Best Bets

THEATRE

"Children of A Lesser God"

"Children of a Lesser God" will be presented by the Catonsville Community College Theatre Department and the Interpreter Training program on Friday and Saturday, May 9 and 10 and again on May 16 and 17. The performance will take place in the theatre of the Fine and Performing Arts building on the main campus of CCC at 8 p.m. For more information call 455-4508.

"Pendragon"

"Pendragon: A Tale of Young King Arthur," a dramatization of Arthurian Romance designed to introduce a new generation to one of the best known legends in world literature, will be performed by the professional adult company of the Children's Theatre Association at the Merrick Barn Theater on the campus of Johns Hopkins University on Saturday, May 24 at 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. For further information, call 225-0052.

"Shrew"

Baltimore City College will present "Shrew", the musical version of Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew," on May 16 and 17. Show time is 8 p.m. For further information, call 396-6430.

EXHIBITS

"Enoch Pratt's World"

Photographs, memorabilia, documents, and newspaper articles recreate the life and times of the founder of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. "Enoch Pratt's World: A Centennial Exhibition," will be on display at the central branch through December, 1986. For more information, call 396-5494.

WORKSHOP

Job Hunting Strategies

Job hunting strategies will be the focus of a workshop at the Pratt Central Library on Wednesday, May 21 from 5:30-8 p.m. To register or for further information, call Pratt's Job and Career Information Center at 396-5394.

Visual Artists Alliance

The Visual Artists Alliance of Howard County will hold its annual Spring Show at Slayton House Gallery in Columbia, MD on May 18. The exhibit will be on display through June 16. For further information, call 543-3636.

FILMS

"The Bostonians"

"The Bostonians," screen version of the Henry James novel, will be shown at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 14 at the central branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. For more information, call 396-5494.

Films for Children

Wednesday, May 14 Brooklyn Branch, "The Pied Piper of Hamlin," "Why'd the Beetle Cross the Road?", and "Piccolo," 3:30 p.m.

Northwood Branch "Five Survive," "Angus Lost," "A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog," and "A Boy and a Boa," 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 15 Dundalk Avenue Branch "The Contest Kid," 3:30 p.m.

Friday, May 16 Brooklyn Branch "The Mole and the Lollipop" and "The Mole and the Green Star," 10 and 10:30 a.m.

Patterson Park Branch, "Mowgli's Brothers" and "The Dancing Princess" 3:15 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS

"Theatre of Nations" Festival

Volunteers are now being recruited to work for the twentieth biennial "Theatre of Nations," a world event being hosted in the City of Baltimore from June 15 through June 29 at several locations. Volunteers will sell tickets, usher at the performances, act as house managers, etc. Persons interested in becoming involved in this event as a volunteer should call 625-4270.

Fells Point Reading Garden

Opening and dedication ceremonies for a new Reading Garden at the Fells Point branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library will be held on Saturday, May 17 from 12 noon to 2 p.m. The program will include a Maypole Dance performed by neighborhood children and a special performance of the Children's Theatre Association. For more information, call 396-5495.

Preakness Frog Hop

Applications are currently being accepted for the annual Preakness Frog Hop. The event will be held in War Memorial Plaza on Wednesday, May 14 beginning at 12 noon. Frog owners of all ages are invited to enter. For more information, call 396-4891.

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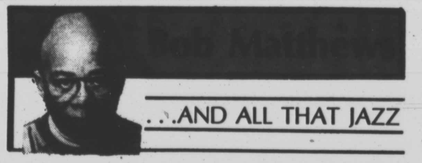

Carmen McRae

Ronnie Wells

...And All That Jazz

Dropped into Ethel's Place to catch the opening night performance of **Carmen McRae** — she'll be at the club through Sunday night.

Am happy to report that Carmen still projects that vibrant, sensuous sound for which she became famous. She is especially mellifluous when projecting songs that she admires.

For example, she did a Billie Holliday medley ("I'm going to sing three songs," Carmen said) after professing that Billie was her favorite vocalist.

