

## BEHIND THE SCENES

with Lisa Collins



Williams Davis Winfrey Cosby

**Amos 'n' Andy To Surface On Broadway?** A New York federal appeals has set the stage for "Amos 'n' Andy" to open on Broadway. The decision overturned a lower court's ruling, thus granting playwright Stephen Silverman permission to create a musical based on "Amos 'n' Andy" radio programs aired before 1948. In its ruling, the court declared pre-1948 "Amos 'n' Andy" shows to be public domain. Silverman has already enlisted a director and has a full-blown musical score for the Broadway version, which is now tentatively titled "Fresh Air Taxi", named after the taxi Amos and Andy operated. At its peak (on radio), "Amos 'n' Andy" drew an estimated 40 million listeners. Widely criticized for its racist stereotypes, the show was condemned by civil rights groups in the 60's, and stored away from view in a CBS vault.

**Miles Davis Management Denies Reports That The Trumpeter Has AIDS:** "Totally unfounded and untrue" was the response of Peter Shukat, who serves as manager for jazz legend Miles Davis, with regards to a recent report that surfaced in a leading supermarket tabloid. Contrary to the report, Shukat maintained that the performer was in the hospital to battle a mild case of pneumonia and to have benign polyps removed from his vocal chords. Now, recuperating in Los Angeles, the 62-year old performer is set to begin a world-wide tour in April.

**Packed House At Brewster's Place Screaming:** Oprah looked smashing the other night (without Stedman) at a screening for her upcoming four-hour TV pic--"The Women Of Brewster's Place", slated to air the latter part of this month. Almost all the cast were on hand--Loretta McKee, Jackee, Lynn Whitfield, -- all with the exception of Robin Givens & Cicely Tyson, who were well cast as mother and daughter in the TV pic. Others on hand to see the three and one-half hour screening included Amen's Anna Maria Horsford.

**They're doing it again:** Bill Cosby and Sidney Poitier will team up once again--for the fourth time--in a film comedy for Universal, called "Ghost Dad." However, Poitier's part in this film will be strictly behind the scenes in the role of director.

**Life At 25 For Vanessa Williams:** Vanessa Williams was more than a little irked about how they promoted and packaged the TV-movie, "The Sex Tapes Scandal", (her first major network exposure) -- "considering that I got fourth-billing movie and they changed the title on me before it came out, but there's nothing I can do about it. It was sweeps-week. I knew they were going to give it some attention. I didn't know they were going to go absolutely crazy." Williams has come a long way since the scandal that cost her the Miss America crown, but she definitely in another space. I'm doing what I want to do, which is being married, having a wonderful family, and a great career." Williams seems to have found her niche in recording, and while she would have liked for her debut LP, "The Right Stuff", (which is still struggling at gold), to have done better salewise, she is most pleased with the critical attention that it's gotten,--what with an NAACP Image Award and two Grammy nominations, said Williams, "I think it was a good start. People probably didn't expect anything and for it to come out this well . . . The next one will be even better". As far as the future, Williams just wants to "keep putting out some albums that I think are reflective of where I'm coming from, and becoming more involved in theatrical projects."

**Short Takes:** Word is there is a movie in the making for Motown's singing sensation, "The Boys" . . . R&B recording artist Karyn White is set to begin a national tour with Bobby Brown and LeVert later this month . . . **Next Week:** The latest on El DeBarge.

## The Piety Of Prince ?

Special To The Post  
By Debbie Selinsky

DURHAM, NC - People who are familiar with some of the lyrics of songs by rock star Prince or have watched his sexually explicit gyrating on stage might be surprised to hear that a Duke Divinity School scholar views the popular singer as a "preacher" of sorts with his own brand of theology.

"People tend to think of Prince as the personification of human pornography, and yet his music also deals with some matters of religious importance," said Jon Michael Spencer, a visiting assistant professor of music and black church studies in the Divinity School. "He explicitly talks about the necessity of loving God. He instructs 'boys and girls LOVE God above' in 'Anna Stesia' on his 'Lovesexy' album. Other songs on the same album deal with issues like war, nuclear arms, drugs, AIDS and poverty."

