RICK JAMES
"Glow" (Gordy)

Rick James's eighth album for Gordy, "Glow," contains the single "Can't Stop" and more rocking cuts, which, as you would expect, he wrote, produced and arranged himself.

The man whom some have called a "king of punk funk" was born James A. Johnson, Jr. in Buffalo, New York.

While Rick was living in Canada, he was part of a band called The Mynah Birds that recorded one album for Motown. The record was never released, but another band member, a young songwriter named Neil Young, eventually went on to greater fame, as did Rick.

Rick's first hit single was released in March, 1978 on Gordy: "You And I." It hit 13 on the pop charts in August. But to really get the maximum enjoyment from this tune one had to purchase the album "Come Get It," which featured the full-length version of the track with its memorable "everybody dance on the funk" chorus.

Later came the "Busting Out Of Seven" album and singles like "Fool On The Street." And in 1981, it was the platinum "Street Songs" album with "Super Freak" and other hits. His last album was "Reflections," which contained some of his previous hits.

Rick James

James has written and produced records for a variety of artists such as Process And The Doo Rags, but as far as I'm concerned his best work is with female artists, including the Mary Jane Girls and Teena Marie. Perhaps you remember such hits as "Square Biz" and "Boys."

Rick James's current album begins with the fairly decent "Can't Stop," then goes downhill.

"Spend The Night With Me" with its saxophone solos sounds as if Rick is attempting a black interpretation of Springsteen. "Melody Make Me Dance" suffers from the same problem as most of the cuts here: a bit too much reverberation in the mix, and an arrangement that grows dull quickly.

"Rock And Roll Control" recalls the sound of his earlier up-tempo numbers like "Dance With Me." The sentiments expressed here are pretty much the same as we've heard in past Rick James recordings, so no surprises here.

I've never been impressed with this man's vocal abilities; I have tended to appreciate his guitar playing more. He still does wonders with the instruments, but this album just doesn't "Glow" for me, it only flickers.

Other cuts: "Somebody (The Girl's Got)," "Glow," "Moon Child," "Sha La La La La (Come Back Home)."

SWEET COOKIE
"Heartbreaker" (Checkpoint)

Here's a new 12-inch single by a lady known as Sweet Cookie, released on a Maryland-based label.

Glynis Rose, alias Sweet Cookie, has been performing rap since she was a tenth-grader at Northwestern High. To some, she is known as "the Vanity of Rapp."

The nearly-8-minute track was written, arranged and produced by Irvin Lee. Background vocals are credited to Renee Hill and Angel.

Sweet Cookie says her single is "not your everyday rap cut. It's not hard, it's soft, something everyone can groove to and understand."

The hip-hop beat is definitely present here but the background synthesizers and the lead vocals during the chorus add a romantic flavor to the track that is "fresh" in its own special way.

A 5-cut EP called "No Zero" by Sweet Cookie's group, The Unos, is scheduled to be released in May on the Powerlight label. Tracks such as "You Don't Know What You've Been Missing" and "It's Tough Being A Girl" are great for party rocking, with interesting messages as well.

From the Carl Matthews Book Of Lists

OPPOSITES ATTRACT

Some songs just seem to say the opposite of other songs.

Innocent (Alexander O'Neal)
Guilty (Barbra Streisand And Barry Gibb)

Uptown (Prince)
Downtown (Petula Clark)

Good Times (Chic)
Bad Times (Tavares)

Boy (Book Of Love)
Girl (The Beatles)

Get Loose (Wax)
Tighten Up (Archie Bell And The Drells)

I Need You (America)
I Don't Need You (Kenny Rogers)

Don't Stop (Fleetwood Mac)
Don't Go (Yaz)

Don't Ask Me Why (Elvis Presley)
Ask Me Why (The Beatles)

Do It (Neil Diamond)
Don't Do It (The Band)

Coldblooded (Rick James)
Hot Blooded (Foreigner)

—MPT presents

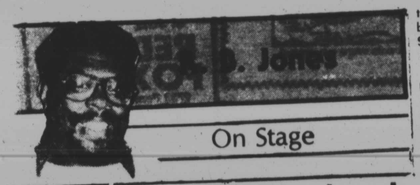
(Continued from page 2)

the dwarf experience.

Since its early days, Little People of America has supported medical research. Some hospitals have acquired expertise in the area of dwarfism and provide comprehensive medical care for "little people." At the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, the Moore Clinic, under the leadership of Dr. Reed Pyeritz, has developed a pioneering program while continuing its research efforts. Genetic counseling, accurate diagnosis, and surgical procedures to relieve or prevent the orthopedic problems experienced by many dwarfs are among th reasons the clinic attracts patients from all parts of the country.

