

Entertainment

BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

N'YORK CITY — Sunday nite June two, the deficiencies of the American Theatre Wing's 1985 Antoinette Perry (Tony) Awards were well hidden behind the enthusiasm of its predominately WASP audience unstung by the lack of the full integration of its total competitive categories. Possessed with those sovereign qualities, they have grown to believe that there's nothing ambivalent about their expression, "Home of the Brave, Land of the Free." Or that the sovereign qualities of the American Theatre Wing do not spread wide enough to cover the total racial mix of this glorious free nation in its recognition of artistic achievements. By and large, and in fact, Broadway isn't an equal opportunity employer. Because annually some Afro-Americans, other termed minorities, and a number of women, are nominated, the Wing let fly the fundamental fallacy that live theatre is emancipated. That is misleading as it has yet to divorce itself from some of the more blatant forms of discrimination. Whatever disguise it takes, it retains its stigma. It can only be blotted out when dynasties are erased and every American is given a fair shot at each category. On Sunday nite June 2, 1985, Afro-Americans were excluded from all the important nominating committees and like thespians were denied competitive opportunities on seven of the Wing's sixteen posted categories. Not because there are none talented enough to be producers, directors, authors, original score composers, costume, lighting and scenic designers; just too few are given the opportunity. Perhaps that is the quagmire in which B'way is sinking. The lack of new blood! Fresh ideas!

SOONER IS BETTER — The old ways must be abandoned if the American culture is to be given its full opportunity to bloom and bring B'way into the 80s. It cannot continue to be the same old

work place of revivals and rivals. It has been an eon since any producer faced up to our major social changes. Most of them are still talking young when 5000 of us turn 65 yrs. old daily. Once the very essence of the theatre was the manner in which it faced the increasingly complex medical and moral dilemmas of life. Has that spirit died?

WRITE PEOPLE — The General Foods executive dinner, honoring Bill Cosby, his real and reel families, was switched to the world class food processor's grand new hdq., Rye Brook, N.Y. Hosted by Jim Ferguson, chair/CEO and his lovely spouse, the event change was to avoid hotel strike picket lines which none wanted to cross... Barbara Jacquet, the second prettiest grandma, could become one of the wealthiest. Her mid 'Manhattan manse with sight passage across Riverside Dr. and the Hudson River into Jersey is for sale. She's asking Lotto prize bucks... Bobby Short, superstar of the long piano, on the other hand, must have green ones he is yet to count. He's back at the Carlyle for a record setting 17th season... About 30 blocks away drummer man Panama Francis is back in the Rainbow Rm. with his Savoy Sultans... That other skin thumper, Jo Jones, who set the tempo for the early Count Basie band drive, is checking "What can the matter be" in a Newport hosp... Vickie Henderson is back in the states checking memories. She took off for Europe ages ago with the cast of "Finnian's Rainbow" and success just allowed her to return... If you didn't do it last wk. you can still send a belated card

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Diahann Carroll, Phyllis Diller to Headline at MGM

To be entertaining, a Las Vegas show should be well-balanced, and one of the best-balanced duos in some time in Diahann Carroll and comedian Phyllis Diller.

Carroll and Diller will be appearing in the beautiful Celebrity Room of the MGM Grand Hotel from Thursday, June 27, through July 3.

Diahann Carroll is a performer who first made a name for herself as a singer but who is currently being seen as Dominique Devereaux on NBC-TV's "Dynasty."

A triple-talent, Miss Carroll is a Tony Award winner, an Oscar nominee, a Las Vegas headliner and a star of an Emmy-nominated series. She has been singled out as one of the world's most beautiful women and has been twice on the Ten Internationally Best Dressed list.

Miss Carroll is a native

to Arthur and Jean Prysock who celebrated their 37th ann'y. Who said their marriage wouldn't last? Maybe it was Billy Eckstine who was divorced as many times as he was wedded... He muffed a Tony Award for his tremendous performance in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," but not the Theatre World Award for the most outstanding new on and off B'way Talent. So Charles Dutton will not leave the Big Apple unrewarded for the great performance he exhibited in the now closing "Ma Rainey." It was great having Theresa Merritt, the star of that opus, in our midst. She too should have won a Tony.

WRITE HAPPENING — The domestic gross is in for Eddie Murphy's "Bev Hills Cop." It's \$210,000,000. With all that cash it's small wonder that one of his ex mgr.'s, King Broder, has told pals that he may seek a \$10,000,000 settlement in-

New Yorker and grew up surrounded by the music of Duke Ellington, Billie Holliday and Judy Garland. She sought her fame in California and made her motion picture debut in "Carmen Jones." She followed that with appearances in "Paris Blues," "Porgy and Bess," "The Spirit" and "Hurry Sundown."

On returning east, she made her stage debut in "House of Flowers." She emerged as a dramatic television performer when she became the first black artist in TV history to star in her own series "Julia."

She describes her current role in "Dynasty" as "the first black bitch on television."

Phyllis Diller, that irrepressible lady with the outrageous laugh, is recognized as the leading female stand-up comic in the



Diahann Carroll

world today. She has starred on television, in movies and has been a performer on the stage for more than a quarter century.

A "late bloomer," she did not start her career until the age of 37. At that time, she was a housewife and the mother of five children — which she thought was funny enough to turn into comedy.

Urged on by her husband, she prepared a nightclub act — and found that her original brand of humor was just what people wanted. She

was first booked into San Francisco's famed Purple Onion.

She has appeared in three television series, countless specials, numerous times as a guest star.

She has accompanied Bob Hope many times on his tours of military bases, and in an unexpected vein has appeared with symphony orchestras around the country as an accomplished pianist.

That's when she calls herself "Dame Illya Dillya."



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