

# Entertainment

## BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

### "BAD" IS GOOD BUT NOT DURING CONCERTS

**HOME & ABROAD:**—More than 125,000 English citizens turned out for Michael Jackson's final concert in Liverpool, England. It was the largest group ever attracted to the performance of a single artist. However, to the magnetic star's chagrin some 3000 people were reorted injured when a near riot was triggered by would-be gatecrashers. Thirty arrests were made, but luckily there was just one reported serious injury, a possible broken spine. The very sensitive Michael Jackson was reported devastated by the course of events. It just may have hastened his growing desire to abandon this phase of entertainment. According to his manager, Frank Dileo, "Michael does not want to do concerts anymore. Instead he will concentrate on recording and film work." His current world tour was kicked off mid-Sept. '87 in Japan and will end there in Tokyo's Dome Stadium where he will do 9-shows Dec. 9-26. According to the report released on Jackson's European tour

which started in Rome back in May, some 2,500,000 watched him perform within the four months he took to cover seven countries. The British portion of the tour accounted for 1,000,000 devotees who paid 16,000,000 pounds or \$28,000,000. . . . Edna Mae Harris Flood who graced the stages of the Lafayette, Harlem Opera House and Apollo Theatres with the late "Pigmeat" Markham, Apus Brooks, Dusty Fletcher and Jimmy Basquette, to name a few, was in a N' Jersey hospital intensive care unit at deadline time. . . . It seems that the dream of Wilmer Ames to publish "Emerge," a general interest African American magazine has struck a financial snag. The words in monied circles are that Time, Inc. has put its promised million dollars plus on hold. Seems that an unnamed minority investment firm fell \$1.4 million short of its promised investment. . . . Music arranger Fred Norman, whose touch of genius inspired the "soul" within many musicians at home and abroad, and his wife Roberta, are hospitalized following a fire

which gutted their apt. He is in the burn unit with serious head and facial burns and she is in intensive care.

**NEWS MAKERS:**—A long line coin dropper rang up to report that Jacqueline Wilson daughter of Jackie Wilson, was shot in the back in what is suspected as a drug related incident. Back in '77 Jackie Wilson, Jr. was shot to death. . . . Hoping to dodge the wrath of the censor's knife distributors have put the Lisa Bonet-Mickey Rourke starrer, "Angel Hart," on hold in Hong Kong. Their hope is that the flick will have a more liberal rating under the new censorship mandate which goes into effect in the fall. . . . James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, opted for surgery and thereby cancelled a dozen dates in Italy. . . . The producers showed their respects for Yom Kippur when they postponed the press opening of the road headed "Driving Miss Daisy." Julie Harris and Brock Peters star. . . . The N'York Appellate Division reinstated that \$7,000,000 negligence legal action born out of an incident during Dianamite Ross' concert in Central Park in '83. The suit was brought by David Rotz, a Newark, N.J., fan who allegedly sustained a fractured leg when a stam-pede erupted. . . . The latest Nielsen report confirms that Black Americans are television's biggest customers. According to its latest findings Black Americans' households television usage is 55% higher than all others in daytime and 14% higher in prime. The findings further highlighted that 11% of all TeeVee U.S. households have a Black head of house. From this corner it seems that Black Americans are

giving the boob-tube more than they receive. . . . You owe it to your search for the unusual; for a delightful clean evening of entertainment that's matchless, go see "The Moscow Circus" on the gigantic stage of Radio City Music Hall.

Lawrence Brown, the quiet jazz trombonist's horn has been silenced. He was among the living greats for 81 yrs. As an artist he was blessed to have performed for 5 decades with "Mr. Genius, Duke Ellington, at a time when creative giants walked the earth.

**WRITE NEWSY:** — AMAS Repertory Theatre is deep into rehearsals for its up-scheduled presentation "Blackamoor" Book, for the musical is out of the creative abilities of Joseph George Caruso and Helen Kromer. Rosetta LeNoire is founder and artistic director and by way of mentioning same, she has been added to this year's Tony Award Committee. . . . Sammy Davis, Jr. received a larger share of critical accolades for his cameo walk-on role in "Moon Over Parado" than the stars of the opus. . . . Wonder what happened to the earlier announcement that the NCAA was on the verge of investigating Grambling State University for possible violations in its male basketball program? . . . Phillip Hayes

Dean's "Paul Robeson" has established a happy record. It has been imported from off B'way to the major illuminated lane quicker than one can say "Jackie Robinson." Of course there were two major factors, and still are in its favor. It's about the life and times of an American of historical proportion who is being recreated by Avery Brooks who warmed his way

## The Blues Is Back

By Tom Clifford  
PM Editorial Services

Every few years it seems, there is talk in the music world of a blues revival. But the blues always remained unrevived, its best musicians working the same old clubs. The talk now, however, is for real. In 1988 the blues is news.



