This Weekend

BALTIMORE

Baltimore On Ice, the city's 80-day winter festival, officially began with the dedication of an outdoor ice rink at Rash Field, located on the south shoreline of the Inner Harbor. The rink will be open daily during the winter festival until February 28. For info on admission and scheduled times, call (301) 837-INFO.

Roy Ayers will perform at Baltimore's Blues Alley, 1225 Cathedral St. from Friday, December 9 and 10. For more details, call (301) 837-2288.

Guyana Assistance Projects presents the second annual Yuletide Festival with three exciting events, Saturday, Dec. 10 at Cramton Auditorium, Howard University: A 1 p.m. cultural seminar with Dr. Ivan Van Sertima; A 7 p.m. Yuletide Concert and at 10 p.m., a dance. All proceeds benefit health care in Guyana. For info, call (202) 547-0606.

Fox Broadcasting Co. presents an exclusive one-hour rockin' musical telecast, "A Rock 'n' Roll Christmas," on Sunday, Dec. 11 (8-9 NYT). This special will thread together some rare, vintage and unlikely clips, such as **Jimi Hendrix**, the immortal rock legend, singing "Little Drummer Boy," as well as live performances by rock 'n' roll greats, such as Little Richard and The Fabulous Thunderbirds!

On Sunday, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m., St. David's Church, 4700 Roland Ave. will present Saint David's Choirs and chamber orchestra with Rodney Hansen, organist, in a program of Christmas works by Charpentier, Brahms, Rutter and Bush. Call (301) 467-0476 for details.

Time is runnin' out if you haven't grabbed your tickets for **Luther Vandross** and **Anita Baker**, scheduled to heat up The Baltimore Arena on Thursday, December 15 at 8 p.m. For information, call (301) 347-2010 or TicketCharge at (301) 481-6000.

WYNTON MARSALIS

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Arena Stage, 6th and Maine St., N.W., presents **"Playboy of The West Indies,"** Mustapha Matura's exciting adaptation of Synge's "The Playboy of the Western World." Directed by Tazewell Thompson, the delightful 2½ hour play runs through January 22.

Enjoy **The Joffrey Ballet Company** as they perform "The Nutcracker," a glittering holiday production for all ages. The production plays through December 17. Seating is limited. For tickets or information, call (202) 254-3600.

Come one, come all to the 'Spirit of Gospel Ticket Give-Away' on Saturday, Dec. 10. The Spirit of Gospel is free and no tickets are required, however free early admission tickets which allow you to enter the hall at 7 p.m. are available from the Friends SPT Desk at the Kennedy Center.

Club Kilamanjaro, 1724 California St., N.W. will present **Gilberto Gil** on Sunday, December 11. Call (202) 328-3838 for showtimes and admission.

Wynton Marsalis is currently performing at Blues Alley, 1073 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. through December 13. For tickets and showtimes, call (202)337-4141.

Holiday Walk '88 begins Yuletide merriment

Baltimoreans can jingle, jangle, jingle their way down Charles Street during the kick-off Week of "Baltimore On Ice," the city's 80-day winter festival, when "Holiday Walk '88" begins on Friday, December 9 at 5:30 p.m. at Charles Street and North Avenue.

Holiday revelers can enjoy an evening of old-fashioned caroling and yuletide merriment when the walk gets underway at Charles Street and North Avenue. Caroling walkers will stroll down Charles Street to the Inner Harbor's McKeldin Square with stops at Penn Station, the Washington Monument in Mount Vernon Place and Charles Plaza at Saratoga and Charles Streets. Walkers can ring in the holiday spirit with bells that will be given out along the route.

A special tree lighting ceremony and entertainment, including musical groups, Santa Claus and costumed characters, will be featured at each stop. Also, free refreshments will be given to walkers along Charles Street.

As the procession reaches Pratt Street, luminary lights will beckon walkers to McKeldin Square where musical groups, competing in the Inner Harbor Songfest, will offer holiday music from around the world.

The songfest, produced by Harborplace, begins at 7:30 p.m. The lighting ceremony for the city's official Christmas tree will take place at 8 p.m. followed by the continuation of the songfest.

Baltimoreans and visitors are welcome to participate in the entire "Holiday Walk '88" route or join the evening's event at any point along the route. Free parking will be available at the Equitable Bank lot at Charles Street and North Avenue.

Free trolley service will be provided between the Inner Harbor and points along the walk route from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

For more information on "Holiday Walk '88," call the Baltimore Office of Promotion at 301-837-INFO (4636).

LESLIE UGGAMS stars as Reno Sweeney in the Tony Award winning Cole Porter musical "Anything Goes." Here she is shown with sailors (L to R) Joe Deer and Gary Q. Lewis. "Anything Goes" will play 8 weeks at the National Theatre through January 14. Call (202) 628-6161 for info.

Coming Soon

THE MANHATTANS

BALTIMORE

The Manhattans will perform at Blues Alley, 1225 Cathedral St. on December 16, 17. For info on showtimes and ticket prices, call (301) 837-2288.