She then did "Any Old Time," "For All We Know," and "What A Little Moonlight Can Do," and her love for the lyric shone through.

This then had to be the apex of her performance.

Not so.

She followed this with a couple of songs associated with Nat King Cole, "Sweet Lorraine," and a Cole original, "Send Me." And it was here that the realization of Carmen's greatness emerges.

With her, the lyric is almost sacred, and it's interpretation is the heart of the performance. This is as it should be and is what separates a singer from a vocalist.

On the musicianly side, Carmen is accompanied by a rhythm section, piano, bass and drums, and as expected, did a stint accompanying herself on the piano.

This produced for me the high spot of the evening, for her rendition of " 'Tis Autumn," said it all.

Got a chance to chat with **Earl Arnett** for a bit while at the club, and asked him about the eclectic array of artists appearing at the club these days.

The idea is working he assured me, and well it should, for it has been demonstrated over and over again that a strictly jazz venue will send you to the poor house quickly, when the nut is as large as it is at Ethel's.

So, the lineup consists of such artists as **Leon Redbone, Banjo Jazz, The Persuasions** and others. But, jazz lovers can put in their calendars these dates:

May 15-17, **Richie Cole**; May 23-25, **Mad Romance**, May 28-June 1, **Monty Alexander**; June 11, **Moon August**; June 12-15, **Charlie Byrd**; June 18-19, **Tim Eyermann;**

June 20-21, **Azymuth**; July 9-12; **Horace Silver Quintet**; July 15-20, **Art Farmer/Benny Golson Jazztet with Curtis Fuller**, and uly 22-27, **Les McCann.** Also, beginning June 30, **Aleta Greene** will be a Monday night regular at the club.

Over at the Jazz Closet, **Gary Bartz** along with special guest **Leon Thomas** are in place this weekend.

They are being backed up by the **Willie Barber** Trio, with **Freddie Thaxton**, piano; **Andre Rock**, bass, and **Willie** on drums. This marks a return for Leon Thomas who was here a couple of weeks ago.

Continued on page 3

The Owners of Sampson's Restaurant are pleased to announce the opening of

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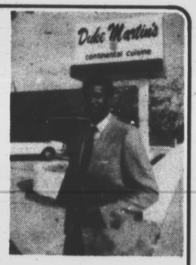

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Carry Out Now Open

'La Cage Aux Folles' portrays theatre at its glittering best

By Bob Matthews

There is an old cliche which states, "things get better with age" — and this aptly describes the road show production of "La Cage Aux Folles," which opened this week at the Lyric Theatre.

The current company is the same as that which appeared at the National Theatre in D.C. last December, so we were fortunate in being able to make a comparison and recognizing the added bits and flourishes.

Indeed, flourishes is the cogent word, for this musical is replete with flourishes of every sort— all to the good of the presentation.

Calculated to induce a "shock" element, this is quickly dispelled during the opening spectacular, where gorgeously ornate costumes, exquisite makeup, along with glittering jewels, inculcate a sense of lavishness — much as you know a Broadway show should have.

The surprise, or shock if you will, comes at the end of the opening production number, when the Cagelles (the chorus line) whip off their wigs putting an end to the guess as to who is male, and who is female.

This sets the tone for the tender love story — between two males who have lived together for 20 years — and are now about to undergo a crisis, since a son of the character Georges, played by Peter Marshall, is about to be married — to a woman.

Incidently, Marshall, I would suspect, has been taking vocal lessons, for his singing voice and presentation here at the Lyric far surpasses his performance earlier.

Keene Curtis, as Albin, is the other half of the romantic duo. He, or she if you prefer, is a featured singer/entertainer at a plush nightclub on the Riviera, La Cage Aux Folles, from whence the title springs, and is being asked to step aside.

The machinations involved in this acceptance of the situation, and coping with it, form the basis of the plot, and it is done with such wit and humor that you empathize with the performers. The opening audience was absolutely captivated with the tenderness evoked on stage.