Albert Collins

Blues music, which grew out of the field hollers and spirituals of slaves, became the popular music among American blacks in the 1930s, '40s and '50s. The music was the framework on which jazz, rock'n'roll and soul music were built. But as the more commercial rock'n'roll and soul music grew in popularity, blues musicians fell on tough times. It is only recently that many blues artists have started getting the national attention they deserve.

"The blues seem to follow me everywhere I go," bluesman Little Milton sang almost 30 years ago. Today, blues artists are shown in full-page magazine advertisements. The music is showing up on movie and television soundtracks, commercials and, for the first time in years, on popular radio. Last year, singer-guitarist Robert Cray's single "Smoking Gun" broke into the Billboard Top 25 and a video gained heavy play on cable television's MTV.

Cray's success is just the tip of the iceberg. Longtime blues artists like Albert Collins are enjoying a greatly increased popularity. Last year, Collins appeared on "Late Night With David Letterman," in a wine cooler commercial and in the hit movie "Adventures in Babysitting," besides sticking to his rigorous road schedule. Ken Morton, publicist for Collins' record label, Alligator Records, says that such opportunities are more available to blues artists today.

"Blues in the mainstream is much more visible than it has ever been," says Morton. "I don't know that many blues musicians will ever get rich, but the biggest thing they're

getting out of this is the recognition they've worked so hard for."

The recognition is coming in large part from young audiences that are new to the blues. While many fans were first exposed to the music by artists like Robert Cray, Stevie Ray Vaughn and the Fabulous Thunderbirds, all blues artists are now benefiting.

"They've hardly left a stone unturned in looking for these blues artists," says Hammond Scott, owner of New Orleans' Black Top Records. Black Top recently released a new record by Nappy Brown, a singer whose career has spanned four decades.

Recognition is coming to even the most traditional blues musicians. Last November, the acoustic blues team of "Bowling Green" John Cephas and "Harmonica" Phil Wiggins took home the National Blues Foundation's "Entertainers Of The Year" honors.




Koko Taylor

"I think the award is indicative of the overall increased popularity of the blues," Wiggins says.

Despite their higher public profiles, blues artists remain a close knit family. When the "Queen of the Blues," Koko Taylor, and her band were involved in an automobile accident recently, many of the blues' biggest stars turned out to play a benefit concert in Chicago to help cover the group's medical expenses. Robert Cray and his band took time off from recording a new album to join artists like Albert Collins, Lonnie Brooks, Son Seals and Kim Wilson of the Fabulous Thunderbirds for the benefit. The concert was a sell-out.

But is the current blues revival just a fad that will pass and leave many of the blues' finest musicians again scraping for work? Hammond Scott doesn't think it is.

"I think that blues is winning so many fans now that I can see this thing going on for a long time," Scott says. "Everything is coming up roses." 

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into national favor as "Hawk" in the TeeVee series "Spenser for Hire" . . . Lots of caps and gowns were on eye-level when Wynton Marsalis received an honorary Doctor of Music Degree from Brown University. He was surrounded by university president Howard R. Swearer, actress Liv Ullman, Ruth Ekstrom, former Sec'y of State Cyrus Vance, the Mellon Foundation and President Emeritus of Princeton

William Bowen . . . STAY LOOSE — Billy Rowe is a syndicated columnist.

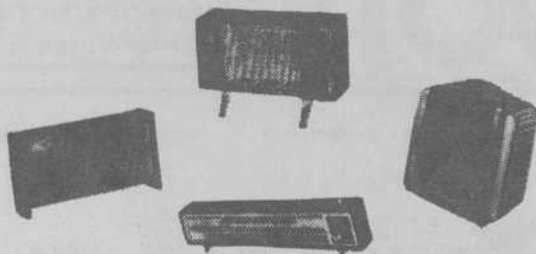
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