IT SEEMS TO ME...!

By Deborah Johns Moir

This week marks my first column for "Friday Plus." I will talk about entertainment events that the AFRO covers in and around the Baltimore-Washington area which are about to take place or which has just happened.

For instance, the month of August started out with a serious bang as the fusion band Hiroshima performed the last night of a 14-city tour at the Wolf Trap in Vienna, VA.

Hiroshima was great on August 1, the Wolf Trap was the perfect setting, and the crowd was quite responsive.

The Wolf Trap promises additional excellence when it brings Joan Armatrading singing from her latest album "The Shouting Stage" on August 22 and the Robert Cray Band on August 26 with songs from the album "Don't Be Afraid of the Dark."

AFRAM, Baltimore's annual African American festival took place August 5-7 despite the heat and the downpours. The crowds were there partaking of the food, music, and cultural events.

The vendors were there, as always, with cultural artifacts for those interested in learning about African American history through books, clothing and art.

The highlight of last weekend for me was the George Michael concert August 6 at the Capital Centre in Landover. You had to be there! From the excellent laser light show to the stage to the band to the man himself, the concert was spectacular. It helped to be a George Michael admirer to deal with the thousands of screaming fans who saw every nuance as perfect.

As Michael ran across the stage from one ramp to the other, the slightest movement brought hysteria. He is a rare artist who can command an audience's attention even as he stood still silently in between verses.

And speaking of verses, Michael sang nearly every song from the "Faith" album with the notable exception of "Kissing A Fool." He opened with the short version of "I Want Your Sex," singing strongly after his recent throat surgery. He included Wham! songs "Careless Whisper," "A Different Corner," and "I'm Your Man," in addition to his hit duet with Aretha Franklin, "I Knew You Were Waiting For me," and songs he's covered from other artists.

He sang for nearly two hours and every song was a good song, judging by the audience's response. As I mentioned earlier, the laser lighting was fantastic. When he did the finale, the long version of "I Want Your Sex," the lasers depicted among other things, the figure of the woman in garters from the controversial video of the same name.

For me, this was one of the best concerts I've attended all year. Michael had the energy, the vocals, and the showmanship to captivate his fans at the Capital Centre.

Throughout the evening, Michael teased the audience, consisting mainly of females, by pulling his jacket down, but not off, until near the end of his show. He sang "Lady Marmalade" with his back up singer Lynn Mabry as he pulled his jacket entirely off revealing suspenders and a hairy chest.

George Michael knew what it took to put on a *sensational* American debut concert and he delivered the goods.

George Michael opened his American tour at the Capital Centre Aug. 6 and 7.

The cast of "Abyssinia" which runs now through Sept. 4 at Arena Stage in D.C.

'Abyssinia' continues at Arena

WASHINGTON, DC — Summer fun at Arena Stage continues with the production of the new pop-gospel musica, "Abyssinia," to play in the Arena from August 5 through September 4.

The title character, Abyssinia, is a young girl who is born in a field and grows up with the gift of song.

Throughout her life, she touches those around her with her mellifluous voice and healing powers, until one afternoon when her faith and musical inspiration are tragically shattered.

This touching gospel - music folk tale, set in an Oklahoma church community around 1900, reveals the circumstances by which Abyssinia regains her faith and her precious voice.

"Abyssinia" is based on a novel by Joyce Carol Thomas, directed by Tazewell Thompson, with music by Ted Kociolek, lyrics by James Racheff, and book by both Kociolek and Racheff.

The production comes to Arena from the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, Connecticut.

"Abyssinia" was conceived in 1982 when Kociolek discovered Ms. Thomas' novel, "Marked by Fire."

Kociolek was taken by the novel's "musical and lyrical promise" and found that it "struck something central" in him.

"Our musical is not a black documentary.

"It's a story that I believe is universal . . . Its theme of suffering and oppression overcome by faith and song has universal appeal at a primeval level."

Director Tazewell Thompson was awarded the 1987 Audelco Award for Directing for his work on "Abyssinia."

He staged the critically - acclaimed production of Aaron Copland's "The Second Hurricane" at SoHo Rep and was nominated for an Audelco Award for "Almos' A Man" and "One Fine Day."

He has worked as a director at the Actors Studio, Perry Street Theatre and Gateway Playhouse.

As an actor, he appeared on Broadway in the award-winning plays "The National Health," and "Checking Out," and regionally at Long Wharf Theatre and Syracuse Stage.

Tickets for "Abyssinia" are available with discounts available for senior citizens, groups and students.

For tickets and information call the Arena Stage box office at (202) 488-3300. Deaf Patrons may call the TDD line at (202) 484-0247.

'Tartuffe,' 'Romeo' to end this weekend

Continuing to stretch its horizons, the RAPP Resident Theater Company has temporarily moved out of New York's gritty, eclectic East Village and onto the tranquil campus of Baltimore's Loyola College for what will become an annual summer residency program.

Now through August 14, the RAPP Resident Theater Company will produce in rotating repertory Moliere's TARTUFFE and Shakespeare's ROMEO AND JULIET in Loyola's new multi-million dollar, state-of-the-art MacManus Theater.

In addition, RAPP's artistic director R. Jeffrey Cohen is conducting an intensive Theater Conservatory Workshop for four weeks.

Loyola, one of Maryland's oldest and most respected colleges, aims to broaden its Fine Arts Department by incorporating RAPP's fresh and iconoclastic approach to classic theater over the coming years.

TARTUFFE is a revival from RAPP's 1986/87 New York season.

(Continued on Page 6)

ABOUT TV

By Deborah Quinerly

WETA will air two new local documentaries on the most pressing issues of our time—drugs and AIDS—Senior Vice-President for Programming and Station Manager Joyce Campbell announced.

