

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

CONVERSATION ROWE

N'YORK, CITY -- "Porgy," which to some is a stage classic, was short lived when first presented as an opera with George Gershwin's original score. Yet the DuBose Heyward opus has appeared throughout the world as an operetta and has been acclaimed by critics of the stage, screen and television as such, yet in reality it is considered the greatest opera ever written by an American, George Gershwin. However, until its limited fling at the Uris on B'way the real (opera) "Porgy & Bess" was never heard.

We remember it best as "Porgy & Bess" and have viewed it as an operetta on every spotlighted arena with such stars as Sammy Davis, Jr., Pearl Bailey, the late Dorothy Dandridge, Brock Peters, Sidney Poitier, William Warfield, Leontyne Price, Joyce Bryant and Jimmy Randolph who's current on B'way in the black version of "Guys and Dolls." Todd Duncan and Ann Brown were the original "Porgy and Bess" of the operatic version of this folk opera. The new original version has been revived on B'way by the Huston Grand Opera Assn. Andrew Smith is "Crown," Dannie Ray Albert is "Porgy," Clamma Dale is his woman "Bess," and Larry Marshall is "Sportin' Life" telling him it "Ain't Necessarily So."

"A La Josephine Baker," Lisette Malidor is the latest bronze craze of Paris. The walls of the gay city are covered with posters flaunting

her striking beauty and talent, reports the Oct. Ebony which gives her the page treatment. Parisians have dubbed her "The Darkest Pearl of the Antilles." Lisette, who like Josephine Baker, plays the lead in "Follement," the spectacular show of the Moulin Rouge...The lovely and talented Melba Moore will be seen on more talk shows the upcoming season than any other super. Just to record a few, she has already taped appearances on Mike Douglas, Sammy Davis & Company, A.M. Los Angeles, Merv Griffin, Dinah and Soul Train. Natch she's set for Tony Brown's "Black Journal" season, as he loves her madly. Oh yeah, she will also sing the National Anthem to kick off the Whitney Young annual football classic which returns to the new Yankee Stadium Oct. 30th.

Paul Robeson Archives is the scintillating artists' tribute to the life of the great one at N'York Carnegie Hall in mid-Oct. Leon Bibb, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Linda Hopkins, star of "Me and Bessie," Sidney Poitier, Pete Seeger, Shirley Knight and Don Shirley will do their thing...Now hear this you old timers, the Golden Gate Quartet will be doing their sounding in Switzerland and Austria through Oct...Singer Jackie Wilson, seven months after a severe heart thing, is responding to physical therapy at the Cherry Hill Medical Center. He has re-

gained the use of his arms and while he cannot write you back, he would be ecstatic should you "get well" carded him....If you dig Michael Schultz on the set of "Greased Lightning," the Warner Bros. flick based on the life of black champion race driver Wendell Scott, starring Richard Pryor, ask him what went with "Brothers." He was once set to direct this cinema about the romance between militants George Jackson and Angela Davis. The cast was topped starred with Bernie Casey, Vonetta McGee, and Ron O'Neal. The original press release had the flick on location at Bismark, North Dakota in a prison.

Critics are hailing the opening of Broadway's historic Bijou Theatre under direction of choreographer-dancer Ron Davis. It'll be a performing arts training center and showcase for talented young performers. A musical salute by the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra did the trick. Workshop is currently rehearsing a major production scheduled for opening in early '77, sz Ron... "The Brownsville Raid" is not a western starring John Wayne, but a Negro Ensemble Company play by Charles Fuller. Tis expected it will debut at a theatre other than New York's Saint Mark's Playhouse on Second Avenue where it's been home since inception in 1968....STAY LOOSE...



MARILYN MCCOO & BILLY DAVIS, Jr.

The music world's latest husband and wife team, Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis, occupy the spotlight this weekend on Soul Train, joined by vocalist Deniece Williams.

Both former members of the highly successful 5th Dimension since its inception 10 years ago, McCoo and Davis now blend their voices for Soul Train fans on their first single, "I Hope We Get To Love In Time," "You Can't Change My Heart" and "You Don't Have To Be A Star (To Be In My Show)."

The duet hopes to establish themselves on records and in live performances before expanding into solo areas on record and film.

Deniece Williams might well be called, "the reluctant musician." Even though for years she sang for her own pleasure in her home town of Gary, Indiana, she resisted the lure of the stage until invited by Stevie Wonder to join his band as a backup singer. As a result, between 1972 and 1976 she has participated in every album Wonder recorded.

Lately, she has become the protege of Maurice White, talented leader of the Earth, Wind and Fire, who produced her first album, "This Is Niecy," from which she sings, "It's important to Me" and "Free."



ATLANTIC RECORD STARS, The Spinners perform before an SRO audience of 2,500 at the Latin Casino in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, raising over \$60,000 to aid Jackie Wilson. (From the left) Philippe Wynn, Pervis Jackson, Bobby Smith, Billy Henderson and Henry Fambrough.

Join Ray Willis and Maria Donoso for a look at what minorities are doing in Southern Nevada. Along with special local and nationally known guests, they make this an interesting and informative half-hour

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