SHOWTIME

Whitaker wins 'Best Actor' award

Plays Charlie Parker in the film 'Bird'

CANNES, France — Actor-director Clint Eastwood introduced the 41st Cannes Film Festival Saturday to "Bird," his film biography of "American icon" and jazz saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker.

"Memories of Parker have stayed in my mind for years," Eastwood, 57, a horn player in his youth, told reporters after the morning screening. "It's always been a great ambition of mine to make a film about him."

The lengthy — 2 hours, 43 minutes — film is only the second of the 13 he has directed in which he has not starred. With him at Cannes were actors Forest Whitaker, Diane Venora and Michael Zelniker. Whitaker was named best actor for his portrayal of Parker in the film.

CANNES, France — Members of the cast of the movie "Bird," surround director Clint Eastwood (2nd R) at the 41st Cannes Film Festival. Damon Whitaker (L) plays the young Charlie Parker, while his brother, Forest Whitaker (2nd L) plays the role of the grown-up jazzman. Forest won the best actor award for his portrayal. Diane Venora plays Chan Parker, who lived with the great also saxman until his death.

Parker's widow, Chan, who worked with Eastwood on the film was to be presented Saturday night at its official screening.

In Cannes, Eastwood had remained out of the limelight, dining with festival organizers and strolling with his wife Sandra Locke, a co-star in a number of films.

An entirely different Eastwood seemed to emerge as he described the long path that led him to the making of "Bird."

From the age of 15, Eastwood played the flugelhorn in jazz bands after his mother played some Fats Waller records for him. Much later, Eastwood decided to bring under-appreciated jazz to a wider audience.

"Americans don't have any original art except Western movies and jazz, and it's easy to overlook what's in your front yard," he said.

He relates the story of Parker — an "American icon" — and his lover Chan from the 1930s through the 1950s, and the musician's struggle with alcohol and drugs. Eastwood makes liberal use of forward and backward flashes to show Parker's physical decay as he rises to fame.

At close to three hours, the $10-million Warner Brothers film at times seems to labor its point. But Eastwood defended its length: "The (studio) executives were concerned, but I just forged ahead at this length. If you really wanted to play it safe, you'd never release a movie."

His film alter-ego could give "Bird" a boost. Another Dirty Harry film will be out before Parker's story, so Eastwood's huge public will again be under his influence when the more intimate work appears.

Also, the ground was prepared by "Round Midnight," French director Bernard Tavernier's successful 1986 film about jazz saxophonist Bud Powell — financed by Warner Brothers at Eastwood's urging.

Whatever the box-office draw of "Bird," it gives evidence of a broader film range and deeper intellectual resources than the self-effacing Eastwood has generally been given credit for.

"We must always take the work seriously," he told journalists at Cannes, "But never take ourselves seriously."

Jazz Festival 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.

Sammy Davis, Sr. dies at 87

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Sammy Davis, Sr., a vaudeville dancer whose career spanned 40 years and launched his popular entertainer son into show business, died recently at his home, a family spokesman said. He was 87.

Davis, who was born in 1900 in Wilmington, N.C., died at his Beverly Hills home of natural causes, said Arnold Lipsman, a family spokesman.

Davis began his career before World War I in New York City where he won a series of dance contests.

When his son was born in 1925, Davis was dancer in Will Mastin's Holiday of Dixieland vaudeville revue. His wife, Elvira, was a chorus girl.

Sammy, Jr. first toddled onto a stage in Columbus, Ohio, when he was 18 months old. His surprise walk-on fouled up his parent's dance number but brought down the house.

The youngster soon joined Mastin's family revue and by the time he was 4, was performing with his father on the Orpheum Circuit, where skimpy finances often forced the pair to share a hotel bed.

After World War II, "The Will Mastin Trio" — Davis, his son and Mastin — became a box-office draw in nightclubs in Los Angeles, New York and Las vegas and also appeared on the Ed Sullivan, Jackie Gleason and Eddie cantor television shows, with the younger Davis emerghing as the star.

The elder Davis also portrayed jazz musician Fletcher Henderson in the 1955 film, "The Benny Goodman Story."

In addition to his entertainer son, Davis is survived by two daughters, Ramona James, of New York City, and Suzette Davis, of Portland, Ore., six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Have you heard?

