

Weekend

Spotlight

Melba Moore: Pay attention to your daydreams, music lovers

Melba Moore was in the midst of teaching school when she decided to put her shyness aside and embark on a career in entertainment. Little did the world, or Melba for that matter, know what a string of successes awaited her.

Having been born to musical parents who enrolled her in piano and dance lessons at the impressionable age of nine, Melba went on to attend Art and Music High School. After teaching music in public school for a year, she left to pursue a singing career by appearing in nightclubs and piano bars. This soon led to recording work singing background vocals.

According to Melba, "I think it's very important that people decide what makes them happy and take a step to proceed in that direction, regardless of what other people's opinions may be. Sometimes you just have to follow your own instincts."

That determined philosophy has given Melba the

"I'm not a workaholic, but I do like to throw myself into my work and I like the people I'm working with to do the same...."
-- Melba Moore

confidence to expand her talents in myriad directions. Beginning with a minor part in the controversial Broadway musical "Hair," Melba remained with the show a year-and-a-half, eventually landing the female lead, a coup that merited an announcement on the front page of *The New York Times*. Melba smiles, "I was the first black girl to take over a lead role from a white girl. I guess it could have only happened in 'Hair.'

This auspicious beginning proved to be a good omen as Melba went on to win a Tony Award, New York Drama Critics Award, Theatre World Award and Drama Desk Award for her starring role in the Broadway musical smash hit, "Purlie." From there, Melba began a long and successful recording career, committing her four-octave vocals to such classic vinyl as "Peach Melba," "This Is It" and last year's

"The Other Side Of The Rainbow."

"I'm not a workaholic," Melba says, her demure frame belying the energy and stamina within, "but I do like to throw myself into my work and I like the people I'm working with to do the same. So I have really like the project I'm working on since I know I'm going to make a full-time commitment." Judging from her accomplishments to date, Melba's decisions have obviously been wise ones made from the heart.

In 1972, she expanded her achievements once again, undertaking a series of successful dramatic roles in both television and feature films, including appearances on the popular TV series "Love Boat" (in which Melba recently sang and danced in a two-hour special), the NBC Movie-of-the-week "Flamingo Road," an ABC special "The American Woman: Portraits of Courage" and "Cotton Comes To Harlem."

Melba's recording career continued to escalate as well with the Top 20 dance chart hit, "You Stepped Into My Life," the Top 10 UK hit, "Pick Me Up, I'll Dance," and the Top 15 R&B single "Take My Love." In 1981, she signed with EMI-America and released "What A Woman Needs," co-writing many of the tunes.

"The Other Side Of The Rainbow," which features Melba sustaining a single, climaxing not for 43 seconds on the title track, was released on Capitol last year. Of the lyrics to that song, which Melba co-wrote, she says: "When I sing that song, I'm pouring out my inner feelings. That's the real me. I'm always encouraging people to pay attention to their daydreams."

Melba continues to realize her own precious daydreams with her second and most current Capitol LP, "Never Say Never." Once again, Melba reveals her inner self, displaying her omnipresent vitality and positive spirit. Prefaced by the release of a 12-inch version of the R&B tune "Keepin' My Lover Satisfied," "Never Say Never," also showcased the Van McCoy-penned classic "Lean On Me" and Paul Lawrence Jones III's "Love Me Right."



Melba Moore: A little lady with a big voice and a big heart to match.



Keep On Trekkin'

Most of them will reunite at least one more time this summer in "Star Trek III: In Search of Spock, who, for those of you

who've been vacationing on the planet Vulcan, apparently died in "Star Trek II."

Ask Yolonda

Wife's willing to forgive, but her husband's brutality persists

By YOLONDA GAYLES
Syndicated Columnist

Dear Yolonda: Please help me with this situation. I've been married for seven years, and five of those years have been the most brutal of my life. My problem is my husband and his drinking. When he's sober, I'm married to the kindest, sweetest man in the world. But when he's been drinking, he's a completely different person. He wants to fight me for no reason at all. One time he even beat me with a belt, and the time, I was pregnant with my second son.

I've tried everything from fighting him back to calling the police. The police, of course, treat our situation as if it's a lover's quarrel. The one time that

they took him in he was back home the next day.

Now I feel as though I was wrong to allow him back in my home again, but I can't financially support my family without his help. I know his problem is emotional, but I can't get him to see a psychiatrist. He thinks he's all right.

I know my husband's problem has something to do with the way he was brought up. In his sober



Yolonda

moments, I learned that his father used to beat his mother. I tried to talk to his mother about it, but all I get from her is that I must be doing something to instigate his violence.

I need help, but where do I begin? I'm afraid that one day someone will get killed.

Aileen, In Portsmouth

Dear Aileen: Clearly, if you think your husband learned his violent actions from his parents' relationship, perhaps you need to think of what your marriage teaches your children.

Over the years, I've visited several shelter homes for women in your situation. The message I hear counselors share is that you've got to become respon-

sible for your own health and safety. I suggest that you call your local police department again, but this time ask for the names of either a shelter home or a family counseling center in your area. A counselor there can help you realize your alternatives.

She Wants Free Ride

Dear Yolonda: A co-worker and I have been friends for many years. We work the same shift, and because I have car, I've been trying to be a good buddy, and give this person a ride home once a week after our usual Wednesday night meetings (free of charge, I might add).

The last month I've been leaving early, so my co-

Broadway Is My Beat

Is Michael near edge?

By JOEY SASSO
Syndicated Columnist

Observations in covering the night beat: Superstar Michael Jackson has everything money can buy, including a magnificent mock tudor mansion in California and a menagerie that includes a boa constrictor called Muscles. He has recorded with ex-Beatle Paul McCartney and has duets lined up with Barbara Streisand and Freddie Mercury of Queen.

And to cap it all, he has won a record 12 Grammy nominations for his runaway best seller, "Thriller." He calls Diana Ross his closest friend and confidante, and if she's not available there's always Brooke Shields and Jane Fonda to fall back on.

But in spite of all the success, luxury and adulation that have surrounded him since he was a tiny tot of eight, Jackson seems perilously close to the breaking point. His mother and father recently divorced after 35 years of marriage. And he's feuding with his father, Joe Jackson, as well as businessmen Ron Weisner and Freddy Demann.

Michael is a devout Jehovah's Witness who studies the Bible every day and refuses to eat meat, drink alcohol or touch drugs. He rejects everything from salt to flour and will eat in only health

food restaurants in Los Angeles. He attends religious services three times a week and fasts on Sundays -- when he allows himself the special treat of a frenzied dance session that drives his slender frame to exhaustion.

He sees himself as Peter Pan. "I totally identify with him" he says. "There are pictures of him all over my room. And I've read everything the author, J.M. Barrie, ever wrote." Michael may even play Peter Pan if Steven Spielberg -- who made "ET" -- gets his way. "ET" is Michael's favorite movie. He's seen it six times. Micheal lives in glorious isolated splendor in the family mansion in California, surrounded by the burly bodyguards he calls "my people." He is painfully shy. Even his mother Kathleen says: "He's quieter off stage than he's ever been. He told me he sometimes feels like a caged animal."...

Singer-songwriter Lionel Richie has agreed -- a year advance -- to serve again as sole host for the "American Music Awards" ABC-TV special. Last month, Richie became the first sole host of the 11-year-old special. The result was the most-watched musical-awards show in TV history with 55 million viewers, according to ABC. Immediately after the broadcast -- and presumably after the ratings came in -- Dick Clark, the show's executive producer, asked Richie to repeat in 1985....

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM SPELLMAN FOR THE CHRONICLE