SHOWTIME

JazzFestival honors Holiday, Armstrong

The JVC Jazz Festival, the world's premiere jazz smorgasbord, will include tributes to four late jazz greats in its 10-day run in New York beginning June 24, producer George Wein said Tuesday.

The tribute concerts will celebrate the impact of Louis Armstrong, singer Billie Holiday and two recently departed jazz forces - drummer Buddy Rich and composer-pianist Gil Evans.

The 10-day mix of jazz, rock, blues and salsa covers a tremendous musical spectrum far beyond the classic jazz and bebop presented at Wein's first Newport, R.I., Jazz Festival in 1954.

"This year's festival is very representative of the current concept of the jazz world," Wein said. "Things aren't quite as simple now. Many kinds of music fit under the heading of jazz in the minds of record companies, critics and, above all, the public. It will satisfy most jazz lovers, but never will it satisfy all. In that way, it maintains the traditions of the festival from the very beginning."

Among the highlights is the June 30 festival debut of Avery Fisher Hall or rock guitarist Carlos Santana and a West Coast band he will co-lead with saxophonist Wayne Shorter, the fusion pioneer who cut his musical teeth in trumpet great Miles Davis's band from 1964 to 1970.

"Santana wants to play jazz fesvitals this summer," Wein said. "I always like it when people outside the field of jazz who still play good music are eager to be a part of a mainstream jazz production. It is a compliment to jazz."

The June 24 opener at Carnegie Hall is a benefit for the Louis Armstrong Project at Queens College. Featured are trumpeters Dizzy Gillespie, Wynton Marsalis, Clark Terry, Ruby Braff, Jimmy Owens, Randy Sandke, Jon Faddis, Warren Vache, ex-trumpet great Roy Eldridge and vibrahonist Lionel Hampton.

The Gil Evans Orchestra, conducted by his son, trumpeter Miles Evans, will perform June 29 at the Kaufman Concert Hall at the 92nd Street. Evans died last month in Mexico. The same setting will host a June reunion concert of the Charles Mingus All-Star Big Band.

The Buddy Rich tribute, July 1 at Carnegie Hall, involves Rich's big band, drummer Louie Bellson, saxophonist Stan Getz, and Singers Pearl Bailey, Annie Ross, Nancy Wilson, Joe Williams and Mel Torme.

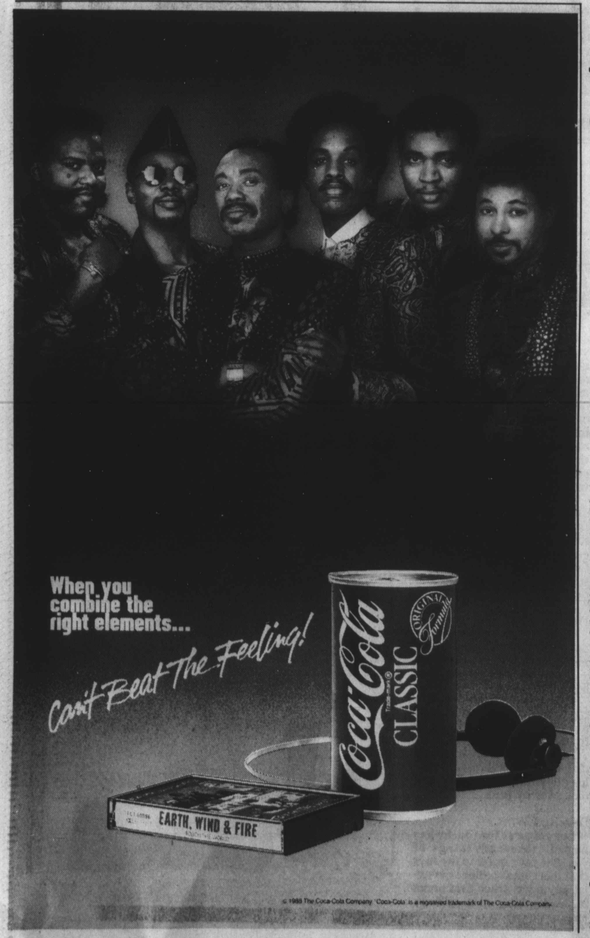
On July 2, the distinctive sound of Billie Holiday will be celebrated at Town Hall with "A Night for Lady Day," featuring Ruby Braff, Al Hibbler, Buddy Tate, Scott Hamilton, Barry Harris, Ellis Larkins, Wein, Jack Lesberg, Jake Hana and Buck Clayton's Swing Band.