Don't expect to see or hear any justification or excuse for transvestite or homosexual lifestyles. The fact that the basic love story is comprised of two people of the same sex, seems perfectly logical.

This is good theatre, and we were happy to note the various bits of business which have been added to the individual performances.

The subtle — and not so subtle — winks and wiggles and waggles all add to the sheer fun of presentation.

"La Cage Aux Folles" opened on Broadway in August 1983, and won six Tony Awards in the 1984 ceremonies. If you are technically minded, it cost $4 million to stage, and has over 1,000 costume pieces.

The costumes alone cost over $1 million. During the course of the performance, there are over 115 costume changes — all done at lightning speed, for the action never flags.

If the opening night audience is any indication, this current version of the play will head toward the SRO status eagerly desired by theatre entrepreneurs.

It will be at the Lyric Opera House through May 31, with matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m., and Sundays at 3 p.m. (There will be no performance on Monday, May 12.)

For further information, call (301) 625-1400.

— All That Jazz

Continued from page 2

Something else has been added to the jazz presentations at the club, for now **Nikki Cooper** with **Tiny Tim Harris** are appearing on Tuesdays.

* * *

As promised, the partial lineup for the Central Pennsylvania Friends of Jazz Festival, which goes on June 27-29 in the Penn Harris Convention Center, Camp Hill, PA, looks like this:

Friday, June 27 — **Al Grey, Buddy Tate** with the Steve Rudolph Trio. Jimmy Witherspoon with the **Reuben Brown** Trio; the **Paris Reunion Band,** which includes **Johnny Griffin, Woody Shaw, Benny Bailey, Kenny Drew, Slide Hampton, Nathan Davis** and **Idris Muhammad;**

Saturday, June 28 — **Dave Chertok's** jazz films; **Ira Sullivan, Rufus Reid, Reuben Brown** and **Steve Bagby** Quartet; **Joanne Brackeen** Trio; **Chris Connor** and her Trio; and **Jon Faddis** Quintet;

Sunday, June 29 — **Pepper Adams** and **Valery Ponomarev** Quintet; **Astrud Gilberto,** with the **N.Y. Samba Band;** the **George Coleman** Quartet. Each night ends with a jam set led by **Ira Sullivan.**

* * *

The Resident Associat's Program of the Smithsonian closes out its Great Jazz Composers Series Sunday at the Baird Auditorium of the National History Building.

Concert begins at 7:30 p.m., and features **Allen Houser** and his Sextet plus D.C. vocalist **Ronnie Wells.** Ronnie has been singing around the Washington area for a while, and is not an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland.

She teaches jazz vocal techniques to students in the Department of Music school. We can remember her appearing in Baltimore last year, as a vocalist with the **Widespread Jazz Orchestra,** a group with which she recorded an album.

Houser is a trumpeter, who can be heard on weekends at Bertha's in Fells Point. In addition to these two, the **V.C.U. Jazz Orchestra** will be on hand to play some of the Monk tunes geared to big band interpretation.

* * *

Also in D.C., **Charlie Byrd** is at Blues Alley through Sunday night; One Step Down features **Dewey Redman** along with **Reuben Brown,** piano, **Steve Novosel,** bass, and **Lenny Robinson,** drums.

Make a Joyful Noise!

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Gospel singers can enter the competition in one of four categories: Choir, Ensemble, Male Soloist, Female Soloist.

To qualify, all entrants must provide a 10-minute performance sampler on audio cassette tape, along with an Official Entry Blank available at any participating Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant or at any of the locations listed. An Official Entry Blank is also available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: KFC Gospel Music Competition, 1400 I Street N.W., Suite 333, Washington, D.C. 20005. Or call 202/842-3456.

All tapes and completed entry forms received by the deadline will be reviewed by a panel of nationally known gospel experts. Selected performers will perform at area churches during the spring preliminary auditions.

The deadline for entries, including cassettes, is

Midnight, May 25, 1986.

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