

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

A WRITE WRAP SESSION

N'York City --The life and time of Lewis H. Latimer, the late inventor-scientist who was the black associate of Thomas A. Edison, will be put to film. The picture is scheduled to be produced by Ralph Biggs who spent several years researching the 1848-1928 life span of the great inventor who perfect the carbon filament and the threaded socket which is the main life of your present electric blub. Robert Royster, his grand nephew, pres-treas. of the Lewis H. Latimer Foundation, Boston, will supply the what-with-all necessary for the production. Either Robert Hooks, or Bill Cosby, whom they say resembles the late genius, will be approached to play the title role... "Porgy & Bess," as the late George Gershwin composed it to be, is a tremendous hit in its, as it was written to be, revival on B'way. That is to everyone except Human Rights Commish Eleanor Holmes Norton. She used the occasion to hit the main stem legit theatre crowd for band bias against black and hispanic musicians. Her charges have sent the League of NY, Theatres and Producers scurrying for surveys to show the amount of minorities making sounds from pits and stages... "Lady Sings the Blues" and "Mahogany" are B'way billed as Diana-Mite and has Ms Ross on the top-50 grossing chart again.

Flip Wilson will be the host with the most "Nadia from Romania with Love," a teevee spec. to be used by Nadia Comaneci, the recent Olympic gymnast perfectionist gold medal winner, to greet America. Shooting is being done on location in Romania and should be ready for CBS eyetime by mid-Nov. This marks the first co-production deal twixt the U.S. AND Romania... It's not a quirk of fate that Andrew B. Ferguson, Jr., an engineer, is co-producer of "The Electric Co.," the highly rated teevee children series, now in its 6th season. Fergie began as an engineer with N.Y. Channel 13, and before joining Children's TV Workshop, he world skipped to make documentaries for NET's "Black Journal," the Tony Brown eye magnet... Sammy Davis, Jr. was some kinda click at the Deutschandhalle to set the Berlin critics on a never used adjective hunt... Teddy Wilson, genius of the 88, made one of his rare appearances in London where all the talk was about Melba Moore who

clicked and checked out just before he came to town... If you're planning a trip to "Fun City" find your way to the Jamaica Arts Center where they may still be showing "Dixie to B'way," a highlite of important artifacts of blacks in the theatre from the 1800's thru the 1930's.

PUNKS & SHOW BIZ -- That old (young) gang is breaking those soul-shows here, there and everywhere. In fact it's no fun in Fun City with youths running rampant after most such major gatherings. After the Isley Bros recent fling at Madison Sq. the punks prevailed. They've acted up so badly at Shea Stadium, during a Rufus concert with Chaka Kahn, the city has stopped letting the baseball acres for such events. The last soul show at the Garden at the end of the month was a reported sellout, Earth, Wind & Fire, with no reported incident. The security forces were beefed up and were very visible.

GET FATTER WITH THIS DATA -- Diahann Carroll's CBS summer series came off the chart tied, 18th, with NBC's Chico & The Man ... The great Muhammad was write up his Ali when Cong'man Charlie Rangel telephone-hooked him into the ears of those attending the Congressional Black Caucus dinner. The unretired champ kept the crowd in stitches, but you could have heard a souffle fall when he, Ali, asked the host democrats whom they planned to vote for. His come-on about Pres Ford was an out-right endorsement. Said the heavy king, "He, Ford, has had me over to his (White) house several times. He's such a fine person I would find it hard to vote against him." It's write needless to report that Rangel, the occasion spokesperson, was without an answer for the great one who did not seem to be aware that he was the honorary co-chairperson of a democratic event... With the highly successful 76th annual confab of the Nat'l Business League history, its prexy, Dr. Berkeley Burrell is busy with plans to organize black citizen band radio buffs. To the more than a million such he is known as "Dr. B.B." There are a number of supers modulating thru the ears and Muhammad Ali is "The Big Bopper," Flip Wilson is "Killer," and Redd Foxx is "Redbird."

An FCCommish admistrative law judge has recommended that the b'cast license of WLTH-

Radio be lifted. Should the FCC follow thru this could clear the way for a group, in which Rev. Jesse Jackson is a part, to take over the Gary, Indiana kilo-cycles.. "Sanford & Son," "Good Times" and "The Jeffersons" are listed in that order on the top-30 list of the new teevee season. No don't go putting them in the one thru three slot, they're more like half way... If you make it to the Apple, you would be wise to eyeball "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf." It's a boss drama which presents the seamy side of "falin" in lo'ooove to make beautiful theatre...

"Big Blue Marble," the ITT funded children teevee see-ries exposes it international togetherness on 149 home screens and 40-abroad. This is the kiddie show talented Melba Moore has been touting for several months. She may host an international x-mas party to introduce some of the kids who have been seen on various shows that have been presented at home and abroad... Michael Schults is the busiest black director since Oscar Michaux. His credits run thru "Cooley High," the now showing "Car Wash," the just 'canned' "Greased Lightning" and he's now set to warm the director's chair on the set of the Richard Pryor starrer, "Which Way is Up." ...STAY LOOSE --



That versatile group, The Four Tops, 20-year singing veterans with perennial appeal, makes a return appearance on Soul Train this weekend. Don Cornelius, show host and producer, also welcomes Vicki Sue Robinson, a singer with a wide and varied background.

From their first hit single, "Baby I Need Your Loving," recorded at Motown in 1963, until their latest releases, "Catfish," "Strung Out For Your Love" and "Love Don't Come Easy," which they sing on this show, the Four Tops have been headliners wherever they performed.

The group's members are Levi Strubbs, Renaldo "Obie" Benson, Abdul "Duke" Fakir and Lawrence Payton.

Vickie Sue Robinson, a veteran performer at 22, debuts on Soul Train with "Daylight" and "Turn the Beat Around." Beginning in her pre-teen years as a folk singer, Robinson mader her professional debut in the Broadway cast of "Hair" at age 16.

After several film roles, Broadway shows and record dates, she is now concentrating on her career as a soloist.

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