A twilight solo piano series at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall will feature Hilton Ruiz, Billy Taylor, Makoto Ozone, Jay McShann, Duke Jordan, Dave McKenna, Marian McPartland and Gerry Wiggins.

Other festival appearances include a "big band battle" June 25 at Town Hall with the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra and the Mel Lewis Big Band, and concerts by Miles Davis, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Gerry Mulligan, Celia Cruz and Tito Puente, Dizzy Gillespie and Carmen McRae. The American Composers Orchestra will perform four symphonic works by Duke Ellington at Carnegie Hall June 26.

The opening weekend will also include two days of outdoor concerts at Waterloo Village in Stanhope, N.J., under co-sponsorship of the New Jersey Jazz Society. A June 25 piano spectacular will be followed on the 26th by an eight-hour traditional jazz picnic.

IN NEW YORK — Nell Carter belts out Alexander's Ragtime Band at Carnegie Hall during the celebration of composer Irving Berlin's 100th birthday.



Ruffin facing drug charge

DETROIT—The Temptations' former lead singer, David Ruffin, has been acquitted of cocaine possession charges but faces up to a year in prison on a conviction of using the drug.

Recorder's Court Judge John O'Brien ruled that insufficient evidence existed to convict Ruffin of cocaine possession, a felony that carries a maximum four-year prison sentence.

The singer said he did not know how containers of butane, commonly used to smoke crack cocaine, and a packet containing a trace of cocaine got into his purse July 28 when police raided the northwest Detroit home of a co-defendant, Marvin Hicks.

Ruffin's attorney argued that anyone in Hicks' house could have placed the butane and cocaine traces in Ruffin's purse, which the singer said he left on a kitchen table while he ran to the basement when the raid started.

But Ruffin, who insists he hasn't had a drug problem for 20 years, acknowledged to the judge that he used cocaine, and will be sentenced May 31 on the drug usage conviction.

Hicks testified that he, Ruffin and five others in the house planned to split 42 grams of "crack," an ultra-potent, hardened form of cocaine. Hicks testified he had smoked cocaine with Ruffin in the past.

Police said Hicks was arrested after jumping out of a window and trying to escape, and that he was carrying $854 in cash, 45 grams of crack, and a handgun, which was tucked in his shorts.

Hicks was convicted of attempted possession of cocaine but acquitted on two other charges — possession with intent to deliver and possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

DIONNE WARWICK

MR. T

By Penny S. Demps

THAT a national talent search for promising young comedians will be launched this month with veteran entertainer Redd Foxx as host. The Miller Lite Comedy Search will involve preliminary auditions at various nightclubs in Chicago, Philadelpia, New Orleans, Detroit and Atlanta with competitive finals in each city. Based on the success of an initial effort, this year's winner will receive $10,000 in prize money. Audition schedules for this year's Comedy Search will be posted in each participating city.

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THAT Michael Jackson's Pepsi spots are about to debut in Russia. Yes, Jackson is going to sing and dance for 150,000 Russian TV viewers later this month, plus he will appear to speak the language thanks to a dubbed Russian voiceover! All the commercials schedules have been seen in the U.S. previously.

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THAT Dionne Warwick's AID Benefit Gala Weekend, June 10-12, is transforming the Nation's Capital into the nation's entertainment mecca. Black-tie dinner entertainment on the 11th features Lena Horne, Sarah Vaughn, Nancy Wilson, Blair Underwood, Byron Allen, George Kirby and Howard Hewitt. Woopie Goldberg hosts the weekend's climax, a gala extravaganza with Dionne Warwick, Gladys Knight, Elton John, Burt Bacharach, Barry Manilow, Luther Vandross, Mary Wilson and Robert Townsend. The list of scheduled participants reads like a "Who's Who": Bob Hope, Sammy Davis, Jr., Ricardo Montalban, Louis Gossett, Jr., Thomas Hearns,and the list goes on. The benefit is the first fundraiser for the newly-formed Warwick Foundation. Health issues are its primary consideration. For ticket information, call: (202) 638-2747.

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THAT top recording stars Stephanie Mills, LL Cool J, Keith Sweat, Miki Howard, The Winans and George Duke and his All-Stars will headline the Black Radio Exclusive Awards Show, Friday, May 27. The awards/concert promises to be a highlight of the 12th Annual BRE Conference, scheduled from May 24-29 at the Sheraton-Registry Hotel in Universal City, CA.

