

# Entertainment



## BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

### AUGUST WILSON'S B'WAY A SUMMER OF GREATNESS

**N'YORK CITY:**--August Wilson, the double Pulitzer Prize winning playwright, 1987, and in this new decade, 1990, is basking in the summer of a deserved greatness. Teamed with Lloyd Richards, dean of the Yale School of Drama and the director of its Repertory Theatre, they perhaps are the greatest legitimate theatre team to ever cast shadows across the footlights of any theatre worldwide. Wilson's writing and Richards, director-producer embrace each other in full accord. This is sharing genius. The fifth of the Wilson-Richards duo, "Two Trains Running," has premiered at Yale and is headed for Broadway. Richards, Director-producer, was nominated twice for "Best Director" and finally captured a Tony Award as director of the award-winning B'way hit, "Fen-

ces." "Piano Lesson," the latest August Wilson play to hit the Main Stem and won for him a second Pulitzer, 1990, Prize, is in tune with the sweet and sour notes of the desires and needs of staying alive. It's an adventure in great theatre. It's a production that's in tune with the symphony of life when democracy was a phrase without meaning or enforced. Should Charles S. Dutton, in the pivotal role of "Boy Willie" fail to win a "Tony" for his superb performance, something will be rotten closer to home than in Denmark. He is superb as he gives the more than adequate cast solid acting legs to stand on. "Piano Lesson" is playing a fine tune at the Walter Kerr Theatre on B'way. There is pride and joy in the song it plays.

**THE CHURCH SAYS AMEN:** - There's a revival on

B'way to save hearts and souls from boredom. "Truly Blessed" is a musical celebration of Mahalia Jackson under the spell of some of the finest gospel songs you've ever heard. The pew packing church goers were rocking under a spell of "Wade in the Water," "Precious Lord" and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." What a glorious change of pace and relief from the raucous blare of 'rock and roll' and rap music, which blast one's eardrums.

**NEWS NOTES:**- Sammy Davis, Jr. has just become a real life grandfather. His



Sammy Davis, Jr.

lovely daughter Traci Hillevi Davis Garner, by his former spouse, actress Mai Britt, has a son. Insiders say he may be named after his famous grandfather. Tracy Davis and Gary Garner were joined in matrimony by the Rev. Jesse Jackson in July '86 when both were 25 years old. Their courtship bloomed after an initial meeting as students at Santa Rosa Junior College...Margo King, PhD, honchoing a June conference tagged "The Black

Male Experience in America." The Borough of Manhattan Community College, N'York is co-sponsor. Marcus Garvey, Jr., and Dr. Na'im Akbar are early named key speakers...James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, should be totally free soon. He can



James Brown

then be able to check through the mail box loaded with offers from wax companies and concert tours. Hope he'll give some of the brothers promotional rights...Looks like somebody is finally going to screen mark the legendary Josephine Baker. Ads to that effect have been released by producers John Kemeny, A. David Pittman and Robert Halmi are listed as executive producers. The stars will be gorgeous Josephine Baker look-a-like, Lynn Whitfield and Ruben Blades...Dizzy Gillespie will hit the airlines for his annual musical jog through eastern Europe. His special peace concerts will team him with some unique performers. Among them will be wast German Chancellor

Willy Brandt, Mrs. Raisa Gorbachev and Lech Walesa.

**IT HAD TO HAPPEN:**- According to reports from Temple, Bradley, Mississippi State, Tulane Universities and those of New Orleans, Florida and Southwestern Louisiana, officials are concerned with the formation of white student unions. It's believed the groups are being formed by students who are angered by what they see as admission, financial aid and retention policies that unfairly favor people of color. The leaders of most of the groups claim that they are not white supremacists, but some are affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan. However, many students on campuses in Louisiana are campaigning in David Duke's run for the U.S. Senate. Duke, a Republican State Senator, has been denounced by both parties for his past membership with the Knights of the KKK. Official reactions differ from campus-to-campus. While some administrators have denounced the groups, they are still allowed to form. Others have refused to recognize them as legit student groups. So far, only at Temple U. and the Univ. of Florida do the orgs. have official acceptance and are allowed to host on-campus meetings and withdraw funds from the student government treasury. The root cause for this new surge is said to spring from the seeds of conservatism planted by the Reagan administration.

According to James A. Fitzsimmons, associate dean of students at Temple, "These students have grown up with a national leadership that hasn't accentuated the need for an atmosphere that is inclusive of all citizens." Dan Hernandez, who aspires to start a group at the U. of Southwestern Louisiana, says that he was angry after he read that USA Today was offering internships for minorities only. "I've tried out for internships and been turned down, and it aggravates me," he said. "If you can't have something just for white, you shouldn't be able to have something just for Blacks." But Eugene R. LaMothe, who is white and heads the U. of Florida's Coalition Against Bigotry, said, "There is a growing realization by white males that they no longer have their privileged advantage. They are part of a generation of people who feel they may not do as well as their fathers, and they are looking for scapegoats..."The uniqueness of Don Cherry is reflected in the range of his students from Dartmouth College upperclassmen to Middle Eastern goatheaders to teenagers at a Swedish summer music camp. As a trumpeter, he has lent his unique sound and lyricism to groundbreaking work by (among others) Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler, Gato Barbieri and Lou Reed...STAY LOOSE...Billy Rowe is a syndicated columnist.

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## JAZZ MONTH CONCERTS LISTED

May is Jazz Month in Las Vegas, and this year, with major funding from First Interstate Bank, the Allied Arts Council has scheduled concerts by nationally known jazz stars such as Carl Fontana, Billy Higgins and Andy Narell, as well as local musicians.

Trombonist Carl Fontana opens Jazz Month on May 2 in the Allied Arts Gallery. Las Vegas resident Fontana is thought by many critics to be the finest jazz trombonist working today. Since picking up the instrument in grade school, Fontana has played with a long list of jazz luminaries, including Stan Kenton, Woody Herman and

Jake Hanna. His current album is "The Great Fontana." He will be accompanied by his quintet, featuring saxophonist Jimmy Cook. Tickets for this and all concerts in the Allied Arts Gallery are \$5 general admission, \$3 for Allied Arts members. Shows are at 8:05 and 10:00 p.m.

The Dan Skea Trio will perform at the second gallery show. Skea has played keyboards in a variety of hotel orchestras, and in the mid-1970s was leader of the jazz fusion ensemble Full Circle. This trio marks his return to serious jazz composing and performing. Saxophonist Azar Lawren-

ce, a former Miles Davis sideman, will headline the May 12 Jazz Picnic, from 1 to 7 p.m. in Jaycee Park. Lawrence also performed for years with McCoy Tyner. Greg Marciel's popular band Therapy will also perform at the picnic, as will the salsa band of Walfredo de los Reyes. The impromptu Brass in the Grass Band will also be on hand. Food and drink booths will be available. Admission is free.

On May 16, drummer Billy Higgins will perform in the Allied Arts Gallery. In the late 1950s, Higgins was the drummer for Ornette Coleman's groundbreaking quartet, and since then he

has performed with a variety of influential ensembles, including those of John Coltrane and Thelonious Monk. His Gallery concert band will feature saxophonist Azar Lawrence.

Back for a second year is Composer's Night, in which a band of experienced Las Vegas jazz players performs work written by local composers specifically for this event. This year's composers are Tom Gause, Greg Marciel, Walter Blanton and Terry Ryan. This concert will be May 23 in the Allied Arts Gallery.

"Allied Arts Jazz Under the Stars" will be held May

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