest, and AFRO Night at the Circus was born. And now you know the rest of the story!

Stephanie Parks, center in big hat, one of the few black clowns in the circus stops to give Dana a hug.

Pa-mela Hernandez and Denise Aubrey, Satin, the first black aerial act, stop for a hug before going on in their sensational act.



Dana's makeup finished, she poses with Dave Hein all made up also with red hair. Her certificate says Honorary Clown.

O'Donel Levy at Morgan

By Frederick I. Douglass

O'Donel Levy, the string popping guitarist whose latest LP "Through A Song" contains the kind of music you can groove to while sipping champagne with your favorite lady at 3 a.m., will be crooning and picking out tunes on his chosen (tonight) Friday in the McKeldin Center Ballroom on Morgan State University's campus.

Equipped to play laid backJazz as well as danceable music, brother Levy is guaranteed to provide ample musical diversity to suit everyone's taste while providing a fiery display of virtuoso guitar to delight the ears of all who trek to Morgan this evening.

Getting into O'Donel's "Through A Song" LP is truly a pleasure because it features some of Baltimore's most talented artists including vocalists Lady Rebecca and Afeta Green; percussion Robert Dupre; Charles Covington and Robert Butta, pianists; and Gary Richardson, bassist.

O'Donel sings and plays guitar beautiful on the title track "Through A Song" which has a haunting melody and interesting instrumentation, interweaving flute and synthesizer rhapsodies with voice and guitar to create a fascinating musical fabric. However, my favorite tune is the destined to be a classic composition "Love This Spring" an O'Donel Levy original that should do wonders for his career. I will bet a dollar to a doughnut that we will be hearing numerous vocalists covering this tune within the next six months. But they will have to go a long way to top Lady Rebecca's satin crooning on this tune.

Maintaining a mellow groove throughout the LP, O'Donel Levy explores other fascinating original compositions including "A Ship For Two" and "I Am, I Am" on an LP that demonstrates clearly that Mr. Levy can groove heartily and heavily on sensuous ballads as well as the scorching up-tempo tunes he usually belts out at Gatsby's and other Baltimore musical havens. O'Donel's concert at Morgan State University this evening should prove to be a major musical event.

Film artists honored at Pratt

Film and video artists of Maryland will be honored at a special celebration to be held on Saturday, March 26, from 1-5 p.m. at the Central Pratt Library, 400 Cathedral St. All events will be open to the public. Admission is free.

Festivities during the four-hour fete will include simultaneous screenings of locally produced films and video tapes in the Wheeler Auditorium, the Poe Room, and the Staff Lounge and personal appearances by the film makers and videographers (video artists) at a short special session scheduled at 2:30 p.m. in the Wheeler auditorium. All productions to be exhibited are from the loan collection of the Audio-visual department, Enoch Pratt Free Library. For the convenience of the public, titles, descriptive information, scheduled starting times, and room locations will be posted in the Central Library.

The Maryland Film and Video Celebration is being presented to promote public awareness of the rich range of work created by local independent film and video artists. The Baltimore Film Forum is cosponsoring the afternoon of film and video with Pratt as kick-off for the forthcoming Baltimore International Film Festival which opens April 2 at the Baltimore Museum of Art. Both the Pratt Library and BFF also coordinate the judging, awarding of prizes, and screening of the Independent Film Competition which is a regular part of BFF's annual film festival.

This year's celebration will feature several unusual new films and video tapes recently acquired for the Pratt collection:

"Conversations with Willard Van Dyke," the much-awarded film about the distinguished American documtary filmmaker, directed by Amalie R. Rothschild, the Baltimorean who currently works in New York, but who will return to Baltimore for this event;

A moving tribute on video tape to the bravery of two older Baltimoreans in the face of handicaps and illness, "Dominick and Margaret: Independence — A Way of Life," directed by William Whiteford of the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of Maryland's School of Medicine.

This will be . . . Natalie Cole is 'Queen'

By Ida Peters

Natalie Cole, daddy's little light-eyed girl, proved she is a number one song stylist... proved that she has recovered her health and with any kind of material will regain the title of Queen of Soul at her concert Wednesday night at Baltimore's Meyerhoff Symphony Hall.

The hall which seats 2,400 had aces and spaces which was a disappointment to the sponsoring organization A.S.S.E.R.T., an organization to benefit Sickle Cell Anemia victims. And, while the concert was produced by Carnegie Producitons, a source close to the promoters told the AFRO that many well-off folks in the black community did not honor their pledges to help the organization.

However, in this reporters view the timing for the concert was poor. Usually in showbusiness in Baltimore, the week before Palm Sunday, the week before Easter and the week before Christmas is poor timing for any kind of event that expects people to pay $15. or more per person. It's the week after these weeks that are Golden. And, after all... how can you compete when the Circus is in town?

