# Best Bets

## THEATRE

**"The Mikado"**

Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Mikado" will be presented by the Hilton Musical Company on Friday and Saturday, June 6 and 7 at 8 p.m. The performance will be held in the Theatre of the Fine and Performing Arts Center at Catonsville Community College. For further information, please call 455-4508.

**"Beyond Therapy"**

The Spotlighters Theatre will be presenting Christopher Durang's comedy, "Beyond Therapy." It will open on June 6 and will run through June 29. For information, call 752-1225.

## EXHIBITS

**Renaissance To Rococo:** Italian Paintings from the Walters Collection will be on display until August 17. The exhibit includes more than 40 masterworks from the permanent collection of Italian works.

**Silver Treasure From Early Byzantium:** This exhibition will be on display until August 17. For further information about special exhibits call 547-9000.

**"Blacks in the U.S. Congress"**

An exhibit presented by the Lillie Carroll Jackson Museum will be on display through June 15. The exhibit, entitled "Blacks in the U.S. Congress," consists of lithographs which date from 1870 through 1983. For further information, call 523-1208.

**Visual Artist Alliance**

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

## FILMS

**Events For Children**

Wednesday, June 11 — Light Street Branch: "The Amazing Cosmic Awareness of Duffy Moon," "Winnie the Pooh Discovers The Seasons," and "Delicious Inventions," 2 and 3 p.m.

Wednesday, June 11 — Hamilton Branch: "The Miser's Slippers" and "The Dancing Princess," 3:30 p.m.

**"Black Life: Labor and Leisure"**

The Baltimore City Life Museums will host a series of films entitled "Black Life: Labor and Leisure." Films are scheduled for June 8, 15 and 22 at 3 p.m., at the Peale Museum. For further information, call 396-3523.

## CONCERTS

**Annapolis Brass Quintet**

The Annapolis Brass Quintet will perform at Dundalk Community College on Friday, June 13. The admission is free to the public. Performances will begin at 8 p.m. in the college theatre. For further information, call 522-5876.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**Model Of The Year Contest**

Travis Winkey, Inc. will sponsor a "Model Of The Year" contest to be held on Sunday, June 8 at 7 p.m. at Coppin State College. Winners will be awarded a trip to New York as well as being signed with a top modeling agency. For further information, call 225-7755.

**Afrikan Festival**

New Era Education, Inc., will be the site for the Afrikan Festival which will be held on June 7 from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. This year's festival will feature poets, dancers, storytellers and live entertainment. For further information, call 578-0603 or 644-0142.

**Cultural Arts Institute**

The Cultural Arts Institute, Inc. will present a free performance by its Teen Performing Arts Workshop in War Memorial Plaza on Friday, June 6 beginning at 12 noon. A combination of classical ballet with modern dance movements will be featured. For further information, call 396-4891.

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# 'Mama' a must for gospel music lovers

"Mama, I Want To Sing," is the title of the musical, and that is what she does—and the entire cast as well, for singing is the major theme of the piece.

For lovers of gospel music, this musical is an absolute must-see production, for it encompasses all facets of the art, from the dirge-like funeral moodiness, to the joyful shot that sets the feet tapping in response.

There are more than 23 songs performed in this two-act production, and although gospel music is dominant, there are sojourns into other musical forms.

For example, there is a "star" sequence, wherein various members of the cast sing in the styles made famous by some of the great black female vocalists.

Karen Bernod portrays Dinah Washington; Hedreich Guillory does Lena Horne, Shilla Benning, Sarah Vaughn, and Linda Haynes stylizes Billie Holiday.

And, there is humor in the production, for the antics of the Minister of Music, played by Charles Stewart, delightfully demonstrates the precision and eclat of gospel choral singing.

One interesting note: Stewart is a minister, choir director and English teacher in E. Orange, N.J., and the choral ensemble he directs on stage is in actuality, the Reach Ensemble.

"Mama I Want To Sing" is the real life story of a young gospel singer, who wants to branch out into the pop vocals world, and her mother strongly objects.

The role is delightfully played by Noreen Crayton, who displayed a voice of incredible range, with nuances that sometimes whispered, sometimes rose to a riveting peak.

