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5th Dimension Starts Anew

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"This Is My Country" (for a change, a TASTEFULLY patriotic number). The founders of The Fifth Dimension, Florence LaRue Gordon and LaMonte McLemore, look (especially Florence) and sound at least as good as they did fifteen years ago, when they led their group to the top of the charts with "Up, Up & Away," which garnered four Grammies. Rounding out the group's strength of five are Mic Bell, Lou Courtney and Pat Bass.

Pat Bass, a new member of the group but a well-established member of the professional music scene, hails from Buffalo, New York (almost all the rest of her family, says Pat, was born and still lives in North Carolina). Pat lived in New York City before she moved a couple of years ago to Smogland. She now lives in Malibu; loves California (even when it's cold and it's damp)...but remembers the New York style wistfully. All the members of the new Fifth Dimension are looking forward to reviving memories, with their music, of a more helpful era and of instilling in those under thirty some of the appreciation for hopeful music held by their elders.

Pat Bass (along with the other members of The Fifth Dimension) loves jazz. And the other night, she joined us at The Hacienda's lounge for the regular Monday night fest. Monk Montgomery was just leaving (!) as we drove up at 1:15 in the morning (Pat had just done two shows at The Sahara, don't forget). But Richie Cole was warming up for a nice set of mixed jazz...comtemporary, old fashioned and mellow.

The Hacienda lounge is a nice place for jazz aficionados on Monday nights. But if you see an ad for "No Cover, No Minimum," don't believe it. If you're gonna go in and order, have money...there's a two-drink per person minimum, and drinks are three bucks apiece. (In other words, it'll cost you a minumum of six dollars a PERSON.) There are definite showtimes, apparently, despite what the Hacienda switchboard may tell you...the first set starts at ten and goes, with breaks till one. The second segment doesn't begin until two and everybody breaks up at three.

Despite these complications, it was a pleasant evening for Pat Bass of The Fifth Dimension and for The Sentinel.

Vernon Jordan

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They want to know where the candidates stand on equal opportunities, welfare reform, urban aid, national health, and other issues of prime importance.

But they're not getting any answers.

This negative process is encouraged by media coverage that is more appropriate to the Super Bowl. Issues are short-changed, personalities spotlighted. A handful of voters in Iowa or New Hampshire serve as the focus for miles of newsprint while millions of urban blacks are ignored and their needs rendered invisible.

Instead of conducting look-alike campaigns, the candidates ought to be taking bold stands to separate themselves from the crowd.

Pandering to a predetermined vision of a mythical Mr. Typical Voter prevents them from demonstrating they believe in something, that they have plans and programs for the nation.

The candidate who shows some moral fervor, who advances strategies that deal with poverty and the social divisions in our society, is the candidate who will generate the excitement that pulls the dispossessed to the polls.

Black, Hispanic, and poor voters have the potential to elect the next President. Traditionally those groups don't vote to the same degree as the white middle class.

The reason is not difficult to understand. They're turned off by look-alike candidates that ignore their interests. They have been lied to so often that many have become cynical and alienated from the political process -- in itself a threat to our democracy.

But the candidate who champions their interests and who educates their fellow citizens to the need for social reforms to make America work better for all its people, is the candidate who will tap the enormous potential of those votes.

That won't happen unless blacks, minorities and the poor flex their political muscles by registering to vote. High minority registration figures will go a long way toward getting the candidates to deal with issues of importance to poor people.

Sentinel Editorial

from page 6

There's a typewriter exercise that summarizes what really needs to be done at this point; "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country."

To get the job done, the city needs to be pressed into action for the black community. Let us not forget that the election winds are just around the corner. Somebody needs to realize that action speaks louder than words.

A cleanup campaign and public education programs need to be instituted --- and now.

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