

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

USO NO S.O.B.

N'YORK CITY -- We can't believe the Pentagon rejected ample-bodied and amply-talented Beulah Bryant's proposed USO show becuz "you don't identify with 17 - 27 year-old servicemen". Broadway Beulah exploded a thats-a-lie epithet after an audition before a trio of judges. Beulah, having performed on the USS Midway and scores of other USO audiences over the yrs. She charged that the review of her revue smacked of "prejudice" in the DC professional entertainment office which, incredibly, lists no black officers. "The whole thing needs revamp," she wrote us. She was particularly incensed 'cause she got no answer to her complaint from Congressman Charles Rangel who in the past has wrangled outta more snubs than Carter has pull to put more blacks in top USO jobs. How could you, Rangel, also ignore the letter of the Rev. Samuel D. Proctor, pastor-successor to the immortal Adam Clayton Powell at the Abyssinian Baptist Church? The Rev. Proctor is fearful that because of staff changes in the new Carter administration Beulah may be overlooked. A Gen. Charles Pennington is in charge of USO assignments at the Pentagon where wo far we have detected so S.O.B.'s regarding USO.

Apoplexy and consternation being registered at CBS Records because publicity man Win Wilford wined and dined Jet mag editor Don Adderton with comp'in booze supplied by whiskey companies. Red faces blossomed out when word leaked to Wilford's bosses that the "welcome to New York" party was staged via comp'ins when CBS is rich enough to buy its own spirits . . . Fresh out of OKLAHOMA, Indianapolis and Ann Arbor, and now in Music Hall, Memphis, "Raisin" has passed its 500th performance and is expected to lure SROs at San Francisco's Curran Theatre . . . Melba Moore returned to N'York's Jamaica H.S. for a Black History Day celebration after doing her big "Big Blue Marble" thing in Nashville, Florida and Atlanta. She's a tireless star -- and always shining . . . IIT announced appt. of George Massaua as director of Public Affairs made a lot of folks happy.

BLACK OR COLORED? -- Bway is relling over the latest set of eye-poppers supplied by the effervescent "Black Journal" producer-host in an in-depth survey of black male/female relationships under the provocative title

"Colored Girls or Black Women?" The NY teevee fare served up controversial conclusions depending on your sex or state of mind. Here is a sample: Black women are not "domineering", you agree? The WNET/13 N'York edition may still be viewed in your area since it has been distributed nationally by the Public Broadcasting Service. Ample excerpts were taken from the now Bway showing of "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf." Tony Brown, chief panelist, said emphasis on rights has earned the nation's blacks "a new respect and awareness". In the crucial male/female relationship he notes that because of attention to stress, the divorce rate among blacks has doubled between 1960 and 1972. Panelists argued that this trend portends "very different male/female relationships among blacks than among white males/females." "We are a people constantly threatened . . . and are constantly in a pressure chamber," said Essence Magazine's editor-in-chief Marcia Gillespie. "So our relationships undergo much more fire than our white counterparts."

Roxanne Reese and Michele Shay of the "Colored Girls" company try to explain away reasons for controversy over the play which features black women's feelings toward black men. It was the play's author, Ntozake Shange who laid it on the line. "The past oppression of blacks have made (black) men and women unused to opening up their personal lives "to take off our masks (as in the play). It is something that takes courage." Other provocative thoughts: Black men are not sexist . . . Black women have not generally accepted Women's Lib. And Tony Brown's socko conclusion: "I don't know how it feels to be a woman and (neither) can she define herself as the opposite of being a man and (no one) can define himself as Black being the opposite of White. We know our women are something special -- literally the colors of the rainbow and Black at the same time."

Now comes a stellar review by Dawn Tyler of the operatic gospel "Your Arms Too Short to Box With God" which producers hoped would have attracted as much attention as "Jesus Christ Superstar." She writes: The musical gospel playing at the Lyceum Theatre on Bway takes you through the trials of Jesus Christ with enough

pagentry to make you born again . . . It is good theatre and great gospel . . . difficult to resist clapping your hands, tapping feet an shouting, "Amen". -- thanks to infectious gospel rhythms . . . Prez Carter would do him self and the nation a favor should he name Eddie N. Williams FCCommish chairman. President of the Joint Center for Political Studies, his background is heavy and relevant . . . The outcome of the FCC probe of payola throughout the country will melt the bank account of many a disc jockey. The probe now centered in DeeCee isn't short changing anyone . . . According to Variety: "The recent TV sensation, "Roots", has started a chain reaction in the educational film business: While an expensive documentary print sells for \$500, Films, Inc., the Chi based national distrib of 16m features and educational pictures, is currently charging more than \$7,000 for a set of prints based on the David Wolper Production of "Roots" and finding lotsa takers."

Spinners Moving

It's no secret in the recording industry that a group named the SPINNERS is one of the longest-lived and most popular acts in the business. Their longevity is matched only by their heavy schedule, a schedule that has them "booked literally for years in advance", according to manager Buddy Allen. Their latest bookings will take them to foreigh, but familiar territory: Europe and Asia. Scheduled to kick-off a two week British tour in April, the Spinners will also appear throughout Japan in May. Later in the summer the Detroit based performers will headline engagements with Melba Moore at the Westbury Music Theatre, N.Y., Nancy Wilson at the Los Angeles Greek Theatre and, too, with the Sylvers at the Painters mill Music Fair, Md., Detroit's Pine Knob, Valley Forge Music Fair, Pa., and Shady Grove Music Fair, Wash., D.C. So successful are their shows they receive salaries matched by only that of a crooner named Sinatra.

The last year has been special for the group who started more than 20 years ago when as high school buddies they decided they could "make it". Over the years the gold records and awards did finally catch up with them. Los Angeles declared one day last summer to be just for them and awarded the Spinners a gold star on Hollywood Boulevard's Walk of Fame to commemorate the occasion. "Rubberband Man", which climbed the charts as a disco hit, earned them a Grammy nomination and became their sixth gold single. "Happiness Is Being With The Spinners" brought them their fifth gold album. In many ways their upcoming album reflects the dedicated professionalism and love they extend to one another as well as to all those around them. It's entitled appropriately "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow". The Spinners' uncanny ability to change with the times while retaining their individual personal warmth and uniqueness ensures that there will be many more sonderful tomorrows for their fans the world over.



REMEMBERING ROOTS! Alex Haley, author of the epic book that became a TV Masterpiece, fascinates Leslie Uggams and George Stanford Brown (member of the TV production) and Dinah Shore when they all guest on 20th Century Fox's DINAH! show. (Please check local TV log for airing). Haley tells a remarkable story about the circumstances which enabled his father to become a scholar rather than a sharecropper. He also recalls sleeping in the hold of a freighter bound from Africa to the USA as part of his preparation for writing of "Roots."



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



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