As to Natalie Cole. She is gorgeous. Her voice is wonderful and she is the ultimate performer. Her lithe sleek frame was sheathed in black, silver and white sequins which was one half white with slits front and back to show off of her fine legs to the hip. She shashayed, pranced and danced continuously across the stage in high silver and black shoes.

She cried. She moaned. She sat on a stool and sang her heart out thru "Lovers," "Mr. Melody," "Inseparable," "Love On My Mind," "This Will Be" and "Satin Doll". The audience groaned and cheered as she introduced each song.

Then backstage, where this reporter was viewing the proceedings, her staff became upset when the tape broke. Behind Natalie was a huge screen that projected various scenes as she sang.

When she came to a tribute to her father, the late Nat King Cole, the tape was finally fixed. Pictures of her with her father were flashed as she sang "Mona Lisa," "Rambling Rose," "The Christmas Song". When she sang "Unforgettable" in duet with her father on screen and tape of him singing the same song... the audience erupted and gave her the famous Baltimore standing ovation. And, at the end of the concert, as she closed out with "Our Love" she received another standing ovation!

Show review

ASSERT president Carl Stokes presented her with a citation thanking her for coming; Ms. Sonya Ross, program director presented her with roses and Mrs. Bonnie Butler, AFRO Baltimore Advertising Manager (she leaves this week for new job as Advertising Manager for Caltec Cable Co.) was splendid in her chores of M.C. and overall promotion of the concert.

The only word for Natalie Cole's backup has to be "great." They included the Duke Ellington Band headed by Mercer Ellington but led for Natalie's set by Eddie Cole, her cousin (Freddie's son) on sax. Others were Vanessa Birch on organ; Luis Kabaza, keyboards; Jeffrey Simon, bass and Chuck Bynum, guitar.

The concert opened with Charlie Earland and Jam. We had heard that he would not appear and that O'Donel Levy would open... but that proved a false rumor. Earland's set was ho-hum to a crowd especially atuned to music of Duke Ellington and Natalie Cole. A reporter will have to report on his set but his singer, Jan doing a Jennifer Holliday "Dreamgirls" version of "Fire" was a terrific artist.

The Duke Ellington Orchestra led by Mercer Ellington was superb. It was a pleasure to sit back and enjoy "Sophisticated Lady", "Take the A Train" and all the old favorites you used to hear at the old Royal and Howard Theatres.

Lloyd Mayers was at the piano; J.J. Wiggins on bass; Rocky White on drums; Harold Minerve, Joe Temperly, Jorge Anders, Dave Young and Ken Garris on reeds. Then there were Chuck Connors, Art Baron and Ray Harris on trombones; Barry Lee Hall, Stanton Davis and John Longo, trumpets.

Each man got a chance to do his thing and overall they were great and satisfying to the soul.

Backstage asked Mercer Ellington why the orchestra seemed so small in comparison to the stage show "Sophisticated Ladies." He pointed out that "in Pop's band there were only 15 men. In New York shows, the union calls for 35 men but the stage would only hold 20. The extra six stood around and filled in."

Mercer says that his band is on a schedule of one-nighter tours and "family-wise" he has a piece of the gate in the late Broadway show "Sophisticated Lady". There is a Las Vegas production and a London production planned and he thinks that "Sophisticated Lady" will be coming to Baltimore soon. In these shows, "Sophisticated Lady" is about the music of Duke Ellington and bands used are house bands... not Duke Ellington's Band led by Mercer Ellington.

LITTLE THINGS: Why is the new Meyerhoff Symphony Hall so cold? It seems they had the air-conditioning on and it was freezing outside Wednesday night.

What is wrong with the spotlight operator at the Meyerhoff?

During the Sammy Davis Jr. concert, the spotlight missed him so often that at one point they left him in the dark. He quipped he thought his other eye had gone bad. If you missed the joke, you know he has a glass eye from a bad auto accident.

Wednesday night during this concert the spotlight was confused because Charles Earland was seated left at the console of the organ and his two white sidemen were standing center stage. I guess the spotlight man figured that any two white men center stage should get the spotlight.

During Mercer Ellington's set the spotlight man clearly was off base. At times, Mercer had to move to the featured performance and point. Especially during the drum solo... When Lloyd Mayers, piano and J.J. Wiggins, bass were doing their solos... half of the time they were in the dark!

Hats off to Randolf Fleming, stage and tour manager for Natalie Cole and all of her crew. It was so cold on stage and her costume was so flimsy that they had to wrap her in towels as she came off-stage after her tremendous set. No wonder! We caught cold, fully dressed, just standing in the wings.

