

Weekend

The Arts, Leisure, Music, Columns

Musical Notes

Mr. T releases musical video

Columbia recording artist **Mr. T** has released his first music video, "Mr. T's Commandment," from the album of the same name. Mr. T raps his way through all of the situations that have made him so popular: attacking "bad guys," befriending children and flashing that alarming smile.

"Mr. T's Commandment," directed by Peter Israelson and produced by Nils Siegel, captures all of the power of the electrifying track. With Mr. T acting out the song, its message becomes clear -- anti-drug, anti-crime and the importance of getting an education. "Mr. T's Commandment" is a nonstop action piece that spotlights the artist's endearing quality of displaying a ferocity toward criminals but a loving gentleness toward children.

Mr. T, who gained worldwide popularity for his role in "Rocky III" and "The A-Team," got involved in the project with the hope that he could reach more children with his inspirational message via a musical, dance-oriented medium.

The popular rhythm and blues group, **Lakeside**, will be among the stars appearing on the 1984 "Lou Rawls Parade of Stars" television special which benefits the United Negro College Fund. The program airs Saturday, Dec. 29 at noon.

It will be a 12-hour national airing, the first telethon to benefit a black cause and the first national telethon to benefit education. Anheuser-Busch, the national sponsor, will also provide promotional support through its Budweiser beer.

Other stars on the program include **Sammy Davis Jr.**, **Donna Summers**, **Bill Cosby**, **Patti LaBelle**, **Al Jarreau**, **Andrea Crouch** and **Kool and the Gang**. Lou's co-hosts are **Marilyn McCoo** and **Ed McMahon**.

For the second straight year, **Gladys Knight** will host the **Black Achievement Awards Television Show** that was scheduled to be taped in Los Angeles on Nov. 18 for a nationwide showing. Co-hosting with Knight will be **Smokey Robinson**. **The Pips**, will also appear on the show.

Knight and The Pips will also be the guests and New York anchor for the "Happy New Year America" CBS TV special emanating from the Plaza Hotel in New York on Dec. 31.

But Gladys Knight and The Pips won't be the only ones helping to ring in the New Year. Blues great **B.B. King** will be the special guest on the **Willie Nelson HBO New Years Eve Special**, broadcast live from Houston.

The two have admired each other over the years

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Broadway Is My Beat

Cosby: Show's a hit

By JOEY SASSO
Syndicated Columnist

Observations in Covering the Night Beat.

Bill Cosby says he'd know his new NBC show was a success even if he didn't look at the ratings -- from the rumors that are starting to circulate. One that annoys him particularly -- and which he insists is not true -- has him and his video wife, **Phylicia Ayers-Allen**, so at odds they're not speaking to one another. Bill also says he's beginning to see the building of resentment toward the series from the industry on the West Coast, because "The Bill Cosby Show" is shot in the East "and is for real." He says the Hollywoodites "say we can't keep up the quality of our series, that we're wearing writers out. Well, the fact is we're smiling here, have tons of ideas -- and will never run out of ideas as long as people keep watching our show."

Robert Guillaume, the star of ABC's **Benson**, has a reputation for speaking his mind. He's also a guardian against offensive racial content on the show. "Robert has a short fuse," said **Inga Swenson**, **Benson's** friendly nemesis on the comedy about a butler-turned-government official. "But I think it's because he feels such a responsibility to the show and to the black community. He's a perfectionist and it pays off."

Will wonders never cease? Not-so-little-anymore **Stevie Wonder** says he's asked another red-hot entertainer, **Eddie Murphy**, to make a movie with him. They would play brothers in a flick written by the Wonder Man. "It's a

lot of fun. I told him the basic concept of the story and he's interested in us doing it," said **Stevie**, who's been pals with **Murphy** since the comic did an impression of him on "Saturday Night Live." Meanwhile, **Wonder**, who's on top of the charts with his "I Just Called to Say I Love You," is hedging his bet. He's also talked to **John Travolta** about doing a video together....

James Earl Jones will come off a great deal like boxing czar **Don King** in NBC's "Las Vegas Strip Wars." Producer **Geroge Englund** isn't worried that the resemblance will lead to trouble. He protected himself by getting a release from King before he started shooting the Nov. 25 TV movie. "In this case, it wasn't possible to disguise the character under any 'thin veil.' It would have been actionable. King's the only black fight promoter," says Englund, of the colorful figure most recently in the news because of his involvement with the **Jacksons' "Victory Tour."** Jones' character isn't the only thing about "Strip Wars" that comes close to real life. Englund also drew from his own background as an executive with **Caesars World** (which oversees **Caesars Palace** operations in Las Vegas and Atlantic City) to write the **Rock Hudson** starrer.