A 2-hour special program commemorating **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** on January 16, 1989, will link live concerts across the country from three leading music schools presenting music associated with King. Hosted by American conductor **James DePriest** will be transmitted live via a 3-city satellite linkup to public radio stations across the U.S. and in more than 20 countries in Europe and the U.S.S.R. (Check listing for local broadcast times).

Center Stage's third production of the season is **August Wilson's "Joe Turner's Come And Gone,"** which opens for previews December 16 and runs through January 22, 1989. The third in the cycle of plays written by August Wilson chronicling the black experience in America, ticket and performance times are available through the Center Stage Box Office, 700 North Calvert Street or call (301) 332-0033.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

"An evening with **Whoopi Goldberg"** will take place on December 29 at 8 p.m. in Constitution Hall, 18th and D Sts., N.W. The show "Living On The Edge Of Chaos" is recommended for mature audiences. For info, call (202) 432-0200.

WHOOPI GOLDBERG

Catch the **O'Jays** on New Year's Eve in concert at 8 p.m. in Constitution Hall, on December 31 for a mighty, mighty good time. Call (202) 432-0200 for details.

The works of independent filmmaker **William Miles** including "Black Champions," which features Los Angeles Lakers Captain **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar**, are discussed on "Black Film Focus," December 16, at 8:30 p.m. on WHMM-TV 32.

The weekly entertainment guide for the Baltimore-Washington area. Published by the AFRO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS group.

628 N. Eutaw St.
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
(301) 728-8200
John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board/Publisher
Frances M. Draper, President
Benjamin M. Phillips IV
Secretary/Treasurer
Charles K. Taylor
General Manager
Penny S. Demps, Editor
Contributing Writers
Carl Matthews
Bob Matthews
Cynthia Nevels
Darryl E. Owens
Deborah Quinerly
Olive Vassell
Robyn-Denise Yourse
Denise Dorsey-Production Coordinator

In This Issue

Cover Story....3
Sounds.....5
Personals.....6
About TV.....8
All That Jazz..9

'Playboy of the West Indies' opens at Arena Stage

Washington, D.C. — "Playboy of the West Indies," Mustapha Matura's joyous and vibrant retelling of Synge's "The Playboy of the Western World," directed by Tazewell Thompson, will begin performances in Arena Stage's Kreeger Theater on December 2 and continue through January 22.

With this production, Arena Stage acknowledges the support and cooperation of the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

"Playboy of the West Indies" takes place in a rum shop in Mayaro, Trinidad in 1950. A Trinidadian sugar cane worker, Ken, seeks refuge in a small village after killing his father and escaping half-way across the country.

His arrival enlivens the villagers who instantly grant him hero status based on his courage and sex appeal. This lusty, 'cultural transplant' of the Irish classic traces Matura's Playboy as he entrances and captivates the villagers during the traditional Discovery Day celebrations.

PLAYBOY—Leon Addison Brown as Ken (the Playboy) and Tonia Rowe as Peggy.

Playwright Mustapha Matura, born in Trinidad, moved to England in 1961. His first full-length play, "As Time Goes By," won both the George Devine and John Whiting Awards in 1971.

The **Evening Standard** named him Most Promising Playwright in 1974 for his "Play Mas." Matura's "Trinidad Sisters," based on Chekhov's "Three Sisters," transforms the bourgeois Russian sisters who yearned to return to Moscow into bourgeois Trinidadians aching to return to Cambridge, England, where they spent their teenage years.

Matura's other plays include "Nice," "Black Pieces," "Black Slaves and White Chains," "Independence," "More More," and "A Dying Business." In America his play "Rum 'N Coca Cola" was produced at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, "Play Mas" at the Goodman Theatre and "Meetings" at New York's Phoenix.

A stellar cast has been assembled for "Playboy" which includes three actors from Arena's recent production of "Abyssinia," LaDonna Mabry, David Toney, and Tonia Rowe, along with director Tazewell Thompson. Two actors, Sullivan Walker and L. Peter Callender, hail from Trinidad and Tobago.

Tickets for "Playboy" are available with discounts available for students, groups and senior citizens; $5 Student night is Friday, December 9; and an NEH-sponsored seminar entitled "Voices from Paradise" celebrating Caribbean literature will be held at Howard University's Rankin Chapel on December 11 at 2:00 p.m.

MUSTAPHA MATURA, Author

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

Joffrey dancer hails the waves of change

By Darryl Elwood Owens
AFRO Staff Writer

Turn on "Soul Train" on any given day and you're likely to see dancers doing "Da Butt," the "hustle," or the "robot."

Yet, one would have a hard time finding Soul Train dancers who can do pirouettes. But, "the times are a changing" and Edward Morgan, the lone black in the renowned Joffrey Ballet, is on the vanguard of this wave of change.

He acknowledged other than the Dance Theater of Harlem black ballet dancers are scarce but added through the company's influence the situation will change as "blacks are given different roles."

