

THEATRICAL WORLD

NEW YORK—

With everyone decrying the decline of good roles for women in films today, the ladies should be happy over the upcoming Lathan & Thomas Production 'The Sirens' which has a point of view extremely sympathetic to women. When the Richard Wasley ('Uptown Saturday Night,' 'Let's Do It Again') play was performed off Broadway, the two female leads, Veronica Reed and Loretta Greene, received a "Drama Desk" and an "Obie" Award for their performances.

Whoops Dept! 'Let's Do It Again' has now grossed \$8,127,099 as against 'Mahogany's' \$5,944,451. And that's only after the two films have been on the charts 13 weeks. But, whoops again! Pamela Grier's 'Friday Foster' has grossed \$1,196,561 after being on the charts only two weeks and ranks 12th in the 50 Top-Grossing Films list while 'Let's Do It Again' has slipped to No. 17 and 'Mahogany' to No. 34.

The latest (and we hope final) dates for 'Bubbling Brown Sugar' to make the Broadway scene at the ANTA Theatre is for previews to begin February 20 and opening on March 2. Group Sales, (212) 796-3074, is handling theatre parties. Josephine Premice has replaced Thelma Carpenter in this Harlem-nostalgia musical revue that has sold out in Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., Chicago, and Toronto.

Fred Williamson who wrote, produced directed and toplined "Adios Amigo," was featured on the "Dinah Shore Show." His film which co-stars Richard Pryor, was rapped by Variety a "nackneyed, poorly put together movie," but reviewer said "Still much credit is due Williamson for attempting to create a black family entertainment..." Weekly trade publication called it 'a light-hearted comedy-western with no strong violence, no sex and little black vs. whitey hatred.'

In Memphis, Tenn., Federal Bankruptcy Judge William B. Leffler ordered Stax Record shut down. Union Planters National Bank, which says Stax owes it \$10.5 million in overdue loans successfully argued in court that the company was unable to operate at a profit. The company will now close at least until a jury trial decides whether Stax is insolvent.

Other trials are forthcoming in Newark, N. J. Federal Court, where payola investigations led to recent guilty pleas to various charges by The Chi Lites, Paul Burke Johnson, former program director of Atlanta's station WAOK, and Edward Portnoy, owner of the Record Shack Second Ave. Corp. Facing trial are Nat Tarnopol, president of Brunswick Records; Clive Davis, president of Arista Records, and Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff of Gamble-Huff Records of Philadelphia.

Golden Globe Award nominations from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association include only three blacks: Ben Vereen for acting debut in a motion picture-male in "Funny Lady," Redd Foxx for television actor-comedy or musical (series) for "Sanford and Son," and Jimmy Walker for supporting actor in television series of "Good Times."

Beverly Hills-Hollywood Chapter of NAACP has almost evenly spread its nominees for Image Awards over four films: "The Wilby Conspiracy," "Let's Do It Again," "Cooley High" and "cornbread, Earl & Me." Others mentioned on more than one list were "Report To The Commissioner," "Man Friday," and "Mahogany."

"The Poison Tree," that tough prison drama starring Cleavon Little, Moses Gunn, DiAnthony Williams and Northern J. Colloway only lasted four performances on Broadway. Many who saw it thought it deserved more, but the critics were brutal.

Vy Higgins, publisher of 'Unique N.Y.' and a disc jockey on WRVR, has been appointed co-host of WNBC-TV's "Positively Black," with Gus Heingburg, president of the Greater Newark Urban Coalition.



FINIS

PEARL BAILEY ENDED HER FORTY-YEAR show business career in her final performance in the title role of "Hello, Dolly" at the Kennedy Center in Washington. The 57-year-old jazz and blues singer recreated the role she is best known for before a packed house of 2,300. (UPI).

Staple Singers In Successful So. African Tour

Warner Bros. recording artists the Staple Singers recently completed a successful series of engagements in Soweto, South Africa, where their current single "Let's Do It Again" is rapidly becoming a best-seller. The group performed before a total of fifty thousand enthusiastic fans at some seven South African concerts. One of the first W. E. A. acts to perform extensively in the area in support of a hit single, the Staples worked closely with Derek Hannon, managing director for W. E. A.'s South African company. The Staples are presently returning to the U. S., to begin work on their first Warners album, scheduled for spring release.

Gossett To Preach In New Film

Actor-singer-musician Lou Gossett joins Glynn Turman and Joan Pringle as co-star in the role of an ex-convict, ex-con man and ex-boxer turned revivalist, in American International's suspense mystery "J. D.'s Revenge," now filming in New Orleans.

Arthur Marks, whose current opus 'Friday Foster' is making box office marks nationwide is producing and directing from a screenplay by Jaison Starks.

Lou Gossett created the role of "George" in the late Lorraine Hansberry's award-winning play 'A Raisin in the Sun' on Broadway, and later repeated the part in the film version. He also won critical acclaim as James Garner's co-star in the hit film "Skin Game."

The CoCaCo Service Company is providing production services for "J. D.'s Revenge," which is scheduled for release this summer.

NEWS FROM MGM

Redd Foxx has been signed to star in 'Norman, Is That You?', the screen adaption of the long-running stage comedy hit that will be brought to the screen by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer with George Schlatter producing and directing, it was announced recently by Daniel Melnick, MGM Senior Vice President and Worldwide Head of Production.

Before emerging as the star of one of the most popular series on television, NBC's "Sanford and Son," Foxx was a leading nightclub comedian for more than two decades. His show business career had begun as a member of a street corner band that won second prize on a Major Bowes Amateur Hour radio show.

"Norman, Is That You?" was unveiled at Broadway's Lyceum Theatre in February, 1970, and has gone on to become a hit in 20 different countries. It enjoyed a 4-year

run in France and in Italy it became the longest-running play by American playwrights ever to be seen there. Currently, "Norman, Is That You?" has finished its first year at Las Vegas' Union Plaza Hotel, is in its fourth year in Los Angeles, is in the midst of a long run in Toronto, and a new national company is now being formed.

The play's authors, Ron Clark and Sam Bobrick, collaborated on the screenplay with George Schlatter, who is making his featured film debut with the screen comedy. Production is slated for April.

Re-tired and More

One re-tired guy ended up spending \$500. One sign on an office wall: "Don't put off until tomorrow what the boss is going to ask for yesterday." Many people claim they're playing cards for fun but only a few have some money left after the game. Don't worry about the news until it is past-tense.

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6 - MIDNIGHT

"BROTHER BOOGIE"

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