

Entertainment

BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

BASIE'S BLESSINGS TO THE WORLD RE'COUNTED

N'YORK CITY: In life they gave him a royal designation, but he refused to act any different from his commoner friends and admirers. That is what always set William "Count" Basie apart from most human beings in life and in death. He was loved because he gave love. He was always respected because he always gave respect. His passing has completed the cycle and the nicest trio of superstars to ever enjoy the gift of life with the talent to make living a joy for others. Nat King Cole,

Duke Ellington and Count Basie are united. Now the Archangel can carve out a Heavenly Mount Rushmore. The proper models are in his sphere.

The write hand attention to the Count's death by the dailies in my eye and ear range was the most complete viewed and heard in ages. His passing really got the Royal treatment including front page, center pic spreads and network news breaks, complete with videodiscs of days of his youth and as time had laid a weighty hand

upon his brow. His media obit was tasteful, befitting his artistic contribution. Strange though, none of the articles, Tee Vee or Radio commentators remembered the name of the deejay who dubbed him "Count." Then too, none mentioned those who were on the Basie trail when there were more obstacles than clear paths. Fellas like Maceo Birch, his once mgr., Henry Snorgrass and Jo Jones.

The Count's passing will leave a great void in the world of incandescent glare. Like Erroll Garner, he was one of a kind. A brilliant artist, great in every instance. A man of honesty and integrity, one who never lost his cool. The first time I met him, backstage of

the Apollo Theatre in those lean years, I got the feeling that his was an unual and quiet drive. One that would find the heaven of fame on earth before discovering it beyond the quiet of the grave. Somehow he always seemed to have the feeling that it was the students' responsibility to exceed the master. In his hereafter he can tell Bennie Moten and Fats Waller all about how he did just that.

HOT OFF THE PRESS: Panama Francis has thrown several strong write hand paragraphs at George Wein. He's taking the "Kool Jazz Festival" promoter to task for a growing lack of productive Afro-American musical artists. In a note to this scribe he said, "I am writing you this letter about a problem that the Black Musicians and the Black Band Leaders are having. They are being phased out of the mainstream of the American Jazz music. Many people are not aware that this is happening. I hope

you will take some time and interest and read my letter to George Wein, promoter of the Kool Jazz Festival." The letter is hotter than a pistol after a gun duel and we await George's reaction to Panama's accusation... If the sound of the music is as good to my ears as the still photos of Johnny Mathis and Deniece Williams are to my eyes, then their new album will soon be pure gold...

NEWSMAKERS: Talk about two is that N'England concert promoter Frank J. Russo is out as co-promoter of the Jack-

sons' upscheduled U.S. tour and that Don King's position is again as tight as the proverbial hat band. Back in early April it was announced that Russo and Danny O'Donovan, the international promoter, were set to book the tour giving King a bit of a nudge aside. The brothers, Michael and all, are allegedly set to trot across the country come mid-June. They are expected to hit some 40 cities...

... STAY LOOSE
... Billy Rowe is a syndicated columnist.

Gaye Said To Have Died Broke

Grammy-winning soul singer Marvin Gaye, shot to death in his parents' home on April 1, apparently died broke, a family lawyer revealed in court today.

"We may have an insolvent estate," attorney Gerald Mehiman told Los Angeles Superior Court

Commissioner Robert Blaylock.

Gaye's career had its ups and downs but appeared to be on the upswing when he was killed one day before his 45th birthday. His father, 71-year-old retired minister Marvin Gaye Sr., has been charged with the fatal shooting.

Blaylock granted special letters of administration jointly to Gaye's 18-year-old son, Marvin Gaye, III, and to an attorney, Joseph C. Karol. The power allows them to marshal assets and pay bills. Gaye left no will.

"We just do not know the size and character of the estate or the extent of creditors' claims," Mehiman told the commissioner in requesting a minimal bond.

Blaylock set the bond at \$4,000. Such a bond is posted in probate cases to cover any loss of assets caused by administrators' work with the estate.

Gaye's profits on such popular songs as "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" and "Sexual Healing" may have been dissipated by alimony payments to former wives and reported problems with taxes and drugs.

His legal heirs, in addition to the 18-year-old son, include a younger son, Frankie, a daughter, Nona, his mother, Alberta, and his father.

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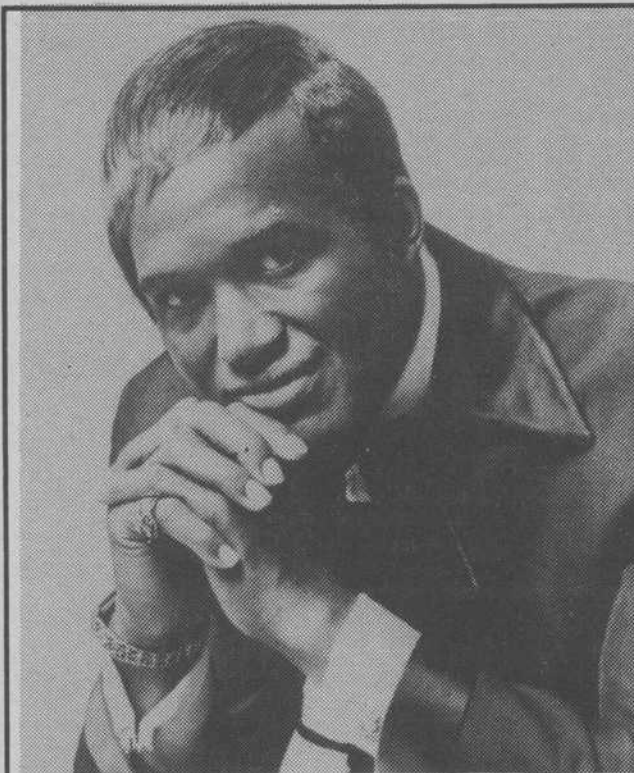
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Andy Miller Photo

Lovelace Watkins

"Sig's Mothers' TV Special" is set for Sunday, May 6 at 11:15-11:45 p.m. via KTNV-TV. It will feature well-known celebrities who will talk about their Mom's. Singer Lovelace Watkins, above, will be one of the guest stars. Others appearing on the show include Rich Little, Helen Reddy, Ann Jullian, Rip Taylor, Lee Greenwood, Jack Jones, Tex Beneke, Paul Anka, Johnny Desmond, Phyllis Diller, Wayland Flowers, Captain and Tennille, and Connie Haines. Producer Gina Sakowicz announced that Forrest Owen will direct.