"Prince is clearly somebody who is spiritual, who is religious, and who embodies the contradictions of being human. He highlights what it means to be both spiritual and carnal."

Spencer, 31, believes the Christian church can better evangelize today's youth and minister to the needs of society if it understands the theology of American popular culture.

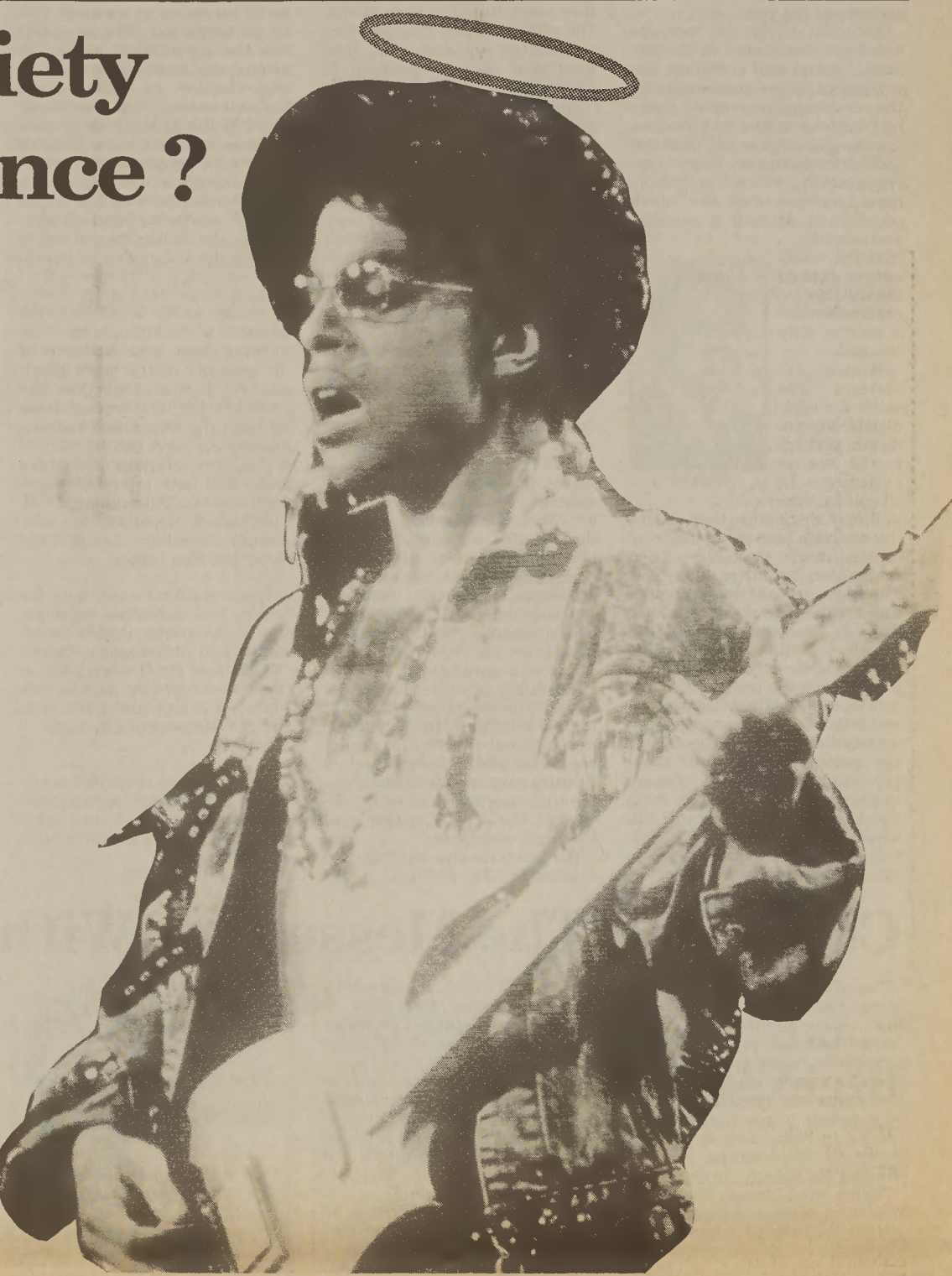
That's why Spencer has coined a new term -- theomusicology -- to refer to his scholarly efforts to examine the music of popular culture from a theological point of view.

