

# Weekend

The Arts, Leisure, Music, Columns

## Broadway Is My Beat

### Carroll: Damone's her real love

By JOEY SASSO  
Syndicated Columnist

#### Observations in covering the Night Beat:

Romance is blooming between singer-actress **Diahann Carroll** and crooner **Vic Damone**, say friends. Diahann, the newest cast member of "Dynasty," has known Vic for years, but their long friendship has blossomed into love, the sources say. The two recently attended a special fashion show together at Georgio's, a posh clothing shop in Beverly Hills, and spent a cozy weekend in Boca Raton, Fla., as guests at a benefit.

Their dates are being kept secret because "Dynasty" producers don't want real-life romance to overshadow a sizzling TV love affair Diahann will have with **Billy Dee Williams** on the series next season. "Vic told me that he has fallen head over heels for Diahann," says a close friend of the singer. "He told me they share so much in common and enjoy many of the same things. Diahann has brought new meaning into Vic's life and he's behaving like a young man again."

Gary, Ind., is the town that knew him when. It's where singing phenomenon **Michael Jackson** and his brothers grew up. But Gary isn't on the itinerary for the much-hyped Jackson Victory Tour, and that has some residents growling.

In fact, City Council President **Vernon Smith** accuses Jackson of insensitivity in failing to respond to 10,000 letters from Gary school children who urged him to visit the city. But other residents say they're simply proud the Jackson name is associated with the city and point to a practical reason why *The Gloved One* won't appear: The largest hall in Gary seats a mere 8,000 to 10,000 people for a concert....

Wearing all those gold chains became a real pain in the neck for Mr. T recently. The burly star was nearly choked by his jewelry while filming a scene for "The A-Team," and only the lightning-fast response of co-star **George Peppard** got him off the hook.

It was the tail end of a sweltering day, and the cast and crew were trying to wrap up an episode. The script called for Peppard to come to Mr. T's aid after the muscleman had been knocked down by a hearse. But Mr. T. needed George

even sooner. As Mr. T stretched himself out on the ground to pick up the action after the hearse had "hit" him, his heavy jewelry swung around and tangled around his throat. He sat bold upright, gasping and sweating, and fumbled frantically with his chains. George was at his side instantly, untangling the chains and soothing his over-heated, out-of-breath co-star....

"Break Out," the second RCA-Planet LP by the **Pointer Sisters**, was recently certified platinum, signifying sales of more than one million units. The current single from the album is the chart-mover "I'm So Excited," previously released on the Pointers' debut RCA-Planet LP, "So Excited."

With the success of the top-10 hit "Jump (For My Love)" from "Break Out" and its highly-acclaimed video, interest in "I'm So Excited" was rekindled on the radio, retail and club levels, so RCA repackaged "Break Out" to include "I'm So Excited" and the album sales soared. Meanwhile, The Pointer Sisters' videos -- "I'm So Excited" and "Jump (For My Love)" -- are being seen on MTV, other major music-oriented TV programs and in video clubs around the country. In live performances, Pointer Sisters June, Ruth and Anita have just completed a highly successful summer tour of major U.S. venues....

Sigmund's estranged wife **Enid** dropped the \$660,000 bombshell three weeks after Sigmund, better known as **Jackie Jackson**, secretly filed for a divorce. Enid, 30, estimates her lead vocalist husband's earnings with the **Jackson SuperSingers** at \$264,000 a month. As part of her \$52,800 monthly claim she says she needs \$3,036 a month for clothes and \$1,300 a month for entertainment....

Lovely **Lena Horne** set attendance records on Broadway with her one-woman show -- but she once married a man she didn't love just to further her fledgling career. Now taking London by storm, the lady says she owes her distinct musical style to second husband **Lennie Hayton**, a music director at MGM -- and a white man. "At first I became involved with him so I could break into white society," she confesses. "I thought Lennie would be useful to my career." And indeed as a manager he could get her into more places than any black musician or manager could, back in the

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#### Play Mates

Diahann Carroll and Billy Dee Williams form a handsome couple as they make sparks fly on TV's "Dynasty." But in real life, Williams is no match for Carroll's new love.

## Spotlight

### For Phyllis St. James, it's only the beginning

"Ain't No Turnin' Back" may be the debut Motown album for singer - songwriter **Phyllis St. James**, but the lady needs no introduction to the music industry. As a background vocalist, session contractor, songwriter and arranger, St. James has worked with some of the biggest names in pop music, from the Beach Boys to the Jacksons. Considering her background, it's little wonder that during her debut album project, produced by **Velton Ray Bunch** with **Benny Medina** and **Kerry Ashby** serving as executive producers, St. James contributed six of the nine songs, gathered musicians for the sessions, even had a hand in the album cover's concept.

