

Black Movies, TV News Briefs

James Earl Jones Signed To Play In "Roots"

By Jesse H. Walker
Special to the Post

The Back Street Flyers, a vaulting acrobatic team of six black youths are featured in The Big Apple Circus, which—in cooperation with Con Edison—is bringing on the clowns, acrobats and jugglers this summer in 20 free shows for 20,000 youngsters from NYC and Westchester County each Wednesday at the circus site, 50th Street and Eighth Ave. The youngsters are Steven Johnson, leader; Abel Shark, Chris Thomas, Darryl Hamilton, Nathaniel Soares and Wayne Jones. Kids filling tent at first show last week had a ball. The circus is public training school for students at the New York School for Circus Arts. Performances are twice daily, \$5 for adults; \$3 for kids.

Entry blanks are now available at Kentucky Fried Chicken locations in the metropolitan area and at the Harlem YMCA, 180 West 135th Street for the Harlem YMCA-Kentucky Fried Chicken "Super Stars" contest, to be held August 5, 6, and 12. Competing events will be in the one-mile run; standing broad jump, 100-yard swim and basketball shootout and are open to the public in all five boroughs and include male and female contestants over 18 years of age.

James Earl Jones has been signed to play Alex Haley in the \$16 million, 12-hour continuation of "Roots" to be presented on ABC-TV next year as "Roots: The Next Generation." Jones, a good friend of Haley, opens in "Paul Robeson," on July 27, at Her Majesty's Theatre in London for a six-week engagement. Pianist Burt Wallace repeats with him in the roles they had in a 77-performance run on Broadway.

Three-card monte dealers, once confined to ghetto areas and the sleazy Times Square area of Broadway and 42nd Street have now moved as far East as Madison Avenue in midtown and even crop up on



Nancy Wilson
...Pleas innocent

Fifth Avenue. Operators are mainly Blacks and Hispanics, but every now and then a white dealer is observed. Some camp close to OTB parlors, to catch gamblers coming and going.

Lawyer for singer Nancy Wilson entered innocent pleas to the misdemeanor charges of drunk driving in Los Angeles Municipal Court, a result of incident when a van she was driving left the highway and hit a marked road grader after she had just returned to LA from NYC to celebrate "Nancy Wilson Week," honoring her 25th year in show business.

In St. Louis, Olympic gold medal boxer Michael Spinks, younger brother of WBA heavyweight champ Leon Spinks, appeared in court on charges of common assault and possession of marijuana, stemming from a June 9 altercation with police at the airport there. Trial was set for Sept. 26.

Con Edison's Ellis Bullock and Lincoln Center were the recipients of awards for support and concern for the arts, the awards presented by Creative Laboratories at the official opening ceremony held at Lincoln Center where the American Crafts Festival was held attracting a crowd of 50,000 the first weekend.

The death plunge of another South African prisoner should inject life in the boxoffice of

"The Biko Inquest," now showing at Theatre Four, a courtroom drama based on transcripts of the inquest into the death of Stephen Bantu Biko held in Pretoria, South Africa from Nov. 14 to Dec. 2, 1977. Biko's imprisonment and strange death at the hands of security police created an international stir.

Hal Jackson, vice president and program director of WBLS-FM, has announced the Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International finals will be held for the eighth consecutive year on July 28-29 at the Coconut Grove in LA. Winners of elimination contests will be flown to LA the week of July 22 and feted by RCA Records and Universal Pictures and also see Lena Horne in "Pal Joey." Again the finals will be taped for a 90-minute syndicated TV special. Hal's wife, award-winning TV producer Alice La-Brice Jackson will produce the show.

Comedian Slappy White has returned to Harlem's Cotton Club (West 125th Street), through July 24.

The Staples have a new album release coming out in July that was produced by Jerry Wexler for Warner Bros. Records under the title, "Unlock Your Mind."

The Latin Casino in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, shuttered on June 28 and may re-open as a disco. One of the reasons for its closing was said to be due

to the 90-day exclusive pact demanded by Atlantic City's Resorts International Super Star Theatre for the big draws who previously played the Latin Casino.

Scoddy Thornton is the youngster who makes his happy movie debut in "The Bad News Bears Go To Japan" with Tony Curtis.



Hal Jackson
...Program director

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