

BILLY ROWE'S

notebook

NEW YORK CITY--A long ago report here has been confirmed by the announcement that Robinson, one of the more successful Black artist mgrs. he's teamed up with exchorus girl and lastwife of the great "Bojangles" Elaine Robinson, to get the job done. The flick is budgeted at \$3-mil, a lot of it is Black dough, and the screenplay has been assigned to Marshall Williams and Pat Bohannon. Gordon, who manages the 5th-Dimension, hopes to star the exciting Ben Vereen opposite Marilyn McCoo, of the Fifth-D. She would fill the role of Fanny Robinson, Bill's 2nd and best known spouse. "The Man from Nazareth," a religious musical on the life of Jesus, seen through the eyes of Black slaves, could be a "God-send" for a Lincoln Center offering. Prof. Edward Boatner composed and arranged the music which matches the choreography of Jessie Oliver and the voices of the Art of Black Music Masters Singers...The Civil Rights Commish has started another study about discrimination against you know whom, by the broadcast media in employment and programming. Don't look for the findings until late fall and then, perhaps, nothing after that. Call it a waste of time and money in searching for facts that are as easy to come by as eyeing the tubes or earing the Kilocycles.

Bud Yorkin, who has a "Good Time" in partnership with Norman Lear, doing "All in the Family," "Sanford & Son," "Maude" and a few other 'loot looseners,' is splitting to do his own thing. Topping the list is a Black comedy about the prison system for flick fanciers, called "Lethal Gas." The novel by Ron Kurz will be script treated by John Kaye and is to be camera ready by June. According to Yorkin, who will direct, "it's the kind of picture I want to do; a comedy that makes a statement,"..Variety, the thea-trade-sheet, called "TNT Jackson," the New World flick with Jeanne Bell in the title role, a "Bone-headed Black chopsocky pic for grind houses.".. "The Wiz," the now B'way musical hit, which looked doomed when it opened with a marvelous all-black. \$60,000 per cast, seems to have it made. During the last nose count it was the top grosser in that box-office jungle. Expectations are that it will recoup the approx. one-mil it cost to stage and advertise it. The gross has jumped from 54G's to 133G's for a neat \$30,000 profit.

The charm of Ersa Poston need not be lost to Albany if she's replaced as Prez of the N'York

State Civil Service Commish. Her tenure as a member of that body is socked in until '77...Folks on both sides of the political spectrum are wondering h'cum Gov. Carey is taking so long to find a slot for Andy Hatcher. Andy, who was the first Black to get a Pale House press ass't spot, with JFK, beat the pavements with the former Cong'-man when he looked like a losing loner seeking the Dem. nomination for the job he later won with votes to spare...The eye holding Ja'net DuBois, who adds once in a while loveliness to teevee's "Good Times," is being groomed for a major film role. Larry Maxwell, the nation's fanciest record promoter, is beating the drums for her in his off time. ..Manhattan VeePee Percy Sutton came on with a goodie the other after dinner time. He told his colleagues that "incompetence is the worst form of corruption."..Write talented Joanne Robinson, General Foods Corp. publicity staff, is off to Russia to see how it's done...The NAB quietly listed Jesse Hill, prexy Atlanta Life, in the main address slot of its 9th annual college and industry conference in Atlanta. Originally John H. Powell, Jr., the EEOC chairman, was supposed to "key" speak at the event...The wax critics were write praiseful of Melba Moore's initial Buddah album, "Peach Melba." There's a lot of soul, a lot of style, a lot of technique and much demonstration of why people like to listen to Melba Moore," is how her efforts were summed up...Boston's Mayor Kevin White has gotten into the act and has cancelled a number of acts slated to perform in the hub-city because of the school tension. The Jackson-5 is among the latest to run into the detour sign. A number of Black acts, including Leontyne Price, nixed the racial torn town at the height of the demonstrations without any help from the chief exec.

Jake McKinney, Black publicist for American International Pictures, is running for western vice president of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Publicists Guild Local 818... Sen Hubert Humphreys took angry exception to a story in the Washington Post reporting how he has been criticized in a government investigation, for helping a friend's project in Africa get \$3-mil in special foreign aid. The friend is Dr. Leon Sullivan of OIC...Clarence Clyde Ferguson, Jr., a Black who holds the United States mission to the United Nations' 4th highest rank as representative to the

Economic and Social Council, is leaving to return to teach at the Harvard Law School where he was the school's first Black faculty member. He also was law dean at Rutgers and Howard Universities. ..It was Justice Thurgood Marshall who delivered the Supreme Court opinion which ruled that minority employees who belong to a union cannot start their own independent outside bargaining unit to negotiate claims of racial discrimination...Two white Labor Dept. employees have filed charges of reverse discrimination against two key Black officials in the department's anti-discrimination program. Both cases have attracted major attention from unions, civil rights orgs and Congress. ...Smithsonian scientists are studying two Black male skeletons, unearthed in an abandoned Virgin Island cememery, that suggests there might have been Blacks in the West Ind. more than two centuries before Columbus. African slaves were introduced to St. Thomas in 1673 to work in cane fields. There are no historical references to a Black presence before that--until now--STAY LOOSE.

Atlantic Records artist MAJOR HARRIS, currently riding high on the music charts with his single release "Love Won't Let Me Wait," will be in Los Angeles, to tape SOUL TRAIN later this month.

Columbia Records has announced the release of the new single from the MANHATTANS, the title tune from the Lp entitles "That's How Much I Love you," the single has been remixed for disco play.

Martha Reeves has signed with Arist Records and has an Lp due soon to be produced by Tony Sylvester.

Coming from Capitol Records this month, BARRETT STRONG debut Lp for the label and veteran songstress Barbara Acklin.

minor key

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