"I'm so excited about the whole thing," St. James says. "I never thought the day would come. After you've worked in the business as long as I have, you see plenty of deserving talent that never gets a chance. I've definitely been blessed."

Despite her musical experience, ironically, St. James born -- and raised in **Oakland, Calif.** -- originally pursued a career as an actress. To insure success in the field, she attained a bachelor's degree in dramatic arts at the **University of California, Berkeley**. Her parents weren't professional musicians -- her mother "sang around the house," and father simply manned the household stereo. However, the music she heard came out of those speakers -- assorted jazz, and pop, like **Johnny Mathis**, **Barbra Streisand** and later the **Motown sound** -- coupled with her earlier activity in school and church choirs, obviously sparked a flame that wouldn't die.

In the Bay area, St. James sang with many gospel aggregations, including friends like the **Hawkins Family** and **Andre Crouch**, until tackling her first pop gig in 1976, with **Boz Scaggs** during his acclaimed "Silk Degrees" LP. Since then, the projects have never

stopped coming and her credits read like a Top 10 who's who including **Ray Charles**, **Tina Turner**, **The Commodores** and **Helen Reddy**. She has appeared on many television shows, including "Solid Gold," "Merv Griffin" and "Saturday Night Live," and her voice augments national commercials for products including **Jack In The Box**, **Haggar Jeans**, **Olde English**. Her own album was the next mountain left to conquer.

Teaming with producer **Velton Ray Bunch**, the two approached Motown Records A&R executives **Benny Medina** and **Kerry Ashby**. Medina and Ashby liked what they heard, and the four of them went into the studio.

The result, "Ain't No Turnin' Back," not suprisingly, is a culmination of her pop influences over the years. St. James compositions like the danceable "Candlelight Afternoon," the passion of "Livin' On The Border" and the downright funky "Phonemate" all pose to natural Top 40 flair. Vocally, she exhibits just why her talents are so in demand behind the scenes, as she gives each track its own identity, vocally caressing one song, letting loose during another.

"To me, the album is a reflection of most of my experiences as an artist," St. James says. "Who's to say if it is my best work, because this is only the beginning, but I'm very proud of what we accomplished. It can only get better from here."

St. James says she's got a whole file cabinet full of projects to occupy her future. "I've got plenty of songs already written. I'd like to write a book and screenplay and after a couple of albums, I'd like to get back to my acting."

In any case, it's clear to see; for **Phyllis St. James**, there simply "Ain't No Turnin' Back."



Richard "Dimples" Fields joins the Soul Train Gang doing two of his latest hits, "Jazzy Lady" and "Your Wife Is Cheatin' on Us." Fields can be seen locally on the show on Saturday, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m. on WJTM-TV.

## Hollywood Today

### Pryor writes book on accident; former queen gets TV contract

By VINCENT TUBBS  
Syndicated Columnist

**Richard Pryor** (\$41 million, y' remember) has written a fictionalized biographical movie titled "Jo Jo Dancer" that begins filming in January, covering the low days of the accident as well as the high, clean days he's now enjoying.

The carrion birds are swooping down on **Jeannie Bell** (remember her?) to write a book about her idyllic days with the late **Richard Burton**, who met her while filming **Black** filmmaker **Bill Alexander's** "The Klansman" and took her to Switzerland and France.

You know, of course, that both of our Miss Americas have

struck it rich in Hollywood: **Vanessa**, who some detracting locals are snickering would not wear a bikini when she appeared in a segment of "Love Boat," has been set for a flick titled "Partners in Crime." **Suzette** will be doing eight episodes of ABC-TV's soap "Loving" in October, playing an exotic European model.

Millionaire **Michael Jackson** has seen Prince's movie, "Purple Rain." Naturally, he made no comment. Which is what **Diana Ross** has also not done about her new film, "Silence", whose director, **Adrian Lyne**, describes it as "another strange love story." It's about a white doctor who gets caught up in the Chicago race riots

and is sheltered by a Black hooker who is mute.

After completing work on "Fast Forward" (formerly "Shootout") director **Sidney Poitier**, who claims he's arhythmic and can't dance a lick, shocked his cast and crew at the film's closing party by doing the moonwalk like a champ.

Meanwhile, **Columbia Pictures** has **Christina Murray** of **Howard University** and **Sharon Langley** of **Clark College** among seven students in its summer intern program. They'll spend seven weeks on the lot, working in various departments and learning all about movie pictures.