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THAT South Seattle school kids were both surprised and thrilled when they walked into an assembly on reading and found tough-guy Mr. T waiting for them, and he gave appropriate tough talk about staying in school and staying away from drugs and gangs. He also told the 350 students "Mr. T is your friend. Mr. T cares about you. That's why I'm here. Mr. T wants you to be good at school." Sporting his usual array of jewely, he explained, "I'm tough on crooks, but tender on kids."

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THAT Whoopi Goldberg had to cancel three performances and is in a Chicago-area hospital. Her publicist would say only that Goldberg had a fever. She was scheduled to perform her one-woman show, "Living on the Edge of Chaos," at the Chicago Theatre. Also canceled was an appearance with Sen. Paul Simon at a shelter for battered women where the two were to present a check from the Comic Relief organization.

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THAT Whitney Houston's new neighbors in Mendham Township, N.J., wish she would hurry up and get moved in. The neighbors on North Gate Rd., which has houses on five-acre lots set back from the street complain that 15 to 30 trucks are regularly parked along both sides of the road all week long while crews install a sound studio, swimming pool and tennis courts for Houston. Meanwhile, Whitney is performing in Europe.

LEGENDARY GROUP Gladys Knight & the Pips and popular artist Alexander O'Neal recently kicked off the 21-city Michelob Class Acts concert tour at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland. Shown at the concert are (L to R) Pip Bubba Knight; Bill Jones, Anheuser-Busch; Ces Butner, Horizon Beverage; Knight; Derek Frederickson, Anheuser-Busch; and Pips William Guest and Edward Patton.

METRO PROFILE

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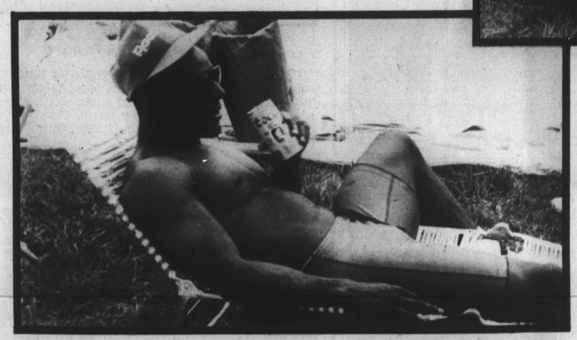
- Lifestyle 3C
- Crime and Punishment 5C

Preakness fever on the infield

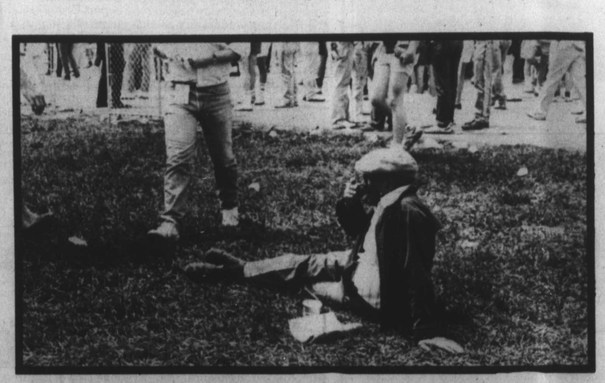
WARMER THAN EXPECTED — Michael Glover had to take off his coat during the Preakness events. It was much too hot.

COME ON! — Desmar Artis can't seem to get his sandwich together, while Khalia and Claude Artis thoroughly enjoy their food and conversation.

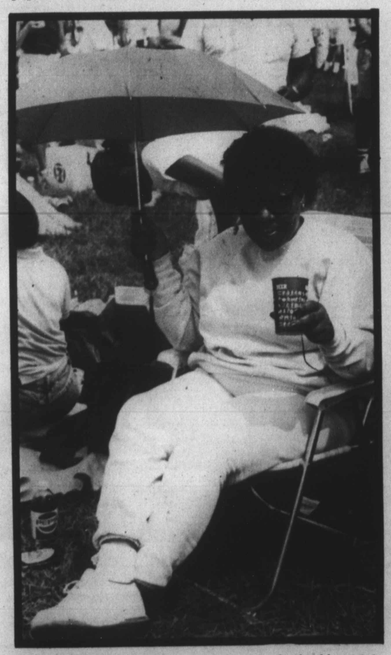
PREAKNESS OBSERVERS — Diane Myers and Marrion Barnes prepare their camera equipment for the Preakness events.



MR. COOL — Here's Kevin McCorkal enjoying the Preakness and a cold beer.



GRAZING IN THE GRASS — The idea of relaxing in the grass was irresistible to this Preakness fan.



UNDER THE SUN — Sally Stewart has a cool refreshing drink as she protects herself from the sun at the Preakness.