By John Robinson

THAT LaToya Jackson, 31, sister of superstar Michael Jackson has left the family compound in Encino, Calif. and is looking for her own digs in New York. Meanwhile, she's staying in a $1,100-a-day suite at the Waldorf Astoria. Not only has she changed locale, she has also forsaken her father, Joe Jackson, for a new manager, Jack Gordon a Las Vegas businessman. "My father would tell me what I should do and I'd just listen," she said of Joe's managerial style. "If I questioned him, he'd scream at me so I wouldn't dare."

LaToya Jackson

Adrienne Brown

THAT the tragic consequences of racial conflict in Africa have been the subject of several recent films, but "the Kitchen Toto," about the Kenya independence movement is a special view from someone most familiar with that moment in history. Unlike the romanticism in "Out of Africa" or the inflammatory films of 25 years ago about the Mau Mau rebellion, "The Kitchen Toto" is a human story by British director-writer Harry Hook, who as a boy lived with his parents in Kenya.

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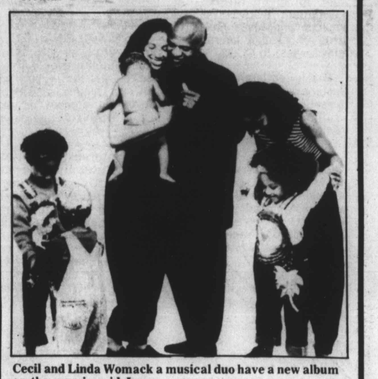
THAT Grammy award winning jazz vocalist Joe Williams and pianist/composer/producer Dave Grusin were conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Music by the Berklee College of Music in Boston recently. Williams, who in 1983 was awarded the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences Governor's Award for sustained artistic excellence, was further with the 1984 Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Performance for his album "Nothin' But the Blues."



Cecil and Linda Womack a musical duo have a new album on the way in mid-June.

THAT the National Coalition of 100 Black Women will honor 11 black women for distinguished achievement in various fields. Singer Patti LaBelle will host the sixth annual Awards ceremony which will be held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on June 22.

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THAT James Brown is back on the good foot with his latest album, "I'm Real." This git down and funky wax was produced by Full Force, the Brooklyn-based crew. The title cut, "I'm Real," available on single and there is also a 5-minute video featuring Brown and a special appearance by Full Force. "The things I did 20 years ago, they'll be playing tomorrow," he said in an interview. And it's true.

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THAT making music is a family affair for Cecil and Linda Womack, who bring out their new album Conscience in mid-June. Linda Womack's father was legendary gospel and pop artist Sam Cooke. And Cecil Womack also came from a long line of musical talent.

His grandfather, Thomas Womack, headed a gospel group in the coal-country of Virginia. What's more, Cecil Womack's father, Friendly Womack, Sr., organized a gospel unit that toured with Marvin Gaye, Joe Hinton, Johnny Taylor, Solomon Burke, Della Reese, David Ruffin, Wilson Pickett, the Staple Singers, Lou Rawls and Aretha Franklin.

Cecil and Linda Womach were married in 1975, and have been doing things as a family ever since. Together they wrote and produced the hits that launched the career of Teddy Pendergrass. They wrote and produced other hits for The Spinners and Patti Labelle. Then Cecil and Linda put out their first LP together — as Womack & Womack — in 1984.

METRO PROFILE

■ Community Living 2C
■ Lifestyle 3C

A legend types his final '30'

THE TOUGH JOURNALIST, Art Carter, just prior to his appointment as Editor/Publisher of the Washington AFRO-AMERICAN. Carter, whose funeral was Friday, died May 22 after a long illness.

Arthur M. Carter, publisher-editor of the Washington AFRO-AMERICAN, was a native Washingtonian and a veteran journalist known to thousands of AFRO readers as "Art Carter."

Carter had been editor been editor of the Washington AFRO since 1970. He was also the first editor of the AFRO's monthly magazine insert "DAWN," and contributed a monthly column to it. The National Newspapers Publishers Association (NNPA) voted Carter "Editor of the Year" at its June convention in Gary, Indiana, in 1982.

The Man. . .

Carter's journalistic career spans nearly a half century beginning at Howard University, where he handled news releases for the athletic teams. He joined the Washington AFRO as a police reporter and sports writer in 1937, and later took the post as sports editor for the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers working out of Baltimore.

During World War II, Carter served as war correspondent for the AFRO in North Africa and Italy, covering the activities of the 99th Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group and the 92nd Infantry.