Those pioneering attempts to decode the ideas about God and humanity that various popular musicians and lyricists "preach" will be the focal point of an upcoming conference at Duke.

Theomusicology examines the theology of both sacred and secular music, and the primary emphasis of this conference is to demonstrate that popular music, while secular, is often theological and addresses issues of ultimate concern. Studying popular music is probably the most effective means of decoding the theology of the nation's vast popular culture," Spencer said.

The theomusicology conference, which is being co-sponsored by the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, will be held at the Divinity School April 7-8. Registration is still being accepted for the conference, which will feature lectures by visiting scholars and Divinity School students.

Speakers, who will focus on the music of people like Thelma Houston, James Brown, Marvin Gaye, Prince, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Run-DMC and Al Green, will include Spencer, ethicist Michael Eric Dyson of Hartford Seminary,



Prince's songs will be studied in "theomusicology."

and sociologists Harold Dean Trulear of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Alton B. Pollard III of Wake Forest University.

Spencer, who taught a class on his new ideas last semester at the Divinity School, said the speakers are all young enough to recall their youthful attitudes about popular music and are active in the field of sociology of religion.

They also all have children, he added. "So they're becoming ever aware that eventually they have to deal with 'Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society,'" Spencer said, referring to the title of the book by Tennessee housewife Tipper Gore.

Gore's book dealt only with the negative impact popular music has on today's youth. We won't be making those kinds of

judgments. Instead our goal will be to, form a Christian point of view, try to help the church understand the society that surrounds it."

That lack of insight and understanding could be one reason why the church hasn't generally done the best job of "evangelizing society," Spencer said.

"What's happening is the reverse -- that society is evangelizing the church. We hope through the work of theomusicology to bring those two worlds -- the church and society -- closer together without having either of them necessarily evangelize the other."

The proceedings of the conference will be compiled in a special fall issue of the Journal of Black Sacred Music, edited by Spencer and published by Duke

University Press.

In his introduction for the issue, Spencer argues that blues -- "the forerunner of jazz, rhythm and blues, soul and rap" -- is basically religious in nature. "If I can prove that, then it's a short step to saying that all of its offspring are also religious," Spencer said.

A music graduate of Hampton University, Spencer earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis. The author of numerous publications on black sacred music, he recently completed a book entitled "Praise and Protest: The Sacred Music of Black Religion" to be published, call Spencer at 919-684-3234.

For more information or to register for the theomusicology conference, call Spencer at 919-684-3234.

## New Music Awards Event Announces Nominations For 1989

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) --- Michael Jackson, Anita Baker, Bobby Brown and the recording group Guy shared the limelight last Thursday when nominations for the 1989 South Train Music Awards were announced.

Each has a shot at three of the awards during presentation ceremonies scheduled April 12 at the Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium. Dionne Warwick, Patti LaBelle and Ahmad Rashad will co-host the live, two-hour show.

Music and program directors at rhythm and blues and urban contemporary radio stations and record stores, as well as the artists themselves were asked to nominate four choices --- in order of preference --- in each of 12 categories.

The nominations, announced at the Beverly Hills Hotel, consisted of the top four choices in each category. The top vote-getters will be honored during the April telecast with bronze trophies.