"Drugs and AIDS: Getting the Message Out" and " 'Til Death Do Us Part" will air on WETA/TV26 at 8:00 p.m. on Monday (15th).

An introduction by Dr. Reed Tuckson, commissioner of public health for the District of Columbia will precede both programs; and a follow-up discussion with Tuckson and four area teenagers will wrap up the evening.

"Drugs and AIDS: Getting the Message Out" will provide inspiring models to make AIDS awareness a reality for all Americans.

The 30-minute documentary demonstrates how large and small communities throughout the U.S. are currently implementing a variety of positive and constructive means to deliver effective AIDS education to the public.

From a mobile health van that delivers health care services to residents of housing projects, to volunteer rescue workers demonstrating protective devices, and the church's controversial acceptance or rejection of AIDS patients, "Drugs and AIDS: Getting the Message Out" suggests specific ways individuals can be involved in an awareness campaign.

Producer Geraldine Wurzburg explained, " 'Drugs and AIDS: Getting the Message Out' is a coalition-building tool that is designed to help communities move past panic and uncertainty to effective and productive action."

" 'Til Death Do Us Part," a film on AIDS prevention, follows at 8:30 p.m. when Tuckson introduces this 16-minute music video, focusing on AIDS and teenagers.

Original music and drama is provided by the Everyday Youth Music Ensemble of Washington, D.C. combining rap, music and dance in a vivid portrayal of peer pressure, I.V. needle use and personal responsibility.

The WETA drugs and AIDS awareness programming will culminate in a 14-minute WETA-produced follow-up discussion when Tuckson joins four local teenagers from the Maryland AIDS Teenage Hotline program.

They will discuss the issues of peer pressure, drug abuse, sex and AIDS.

* * *

As of this writing, Hollywood producers and striking members of the Writers Guild of America have reached agreement on terms of a new contract that would put the television and movie industry back to work.

Let's keep our fingers crossed and hope for the best because there are some very interesting television projects in store for us during the new and upcoming television season.

Have a good week!

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TV CAPSULES

Friday, August 12

"EVENING AT POPS" (9-10:00 p.m.) Features Tony Bennett, George Benson, Nell Carter, Wynton Marsalis, Sarah Vaughan and Toots Thielemans. Simulcast in stereo on FM 88.9, WEAA. Channels 22 and 67.

Saturday, August 13

"ESSENCE SUPERSTARS" (3:30-4:30 p.m.) No information available at press time. Channel 11.

"CUB DATE" (10:30-11:00 p.m.) Seventy-three-year-old jazz violinist Papa John Creach is accompanied by Mike Wofford on piano, Bob Magnusson on bass, and Jim Plank on drums. Featured numbers include "Exactly Like You," "Georgia On My Mind," "Git Fiddler," and "Movin'." Channel 32.

Tuesday, August 16

"HEALTH MATTERS: Addiction and the Family" (7:30-8:00 p.m.) A look at one family's battle against drug and alcohol addiction, with information about support groups and treatment programs. Channels 22 and 67.

"TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN AFRICA: Traditional Healiers and Modern Physicians" (8-8:30 p.m.) A visit to Zimbabwe shows how traditional healiers have now regained their former importance and have become integrated in the national health system. Channel 32.

Wednesday, August 17

"16 DAYS OF GLORY" (8-9:00 p.m.) Carl Lewis of the United States proves to be the most successful track and field athlete at the Olympic Games as he wins gold medals in four events. Channels 22 and 67.

Frank's (Tim Reid) life is turned upside down when Chez Louisiane is chosen as the location for a big-budget movie, and the beautiful and seductive star Neema Sharone (Pam Grier) enters his life, on "FRANK'S PLACE" on Saturday at 8:30 p.m. on Channels 9 and 11.

"PERFECT COMBINATION," a rhythm and blues musical group, recently appeared on WJZ-TV's "In The Spotlight." The group members pictured above, (L to R-front) are: Dwayne Satterfield, David Barnes, and (L to R-back) Warren Williams, James Pierce, Edward Byrd, and Dannie Satterfield.

Theatre Project

DANCE SAMPLER 1
SEP 28-OCT2

***THE POWER PROJECT**
OCT 5-23

***NOT FOR REAL**
OCT 26-NOV 13

***ANERCA**
NOV 30-DEC 18

***PAPER WINDOWS**
JAN 4-29

***HAVE YOU SEEN ZANDILE?**
FEB 8-MAR 5

DANCE SAMPLER 3
MAR 8-12

***RASPUTIN: THE FORBIDDEN STORY**
MAR 15-APR 2

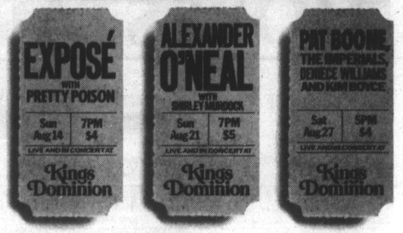
ICARUS
APR 12-MAY 7

***SEXUAL MYTHOLOGY**
MAY 10-28

DANCE SAMPLER 4
MAY 31-JUNE 4

***1988-89 subscription series**

IF YOU THINK THE RIDES AT KINGS DOMINION WILL ROCK YOU, WAIT 'TIL YOU SEE WHAT'S IN OUR SHOWPLACE.



Advance concert tickets available at all TicketCenter locations including Hecht's, or by calling TicketCenter in Washington at 202-432-0200. In Baltimore, 301-481-6000. Or toll-free at 1-800-448-9009. A limited number of tickets are available the day of the show at Kings Dominion. Park admission is required.

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