

Weekend

The Arts, Leisure, Music, Columns

Hollywood Today

Is network slyly reviving 'Amos 'N Andy' series?

By VINCENT TUBBS
Syndicated Columnist

HOLY MACKEREL!! -- Were you up late (1 a.m.) a week or so ago when ABC-TV resurrected "Amos" with George Kirby doing a sleek, faintly disguised marketing test for what is sure to revive and rerun those tired, old stereotypes that were so embarrassingly funny in 1951-53 that the NAACP drove them off the television waves?

It was a documentary eased in during late, late show time as a special, and earned a 1.9 rating and 19 shares in the Neilsens, beaten in the time period only by a CBS movie that began 15 minutes earlier.

But the local NAACP woke ABC-TV up bright and early the next morning with sound condemnation of its "insensitivity ... in reopening old wounds inflicted years ago by a television series fraught with flagrant stereotypes and demeaning black characterizations."

Producers of the "documentary" said they are shocked that the NAACP is still mad, and claim that "public and press response have been good" in approximately 50 other markets where the show has been seen, including Philly and San Francisco (though New York won't touch it.) Producer Michael R. Avery had to admit, however, that some advertisers initially linked with the show "chickened out at the last minute" and in some places the show "had to be put on for nothing" because no commercial time could be sold.

Nevertheless, you just may be seeing "Amos 'n' Andy" again. Its revival has been discussed in Hollywood for 20 years to my knowledge. Avery Productions has dared to break some rather thick ice. And if you see the well-constructed documentary, you just may laugh yourself sick (and hate yourself next morning for laughing so hard last night).

National NAACP spokesman Henry Lee Moon, Redd Foxx, Marla Gibbs and presidential candidate Jesse Jackson are shown saying there's nothing wrong with running the Kingfish and Amos and Lightning around again.

GEE, HOW HE TRIED -- Yet tragedy seems always to have dogged his footsteps. He said in his first hit (1962) he was "stubborn kind of fellow" trying to determine "what's going on." He knew "how sweet it is to be loved," but he couldn't "get a witness" even when he "heard it through the grapevine."

Unable to fathom "what was the matter with Baby," he resorted to "sexual healing."

Viewed that way, it would seem that his entire life was reflected in the songs he wrote and sang. And it all came to naught.

One day before he would have become 45 years young, the voice of Marvin Gaye, a romantic to the core, was silenced forever; his long-bleeding heart, stilled, his search for love (like that of most men) ended.

There had been fame and acclaim, fortune and fun, but there had also been devastating marriages, the albatross of alimony, the pitfall of drug addiction, bankruptcy at the peak of success, a suicide attempt, income tax problems and two years of self-imposed exile in Europe to cool out and regroup.

Back in the USA, sold-out concerts, two Grammy Awards in 1982 and a Grammy nomination last year seemed to forecast a second chance.

Then the demons that apparently await those who dare to be stubbornly different reached out for him again. He spent more time in court than he did at writing or singing. Ex-wives sought \$300,000 in back alimony, the IRS sought \$2 million in taxes, the bankruptcy court kept calling, there was child support for two daughters and a son, and an old girlfriend filed another law suit seeking a bite out of him.

He sought the peace and sanctity of his father's house closeted himself in his bedroom away from a world gone crazy only to have a simple family fuss prove to be the straw that broke the camel's back on the eve of April Fools Day 1984.

Friends and admirers numbering more than 10,000 traveled long distances (even by L.A. standards) to file past his bier in the Church on the Hill in Hollywood's Forest Lawn Cemetery. News of his death filled newspapers and radio and television airwaves. An official of the cemetery where many of Hollywood's most famous stars are buried said: "I don't recall seeing this large a crowd for any visitation or funeral in the past 25 years."

Meanwhile, police held the Rev. Marvin Gaye, Sr. for mental evaluation prior to arraignment on charges of causing the death of his son. And record buyers laughed a "run" on record stores.

Marvin is dead. But his music lives on.



Mrs. Ali Speaks Out

"I feel like I'm capable of anything that I aspire to do," reveals Veronica Ali in upcoming interview on "Tony Brown's Journal" Veronica, known to the public as Mrs. Muhammad Ali, also addresses the rumors surrounding

her husband's finances and health on the nation's top-ranked black affairs show, which will air locally on WUNL-TV, Channel 26 on Sunday, May 6, at 6:30 p.m.

