SPOTLIGHT

New movie links S.A., homelessness, black upward mobility

Washington, D.C., with its imposing symbols of power and influence that co-exist with physical blight, homelessness and other signs of economic despair, is the backdrop for the new film by independent black filmmaker Edward Tim Lewis.

Serving Two Masters is a philosophical drama which explores the myth of black upward mobility in traditionally white institutions and confronts the issues of South Africa, homelessness and hunger. The black and white film is a study in contrasts, emotionally and visually.

Father Matthew (Father Victor Lawson) is a troubled Episcopal priest who now roams the streets as a homeless man, preaching and wrestling with inner conflicts. Father Lawson brings a disturbingly realistic presence to the role, in part, because he is, himself, an Episcopal priest, and rector of Our Saviour Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.

Clifford Jackson (Cliff McMullen) is a black executive on the fast track who accepts the difficult responsibility of publicly defending his company's policy of doing business with South Africa. A chance encounter brings the formerly close friends together again and creates the story's conflict.

A full scale psychological tug-of-war develops as Father Matthew becomes Clifford's unshakable conscience. He eventually sets up a make-shift shelter outside Cliff's office. In his more verbal moments, Father Matthew is a firebrand of believable conviction.

A SCENE from "Serving Two Masters."

In one scene, he chides Clifford that he is an assistant in a company that is nothing but a "bunch of pirates and thieves that would carve up the world like it was their pie, and give you the crumbs for your world."

His schizophrenic-like rages challenge America: "You invent machines that look into the heart of an atom, but you can't feed people on earth. You build bombs and missiles, but you can't build decent homes for people to live in . . ."

In an interview after the film's showing at the Episcopal Urban Caucus in the Washington Cathedral, Lewis discussed his approach.

"Homelessness is a metaphor which I am using for the experience of black people in America. America has consistently rejected our consciousness and our perspective. We have always struggled to change America's values, but in trying, the irony is that, in many cases, we have taken on the morality of the very institutions we were trying to change."

He continued, "In America, we can measure the real influence of a people by how they are able to effect foreign policy. In reference to South Africa, obviously our influence here is very little."

Director Lewis has acted and directed in Minnesota, California, and Florida, in theaters that include Shakespeare in the Streets, Dudley Riggs' Brave New Workshop, The San Francisco Black Writer's Workshop, and the Berkeley Repertory Theater.

he has worked as a television news cinematographer and in a variety of other media related jobs. His interest in traditional music sent him on the road with Walter "Brownie" McGhee, as a student, and with Flora Molton, as a sideman, as well as in the field as a researcher.

He talked about filmmaking to students at the U.S. House of Representatives Page School. "The beautiful fact of filmmaking is that it incorporates so many of the arts — writing . . . theater . . . music . . . photography . . . and others. Independent filmmaking, particularly, challenges you on so many levels of

(Continued on Page 7)

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HOMELESS PRIEST — Victor Lawson

. . . . . About SERVING TWO MASTERS

"I was riding a Washington, D.C. Metrobus that was filled with domestic workers coming in, at dusk, from long hours of cleaning other peoples' homes, when, near the U.S. Capitol, an impeccably dressed, young black priest entered wearing a clerical collar and carrying an expensive briefcase. He was very drunk and very profane.

The women on the bus looked at him with pain and pity in their eyes. He noticed their stares, stood up uneasily, and glared back at them. And then he roared, 'I'm rising and falling, brothers and sisters, rising and falling.'

The image of that priest stuck in my mind. His conflict began to define, for me, the dilemma of the African-American in the 1980's. Rising and falling. More blacks in the middle class, but more also in prisons, in mental institutions, and in the streets of our cities, without homes. SERVING TWO MASTERS explores this irony."

—NEW MOVIE

(Continued from Page 6)

expression."

According to Lewis, who currently teaches in the Department of Radio, TV, and Film at Howard University, a major objective in producing **Serving Two Masters** was to create a training ground in which black professionals were paired with young aspiring filmmakers.

After showings of the film, Lewis is often available to discuss with the audiences their differing perceptions of the film's message.

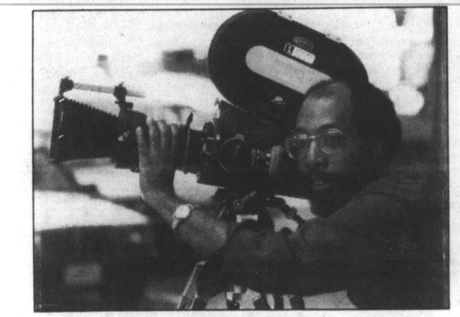
Of his audience, which has so far ranged from students to seminar participants to theatergoers, Lewis says, "I want them to re-examine where we have come since the struggles of the civil rights movement. How effective have we been in bringing about change? We must begin to call each other to task."

