

Entertainment

BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

THERE'S GREAT ENTERTAINMENT BEHIND B'WAY'S "FENCES."

N'ROCHELL, N.Y.: — There is abounding entertainment within the gates of B'way's newest critically acclaimed hit, "Fences." Its power and glory can be attributed to the close collaborations of producer Carole Shorenstine Hays, playwright August Wilson, director Lloyd Richards and a well rounded cast of seven talented thespians. However, its star, James Earl Jones, whose uncommon talent gives the drama its fluent and meaningful elegance, while his supporting actress and actors exceed the borders of conventional performing to add its compact vitality. "Fences" is a

phenomenal play without imitative or stereotyped flaws to make "suspect" the message it nudges into your ears with prideful power of a Black family's conflict in a generation of change, from the old "Separate But Equal" to the fulfillment of Equal Opportunity."

In the heat of this family conflict, the dialogue takes on a rhythmic cadence and dances across the hearing like quiet thunder as if directed by an accomplished virtuoso. The words mouthed by each performer, James Earl Jones, Mary Alice, Ray Aranha, Charles Brown, Frank R. Faison, Karima Miller and Courtney B. Vance came earward as if they had been recorded by the soul and played back by the

heart. This play is blessed with the necessary ingredients needed to cook up great theatre and is fitting to the taste of any theatregoer in search of a B'way feast at its meaningful best. The ingenious "write" hand skills of August Wilson have infused a deep-seated impression on the critics of the B'way scene with "Fences." He is the first Afro-American to exact such notices from the persons who sit on the aisles with the power of making, or closing a B'way's million dollar venture before the spotlights have time to dim. The 41-yr.-old playwright is a Pittsburgh native of whom it is said, A distinctive voice is just beginning to be heard. His initial play on this scene a season ago, "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," was embraced by the critics and even won the Drama Critics Circle best-play award.

However, it did not survive a box-office slump after being let down by the "TONY" voters as such. A significant note on producer Hays is that she is with child and spent \$850,000 of her own cash on "Fences," her B'way production debut. Though the sole investor, she will not have to jump any fences to retrieve her cash, plus a handsome profit, in face of the rave notices received by the show.

NEWS BREAKS: — There's information from an unimpeachable source that N'York State's lotto cash isn't an extra stipend for education. The dough from the pot handed out for that purpose is allegedly deducted from the allotted revenue the State had already earmarked for the schools' kitty. As my lotta-bucks are a voluntary tax, h'cum they're not tax deductible?... "Fences" dampened the lovely orbs of Lena Horne and brought the entire opening nite audience to its feet with vociferous applause. The lady without her music was escorted by mgr Sherman Sneed... A major legal battle is fermenting over the 20-yr's delay of 10 southern states to desegregate their public colleges and universities. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund has said enough already and is gearing up for a court challenge... Beulah Bryant's dedication came through like a rainbow reflecting the sun. She sent along her Afro-American Guild of Performing Artists contribution from the Bird S. Coler Hosp. where she is a patient... Jack the Rapper is singing the praises of Cory Robbins, prez of Profile Records. Small wondah, he contributed \$2500 to bolster the Jackie Wilson "Grave Marker Fund." It will be interesting to discover which will Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker give the most out-of-pulpit time to this summer, following that bedimpled ball from tee to green, or bouncing over the waves in his recently purchased yacht?... The sunchasers are headed home from Puerto Rico now that there's more sun than snow embracing the mainland. This yr's contingent included Ada and Rumps Jones, Turk and Audrey Thompson, Edith Boyd, Ersu Poston, Barbara Sujet, Edna Beach, Sonny Bostic, Sarah and Harold

Chandler and world traveler Miriam Walker... The pending commemoration of Jackie Robinson's historic adventure, to truly make baseball "America's past-time, is turning up a parcel of pathological liars taking bows in another's spotlight. Wondah where were they when their voices could have been useful? Hope Wendell Smith, a staunch partner during those Jackie Robinson moments, is resting in his hallowed place and laughing at it all in the company of the immortal baseball pioneer.

FLICKS & FACTS: — If you happen to hold a baccalaureate degree and are familiar with grant and funding management, have excellent oral and written communication skills and demonstrate organizational ability, York College wants you. It is a unit of the City University of New York. Its student population is 4500 and salary offer will be commensurate with one's experience. A development officer is also needed. While you are sending out your resume, dispatch a copy to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. That august body is also in the hunt for a fund development executive. York College contact is Dr. Diatra A. Jones, office of the prez., York College, CUNY, 94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd., Jamaica, N.Y. 11451. Interested get on the write hand by 4/17/87... Mandla Tshabalala, the South

African prof. social work, is here on a Fulbright Lectureship. He's hoping to work out a social workers' exchange program with the U.S. The professor made it known that Black social workers face some of the most difficult challenges in his apartheid homeland. Said it was due to the discriminating educational system... The NUL top executive, John E. Jacob, will Grand Marshal the 369th Veterans Ass'n 20th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 20th Annual Memorial Parade... The 59th Academy Awards Ceremony for the Oscar-giving wasn't very different from the first. I'm sure of one thing, it had a larger audience and the participation of a few of us.

However, as usual, it was dominated by the White ruling class and the owners of the industry. Herbie Hancock was our only winner. He took home an Oscar for the best original score. Dexter Gordon was nominated for Best Actor, but was in fast company. In short, he was called but not chosen. The hi'sailing TeeVee darling Oprah Winfrey was a short delight as a presenter and Natalie Cole lifted her voice with Sam Irving while Melba Moore and Lou Rawls made an attractive duo. However, beyond that, we were a lost ball in Hollywood's high weeds of invisibility... **STAY LOOSE...** Billy Rowe is a syndicated columnist.

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PAMELLA D'PELLA: Beautiful New Actress on the Horizon GETTING HOT on the current scene is a gifted young actress - Pamela D'Pella. Look for her co-starring in the current episode of O'HARA. Ms D'Pella is a Cincinnati, Ohio native with extensive stage and film experience. Readers will have seen her twice this season on L.A. LAW with Mario Van Peebles, playing Mrs. Fields. Look for her in the upcoming film "SLAMMER," starring Madonna. Pamela has been living in LA for the past 5 years and at one time was employed by the Gazette Newspapers of Pasadena as their Entertainment Editor.