

# Entertainment

## BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

Josephine Baker, "Her Life In Fashion," has been slotted for a B'way showing in early '82. Scheduled for production by Tumpie-Jordan Productions LTD, the opus has been cooked up from a potpourri of excerpts from La Baker's original concerts around the world and the fashion trends she created through the more than 100-gowns she wore out of to dazzle the world from '25 thru '73 at her last concert in Carnegie Hall.

**JESSE ON JOE**—Thanks for your cards and letters. I am sure the Rev. Jesse Jackson loves you for every word. So do we.

"All champions are not heroes; heroes are born of necessity. They must heed a need. Joe responded when we needed him — our personhood cried out for confirmation — he was the Black's treasure, but the world's champion. Usually, the fight is for the crown, but in Joe's case, the bigger fight was who would crown him. Everybody claimed ownership and sought identification with a hero. Authentic heroes are never a part of surplus."

"TV nowadays has a tendency to fabricate heroes, and the supply is much greater than the demand. Thus, they are situational heroes, but they do endure. Joe was so necessary that his enemies became his footstool, yet, he had so much grace he would not step on them. As in the case of Charles Lindbergh and Jesse Owens, our national ego was at stake. The ancient Israelites needed David and Samson's role for its national confidence, its emotional security and its divine assurance. We needed Joe. Often we tread on God-like descriptions as we describe our relationship with Joe. He was an answer to the sincere prayer of the disinherited and the dispossessed. With Joe Louis we had made it from the gutter to the uttermost; from slavery to championship. Joe made everybody — somebody. Usually, the champion rides on the shoulders of the nation and its people, but, in this case, the nation rode on the shoulders of the hero, Joe. He was what the Olympics were meant to be — a test of national strength, courage and health. When Joe fought Max Schmelling, what was at stake was the confidence of a nation with a battered ego and in search of resurrection; and the esteem of a race of people."

"In ways that presidents and potentates never could, Joe made the lion lie down with the lamb. The Black, Brown and White — the rich and the poor were together and none were afraid. With fist and character the predicate was layed for snatching down the cotton curtain. The shadows were lifted and everybody got the sunshine; none remained in the shadows. We came as close as we could get with cheers and prayers. We even danced the "Joe Louis Shuffle". Our children were named after him." "I was named Jesse Louis. Others were named Joe and Louis. Girls were named Josephine and Louise. Tragically, Joe was a second-class citizen by birth, but, in fact, a first-class man. He wore glory and grace with honor. The black race is envied because of Joe; the human race is enhanced and rewarded because of him. He made a nation proud of him and ashamed of itself. Even to this moment, the government's conduct towards Joe is a source of tension and shame. On 1-9-42 he knocked out Buddy Baer at Madison Square Garden in a championship fight. He donated his entire purse to the United States Navy Relief. The Navy, at that time a bastion of racial segregation, was so surprised that they offered him a commission of Second-Lieutenant. At that time there were no blacks in the navy who held a rank higher than petty officer. The Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, had said publicity that as long as he was alive, the status quo would remain...Joe Louis' reaction will conclude next week....STAY LOOSE.

## VALARIE JACKSON NEW FOUND TALENT WITH "UPTOWN"

By Joe Cross

Valerie Jackson has been singing professionally for over 10 years now and she's had some success. She's worked as a backup singer for several well-known rock

lot of different bands coming through Caesars."

Besides singing — since, after all, she is the sensible type who realizes you've got to eat and sleep while you



Valerie Jackson

groups and top name singers. She's a known name back home in Memphis.

But all the success she's had in the past doesn't come close to the speed at which she's moving since coming to Las Vegas.

Jackson, like literally thousands of others before her, figured that the place to make your name as a singer was Las Vegas, Nevada.

And, like many of those other would-be stars, Jackson made the rounds of the showcases when she first moved to town about a year and a half ago.

Entertainers are always hopeful that their talents will shine through enough during their brief stop onstage at the showcases, that Mr. Big will sign them on the spot. It hardly ever happens, of course.

But Jackson did impress the right people, apparently, for she got a gig at Caesars Palace — and they liked her so well they kept her around and, as she notes, "I worked with a

wait for the big break — she also held what entertainers call a "day job" working in room reservations at Caesars.

Then a couple months or so ago, she spotted an ad for singers in a new show they were planning for the Tropicana Cabaret Theatre. To be called "Let Me Off Uptown," it only called for a six member cast.

She decided to give it a try — along with 70 other hopefuls, many with more experience than she has — and lo and behold, the producers, Lenny, he's the Trop's entertainment chief, and his wife Mickey Martin, realized they had a winner when she got up and sang.

Suddenly, Valerie Jackson — AND "Uptown" — are both getting rave reviews all over town.

It seems like a dream to Jackson, a quiet young lady, who still appears to be slightly overwhelmed not only by the success of the show but by the fact she's suddenly become an "overnight" success.

# BILL LANE

## HOLLYWOOD

The other day the Hunt nemesis struck again. Despite the packed Forum for the Ross show; despite the obvious elation and appreciation of the crowd, Brother Hunt laid it on Miss Ross no end, calling her audience-participation "Reach-Out" sequence sick and railing against the television cameras following the singer through the audience. Hunt also squawked that certain TV stars said to be booked to appear with her on the TV special in March were not in the audience nor were they on stage with Diana.

The guy must have arrived late, for producer Steve Binder had announced in the beginning of the concert that certain television sequences had already been taped elsewhere, but that those stars were in Ross' audience that night. And if the guy did not arrive late, and heard the announcement, it was horrible to rap somebody for not doing a stage repeat of a taping, just for his own benefit.

A critic should somehow be swayed by an audience. They are the people who pay to see and hear, and form their own opinions. But something dreadful has to be wrong with anybody who writes a poison review about a performer who appears and performs on time before a soldout house and has the crowd screaming for more. Makes it look like he attended some other show featuring somebody else.

And when a man is licensed to slander somebody before one million readers solely from his own jaundiced viewpoint it sets up a circumstance that calls for

reckoning.

Like writing, "The crowd loved it, but I didn't."

But some so-called critics are cowards. They won't write it that way, more often trying to give the printed impression that the crowd showed it felt the same way he did.

And the Hunt piece referred at great lengths to Diana Ross as the Motown artist. Diana Ross' contract with Motown, it is common knowledge, expired last December, and at this writing, and at the time of her Forum concert, had not been renegotiated. Ross did not mention Motown one time during her elegant concert.

Another thing, it is not good journalism for a paper like the L.A. Times to employ a rock reviewer to go out into the public and sit as critic on all forms of music. All black artists don't sound like Teddy Pendergrass, nor look like him. All black female singers are not prototypes of Chaka Khan and Tina Turner.

The Herald-Examiner devoted two tabloid entertainment pages to the Diana Ross concert. The same paper also praised highly the Smokey Robinson concert rapped by critic Hunt.

Probably what the Times needs for its critics is a good backup proctologist.

PBS deserves laudits for its William Miles film presentation "I Remember Harlem." Had to be good, as it was written by writer Clayton Riley, and narration was by Adolph Caesar. His voice is heard on hundreds of radio and TV commercials.