PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION "Music From the Motion Picture Purple Rain"

By now, if you haven't heard the smash hit record, "When Doves Cry," you're just not a rock and roll listener.

That song was a number one hit on the pop, soul, and dance charts all across America, and it's one of the songs on Prince's latest Warner Brothers LP, "Purple Rain." The movie is pretty hot, also.

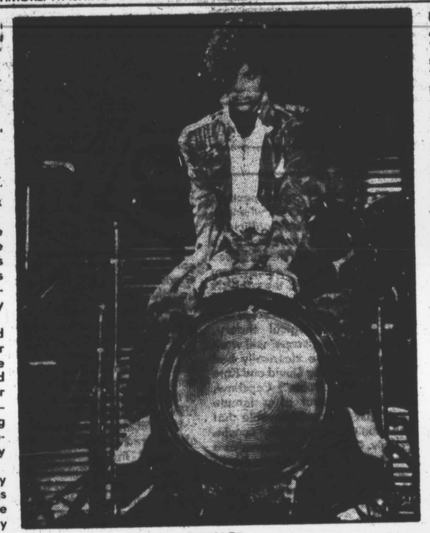
Could you have predicted Prince would be this big? After all, Prince had sold nearly three million records before he turned 20. Remember his debut LP, "For You," in which he did it all—played all the instruments, sang all the vocals, wrote and produced the whole album by himself?

Every Prince fan should easily be able to remember hit songs like "Soft And Wet," "I Wanna Be Your Lover," "Uptown," "Dirty Mind," "1999," "Little Red Corvette," "Delirious,"; perhaps even "Sexy Dancer."

When it comes to black crossover artists, there's no one else like him.

That is certainly apparent on his latest LP which already has two big hit singles going for it. These two songs are the best songs on the album, the way I see it—everything else on the LP is somewhat less interesting.

The opening guitar riff of "When Doves Cry" jumps out at you; that's what makes it great singles material. With its dance beat, it sounds like it knows where it's going.



PRINCE

The keyboard chords that begin "Let's Go Crazy," along with your standard Prince lyrics, distinguish this rock tune from your average crazy song.

This stuff is fine for the die-hard Prince fan, but I can understand others giving this LP only an occasional listen. The slower-moving tune "Purple Rain" is obviously not designed to be catchy, so perhaps the visual element of the movie is necessary to grasp the full meaning of the song.

Every Prince LP contains a couple of great hits, so "Purple Rain" is a good continuation of this tradition.

Other cuts: "Take Me With U," "The Beautiful Ones," "Computer Blue," "Darling Nikki," "I Would Die 4 U," "Baby I'm A Star."

FATBACK "Phoenix"

Fatback's twentieth album is their first on the Cotillion label, and it's titled "Phoenix."

The group was formed by producer/leader Bill Curtis. Fatback began recording in the early 70's with a trio of albums on the Perception label: "Let's Do It Again," "People Music," and "Feel My Soul," from which came singles like "(Are You Ready) Do The Bus Stop," and "Spanish Hustle."

Later, with Spring Records, their "Hot Box" LP went gold. Fatback was alive on the dance charts with such tunes as "I Like Girls," "Backstrokin'," "King Tim III (Personality Jock)," and more recently, "Is This The Future."

These records weren't exactly the cream of the crop of R&B, but at least they had that "live" Fatback beat that made them fun.

Now with their latest, Fatback has headed in a new direction, but it sounds to me like they've been misguided somehow.

In their attempt to be more pop-sounding, with more sophisticated vocals and harmonies, Fatback has produced something that is not as consistent as the best of their past stuff, nor even as interesting as the material currently out by the artists whom they sound like.

They lack the solid hooks of Kool And The Gang and the expressiveness of artists such as The Gap Band.

Michael Walker's lead vocals on the bouncy "I Love You So" aren't bad; he sounds a bit like Luther Vandross on the cut, but it sounds ordinary. "The Drum Song," an excursion into drums and synth noise in which the group chants "Let the drums speak..." is pale compared to their early '80s stuff.

"Big Brother," with Curtis on lead vocals, is reminiscent of the old Fatback beat, with its funky bass line (sounds like "Gotta Get My Hands On Some Money").

I've heard better Fatback. I'll leave it at that.

Other cuts: "You've Got That Magic," "Call Out My Name," "Lover Man," "Just Be My Love," "Jump Up Baby, Jump Up!"

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The Studio Theatre

"My Sister in This House" by Wendy Kesselman will be performed at the Studio Theatre starting August 29 until September 30. The theatre is located at 1401 Church St., N.W. Washington, D.C. For further information call 202-265-7412.

Patti LaBelle will appear at the Warner Theatre Tuesday, August 28 until Sunday, September 2. Tickets are $17.50.

THE STUDIO THEATRE

Continued from page 3

Wedding at The Studio and also appeared in **Fifth Of July.** A talented newcomer to the Washington THEATRE SCENE, Julie Frazer has performed in the Richmond, Virginia, area and has toured with the Liberty Theatre.

