

Melba Moore is about to turn up the heat! She's just recorded a new LP, *Burn*, with producer Pete Belotte. Belotte, who co-produces Donna Summer, has made Melba one of his only projects this year. Two others are albums by Donna Summer and Elton John. Meanwhile, Melba has taken a firm hand in the creation of *Burn*—she has co-written the music and lyrics of all the album's eight songs.

Melba and Pete Belotte were recently joined in the studio by Epic Records' Vice President of A&R Lenny Petze and Epic/Portrait/Associated Labels Senior Vice-President and General Manager Don Dempsey.



# ENTERTAINMENT



LEFT TO RIGHT -- Melba Moore, Pete Bellette, Petz and Dempsey

## BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

CLUBBING 'EM WITH JAZZ

N'YORK CITY --- Jazz is fast becoming the core of the Big Apple's entertainment fare after almost a decade of a bop up here and a swing over there. Though left for dead, it never really died. No! In all its origins --- swing, boogie-woogie, bop, disco, funk, they're a cacophony of beats that stir the soul. It's kept pace with music in any form. But now, suddenly, the pace has quickened. Jazz has come back with a bang and New York cabarets once more have become the talk of the town. The clubs had been echoing to the comparative emptiness of chamber music when lo! Someone followed by many more realized that jazz would resurrect the cabarets. What jazz did for the Savoy and the Cotton Clubs in the heart of Harlem back in the Roaring Twenties and the Thirsty Thirties before the war intervened, it would now do for some of the smart clubs here in town. Here now is jazz singer Helen Humes sockin' it to 'em at such places as the Jazz Emporium at Beefsteak Charlie at 12th St. and Fifth Ave. Here, now is the "Humming Bassist" Slam Stewart at the likes of the Tin Palace, Sweet Basil, 7th Avenue South and at the Squat Theatre. So here, with such young jazz faces as Herbie Hancock, Ramsey Lewis and Chick Corea, cabarets are busting out like thunder as the revival spreads all over Fun City.

It's not quite by accident, either. Two highly successful jazz-oriented musicals took Broadway by storm over the past two years. Patrons thronged the theatres serving up "Ain't Misbehavin'" and "Eubie!". Observing this, club owners said: "Ha—the crowd knows what it wants. Let's get part of the action." Maestros liked the sound of [jazz] music in their own bistros. "What it's doing for Broadway, it can do for us," they chorused. So-o-o Maxine Sullivan and Anita O'Day reappeared to thrill and thrill once again. Big Joe Turner turned it on and Alberta Hunter cracked the cash register decibals at Barney Josephson's Greenwich Village eatery, "The Cookery." Michael's Pub copy-catted the Broadway hits by importing black jazz musicians and singers and borrowed the tunes. The joint is jumping.

Dizzy Gillespie at the Village Gate, along with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Carman McRae at the Bleeker St. Club piano. Hoagy Carmichael's arrangements will get a three-weeks exercise at Michael's Pub. And so it goes at the Village Gate, Fat Tuesday's, Crawdaddy's, Eddie Condon's, the Red Blazer, the Village Corner, the Bottom Line and Eric's. And there goes Annie Ross at Reno Sweeney. Yep, "It don't mean a thing, if y'ain't got that thing!" at all the cabarets. Jazz is back, big!!!



