

ENTERTAINMENT A8

Lost In Yonkers has zest, with universal appeal

1942 and it's the "Friday Night Fights," brought to you by Gillette! The ring, a small two-bedroom apartment over the "Kurnitz's Candy Store" in Yonkers, New York.

In one corner, two boys, Jay and Arty, (Jamie Marsh and Danny Gerard), their father Eddie (Mark Blum), Aunt Bella (Didi Conn), their 35-year-old screwball spinster aunt, Uncle Louie, a small-time, two-bit gangster (Kevin Spacey), and Aunt Gert (Lauren Klein), an older but only slightly wiser Bella.

In the other corner is none other than grandmother Kurnitz. Hummm... like it's sure to be another Friday night mismatch — after all, it's six against one. They're young and she's very, very, old! But she does carry a stick.

After round one, it looks like it's the old lady by a knockout — still undefeated! Grandmother Kurnitz, loved by some — feared by all!

Course the fight doesn't end on Friday evening; they do this sort of thing all the time; in fact they've been doing this for years. They fight six days a week — including

the new Broadway Preview Series.

The play, directed by Gene Saks, is hilarious, thought-provoking, tearful, and wonderfully acted. Simon, always in search of the uni-

versal appeal, has found it once more!

Lost In Yonkers is about a family whose grand matriarch commands a Hitler-like grip over its members, each of whom struggle with all of their might to free themselves from the shadow of her towering specter.

The USA as a nation may indeed be fighting World War II, but for those who live under the "Kurnitz cane," there is hardly any personal peace — at least not-in-this home. Death would be better.

The power of the "unlaid" shot through the Stevens Center like the "hawk" flies through the southside of Chicago.

Irene Worth was so real that I wondered if she might indeed be German — either in this life or in the one before. She might have been somebody else's grandmother for that matter.

In fact, Jeanette Lewis, Lena Crowder, and Flonnie Anderson who attended Monday's performance, swore that it was their "Aunt Genoa" up there on the stage. I suspect there were many who felt that way.

You might wonder how can all of this be funny? Well, it wasn't all funny.

These people really did hurt. Under all of the laughter, the meanness of Kurnitz, the silliness of Aunt Bella, the moxie of Uncle Louie, all of the very funny one liners found

all throughout the play, there was also the overriding, underlying question about the character of the human heart and just how much it can give and forgive? Forgive, not just one another—but how much can we forgive life when life treats us unfairly — cruelly?

How much can we forgive when nature deals us a very poor hand while everyone else seems to get kings, queens and aces?

The entire cast was so excellent. There was a lot of love emanating from the stage Monday night — and it seemed to come from the hearts of the actors; it was as if they not only enjoyed their craft, but they also loved and enjoyed Simon's newest work. This is truly a Neil Simon treasure, and as they say in the South, I couldn't care less what the folks in New York think.

Besides, Jeanette, Flonnie and Lena just loved it.



ON THE AVANT-GARDE

By TANG NIVRI

on the Sabbath. About the only time they don't fight is on Sunday afternoon which is when Grandmother Kurnitz takes her nap!

Who are these people, why should we care, and why are they fighting so much?

Well — herein lies the tale and beauty of Neil Simon's latest offering, *Lost In Yonkers*, which opened here at the Stevens Center as part of

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An exciting New Year begins at Urban Arts of The Arts Council

As we enter into a new year and make our resolutions and start another diet, we all look forward to a year full of promise. Urban Arts of The Arts Council Inc., has made a resolution to make this its best year yet and is inviting Winston-

series of concerts Jan. 26 at the Arts Council Theater at 8 p.m. Admission is \$8 at the door and \$6 in advance. This concert is part of our Jazz Sampler series which hopes that in providing local and regional jazz musicians the opportunity for

Herbert Stephens, and Ervin Stowe share the stage to showcase some of the best jazz in the Triad and create a unique blend of their various jazz styles.

The great jazz voice of Betty Carter will also be a part of our Jazz Sampler series on April 27, 8 p.m. at the Stevens Center. Considered one of the great American singers, Ms. Carter will bring to the Stevens Center stage a vibrant and vital interpretation of jazz and bebop as one of the greatest jazz vocalists alive today.

And right around the corner, we have a special event in February, brought back by popular demand. Urban Arts of The Arts Council Inc. and The North Carolina Black Repertory Company present Jomandi Productions' "Queen of the Blues" — An Evening With Dinah Washington, February 2, in the Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium on the campus of Winston-Salem State University at 8 p.m. Admission is \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door.

"Queen of the Blues" is musical entertainment based on the life of jazz and blues artist Dinah Washington. Produced by Jomandi, a

nationally known professional theatre company out of Atlanta, "Queen of the Blues" offers a great night of music, drama, and comedy for everyone. Tickets for this, as well as our jazz series, are available now at the Arts Council, Now Hear This, and Discount Records and Taps. Jomandi tickets are also available through the North Carolina Black Repertory Company.

In addition to these special events, we have some ongoing programs to which I would like to draw your attention. Our continuing Art-Is program provides training in the performing and visual arts to children ages 6-15 and is open to all Winston-Salem/Forsyth County residents. Classes are offered in piano, dance, drawing, and painting, Monday through Thursday. Classes are still open, and anyone interested should call (919) 722-5293.