Morgan, who has danced with both troupes, said there was not much difference in the quality of the two companies but said "Joffrey works better for me because of my past training with Mr. Joffrey in the past. I like the style and the Joffrey is really versatile in style."

As in theater talented blacks are often not picked for roles because the production has traditionally been cast for white actors. Morgan said other dancers have discussed the lack of non-mainstream casting but he feels the dearth of black ballet dancers is not an intentional oversight.

"It does exist ... I guess we would want to hope it is getting better. These problems have been in other companies but I don't think Joffrey has that because it's so versatile," he said.

Listening to the vivacious dancer you soon realize he is a born performer which he says helps him worry less about roles in traditionally mainstream productions.

"I love to be in the limelight ... I never had the desire to be "Romeo" in "Romeo and Juliet" or the lead in any production. I need more dramatic roles — more mysterious roles."

And when he gets these roles Morgan really gets into character.

"Usually before I get into a role I put myself into the character tooth and nail. And I dedicate every performance I do to something, like to all the people who have sickness, then I channel my energy towards that so I send out vibes to the audience," he explained.

"If you really dig back deeper and try to figure out what this role is you really get into it. Sometimes I've really gotten into a role where I have to say to myself 'Hey! Wait a minute!'"

While Morgan knew at an early age he wanted to be a dancer his inspiration came from an unusual place.

"San Antonio didn't have anything as far as dance. I was only watching what I saw on television. I would see the Carol Burnett Show and the Bill Cosby and watch the dancers," Morgan said.

"And in elementary, junior high and high school whenever they had something like a talent show I was always involved in it."

But, that was only part of it. Morgan was steered into the arts (if ever so gently) by his stepmother who is Dean of Arts and Sciences at St. Phillips College.

"For my 17th birthday, she bought me a seasonal ticket to the Joffrey Ballet. The company was really exciting because it's ballet but it's really versatile. They could do modern, jazz or any other form of ballet."

Intrigued with the art form, Morgan moved to Dallas and enrolled in the Dance School of Ballet Arts in 1978. His first major solo was in "Bolero."

EDWARD MORGAN

From there, Morgan joined in the Joffrey Workshop in San Antonio. He soon joined the Dallas Metropolitan Ballet. It was with this group Morgan was able to travel to an annual festival where Robert Joffrey noticed him. Joffrey chose him for his honors class.

Morgan joined the Joffrey II Dancers in 1979. He rose to the ranks of the parent troupe two years later.

Some of his favorite roles have been dancing the lead role in "Trinity," as "Donnie" in "Ode to Donnie Hathaway" and as the "Winterwind" in "The Night Before Christmas."

In the upcoming Joffrey performance of the "Nutcracker" at the Kennedy Center's Opera House, Morgan will be dancing the role of the "Mouse King" on alternate evenings.

While plenty of armchair quarterbacks have snickered at male ballet dancers Morgan stressed ballet is not for "wimps."

The company starts the day with a class from 10 am to 11:30 where the dancers warm up and work on technique. This is followed by four to five hours of rigorous rehearsal.

"We need about the same stamina-wise as a football player," Morgan said. "But we need more technique-wise. You have to really be in shape."

"Besides we have to constantly train to keep up with the other (younger) dancers."

Dancers usually maintain strict diet regimens because if "you get a few pounds on you can't move," he said.

Although Morgan originally joined the Joffrey Ballet seven years ago he is just recently returned from a self-imposed three-year hiatus.

He said while he was not burned-out he needed some quality time alone with a forgotten friend — himself.

"From an early age I took piano lessons, drama lessons, ballet lessons — whatever type of lessons there were — and I never had any time to myself," he said. "After one year with Joffrey, I started to feel locked in. I felt I needed to let go and be myself and to find out who Edward was."

"I know I'm on the right track now ... When I left the Joffrey it (the limelight) started haunting me. Now Edward is dancing for himself."

When he's not standing on his toes, Morgan dances at clubs, goes to movies or stays at home alone eating Oriental food and watching television.

Although the company's heart and soul Robert Joffrey is now with the company in spirit only Morgan says under the brilliant artistic direction of co-founder Gerald Arpino the company's legacy will continue.

"I think Mr. Arpino was so close with Mr. Joffrey that the company is going to be great," he said. "I have that gut feeling."

And he looks forward to validating his point in the perennial Christmas favorite "The Nutcracker."

"I think the children like it because it's got lots of good dancing and has that Christmas spirit. Joffrey's "Nutcracker" is very exciting because the artists are versatile. And Joffrey has extra kids in theirs which is very nice," he said.

"And it's really good for people who don't know anything about ballet. They come to it and love it. Even if you don't like ballet you'll love it."

While the career lifespan of dancers is relatively brief (and Morgan would not reveal his age — a trade secret) Morgan plans to remain in the arts when he hangs up his ballet slippers.

Morgan, who has acting and directing experience, said he would like to give theater a fry once he retires.

"I have to do my best and have Jesus do the rest," he said.