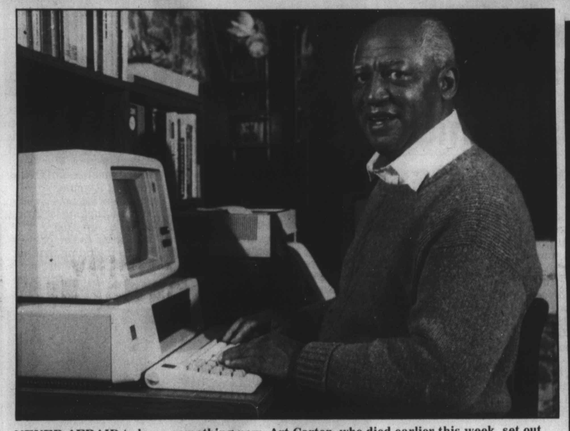
After returning from the war assignment, Carter was national correspondent, assistant managing editor and then managing editor of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers in Baltimore before coming back to Washington as publisher-editor of the Washington AFRO in 1970.

He has twice won the "Journalist of the Year" award from the Capital Press Club and was cited in 1984 by the Prince Hall Masons for his "outstanding service to humanity and dedication to excellence in journalism..."

He has received numerous merit awards for his journalistic work from the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA).

Carter was active in community affairs as chairman of the Howard University Hospital Advisory Board, member of the Boy Scouts of American National Capital Area Board, Shepard Park Citizens Association, National Press Club and Capital Press Club, which he twice served as president. He also was a member of the administrative board of the Simpson-Hamline United Methodist Church where he served as church treasurer.

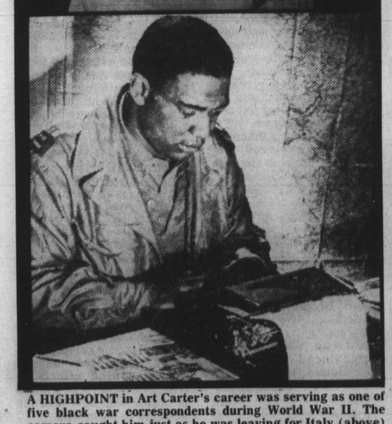
He was married to former Callie Scott and resided in Northwest Washington.



NEVER AFRAID to learn something new, Art Carter, who died earlier this week, set out to learn how to use a computer after he retired in 1986.

ART CARTER and the monthly poker crew. (Left to right, standing) Carter, Sam Lacy, AFRO Sports Editor; Moses Newson, former AFRO National Editor; Bob Matthews, AFRO Executive Editor. Sitting are Callie Carter and Ruth Jenkins, one of the AFRO columnist and former Washington AFRO City Editor.

WITH FRIENDS Sam Lacy and retired AFRO Board Chairman John H. Murphy, III, Art Carter made his face known to many benefits and receptions around the city.



A HIGHPOINT in Art Carter's career was serving as one of five black war correspondents during World War II. The camera caught him just as he was leaving for Italy (above) and later in the field facilities of the 92nd Infantry (Buffalo) Division (below).

. . .And the Journalist

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following was among the first in a series of reports Art Carter sent back to the United States while serving as one of five black war correspondents during World War II. He covered the 99th Fighter Squadron's serving in Italy in 1944, the 366th Infantry as well as 92nd Division.

The article, reprinted from This is Our War published by the AFRO-AMERICAN represents one of the many highpoints of a career spanning over 50 years.

We offer it to you as a tribute to the man.

SOMEWHERE IN ITALY — Pandemonium reigned supreme at the 99th Fighter Squadron's operations tent, in February, 1944, as crack pilots returned from their history-making air attacks against the Germans, running their scoreboard to twelve Nazi planes destroyed, two probably destroyed, and four damaged during two days of fighting — a record for the current invasion of Anzio and Nettuno Beaches, South of Rome.

Like football players bursting into a dining room after a triumph in the season's classic, war-weary pilots were jubilant in their description of victories over the Luftwaffe, giving vivid recollections of how they poured hot lead into enemy aircraft.

The fourth victory on the second big day went to Second Lieut. Lewis C. Smith of Los Angeles, who downed an FW-190.

Upon their return from the second day's mission, the pilots were surprised with a visit by Major Gen. John K. Cannon, commanding general of the 12th Air Force, who personally congratulated them and their commanding officer. "I am tickled to death with the magnificent job you are doing. It was a grand show. Just don't overwork yourselves."

The big bag brought the 99th squadron's nine months' overseas record to thirteen destroyed, four probably destroyed and six damaged...