We are very excited about the outreach of our Art-Is program — Art-Is Too — that offers training in the arts to youth in public housing developments of Piedmont Circle, Kimberly Park, Cleveland Avenue Homes, and Happy Hill Gardens. Funded by the Winston-Salem Foundation, these after-school

classes in dance, voice, drawing, and painting are offered Monday through Thursday, encouraging the children to explore their creativity and providing a positive outlet for them to express their emotions.

This year we are proud to continue our Young Black Writers program, as well as our Art-Is and Art-Is Too programs, are open for registration. For more information concerning any of these or the events mentioned above, please call (919) 722-5293.

specialized instruction so that these young people can learn the craft of writing. Our Young Black Writers program, as well as our Art-Is and Art-Is Too programs, are open for registration. For more information concerning any of these or the events mentioned above, please call (919) 722-5293.

Reggie Johnson is the executive director for Urban Arts of The Arts Council Inc.

ARTSREACH



By REGGIE JOHNSON

Salem and Forsyth County residents to help us reach our goal. We have some exciting programs this winter that we hope will promote a greater awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the arts in our community and all we need is you.

We are specifically excited about our upcoming concert in January. The Ron Rudkin Band led by saxophonist/woodwind specialist Ron Rudkin and SPEX featuring local musicians playing jazz rock and jazz fusion come together for the second in our Jazz Sampler

technical exchange and public exposure, it will help introduce the public to the great variety of jazz styles and jazz talent in the community.

Also included in our Jazz Sampler series is The All Star Jazz Jam bringing together area jazz musicians for one special night, March 29, 8 p.m. at The Stevens Center. The regionally known talents of Keith Byrd, Calvin Crisp, Charlie Culbreath, Matt Kendrick, Steve Kirkman, Chris Murrell, Federico Pivetta, Janice Price, Ron Rudkin,

N.C. Black Rep to present MLK Birthday bash

Chronicle Wire Report

The North Carolina Black Repertory Company will present its sixth annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration on Tuesday, Jan. 15, at 7 p.m. in the Arts Council Theatre. The event is free and open to the public.

For the past five years the Repertory Company has presented this offering to the community on the actual birthday of Dr. King. The event has been so well-attended over the years that people have been turned away. It is therefore suggested that those interested in attending make reservations to ensure proper seating by calling (919) 723-7907.

Some of the most talented African-American artists in the Winston-Salem community will offer performances in tribute to the celebration of Dr. King and his positive impact and contributions to the civil as well as human rights struggle.

Performers on this year's program include award-winning producer/director/actor, Larry Leon Hamlin, who will recite from Dr. King's famous speech, "I Have a Dream."

Other artists performing will include vocalists: the Rev. John Heath, Car-

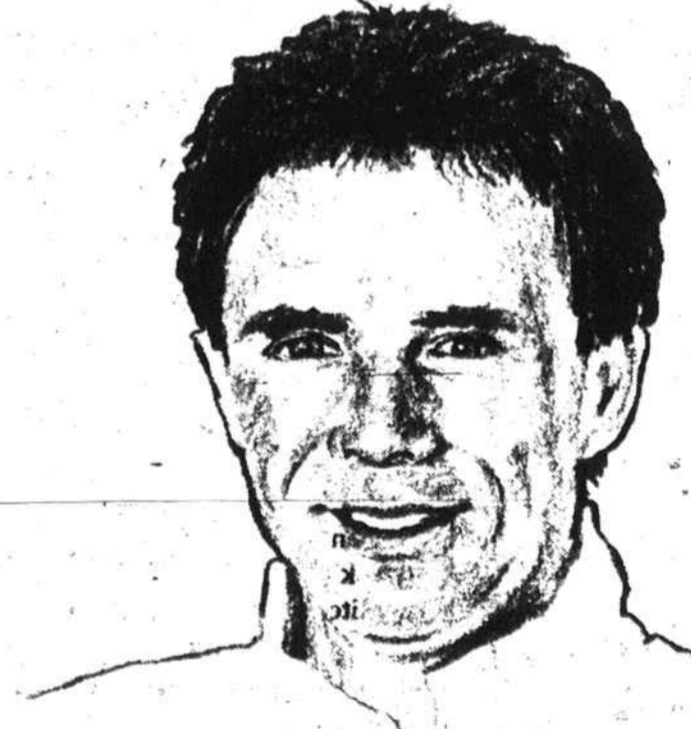
lotta Samuels, Randy Johnson, Kenny Mallette, Sharon Frazier, LaTonya Black, Cynthia Bailey, Connie McCoy, and Mammie Lemons. In addition, Ambassadors for Christ Gospel Youth Choir, under the direction of David Allen, will also perform.

Mabel Robinson, a stage director and choreographer of musical theatre, will read from the late Sydney Hibbert's "St. James Infirmary." Mr. Hibbert, an award-winning actor, director, and writer, participated in a number of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebrations with the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. He was also a special consultant to the artistic director of the company and was instrumental in helping to organize the 1989 National Black Theatre Festival.

Additional performances will be provided by dancers: Robin Little, John Franklin, and Kelvin Wharton; as well as actors, James Smith, André Minkins, Willette Thompson, John Poindexter IV, Tony Patterson, and playwright, Nathan Ross Freeman.




Other artists, choirs, and singing groups interested in performing should contact Larry Leon Hamlin at (919) 723-2266. The performances are geared toward the family, especially the youth of the community.

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