Ask Yolonda

Forsyth reader wonders about our heroes

By YOLONDA GAYLES
Syndicated Columnist

Dear Yolonda: I've got a question for you to help answer. It seems to me that we as blacks have a problem when it comes to picking our heroes. We wait for whites to choose our heroes and successes, then we run behind those persons and honor them with expensive dinners and such.

For example, here in Forsyth County a person was assigned to a board of directors, and since then I've received three invitations to purchase tickets or come to a party in his honor.

For what? What did he do besides get close to the right person?

It seems to me that he already received his reward when he got his job. Please comment.

John B.

Dear John: If part of your statement is that we should keep our money and our applause in our pockets until those in question

do something praiseworthy, I agree.

Further, if you're suggesting that we pick our own images of success, I'm in double agreement.

Our communities are loaded with unsung heroes. The unfortunate part is that no one is giving dinners for their efforts.

An Inensitive Boss

Dear Yolonda: This concerns your letter to Carl, the man who complained about blacks not utilizing his business. When I read it, I said, "Okay, it's time for me to respond."

Every problem with the businesses in our community is not due to customers or merchandise, or the lack thereof. Some of the difficulties don't have anything to do with

the staff.

Some of the problems, quite frankly, have to do with unappreciative, insensitive bosses.

The place where I work is an example. Outside this building my boss is well-respected. Inside this place everybody hates him because of the way he acts. One time, during one of his emotional tantrums, he shouted at the top of his voice: "You all can be replaced for a dime a dozen!"

Loyalty? He doesn't deserve mine.

What comments would you make to a boss who talks to you like this?

Joann

Dear Joann: I would make no comment. I mean, what could you possibly say that would straighten out someone who -- because he is your boss -- tells you what to do?

If things get too rough, just start fishing around for something a little less stressful. Please see page B11



Yolonda



Singing In Style

Singing star O'Bryan, resplendent in his \$5,000, custom-made jacket, performs his new single "Lovelite" on "Soul Train." The program airs Saturday, May 19, on WJTM-TV, Channel 45.

Musical Notes

Marlon Jackson may branch into a movie career after tour

Marlon Jackson has been offered the lead in two separate films when the upcoming Jackson "Victory Tour" is over. The first movie, a full-length feature called "The Cat," is reportedly backed by Universal Pictures. The second is a feature currently being reviewed by Richard Pryor, who is considering directing it.

But Marlon Jackson's future film career does not mean that the Jacksons are separating after the tour. Says Marlon, "We'll always be together as a group. That's where it all started. That's the mothership."

But couldn't Marlon's cinematic possibilities lure him away from music? "Film is in my future," he says, "but music is in my blood. I cut myself and musical notes jump out."

Learning From 'Pops'

The O'Jays are gearing up to tour this June in an unusual manner. They've flown to Las Vegas to rehearse with 70-year-old Charlie "Pops" Atkins. What's so special about Atkins? Why would the O'Jays leave their homes in Ohio and California to camp out with Pops?

Says O'Jay Sammy Strain: "Pops is a legend. He's been choreographing singers for 50 years. He's worked with everyone: Frankie Lyman and the Teenagers, the Temptations, Gladys Knight & The Pips, Diana Ross.

"He helps us develop really intricate choreography, the kind that never stops moving from the minute we get onstage. We've had athletes like Sugar Ray Leonard come backstage and say, 'I thought I move, but YOU guys...'" Reggie Jackson told *Playboy* that if he could perform, he'd like to be able to move like (O'Jay) Eddie Levert."

How does Pops help the O'Jays achieve the kind of movement that makes even athletes jealous? Says Strain: "He makes us work 10 hours a day, seven days a week for nine weeks straight."

One 'Jump' Too Many?

"Jump," the new single from the Pointer Sisters, has undergone a title change to "Jump (For My Love)."

The change was made to avoid confusion with Van Halen's current hit, "Jump," which is totally elated to the Pointer's song. It was decided to make the change even though the track, under the title "Jump," has been on dance charts for several weeks, and is featured on the Pointers' album "Break Out" with its original name.

"Jump (For My Love)" is the third single from the LP and follows the Top Five hit, "Automatic" and the dance club favorite, "I Need You."

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