



Phyllis Hyman  
...Diversified entertainer

## Phyllis Hyman Releases First Lp In Four Years

By Loretta Richardson  
Post Staff Writer

Once Phyllis Hyman proceeds to belt out a song, even the chirping birds stop to listen. It's been that way since the sultry singer's career started with a top 40 group, The New Direction, that toured the country and the Caribbean.

Before getting her own group going, Ms. Hyman was affiliated with All the People. Then she formed the Phyllis Hyman Factor.

While cementing her career in the upper westside of New York City around 1975, Ms. Hyman caught the attention of Norman Connors who immediately signed her as the featured vocalist on his "You Are My Starship" album.

Hearing her voice on wax obviously whet Ms. Hyman's appetite to pursue recording ventures. Within two years, Ms. Hyman released her debut album which included the classic "Loving You-Losing You" and "I Don't Want To Lose You."

The albums that Ms. Hyman has recorded since that time, "Somewhere in My Lifetime," "You Know How To Love Me," "Can't We Fall In Love Again" and "Goddess of Love" testify to the increasing vocal maturation of an exceptionally talented performer.

By '81 the album production slowed. As a matter of fact it was in '83 that her last album, before this year's was recorded. Phyllis

took a new direction. Broadway and the Duke Ellington musical, "Sophisticated Ladies" became the focus of Ms. Hyman's professional energies. So outstanding was Ms. Hyman's performance, she won a Tony nomination for Best Supporting Actress in a musical and a Theatre World Award for Most Promising New Talent.

After a four year hiatus from recording, Ms. Hyman, now appearing on the road with the "Jazz Explosion" tour with jazz greats Jean Carne Stanley Turrentine and Ramsey Lewis has released her most recent recording endeavor, "Living All Alone."

Still diversifying, Ms. Hyman has scheduled her first speaking engagements. "I'm about to embark on my first two lectures, one on the music business, being a black woman who heads her own company and the other on the importance of a new sickle cell facility in Pittsburgh."

"Despite her success, Phyllis Hyman still feels the need to achieve, to grow. She isn't satisfied."

"Never satisfied," she said. "I am pleased. I am happy. I feel confident about the future. And I'm never satisfied, no. Never going to be satisfied until I get my fair share. As long as they take talented people you see everyday-you know what I'm talking about- and make those people stars, I'm never going to be satisfied."



Ebony Jo-Ann as MayAnn, Louis Armstrong's mother and Kenyatta as the young "Satchmo" share a tender moment in this scene from the musical celebrating the life and times of the jazz great, Louis Armstrong

## Ebony Jo-Ann Portrays Louis Armstrong's Mother, Wife

By Loretta Richardson  
Post Staff Writer

On the upper level of Ovens Auditorium voices can be heard discussing script changes in the upcoming musical, "SATCHMO: An American Musical Legend." In another part of the auditorium the young lad portraying Louis Armstrong as a child rehearse a scene where Armstrong gets a chance to show off his trumpet playing.

The meeting upstairs finally breaks. Descending from the stairs is Ebony Jo-Ann, the actress who plays not only, Louis Armstrong's mother, but his wife as well.

The dual roles Ebony Jo-Ann plays almost went to another actress. According to her, when she found out about the musical there wasn't the slightest possibility that she could audition for the part.

"I just happened to run into Maurice Hines, the choreographer of the show and he was telling me about it. At that time, though, the musical was hiring nonunion actors and actresses and I am a member of the Actor's Union," commented Ms. Jo-Ann.

Not giving the musical a second thought Ebony went on to audition for and land a part in a play called, "Waking Women," written by Cassandra Medley. "The play was wonderful. It was the most challenging piece I've been in. The play centered around a woman named Ms. Edie who offers condolences to a neighbor. She has a 30 minute monologue and I loved every minute of it."

But that wasn't the end of "Satchmo". Nor was that the end of Ebony Jo-Ann. The musical began using union actors and actresses and the production stage director, Jerry Cleveland stressed to the producer and director that they see Ebony.

From the beginning the dual roles of MayAnn, Louis Armstrong's mother and Lucille, his wife, were to be a packaged deal. Having had to embody these two powerful figures, Ebony has only had to draw upon her own experience. "For MayAnn who is a sassy and articulate person, I've drawn from my family environment. I go with what I know. Lu-

In The Musical- "SATCHMO: An American Musical Legend"



High spirited dance scenes like the one pictured above were expertly choreographed by Maurice Hines.



Kenyatta Beasley as young Louis Armstrong and James Rowan as Joe "King" Oliver in "SATCHMO: America's Musical Legend".  
cille, who is more boisterous bringing in Connecticut." women and especially black  
makes me reach back to my up For Ebony, portraying black See Satchmo on Page 3B