"Little People" takes a look at the gradual changes in outlook and attitude currently occurring among dwarfs through personal accounts by dwarfs from varying social and professional backgrounds.

The documentary was produced by Thomas Ott and Jan Krawitz.



"Agnes Of God" Weekends To June 2

The Spotlighters seem to have an endless supply of ingenuity in terms of dealing with their small performance space, but the current production of "Agnes of God" indicates that they have very deep reservoirs of talent to go along with their ingenuity.

The issues confronted in the play, loss of faith, hatred of the rigorous discipline imposed by the Catholic church, the sanctity of the cloistered life of nuns and the existence of miracles, could easily become didactic exercises in theological gymnastics in a play.

This does not happen in "Agnes of God" because the author, John Pielmeier, dealt with the subjects through the lives of realistic characters. Yet, this skilled writing could have been underminded had the Spotlighters not put three highly skilled actors onstage.

The play concerns a court appointed psychiatrist who must interview a novice nun to determine if she is sane and able to stand trial for killing the baby that was born to her on the floor of her convent room. The mother superior found the dead baby wrapped in a paper bag and thrown in a waste basket.

As the psychiatrist interviews the nun, Sister Agnes, her own bitter relationship with the Catholic Church reemerges as she and the mother superior battle over Agnes.

To the doctor of the mind, Agnes is a victim of her mother's child abuse and the stifling embrace of the Catholic Church. To the mother superior, Agnes is one touched by God who is a last affirmation of her withering faith in miracles.

Agnes, throughout the play, maintains such a childlike innocence and ethereal quality that one is drawn to believe however slightly that perhaps something miraculous could have happened to her.

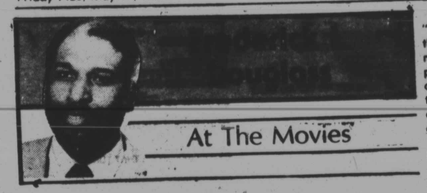
Trisha Blackburn played Dr. Livingstone with the nervous, self-doubting tenacity that one would expect when a psychiatrist, a supplicant of a modern faith, confronts Catholicism, a faith of ancient tradition and enormous authority. She covered all of Livingstone's bases emotionally, from probing objectivity, to vengefulness to troubling uncertainty about her professed atheism.

Audrey Herman played Mother Miriam Ruth, the head of the convent with an attractive mix of frail humanity and relentless persistence in her defense of Agnes and her church. Her portrayal was especially haunting to this reviewer who grew up down the street from a Catholic school and across the street from a Catholic Church. She did not portray a nun, from my experience with them I would say she became a nun onstage.

Leisa Kelley as Agnes was a wonder. Her role was most difficult because she portrayed a woman who had to be childlike and innocent, but at the same time be perceptive and sensitive to the other characters in the play. Her supposed insanity had to be dignified at all times if Sister Miriam Ruth's contention that Agnes was a special and touched by God was to have any credibility.

Ms. Kelley was absolutely spellbinding in her performance.

I would recommend this production to anyone who loves quality theatre. It is no evening of frippery and frivolity, but it does contain that magic that only live theater can conjure.



Billy Dee Williams loses his class in "Fear City"

Many women have told me that they like Billy Dee Williams because they think he is attractive, handsome, sexy, etcetera.

Generally, I have found Mr. Williams to be impressive on the silver screen because he carried off his roles in "Dynasty," "Mahogany" and other flicks that I have seen with a dash of class and aplomb.

Whenever I saw Billy Dee Williams' name attached to a production, I always assumed that everything was bonafide and I would think to myself "I know that the flick must be on the money because the brother would not portray a role that was demeaning to himself, and therefore, insulting to his people."

But that was before I ventured to check out Billy Dee's latest flick "Fear City." I was totally shocked by what I saw. "Say it isn't so, Billy! Say it wasn't you I saw in that awful movie!"

First and foremost, the movie is a total bait-and-switch type ripoff because Billy is billed as portraying a starring role when he actually spends very little time on the screen, maybe showing about 12 minutes in a movie that seems to last for hours and hours and hours. YAWN!

This is like going to a sale where a television set is advertised as being available for an unbelievably low price only to find out that all specially priced sets have been sold out, but there is another bargain set available. You only have to be burned one time to know that dubious advertising claims can seperate you from your ducats very quickly.

