

Black Movies, TV News Briefs

Philip Fenty, who wrote "Super Fly," has been showing his new film, "Baron Wolfgang Von Tripps" to selected audiences in New York City after a private screening in Dallas, Texas where his backers reside. The film stars Calvin Lockhart, Raymond St. Jacques, Charles McGregor (yes, he dies once more), Joan Blondell, Richard Lynch, Marlene Clark, Prince Serge Obolensky (playing himself) and has the New York Knicks' Mel Davis making his screen debut.

Four of the most gifted kids from Harlem's Al Fann Mini-Ensemble have been added to the regulars on "Sesame Street." They are Rodney

Brown, 10; Tan (Big Spender) Adams, 8; Kim Fields, 6, and Al's own 6-year-old "Jocko," Aka Al Fann III.

The stars are coming back to Harlem. Uptown now it's upstairs at Vincent's Place in the CAV Building at 55 West 125th Street. February 25, 27, 28 it's the fantastic big band sound of Sam Wooding and Rae Harrison. March 18, 19, 20 it's Thelma Carpenter. In the meantime, Dayton Selby's pianistics are pleasing those who frequent the lovely room.

Jim Brown's next venture is a film to be produced by his own company, "Jim and I, Inc." It's "The Beach" and with location in St. Simons Island, Georgia where Jim was born and raised in his early years. It centers on two brothers (one of whom he plays) who live there, own most of its best land, but do not always share the same set of values. They split when powerful resort builders discover this would-be vacation paradise. One brother sees only dollar signs; the other only trouble signs.

Moviegoers accustomed to the image of Richard Roundtree cast as a clever, tough super cop, John Shaft, which produced three smash hit films and a TV series, will see a markedly different character portrayal in the upcoming Avco Embassy release, "Man Friday," which stars Roundtree in the title role as a naive, but deceptively clever, South Seas native, and Peter O'Toole, cast as the shipwrecked Robinson Crusoe.

Eartha Kitt caused another flap in Washington (remember her impassioned confrontation over the Vietnam war with Mrs. Lyndon Johnson in 1968?) when she was at a Washington Post Book and Author Luncheon plugging her book "Alone With Me." She blasted Jack Valenti, former press secretary and now president of the Motion Picture Association of America on his flattering description of the former president in his book, "A Very Human President." Eartha said "one thing...that personally I have knowledge of, was that he was mean. She blames this on her belief that LBJ personally ordered the FBI to make a "Subversive name check" on her after the White House luncheon that caused her to lose work in America.

Al Duckett, president of Chicago's Writers & Editors, which has been hitting downtown entertainment places, especially movie theatres, which accept overwhelming black patronage without returning the economic benefits (jobs and ads in the Black Press) to the Black community, will also set up a new York Operation Respect Committee. Al will be in the city for a month-long visit as Distinguished Visiting Professor for Ethnic Journalism Spring classes at the City College of New York.

The Adult Entertainment Guild of New York now provides a "Dial-A-Disco" service, a 24-hour-a-day information service that tells you what's happening tonight. Just call (212) 293-2897.

The National Geographic Magazine did a photo treatment of Harlem's newly-reopened Red Rooster and manager Charlie Dixon is nearly delirious over the wonderful response the place is getting from former patrons.

The Negro Ensemble Company opens its ninth season on February 25 with "Eden," by Steve Carter at the St. Marks Playhouse.



LOVELY LOLA FALANA ...Television's hottest star

Third Lola Special Due Tuesday Night

"Happiness," says Lola Falana, "is being Lola Falana. This month, anyway," she adds with a wry smile.

It's not that television's hottest new star is expecting trouble to rear its ugly head at any moment...on the contrary, with two top-drawer specials behind her and a third, LOLA, due Tuesday, March 9, from 9 to 10 p.m. on ABC-TV Channel 19, Miss Falana is on top of the world. Critics all over the world greeted her performance in specials one and two with the kind of reviews most artists only dream about, and her guests for LOLA are Dick Van Dyke and Redd Foxx...so what in the world could possibly worry her?

"I just keep waiting for the bubble to break," she says. "I've had so many ups and downs in my career, so many big things that almost happened, that I've stopped banking on things. After a certain point, I decided that I was going to have to stop getting my hopes up, just sort of let life live me for a change and take it as it comes."

"And everything about these specials has been almost too good to be true. Fred Silverman and my producers, Allan Blye and Bob Einstein, made a decision at the very beginning that what they wanted to do was enhance my personality, not replace it. They've given me every possible chance to be real, and that's important."

respect for performers comes naturally. Both of them have extensive performing experience -- Blye starred in Canadian television for nine years and has appeared, as a singer, actor and comic, on everything from nighttime variety shows to 150 guest shots (as a character called "Captain Blye") on the popular children's program, "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood." Einstein created television's most unique policeman, "Officer Judy," on the Smothers Brothers' weekly series, and also appeared frequently on "The

Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour." Performance, and the special world of performers was also very much a part of his childhood; he is the son of the great comic, Harry "Parkyarkarkus" Einstein. "I think our understanding of what can go wrong for a star is one of our greatest assets," Blye says. "We know how it feels to be on the screen doing something that isn't working, and we'll kill ourselves to keep one of our stars from being in that position. Performers sense that, and they give us their trust...and we'll work night and day to deserve it."