Singer Natalie Cole poses backstage at the Meyerhoff Theatre in Baltimore with ASSERT PR person Mrs. Bonnie Butler.

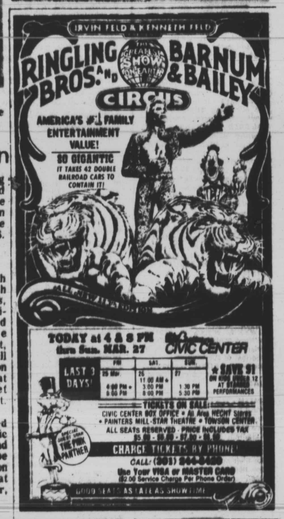
(Photos by Ida Peters)

Mr. and Mrs. Elsie Street poses with Mercer Ellington (R) at concert. She's president of Carnegie Promotions.

Stephanie on 'Search for Tomorrow'

Acting and singing on nothing new for Casablanca-PolyGram recording artist Stephanie Mills; so she'll be very much at home when she becomes part of the storyline on the NBC Television daytime drama, "Search For Tomorrow," on episodes airing March 25, 28 and April 1.

Mills' guest appearances were written into the "Search For Tomorrow" scripts in keeping with the trend of entertainment from other entertainment forms, like film and music, on the network airwaves. In her final episode on April 1, Stephanie Mills will debut a newly-produced vocal version of the "Search" theme song, "Do You Love Him". The new "Do You Love Him" theme was produced by legendary record producer Phil Ramone, and will be on Stephanie Mills' forthcoming album.



Pratt Calendar of Events for children

Monday, March 28-Canton Center, 1030 S. Ellwood Ave.: Films — "The Elephant Who Couldn't Forget" and "The Seven Ravens" 4 p.m.

Wednesday, March 30-Light Street Branch, 1251 Light St.: Film — "Gulliver's Travels," 1 p.m.

Forest Park Branch, 3023 Garrison Blvd.: Films — "Little Roquefort in the Haunted Cat" and "The Lorax," 3 p.m.

Northwood Branch, 4420 Loch Raven Blvd.: Films — "A Visit from Space," "The Teddy Bear's Balloon Trip," and "The Man Who Wanted to Fly," 3:30 p.m.

Walbrook Branch, 2303 W. North Ave.: Film — "One Hour to Zero," 3:30 p.m.

Music

The Fernando Allen Singers, winners of the 1982 "Baltimore Gospel Greats" competition, will perform gospel music in the last of a series of concerts featuring America's traditional music at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 27, in the Wheeler Auditorium of Pratt's Central Library, 400 Cathedral St. Free tickets are available in the Fine Arts Department, second floor, Central Library. Call 396-5490 for further information.

Films

"His Girl Friday," fast-paced comedy about newspaper life, starring Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant, will be screened at 6 p.m. on Monday, March 28, at the Canton Center, 1030 S. Ellwood Ave.

"Diabolique," French murder thriller with psychological overtones, directed by Henri-George Clouzot and starring Simone Signoret, Vera Clouzot, and Charles Vanel, will be screened at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 30, at the St. Paul Street Center, 2521 St. Paul St.

"Tillie's Punctured Romance," silent classic with Charlie Chaplin and Marie Dressler, will be screened at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 30, at the Fells Point Center, 606 S. Ann St.

49th Annual AFRO Clean Block Leadership Meeting

Friday, March 25, 1983 12 Noon

Arena Playhouse

801 McCulloh Street

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In Unity there is strength!

You can have a Clean Block...

If you work at it!

Let us tell you how!

Call

Mrs. Ida Peters

Mrs. Vanessa Johnson

Mrs. Darron Bell

728-8205

Blacks on TV

By Vanessa Johnson

Editor's Note: Mrs. Vanessa Johnson is out ill. During her absence her column will be handled by Mrs. Darren Bell.

WBAL-TV Ch. 11-Saturday, March 26, 7:30 p.m. "Black Horizons" hosted by Dwayne Wiekham featuring AFRO - AMERICAN Newspapers. An interview with John J. Oliver Jr., Chairman of the Board of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers. Also, interviews with two local black psychiatrists on the health problems facing blacks today.

WBAL-TV Ch. 11-Sunday, March 27, 8 a.m. "Gospel Variations" hosted by Pastor Naomi Durant. Guests Charles and Roslyn; Julius Brockington and the Pilgrim Jubilees.

WJZ-TV Ch. 13-Sunday, March 27, 12 Noon "City Line" Guest Donell Green. Should he have been expelled from the Naval Academy? Tim Watts has Michael Jackson videotape doing "Billie Jean".

"P. E., I already know the games," Cheryl Pasteur as Kathy appearing in "Vanities" now at Arena Playhouse.

Friday Plus

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