"Las Vegas Strip Wars" has **Hudson** playing a Las Vegas casino honcho, accused of having ties with organized crime figures, who's ousted from his position and takes over another hotel. It constituted "doing a slalom

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Cosby on TV wife Phyllicia Ayers-Allen: We get along just fine.



Avery Brooks, second from left, stars in the title role of the American Playhouse production of "Solomon Northup's Odyssey." The production, based on the true story of a free black man kidnapped into slavery, also stars, left to right, Christopher Mariso, Rhetta Green and Jane League.

PBS airs Solomon Northup's plight

In 1841, a free black in Saratoga, N.Y., was kidnapped and sold into slavery in the South. For 12 years, this young man experienced the cruelty and subjugation of enslavement on various plantations in Louisiana.

No one, not his wife, his friends, or his family, knew of his whereabouts. And although he told his story to anyone who would listen down South -- his fellow slaves, his "owners," etc. -- either no one listened or no one cared.

It wasn't until he was able to smuggle a message up North that anyone learned about the fate of Solomon Northup, the free black who was suffering, physically and emotionally, under the yoke of slavery.

"Solomon Northup's Odyssey," a two-hour historical drama recounting this true story, will be presented on **American Playhouse** on Monday, Dec. 10, at 9 p.m. EST, over the **Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)**. The film, shot on location in Savannah, Ga., is directed by **Gordon Parks**, the award-winning former photographer for **Life Magazine**, who has earned the title "renaissance man" for his varied achievements as a composer, poet and novelist, as well as director of such feature films as "The Learning Tree," "Shaft"

and "Leadbelly."

Avery Brooks makes his film debut in the title role of "Solomon Northup's Odyssey." Also starred are **Mason Adams**, **John Saxon**, **Michael Tolan**, **Janet League**, **Petronia Paley** and **Rhetta Greene**.

The script, by **Samm-Art Williams** and **Lou Potter**, is based on **Solomon Northup's** own factual account, entitled "Twelve Years A Slave," which he wrote following his rescue. The book was so popular -- it sold more than 25,000 copies in its first printing -- that it became a powerful tool for the abolitionists in their campaign against slavery even at the cost of a Civil War.

In 1841, **Solomon Northup** was a free black man in Saratoga, N.Y. He was a carpenter, a devoted husband, a loving father and an accomplished fiddler. Then one day an enterprising entrepreneur convinced Solomon to travel to Washington, D.C., where he had arranged for a big paying job as a musician.

However, instead of giving him a job, the "entrepreneur" delivered Solomon into the hands of a white slaver trader. Although fiercely independent, Solomon, shackled and physically beaten in-

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Ask Yolonda

Helping her sister's friend turned out to be a big mistake

By YOLONDA GAYLES
Syndicated Columnist

Dear Yolonda: Several weeks ago a woman who wrote in to say that the only way blacks are going to solve our employment problem is when we learn to aid one another in our job search.

I once believed in that theory, but now I sure don't. When I tried to help someone, I got burned.

My former boyfriend was a computer programmer. My sister had a girlfriend who was job-hunting, and every job that interested her called for some computer experience, so my sister asked me if I would ask "Ron" to help her.

To make a long story short, last month Ron was



Yolonda Gayles

in one of his confession moods, and he told me that during the time that the two of them were together, they were doing much more than work-

ing on the company's computers. He claims that she practically threw herself at him. Since telling me this, I've refused to see him. I feel that I could never trust him again.

So you see, you can't help people today. Everyone's looking out for themselves.

Oh, the young lady did get a job in the field -- so she looked out for herself and is doing all right. I'm the only one who lost.

Gail

Dear Gail: Had your boyfriend and your sister's friend met under different circumstances, the same thing could have occurred, so don't blame

your helpfulness. I think you were right to help your sister's friend (even if she didn't deserve it).

Now, to your own problem -- if you really like Ron, refusing to see him again may be a little harsh. After all, he did tell you what happened. Let's hope that he learned from the experience, too.

Inside Knowledge

Dear Yolonda: My letter concerns the writer from Macon whose son was "brainwashed" by the drugs he used.

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