Her mother is played by Doris Troy, in the role of Mama Winter, who is the sister of Vy Higgenson, writer and director of the musical. The plot revolves around the real life story of Doris, who plays her own mother in the production.

The ne plus ultra of female gospel singing, is displayed, in our opinion, by Kathleen Murphy-Palmer in the role of Sister Carrie. No stranger to the gospel music world, she was a former opening act for the Hawkins Family, and has appeared with Andre Crouch and Amy Grant.

The story of the winters family and its problems, is told via the flashback visitations of the onstage radio disc-jockey, who leads into all of the musical presentations, setting the scenes.

Hazel Smith performed this role, and does it in such an authentic manner, that you begin to believe you can tune in station WVHM, by turning to 107.9 on the dial.

Ramona Keller, Noreen Crayton and Hedreich Guillory sing in the style made famous by a female group in "Mama, I Want to Sing" currently running at the Lyric.

The sets are sparse, since this production is essentially a road-show company offering. But then, scenery, dialogue and props, while necessary, are not a major focus here—the music is.

There is no curtain. Lights are used to effect transitions, which leads to speculation that the production is designed to be produced in the round as well as on a proscenium stage.

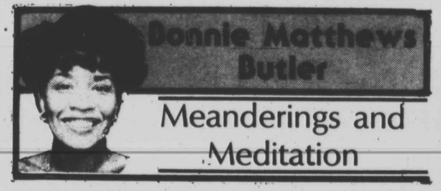
In town for a limited engagement, the musical plays through June 15. Performances are Tuesday-Saturday evenings at 8 p.m., Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday matinees are at 3 p.m., and there will be a special 11 a.m. matinee, Saturday, June 14. For ticket information call 625-1400. All performances are at the Lyric theatre.

**"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 of 1986. For further information, call 396-5494.





# Bonnie Matthews Butler

## Meanderings and Meditation

Kurtis Blow, considered by many to be the "King of Rap," dropped by the AFRO offices Wednesday to promote his appearance on the upcoming Sprite/Fresh Festival III being held Saturday, June 7 at the Baltimore Civic Center.

For those of you unfamiliar with this new "music form," rap music is, according to Kurtis, "talking in rhyme to the rhythm of the beat. You have that funky, funky rhythm under the rap which is the best thing for the disco dance floor so people across the board can get into it."

He should know for Kurtis is considered to be the best rapper on the scene today and he was well prepared for the success he is finally receiving.

"I was in college in 1977-78, Kurtis told **Right On! Magazine,** my major was communications and speech broadcasting. I wanted to be a radio announcer. So while pursuing that course, I also did mobile DJing at different discos throughout the metropolitan area in New York. I picked up on rap back then. Every Saturday, kids would jam in the parks. I would go around from park to park exposing myself to the people that way besides playing in the discos."

Producers Robert Ford and J. B. Moore heard about this talented D.J. and within a short while contracts were signed and Kurtis recorded his first record, "Christmas Rappin' " in 1979.

Kurtis has released four more LP's since then with the latest entitled "America."

Now, Kurtis is about to tackle Hollywood for he has packed up, lock, stock and barrel and is moving to Los Angeles where he has purchased the home of Debbie Allen. He's now hoping to add a film career to his other achievements.

We wish him the best.

* * *

The Kentucky Fried Chicken Gospel Music Competition preliminaries will be held on June 11 at Gillis Memorial Community Church, 4016 Park Heights Ave. and on June 11 at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 1501 E. Oliver St.

The auditions will begin at 7:30 on both dates and the admission

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Super rapper Kurtis Blow (right) chats and raps with Friday Plus record reviewer, Carl Matthews during his recent visit to the AFRO.

Vocalist Sheila Horne will be appearing every Friday in June on The Lady Baltimore, the entertainment cruise ship in the Inner Harbor. Also featured on the cruise will be vocalist Amory Strange and the Windjammer Band. Boarding time is 10:30 p.m. at the Harborplace Dockside and tickets are $9.00. For more information call 727-3113.

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KNIGHTS of the CITY

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