But what is even worse than the fact that Billy Dee has limited screen time is the fact that when he does show up, his acting is wooden and waterlogged. He delivers his lines with all the dramatic flair of a somnabulist.

Furthermore, the character he plays is an ignorant, arrogant, racist cop who spends most of his time talking about how much he loathes and despises "wops, spics and dagos," calling them such names to their faces and in conversations with other officers.

Finally, I disliked the fact that "Fear City" is another one of those "Avenging Angel" type movies wherein a caucasian lay person has to come in and solve a crime that a professionally trained, high ranking Black police officer just cannot seem to figure out.

Will somebody please tell me how Billy Dee Williams ever allowed himself to become involved in a movie that makes him look like the dunce of the year. Did he read the script? I seriously doubt it. There has to be a reason why he would decide to take such an assinine role in such an awesomely bad movie with such a threadbare plot.

"Fear City" is about a maniacal killer who terrorizes the topless dancers who work in New York City's red light district along Times Square. Played by Rae Dawn Chong, the crazed killer is writing a book entitled "Fear City" in which he chronicles his efforts to rid the world of wanton women. In his spare time, he trains in the martial arts and travels around the city tracking down exotic dancers so that he can mutilate and murder them.

His initial targets are terpsichoreans working for an agency headed by Mady Rossi, an ex-boxer who spends his spare time having flashbacks about an opponent named Kid Rio who died after the referee refused to stop a match.

Tom Berenger, who is actually billed as the leading man of this flick, is an Italian gangster who has a franchise from the Mafia to supply topless and bottomless dancers to clubs that feature lascivious entertainment.

His business begins to suffer after several dancers are maimed and/or murdered because th ladies are afraid to go to work. So Rossi sets out to track down the killer since Wheeler, the tough cop played by Mr. Williams, does not seem to be able to handle the task.

While "Fear City" has a few titilating scenes in the beginning and sprinkled through the movie, I am compelled to recommend that you hold back on your money until you are ready to view another movie of greater artistic and entertainment value. Even the Billy Dee Williams fanatics will find this movie to be a real canine flick.

By the way, if you think that the young lady who is knifed by the assasin about 20 minutes into the movie looks familiar, you may want to go back and look at Michael Jackson's video "Thriller" again. The young lady is Ola Ray, Mr. Jackson's co-star in "Thriller."

Rated "R" "Fear City" is rife with nudity, violence and coarse language. I still cannot believe that Billy Dee Williams made this abysmal movie!

By sword
By pick
By axe
Bye bye

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Robert Woods may have a high-school reunion

By Kimberly Redmond

Q: The other day I saw a deodorant commercial featuring one of my former high-school students, Robert Woods. A friend told me that he also appears on a soap opera, but I don't know which one. Can you help me get in touch with the actor? — R.S., Red Oak, Iowa.

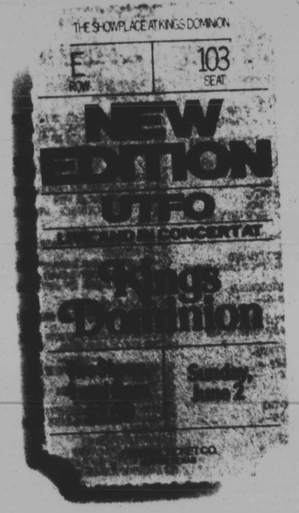
Wood stars as Bo Buchanan on "One Life to Live." You can write to him c/o "OLTL," ABC, 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. Happy reunion!

Q: I'm intrigued by the actor who portrays Shane Donovan on "Days of Our Lives." I love his accent! Please tell me where he's from and what other TV shows he's appeared in. — A.F., Perth Amboy, N.J.

A: Charles Shaughnessy portrays secret agent Shane Donovan on the NBC soap. The actor hails from England, where he attended Eton College before earning a law degree from Cambridge University. Shaughnessy, whose father Alfred was the chief writer of the classic BBC TV show, "Upstairs, Downstairs," is from a theatrical, upper middle-class family. When he was 23, Shaughnessy gave up his budding law career to become an actor. He has appeared in repertory theater, and spent a year on the British series, "Jury." He's married to actress Susan Fallender, who convinced Shaughnessy to try his luck in Hollywood. When he did, he landed the role on "Days" soon after his arrival.

(Have a question about soap operas? Write Kimberly Redmond at 200 Park Ave., Room 602, New York, NY 10166.

Questions cannot be answered personnally but those of general interest will be answered in future columns.)



Get your concert tickets in advance at any Richmond area Album Den, or at Kings Dominion the day of the show. Park admission is required.