### GREENBACKS FOR BLACKS

Along comes the United Black Concert Promoters with a legitimate yelp. They want to know why, with music being one of their most important natural resources, black artists permit white promoters to rip the black community off. The group, headed by Dick Griffey, points out that blacks generate more than one third the \$4 billion-a-year record sales, but very little of that money finds its way into the black community. Says Griffey: "A Teddy Pendergrass concert at Madison Square Garden grosses \$140,000 with the audience virtually all black. But it's the white promoter who draws down at least a 15 percent commission. To top it all, the side jobs --- catering, concessions, sound and lights, the stage hands and such --- we deserve most of those jobs or we'll boycott and picket black groups who don't support us. We'll ask the radio stations not to play their music and the stores not to sell it. If black artists don't support their community, the community should not support them." The message has gotten across to some. Pendergrass, Earth, Wind & Fire the Jacksons and the Commodores only recently switched from white promoters to UBCP. "Blacks are fully prepared to handle all aspects of the music business themselves," says Griffey. "The biggest black-owned business in America is Motown Records and the biggest publisher is Motown's Jobette." To which we can add that the white promoters used to get all the dates. The big [white] talent agents survived because they signed such talent as the great Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington. The Moe Gale Agency had under contract such geniuses as Chick Webb, Ella Fitzgerald and the peerless Ink Spots. The William Morris Agency signed the great Sammy Davis, Jr. but thank the heavens he ditched them and is now his own agent. The Joe Glaser Agency had Louis Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson and Lionel Hampton. Surely, blacks can serve as agents. No?

EQUAL TIME is the clarion cry of black TV performers. They want air time and a variety of roles other than the stereotypes of black family life as personified by Sherman Helmsley and Isabel Sanford in "The Jeffersons" and Redd Foxx in "Sanford & Son." As Robert Guillaume explains it: "I'd like to see the day in this country when a character like Benson can pick up the nasty Nazi-type interrogator during Jessica Tate's murder trial, and grab him by the throat without it being viewed as a black man putting down a white, I'd rather have it seen as a decent man picking on an indecent man." Guillaume is out to prove that emotions are the same in blacks as whites, that they have similar heart beats and the rest. That's what this great actor hopes to prove when he premieres his own series for ABC Sept. 13. "This is my show and I want it to do more than just entertain. I want Benson to be seen as a character who behaves the way he does with all people, not just whites -- we're all one. I want people to know that our real problem is not recognizing that." **STAY LOOSE**

**Black news is good news**

### LOUIS GOSSETT, JR.: PUTTING FORTH A POSITIVE IMAGE

Louis Gossett, Jr. is concerned about the imagery of blackness in the media. He says he's weary of the Hollywood stereotypes of blacks. That's why he's so enthusiastic about the ABC-TV new dramatic series, "The Lazarus Syndrome," which premieres with a 90-minute special presentation, Sept. 4, over ABC-TV. "The Lazarus Syndrome" will subsequently be seen every Tuesday, 10 PM [ET].

Gossett portrays Dr. MacArthur St. Clair, a black doctor who is chief of staff at a privately owned hospital. The show also stars Ronald Hunter as Joe Hamill, the hospital administrator, and Sheila Frazier,

who plays Gossett's wife, Gloria. Executive producers are William Blinn and Jerry Thorpe.

"There has never been an image, week in and week out, of a black doctor who is head of a hospital," Gossett says. "The doctor is highly responsible, brilliant and intelligent. It's a very positive role -- a constructive image to project on a regular basis."

When Gossett first read the pilot script, he noticed the lead character was an Italian named Vitale. Gossett was promised a complete re-write if he wished. But he says the only thing he asked was to have the name of the character changed.

"James Earl Jones could be doing 'Quincy' with no changes whatsoever. 'The Rockford Files' could star anybody," Gossett says. "That's the point. The parts are for people, not colors. I think we are going to do our best to avoid using the color issue until a time when that might be used positively in possible future scripts. I think white America is ready to accept Mac as a black doctor in this series."

Gossett says the relationship between himself and Ronald Hunter, who plays Joe Hamill, the tough, hospital administrator, is honest.

"They're not the best of friends. They're not the worst of enemies," he says. "It's very realistic -- there's no perfection in the character's lives and no perfection in the doctor's marriage. The only thing we have to do is inject each episode with drama and excitement."

With Gossett's limitless reserves of energy and enthusiasm, that should prove easy.

"The Lazarus Syndrome" is a Blinn/Thorpe Production in association with Viacom.

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