

# The Arts



Jayne Cortez, New York poetess, was one of the many talents here on campus for the spring Black Arts Cultural Festival.

## Black movie images depict stereotypes

Joyce Terry  
Staff Writer

Many people erroneously believe that the era of black movie career began in the 1970's, film critic Donald Bogle said here in early April.

Bogle, former assistant editor for "Ebony" magazine and author of "Tom, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies and Bucks", gave an interpretative history of blacks in American films before a Memorial Auditorium audience as part of the Fifth Annual Black Arts Cultural Festival.

There are two categories of films, Bogle began; the independents, which are made outside Hollywood, and the Hollywood films. His focus, he explained, was on Hollywood movies "because they are seen worldwide and have given misconceptions of blacks."

"Blacks always play the roles the times demand," Bogle said, "and what the black actor does with his character is the most important thing—not the character."

According to Bogle, blacks have played five characters in Hollywood movies: the Tom, coon, mulatto, mammy, and buck.

The Tom character marked the beginning of blacks in motion-pictures with the 12-minute movie, "Uncle Tom's Cabin", in 1903; however, the first Uncle Tom was played by a white actor made up in blackface, said Bogle. The Tom character was a clown, good Christian, and loyal to his white friends. The first black actor to play Tom was Sam Lucas in 1914. However, a contemporary Tom was Sidney Poitier in the 1950's, contends Bogle. "Although Poitier was sophisticated and mannerly, he was still a Tom character," he said.

The second stereotype Bogle noted was the coon, divided into children, pickaninnies, and adult males. Coons were clowns, watermelon eaters and lazy good-for-nothings, and the most famous of whom was "Stepin Fetchit". The coon figure is still here, Bogle said; a contemporary coon of the 1950's and 60's was Sammy Davis Jr.

"The mulattoes," Bogle said, "were black women who had to be close to the white image. They were supposed to be white women cursed with black blood." These women, he continued, were always left unfulfilled and unhappy. He called them tragic women because they were in "tragic positions, lived tragic lives and had tragic endings." Mulattoes were also whore images, he said, but not really whores. Because of the mulatto stereotype many black women went to Europe to continue their careers. "They were tired of being made white or whores," said Bogle.

"Mammy", according to Bogle, was the dark black woman usually big, fat, and quarrelsome. The "mammy" role was perfected by Hattie McDaniels, the first black to win an Oscar. She won it for best supporting role in "Imitation of Life".

The buck, Bogle said, was a rejection of the middle class image. Bucks were emotional, sexual men who had hard times and went for white women. Bogle cites Jim Brown as falling into the category of the early bucks. However, around the early 1970's a new kind of buck appeared. This buck was a radical black, he degraded black women and exploited the way of life in the ghetto in movies such as "Superfly" and "Sweet Sweetback".

The new buck, according to Bogle, was liked by the black audience because he came out on top. The new bucks were usually pimps, pushers and tough guys. Historically, buck films were good because they answered a need for the black man to come out on top. However, Bogle said, the buck films failed to explain the social reasons behind the corruption of the buck.

"To change the buck image or to make it more explanatory there should be more black people behind the scenes as directors and producers," he said.

### Album Review

## Funkadelic: Stretchin' Out

Allen Johnson  
Editor-Elect

*Stretchin' Out* In Bootsy's Rubber Band (Warner Bros.).

Now let's get this straight.

Funkadelic is the same as Parliament which is the same as Bootsy's Rubber Band.

Well, essentially yes, folks, with a few minor exceptions. One such exception is Miss Leslyn Bailey, whose driving vocals on the selections "Love Vibes" and "Physical Love" add a refreshing new femininity to the Parliamentfunkadelical sound. Two other exceptions are a couple of fellas by the names of Maceo Parker and Fred Wesley, whose horns have already vaulted Parliament to belated prominence ("Mothership Connection") and now guarantee instant success for Bootsy's band of minstrels.

Strong cuts include "I'd Rather Be With You," a classic Parliament croon tune, "Stretchin' Out (In a rubber Band)," which features Bootsy's throbbing "space bass" at its very funkier, and "Psychoticbumpshool," a characteristically unique Funkadelic approach to disco music.

The only possible drawback this album presents is that it may worry some fans who wonder how long this same array of talented musicians can compose three different groups on three different labels at the same time.

*Second Resurrection* (Dark House). In the latter sixties, they were called the Five Stairsteps, and after abruptly bursting on the scene with the hit single, "Ooh Child," they abruptly submerged into obscurity with comparable haste. Since that time, no one had seen neither hide nor hair of the group until they recently re-emerged as the Stairsteps, teamed with Billy Preston, and produced a superb album.

"Second Resurrection" is aptly named, signaling the revival of one of the most potentially creative groups since an irreverent bunch of revolutionaries decided to form Funkadelic.

Choice hits include "From Us To You," a velvety-smooth footstomper reminiscent of Sly Stone in his early days,

"Pasado," a tender intermingling of acoustic guitar and vocals, "Lifting (Second Resurrection)," a tribute to the group's Islamic beliefs, and "Time," a suspiciously Stevie Wonderish tune which was, in fact, co-authored by Wonder's ex-wife Syreeta Wright.

*Lookin' Out for No. 1* (A and M). If one closely peruses the liner notes of Quincy Jones' "Mellow Madness" one soon realizes that four of the album's ten selections were written by George and Louis Johnson. One will further note that the lead vocals on three of those songs are performed by George Johnson and that on bass and electric guitar for EVERY selection on the LP are Louis and George Johnson, respectively.

Now the duo has released an album of its own the inspiration evident in "Mellow Madness" flows even more freely.

From its turn-up-the-stereo-so-that-the-rest-of-dorm-can-hear-this-bad-jam cuts ("Get the Funk Out My Face," "Dancin' and Prancin'," and "Thunder Thumbs and Lightnin' Licks") to its resonantly mellow renditions ("I'll Be Good to You," "Land of Ladies," and "Tomorrow") this is the baddest LP to date in 1976.

*Love and Understanding* (De-Lite). Kool and the Gang have steadily expanded their musical perspectives, still maintaining their status as the nation's premiere boogie band ("Higher Plane," "Rhyme-Time People" and "Spirit of the Boogie") while simultaneously delving into the sound of synthesized jazz ("Summer Madness," "Winter Sadness," "Whiting H and G"). Unfortunately, the band's current release offers little of either. Although three of the LP's selections are creditable live performances at the Rainbow Theatre in London, the new material, to term it generously, is bland.

One good cut on an album garnished with few is the live recording of "Summer Madness," altered slightly by the addition of female background vocals and a jazzy saxophone conclusion.

Otherwise, there simply isn't very much here to speak of.

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