

Entertainment On Stage

Among the many events staged at FSU, the Lyceum Committee sponsored two musicals during Black history month: "Tambourines to Glory" and "Black Musical Part II" from Harlem to Broadway were presented by the Shaw Players and Company. The musicals gave the audience a spiritual uplift of the commemoration of the struggle Blacks have endured.

The music from "Black Musical Part II" is from the best musicals in American history that have been associated with Black composers and performers. The musical was composed from a variety of Black musicals, among those were: "Dreams Girls," "Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope," "Porgy and Bess," "The Wiz," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Purlie," and "Cabin In The Sky," just to name a few. The cast, from Harlem to Broadway, consisted of five very talented and gifted young Black performers with inherited spiritual inspiration and black awareness. The cast performed the musical as a tribute to all the great artists of the past and present who have contributed a lot to all the great artists of the past and present

who have contributed a lot to the heritage of the American musical, and proved that neither color nor creed can deter great talent. The cast left nothing to be said of the great erect "Black Musical."

The Shaw Players and Company touched the hearts of many Blacks who can relate to the experiences portrayed in the skit from "Tambourines to Glory." The experiences projected and created a moving and intense atmosphere. The talented cast of the Shaw Players and Company has entertained the FSU family for several years, and they have certainly been enjoyed.

The Lyceum Committee selected excellently the program activities for this Black History Month. The primary interest of the committee is the students. "I don't like to be alone, so how about everybody, showing appreciation, attending campus activities."

"Lift every voice and sing
till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmony of liberty..."

Frances Scott Key



The Shaw Players "Tambourines To Glory."

Photo by Rosemary Byrd

The 'Toy' Is No Gift

It's always disappointing when a well-cast, promising film such as *The Toy* proves instead to be one of the season's biggest flops. It's even more discouraging to see two TV/movie greats like Jackie Gleason and Richard Pryor submitting themselves to portraying such shallow, two-dimensional characters as they've done here. And it's not only humiliating but disgusting to set through 90 minutes of racial jokes and a silly, predictable script that runneth over with humor at its absolute worst. And if this isn't bad enough, well, just stay tuned: Not even the ever flexible Richard Pryor or the ever-comical talents of Jackie Gleason can save this toy from shattering into a million ridiculous pieces.

Pryor stars as Jack Brown, an unemployed journalist of sorts who learns one day that unless he finds some sort of steady income, the friendly neighborhood bank will foreclose on his house. Desperation finally takes him to the doors of financial wizard U.S. Bates (Gleason), where he dons dress and stockings to become one of the company cleaning ladies (ha-ha). It's a steady flow of originality and wit such as this that quickly begins leaving a very, very stale taste.

Bates' spoiled, obnoxious son Eric (Schwartz), home visiting for a week and promised anything he wants from

daddy's department store, happens to spy an unwary, fun-loving company janitor by the name of Jack Brown. Since the black man is one toy Eric hasn't yet acquired, he finally manages to get daddy to buy a reluctant Brown and have him shipped over to the house (all aided, of course, with a few warmed-over jokes concerning Lincoln's supposed freeing of the slaves).

So begins our trio's ridiculously predictable and cornball little lessons on the earning of friendship and love, on daddies who have too much money and don't spend enough time with their children, on how rich people shouldn't dismiss a man and his talents merely on the basis of his color.

The last 20 minutes however, do provide a somewhat smooth, somewhat resolving confrontation. But what's disappointing is that every previous scene that bordered on the emotional always ended much too abruptly, much too unresolved. Although the finale does manage to stir your sentiments a bit, it's just too little, and much too late.

Although Pryor does occasionally surprise with a hilarious comeback or two (many of them, unfortunately, are only sigh gags), *The Toy* still remains a terribly bothersome, immature and tiring washout.



Cast of "From Harlem To Broadway" photo by Rosemary Byrd.

