

ROWE

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are also not on speaking terms with affirmative action or "Fair Share." The Black executives in their setup are few and none. They should all take lessons from Sammy Davis, Jr. and Lena Horne . . . Charlie Banks, Ida Johnson and daughters Jackie and Marilyn made with the song and fun to mark Harry Wadson's 91st b'day. He is the brother of the late song legend Alberta Hunter. Ida is the widow of Freddie Johnson who was a European piano favorite during the second big war yrs. She and Evelyn Hayman, who was the b'day fella's partner, spent two yrs in a Nazi concentration camp. Harry missed capture because he headed for Paris just before Hitler's storm troopers picked up the ladies . . . Delilah Jackson's good heart is working overtime, as usual. She's busy planning a salute to Mary Bruce who has spent more than a half century teaching youngsters the art of terpsichore. A happy announcement from Norma Miller. She has finally finished her book on the

legendary Savoy Ballroom. She, Lord Burgess, Buster Brown and the Copasetics will entertain . . . That's little love lost between Omaha's Afro-American musicians and its first "brother" City Councilman Fred Conley. According to a 22-center from Preston Love the politico spends too much time applauding ofay musicians who get all the gigs and media attention while "our" group stays starving idle . . . 8 yr old Tressa Thomas was born to be a super song stylist. She is some kind of singer, a miniature Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald and Aretha Franklin rolled into one wonderful youth voice. Thanks to ActSo for introducing her to these eye/ears . . . Cab Calloway, Sarah Vaughn and Joe Williams have been teamed to hi'lite a floating jazz fest comes October. The Norway event will also include Panama Francis, his Savoy Sultans, Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Bellson, Stan Getz, Carmen McRae and Milt Jackson. The liner will transform its lounge space into a Savoy Ballroom facsimile for the occasion to entice happy feet . . . STAY LOOSE . . . Billy Rowe is a syndicated columnist.

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This Butler did it with jazz-pop style

by Robert Seidenberg
Special for USA TODAY

NEW YORK — Jonathan Butler was a superstar in his native South Africa at 13, but he's not nonchalant about his USA success. He's as excited as a little boy at having opened for the first part of Whitney Houston's summer tour.

"I played for thousands and thousands of people and I know what it's like to be on



Butler

stage," says the 25-year-old singer/songwriter SINGER/songwriter/guitarist, "but this is a whole new world.

"My ultimate dream and desire was always to become a star here, to become successful in America."

So far so good. *Lies*, the first single from Butler's new self-titled double album (Jive) reached No. 5 on *Billboard's* black singles chart; both it and the LP are crossing over to the pop and

adult contemporary charts. And Butler has written songs for Billy Ocean, George Benson and Al Jarreau.

With his blend of smooth rhythm and blues and light jazz, Butler calls to mind Benson and Jarreau. And his favorite subject matter is love.

"People are surprised that I'm from South Africa and my songs aren't political," says Butler. "But I write what I really feel; my songs are about honest emotions, about things that I've experienced. I haven't written a political song yet, but I may one day."

The five instrumentals on *Jonathan Butler* contain hints of African polyrhythms, but most of the LP is jazza pop. "A lot of people think I'm from someplace like Detroit or Washington," he says. "But as I've often tried to explain, Africa is not just guys with spears; there are Porsches and Ferraris. It's really happening."

"I heard plenty of American pop and jazz on the radio when I was growing up. And I loved it from the start. I couldn't resist West Montgomery, Stevie Wonder, George Benson. That comes out in my music."

The youngest of 17 children raised in a Capetown "shanty-town," Butler picked up the guitar at 6. By 8, he was playing in a traveling show, and five years later his renditions of USA classics by groups like the Drifters made him a teen idol. 1/2

"People were just crazy," he recalls. "They'd run after me on the streets and scream when they saw me."

Butler was the first black kid on South African TV, the first black artist to win a SARY (the South African

NAACP

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Georgia, one county among three in the State of Georgia where no blacks reside, brotherhood demonstrators have been brutally beaten, killed and threatened by members of the KKK.

In the field of education America is moving rapidly toward becoming two permanently separate and unequal societies. White flight and the active encouragement of our Justice Department have led to a re-segregation of many of our school districts, particularly in the northeast, the mid-west and the west. The dropout rate has reached epidemic proposals, and if left unchecked, will result in

Grammy) and the first African artist on all seven major African radio stations. But he became disenchanted with his country's politics and stopped making records for several years.

"I got really annoyed when I got to the top because what I saw was terrible . . . And it will never be any better until their apartheid is dismantled."

Butler also grew disillusioned with the nation's record industry. "It's either traditional music or it's pop music, and I was experimenting with putting jazz, funk, gospel and fusion all together . . . There was no room for that."

In 1985, when the British label Jive offered Butler a contract, he moved to London with his wife and baby daughter — to begin again. "It was real strange. Back home I was like the little superstar, but when we got to English I was just nobody. I knew people would eventually get to know me, but that it would take hard work."

Butler's confidence has been stoked by his success. But he wants even more: "A double platinum album, no, a triple platinum album — that's what I want, that's what I expect, that's what I'm going to get."

Yet he's awed by what he's achieved already. "This is unbelievable!" he explains. "I'm playing with Whitney Houston. I've written for George Benson and Al Jarreau. And I've met all these wonderful musicians."

I need to get on a plane and go back to Africa to tell my friends about it because nobody really understands. It's really incredible! My little heart can't stop pounding."

hundreds of thousands, if not million, of young people being ultimately unprepared not to prosper, and not to exist in a highly technologically advanced society. Despite the cries and protestations to the contrary, blacks have not received preferential treatment in the area of employment. The unemployment rate for blacks is twice as high as it is for whites, and much of the progress made in the late 1960s and the decade of the 70's for blacks in management positions have been eroded. Many of the pioneers who blazed the way have now reached retirement age. Unfortunately, these persons are not being replaced by other qualified blacks. There are instances where a corporation's middle and upper management levels are more segregated in 1987 than they were in 1967. As manufacturing jobs decline and as other jobs move to the suburbs, many of our young people are trapped in economic "homelands" in the inner cities with no job prospects on the horizon. In a real sense, America is moving rapidly to a system of economic, educational and housing apartheid.

It is abundantly clear that we must look for new solutions to old problems, which at the same time, not abandon those tried and true methods which have worked. We must continue to utilize the ballot in an effort to force a recalcitrant political status quo to open farther the doors of opportunities. Organizations like the NAACP, the National Urban League, and others, must continue to litigate, lobby and where necessary, march against the Goliaths of injustice. Unfortunately, there are no easy solutions to the complex problems which we face.

We in the NAACP will continue to push our "Back-to-School / Stay - in - School" program in an effort to encourage our young people to remain in school and get the best education that those school systems have to offer. Our Economic Development Department will continue to pressure corporations and companies to sign Fair Share Agreements to provide expanded opportunities for blacks to entry level and management positions and to encourage minority vendorship. We will continue to seek ways of dealing with the horrendous problem of inadequate and sub-standard housing for black Americans.

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