The nominations are:  
**Best Rhythm and Blues, Urban Contemporary Single, Female:**  
• "Where Do Broken Hearts Go?" Whitney Houston.  
• "The Right Stuff," Vanessa Williams.  
• "Giving You The Best That I Got," Anita Baker.  
• "Superwoman," Karyn White.  
**Best Rhythm and Blues, Urban Contemporary Single, Male:**



Michael Jackson

- "Man In The Mirror," Michael Jackson.
- "Just Got Paid," Johnny Kemp.
- "Make It Last Forever," Keith Sweat, Jacq McGhee.
- "My Prerogative," Bobby Brown.
- Best Rhythm and Blues, Urban Contemporary Single, Group or Band:**
  - "Da Butt," E.U.
  - "Groove Me," Guy.
  - "It Takes Two," Rob Base &



Karyn White

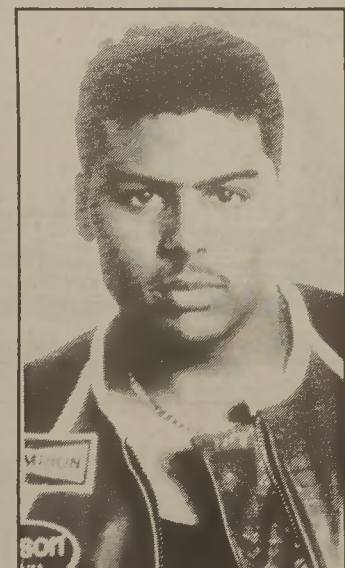


- D.J. E-Z Rock.
- "Can You Stand The Rain," New Edition.
- Best Jazz Album:**
  - "Simple Pleasures," Bobby McFerrin.
  - "Stronger Than Pride," Sade.
  - "Day By Day," Najee.
  - "Silhouette," Kenny G.
- Best Gospel Album:**
  - "Inspired," James Cleveland.
  - "Live In Chicago," Shirley Caesar.



Bobby McFerrin

- "Take Six," Take Six.
- "Conqueror," The Clark Sisters.
- Best Rap Album:**
  - "It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back," Public Enemy.
  - "It Takes Two," Rob Base & D.J. E-Z Rock.
  - "He's The D.J., I'm The Rapper," D.J. Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince.
  - "A Salt With A Deadly Pepa,"



Al B. Sure!

- Salt-N-Pepa.
- Best New Rhythm and Blues, Urban Contemporary Artist:**
  - "Off On Your own (Girl)," Al B. Sure!
  - "Heaven," BeBe & Cece Winans.
  - "Groove Me," Guy.
  - "Superwoman," Karyn White.
- Best Rhythm and Blues, Urban Contemporary Music Video:**
  - "Skeletons," Steve Wonder.
  - "Man In The Mirror," Michael

- Jackson.
- "Wild, Wild West," Kool Moe Dee.
- "Parents Just Don't Understand," D.J. Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince.
- Rhythm and Blues, Urban Contemporary Song of the Year:**
  - "Giving You The Best That I Got," Anita Baker.
  - "Don't Be Cruel," Bobby Brown.
  - "I Want Her," Keith Sweat.
  - "Man In The Mirror," Michael Jackson.
- Rhythm and Blues, Urban Contemporary Album of the Year, Female:**
  - "Stronger Than Pride," Sade.
  - "Tracy Chapman," Tracy Chapman.
  - "The Right Stuff," Vanessa Williams.
  - "Giving You The Best That I Got," Anita Baker.
- Rhythm and Blues, Urban Contemporary Album of the Year, Male:**
  - "Simple Pleasures," Bobby McFerrin.
  - "In Effect Mode," Al B. Sure!
  - "Don't Be Cruel," Bobby Brown.
  - "Any Love," Luther Vandross.
- Rhythm and Blues, Urban Contemporary Album of the Year, Group or Band:**
  - "Who?" Tony! Toni! Tone!
  - "Guey Break," New Edition.
  - "Guy," Guy.
  - "Just Coolin'," LeVert.