Time Enough For Blood

It might be termed a "sleeper," that is a film that is not expected to make as much money as it does or to be as popular as it becomes. But whatever you call it, *48 Hours* has certainly been one of the smash surprises of the Christmas season. Combining graphic violence with an irreverent and profane humor, the film has hit a receptive chord with the public.

It's ungenerous to criticize a film for not doing something that it never aspired to do. *48 Hours* certainly has no intention of being art, or of even being a particularly intelligent film. All it probably meant to be was diverting escapism, with an emphasis on physical action and rough language to titillate its weary viewers. But if it is ungenerous to damn a film for not being more than it tries to be, it's equally unpardonable to excuse it for being so perfectly content to wallow in its own excesses.

48 Hours is incredibly simplistic. A cop (Nick Nolte) "paroles" a convict (Eddie Murphy) for a weekend to help him track down a lunatic killer. At the beginning of the film, we are introduced to the lunatic and his equally unhinged sidekick as they gun down half a dozen guards and escape from their chain gang. Once on the loose, the killers quickly proceed to put a bullet in another man's head (to steal his money and credit cards) and then go hunting for their former cohorts who assisted them in their theft of a bundle of money a few years ago.

With their simple but effective ways of persuasion, they easily convince one former partner to cooperate and get them the hidden money (stashed away, ingeniously, in Eddie Murphy's car trunk). After all this exertion, they decide to relax with a couple of prostitutes. The cops get a tip and race over to the seedy hotel to nab the maniacs. Nolte, as the proverbial private eye with the stormy friendship with the cops, accompanies them and is involved in another bloodbath as the psychopaths, after beating up the girls, are warned about the cops and escape by blasting their way out. The two cops are riddled with bullets but Nolte ducks for cover and survives.

What these scenes establish very clearly is that the escaped killers are not very likeable and have few socially redeemable qualities. This is an important point, because it justifies all the carnage that has happened and that will happen.

Nolte decides to track down these menaces to society and coerces Murphy into helping him in his hunt. With the

appearance of Murphy comes the comedy, and although Murphy is occasionally amusing, most of the humor comes from the blunt contrast between gratuitous, technicolor gore, and Murphy's earthy interest in food and sex. Predictably, Nolte and Murphy begin an odd couple friendship, and lest it seem too obvious, they have to go through an obligatory stage of insults and roughhousing. We are not even spared fisticuffs.

The dialogue between Nolte and Murphy has all the charm of locker room chitchat. Curses, oaths and maledictions are exchanged with great gusto, all to prove that these two guys really like each other.

When Nolte isn't uttering an obscenity, he's grunting. He grunts more than a testy Neanderthal, which is probably meant to be irresistible for those females who like their men to be Real Men. Murphy's character is a bit more likeable, although his thoughts are consumed with coitus. Sex, along with other pleasures of the flesh, is always on his mind. Together they give the impression that the movie is not taking place in San Francisco, circa 1982, but in the wilds of New Guinea, circa 4000 years B.C. The only thing they don't do to prove their primeval manliness is beat their chests. They save that for the women.

With such memorable dialogue, one almost appreciated the action scenes. In a strictly technical, kinetic way, they are well done. Nolte and Murphy chase the two madmen throughout the city while the director, with a stroke of originality, places two of the chases in a subway station and a city bus. They're deftly done, the action scenes, and for those who don't mind implausibilities and blood, they're fairly exciting. But underneath the surface thrills, these scenes, as with the rest of the film, are merely comic book escapades, revved up, splattered with blood, and mindlessly violent.

What do such films as this signify about our society? Do they reveal something about us? Our tastes? Of course, there is always a danger of making too much ado about such films and sounding like a Calvinistic clergyman fulminating against the evils of gambling, alcohol, and necking. And of course, apologists for such films see them as harmlessly entertaining: an outlet for all the violent emotions we bottle up. The box office receipts show most people would side with the latter estimation of *48 Hours*. Maybe it's that simple.