It's especially fitting that Dick Van Dyke is one of the guest stars on LOLA, because Allan and Bob will be producing his weekly hour-long variety series next season -- a result of the supplantive job they did on "Van Dyke & Company" earlier this year. Van Dyke is as high in his praise of the Blye-Einstein team as Miss Falana is...but Allan and Bob, characteristically, hand the accolades right back to their stars.

"With Lola Falana and Dick Van Dyke," says Einstein, "how can you go wrong?"

Wilson Pickett
Is Soul Train

Guest Star
Wilson Pickett, Betty Wright and The Modulations are the featured artists this weekend on Soul Train, television's popular entertainment showcase.

In true Soul Train tradition, country-soul singer Pickett gets things off and running with "Love Will Keep Us Together" and "The Best Part of a Man," two of his most popular hits.

Betty Wright maintains the pace with her fast-moving, hard driving renditions of "Everybody Was Rockin'" and "Slip and Do It."

Adam Wade Becomes Host For "Black Journal" TV Program

Beginning Sunday, March 7, singer-actor Adam Wade becomes the game co-host for Black Journal's "Can You Dig It?" segment, a fast-paced quiz pitting two contestants against questions culled from the Black historical and cultural experience.

Produced by WNET-13, New York, Black Journal is distributed nationally by the Public Broadcasting Service to its member stations Sunday evenings, 10 p.m. on channel 42. Black Journal is produced with the assistance of a grant from Pepsi-Cola Company.

Adam Wade joins the Black Journal "family" of executive producer and host Tony Brown and music co-host Dr. Billy Taylor. The March 7 edition of Black Journal, on which Wade first appears, features a tribute to the famous blues singer Bessie Smith, with singer Linda Hopkins, star of the current Broadway show, "Me and Bessie," per-

forming some of Ms. Smith's best-known songs.

Wade will also be seen on the March 21 and April 4 editions of Black Journal. In addition to his game co-host duties, Wade will also serve as the special co-host and sings "The Hungry Years" on the March 21 show.

Adam Wade was the first Black game show emcee on commercial television, when he hosted "Musical Chairs" on the CBS Network during the summer of 1975. He has had a varied career in film, television, sports, music -- even science, as a research assistant to Dr. Jonas Salk.

Born in Pittsburg, Pa., Wade won a basketball scholarship to Virginia State College, Petersburg, Va., where he was team captain during his junior year. An ankle injury lost him an opportunity to play with the Harlem Globetrotters, but after graduation, he became a cardiology re-

search assistant, and in 1957 was hired by Dr. Jonas Salk as a member of his polio virus research team.

Visiting New York and singing a songwriter friend's songs for a publisher's audition led to a recording contract and a career in music. His first two songs, "Tell Her for Me" and "Ruby" in 1960 and 1961 were instant hits.

After six years in music, Wade turned to acting, playing the role of John Burroughs on the soap opera, "Search for Tomorrow." He studied with actor-colleague Al Fann for five years, starred in many commercials (including music and voice-overs), and

was featured in television shows, including "As the World Turns," "Love of Life," and "Adam-12."

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Whitman Mayo ...Popular TV star

"Grady" Joins

"Miss Black

USA" Staff

Whitman Mayo, star of the new NBC-TV comedy series, "Grady," and co-star of "Sanford and Son," has joined the advisors and Board of Directors of the Miss Black U.S.A. Beauty Pageant. Mr. Mayo will direct his talent and expertise to production and talent performances.

Mayo's acting career dates back to his high school days in Los Angeles, where he first performed in "Home of the Brave." Later, after attending Los Angeles City College, Mayo studied under the late actor-producer Frank Silvers, and appeared in Silvers' production of "The Amen Corner" starring Beah Richards.

"I would like to get the kids interested in drama," he said, "because its certainly in line with the efforts being made by the 'Miss Black U.S.A. program,' opening doors for young people." Mayo is co-director for NASBA, Inc. a New York Artist Management and Literary Agency.

The Miss Black U.S.A. Beauty Pageant will hold its First Annual Program on July 31, 1976, in Phoenix, Arizona.

Bill Withers To

Be Featured On

American Bandstand

Frankie Avalon, rhythm and blues singer Bill Withers and comedian Fred Travalena are Dick Clark's special guests on the ABC Television Network's "American Bandstand," Saturday, March 6 (from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., EST).

Frankie Avalon will sing his new version of "Venus" and Bill Withers will sing "I Wish You Well" and "The Best You Can." Dick Clark talks to and trades quips with Fred Travalena.

Dick Clark is the host of "American Bandstand." Barry Glazer is the executive producer and director and Judy Price is the producer.

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