Since its 1987 premiere at Howard University, the film has been used by universities, church groups, and other organizations, as a tool to encourage discussion of the issues raised by the film.

In April of 1988, it opened and played to packed houses at the Biograph Theater in Washington, D.C., where it will return, by popular demand, in September.

The film has been featured at the Athens International Film Festival, The Sydney Film Festival, the Newark Black Film Festival, and at Chicago's Blacklight Festival.

For more information, contact Edward Tim Lewis, 609 Hamilton Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. (202) 882-3116.



TIM LEWIS—Filmmaker

BIOGRAPHY

Edward Tim Lewis was born in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1947. He studied theater at the University of Minnesota, and film at The American University.

He has acted and directed in theaters in Minnesota, California, and Florida that include Shakespeake in the Streets, Dudley Riggs' Brave New Workshop, and the Berkeley Repertory Theater. He has worked as a television news film cameraman and in a variety of other media related jobs.

His interest in traditional music sent him on the road with bluesman, Walter "Brownie" McGhee, as a student, and with Washington, D.C. streetsinger, Flora Molton, as a sideman, as well as in the field as a researcher for the Smithsonian Institution.

His films include **Census '75** (1976), a film about unemployment, produced for the State of Florida; **Spirit and Truth Music** (1987), a documentary about the music of Flora Molton; and **Serving Two Masters** (1987), a philosophical drama that explores homelessness, hunger, South Africa, and the conflicts of upwardly mobile blacks in traditionally white institutions.

He currently lives in Washington, D.C. where he also teaches film and television at Howard University.

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CENTER STAGE

Julie Hall onstage at Blues Alley

By Jill P. Carter
AFRO Staff Writer

Labeling herself a multi-talented jazz and progressive vocalist, Julie Hall is excited about being a featured singer during the grand opening celebration of Baltimore's Blues Alley.

Hall, a 24 year old Baltimore native, will perform two shows, Wednesday, September 21, at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.

"I was honored to be called by the booking agent from Blues Alley. He asked, I think, because he knew I grew up here and thought I should be a part of the grand opening," Hall said.

Forming her first band at 15 years old, Hall has worked to develop an encompassing style that attracts all audiences. Wednesdays guests can expect to hear a combination of jazz, Brazilian and pop songs, as well as some original music.

"I don't want to limit myself by saying I'm a jazz vocalist," Hall said. "I don't think you can put one label on me. I consider myself a progressive artist because I sing and write jazz as well as commercial music."

Tall and slender, with a sultry voice, Julie Hall admits to being sexy, but says her talent runs deeper than sex appeal.

"I'm sexy but that's not what I'm selling," Hall said. "I am myself when I'm on-stage. I may be sexy to some people, but just a good voice to others."

A comparison to Blues Alley's previous guest, Phyllis Hyman is inevitable, but Hall prefers to be recognized on her own merit. Though her voice may be similar, the style is her own.

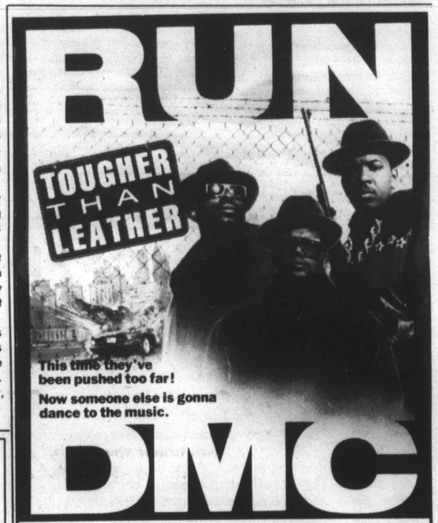
Off stage, Julie is recording a demo tape which she hopes to complete by January, which she believes will further the recording career she began at age 17 while in the studio with Kathy Sledge.

She is currently performing regularly in Washington, D.C. and hopes to soon become the featured performer at her engagements.

A classical and jazz music graduate of Howard University, she has opened for performers Les McCann and Whitney Houston and substituted for Jennifer Holliday.

While Wednesday will be her debut at Blues Alley in Baltimore, she has appeared at Washington's Blues Alley twice and sang previously at Ethel's Place.

JULIE HALL



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