My Sister In This House is a riveting exploration of complex relationships in a French bourgeois household. Based on a famous murder which took place in Le Mans in 1933, the play's suspense builds relentlessly toward a shattering climax. Genet's play, **The Maids,** is taken from the same bizarre crime that shocked and puzzled all of France at the time.

Wendy Kesselman, playwright for **My Sister In This House,** won the New Dramatists - Playbill Award for her play in 1980. It was first produced by The Actors Theatre of Louisville and went on to The Second Stage Theatre in New York.

The second play, **Album,** by talented playwright David Rimmer, will be directed by Sue Crystal and will run from November 1 through December 2. A comedy about four friends growing up in the sixties, **Album** is set to the music of the period. At different times, the young characters turn to the Beach Boys, the Beatles and Bob Dylan for stimulus, refuge and a means of understanding the complex forces in their rapidly changing lives. The play will offer humorous moments of self recognition for those who came of age during these turbulent times. **Album** is a premiere for the Washington area.

Tambourines to Glory will follow from January 10 through February 10 with Fred Lee as director. First produced in 1963, this powerful folk ballad resounds with gospel music. Harlem's saints and charlatans are presented with affectionate warmth and humor. The Studio Theatre's production will feature Debra Tidwell, popular local singer who appeared in The Studio's production of **Raisin In The Sun** in 1980. The playwright, Langston Hughes, is recognized as the most innovative author of the Negro Renaissance of the 1920s. He wrote prolifically until his death in 1967 and has been called the "Poet Laureate of Harlem."

The fourth production, **La Ronde,** by the Viennese playwright Arthur Schnitzler, is scheduled for March 14 through April 14 and will be directed by Joy Zinoman. Written in 1902, this classic comedy has just been translated and produced in England by the Royal Shakespeare Company. The Studio's production will be its Washington debut. Exploring the difference between love and lust, the play's string of vignettes brightly satirizes sexual mores. Characters move from one partner to another in a round dance of passion and playfulness. A witty French film version of **La Ronde** directed by Max Ophuls was produced in the early sixties and is often seen in repertory. Schnitzler's sexy style and unabashed subject matter prevented the stage production of **La Ronde** for many years.

The final play of 1984-85 season will be a local premiere of **The March of the Falsettos,** by William Finn. Tom Allen will be the music director of this production which will run from May 16 through June 16. This adventurous, all - music musical tells the bittersweet saga of a man who leaves his wife and son for a male lover but still longs for a family. When it opened off-broadway in 1981, **The March of the Falsettos** received enthusiastic critical acclaim for its fresh and exciting approach to contemporary relationships. Negotiations are under way with J. Fred Shiffman, Arena Stage actor and member of the comedy team, Shiffman and Vance, to play the leading role.

For more information about season subscriptions to The Studio Theatre's seventh season, call the box office, 265-7412.

The Allure of North Africa and the Near East

By Donna Doram Brewer

Presently on view at the National Gallery of Art in Washington is a beautiful and inspiring exhibit of work done by early 18th century and 19th century artists. In the nineteenth century, the term Orient referred not to China or Japan, as it does today, but to North Africa and the Levant: the lands stretching from Morocco to Egypt, to the Holy Land, and to Constantinople. The region was predominantly under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. For those of you who have traveled to this part of the world you will greatly appreciate the many interpretations of desert sun and sand on display. For those of you who haven't; you'll be drawn through the collection as though caught by a desert wind gently passing from one experience to the next.

This collection exemplifies the Western experience of the Near East and North Africa as early as 1798 where Baron Denon on expedition trekked through Egypt with Napoleon Bonaparte's troops, sketching as he went. It was a diplomatic mission which gave Delacroix his chance to witness Algeria and Morocco in 1832. David Roberts painted majestic ancient temples and through sales of his lithographs recouped his travel expenses, Jean-Leon Gerome and Eugene Fromentin traveled from Paris in 1856, and Frederic Church sailed from New York in 1868. The latest artists who traveled and are included in this exhibition were Wassily Kandinsky, who went in 1904, and Henri Matisse, who journeyed in 1906 "to see the desert".

The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse. The Allure of North Africa and the Near East presents the painters' vision, sharpened by encounters with unfamiliar light, landscape, and culture. The response of these painters to this exotic environment is vividly self conscious of Westerners attitudes towards North Africa and the Middle East. The artistic expression of Orientalism evolved as Europe's political and economic expansion deepened. Ethnocentrism is evident in some of the paintings and they exemplify the colonialist attitudes prevalent during this era.

Of course, travelers' perceptions were often preconceived notions of the Near East due to literature and art. In many notebook writings it was commonly expressed "how like a picture is this scene before me" which is quite natural. Though Gerome especially sought diligently to escape these trappings of thought and set out to document the "real" Orient. This impulse was strongly evident in particular paintings where it illuminated the shifting relations between art and experience.

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