

## BEHIND THE SCENES

with Lisa Collins



Ali Warwick Townsend Gibbs

**Hollywood Goes Gotham:** It was quite an active week with the star-studded openings of both "Ghostbusters II" and "Batman." Warner Bros went all out for the premiere of Batman, even though it shelved its plans to turn the premiere site into a look-alike of Gotham City. Still for those who were able to attend the glitzy premiere and after-party, it proved to be quite a good time. Among those joining film stars Michael Keaton and Jack Nicholson were Quincy Jones, Robert Townsend, Eddie Murphy (whose entourage included Jasmine Guy) and Prince ... Just a few days prior to the event, Columbia transferred the lobby of the Hollywood Paladium to resemble Disneyland's Haunted Mansion Ride for the premiere of "Ghostbusters II." Those turning out for the festivities included the entire cast as well as Suzanne de Passe, Magic Johnson, Paula Abdul, Bobby Brown, and a host of stars.

Meanwhile, across town, **Marla Gibbs turned 30?** Or at least that's how her birthday bash was billed. At any rate, she went all out for the occasion with a lavish party at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Those on hand to wish her a happy birthday were, of course, all her cast members from "227" with the noticeable exception of Jackie. Other guests included Lou Gossett, Roxie Roker, Mayor Tom Bradley, Assemblywoman Maxine Waters, Lou Rawls, and Nancy Wilson. Capping off the evening was a musical number performed especially for Marla by Lou Rawls and Nancy Wilson.

**Actress Beverly Todd Says Thanks:** "Lean On Me" co-star Beverly Todd extends her thanks to all the many Behind-The-Scenes readers who sent their condolences upon hearing about the recent death of her teenage son, Malik. The actress has been spending a great deal of her time seeing that justice is done in Salt Lake City, where the incident took place. The trial has been postponed until October 2. In the meantime the Kwanza Foundation, a group of black actresses, including Marilyn McCoo, Marla Gibbs, Sheryl Lee Ralph, Telma Hopkins and Sheila Frazier, have implemented a scholarship fund in the name of Todd's son. Direct all inquiries or donations to the Kwanza/Malik Smith Scholarship Fund, 256 S. Robertson Boulevard, Beverly Hills, CA 90211.

**Natalie Cole & Dionne Warwick - Dynamic Duo!** It was quite a show that Natalie Cole and show biz veteran Dionne Warwick put on last week at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. Both looked resplendent as they delighted audiences with medleys of their hits and rotated turns at center stage. Perhaps most touching is the segment focusing in on her Dad, complete with sound-track and slide show. So touching was it, that Natalie's aunt Bay (the late Nat Cole's sister who was on hand) became teary-eyed. Their managers came up with the idea. At first Cole thought it was kind of crazy. "There's a different kind of music happening and you have to really be versatile to like both of us, so it's amazing that this show really works. We really seem to have the same sense of music, and I feel like she's been maternal in many ways with me. When we first started on this project she said, the music should be the star and not us and I liked that very much, because I'm about promoting the music, not me." ...

**In other music news,** in Cincinnati, police charged two rap groups -- NWA (Niggers With Attitude) and Too-Short--with disorderly conduct after a concert at Riverfront Coliseum because of the content of their songs. The performers were fined \$113.

**Short Takes:** Look for Rain Pryor, Richard's daughter, next fall on ABC's "Head Of The Class." Rain is being touted as a shoe-in to replace one of three original cast members who seem to have outgrown their roles and won't be returning to class in the fall. (No, Robin Givens is not among them).

**Muhammad Ali has packed** with Lee Caplin Productions to do a motion picture based on his life.

**Alfre Woodard is off** to Puerto Rico to begin shooting "Show Of Force" with Amy Irving, Erik Estrada, and Lou Diamond Phillips.



Alvin "Vinnie" Chea Claude V. McKnight III Mervyn Warren Cedric Dent Mark Kibble David Thomas

## TAKE 6

### The Special Jazz Mix Of Take Six

The stage is bare; guitar stands, drum sets. Only six individual mike stands.

Six young men stroll onto the stage. The look...clean; contemporary. They toss casual smiles, "slap five" and take a moment to settle behind the mikes. Their fingers start to snap in unison as they fall into the groove of an easy jazz swing. Then the music begins, and immediately you are overwhelmed, far from that once bare stage you now hear all the elements of a tight jazz band, complete with percussion, a mellow base and a screaming horn section, coming from those six voices. The songs range from standard hymns and spirituals to contemporary Christian favorites to original compositions by members of the group, all dressed up in a cappella arrangements that almost defy belief. And the music soars, with a blend of vocal jazz, traditional black quartet gospel and just a pinch of street-corner doo-wop. "This is going to be nice," you think to yourself as you settle back to enjoy. You're hearing Take 6 for the first time, but you determine in your heart that it won't be your last.

Take 6 was formed in 1980 by four freshmen students at Oakwood College, a small, Christian school in northern Alabama. Time and several personnel changes have brought the group

to its current roster, which includes Alvin Chea, Cedric Dent, David Thomas, Mervyn Warren, Mark Kibble and Claude V. McKnight, III.

**Claude V. McKnight:** As a member of the original quartet, Claude V. McKnight has been there from the beginning. He now serves as the group's director. A natural baritone, he sings first tenor in Take 6 because "when we first started the quartet, no one else could sing the parts!" Claude likes basketball, drawing, weight lifting, exotic cars, and plans one day to own his own recording studio/production facility. He would also like to assist up-and-coming musicians with an internship program at his alma mater, Oakwood College.

**Mark Kibble:** After hearing Take 6, it's easy to believe Mark Kibble when he tells you "I love to arrange music and to see my arrangements done to the 'nth' degree!" As chief arrangers, Mark is primarily responsible for the vocal pyrotechnics that make the sound of Take 6. He holds a B.S. degree in business administration and is interested in all sports, body building, sports cars, computer programming, carpentry, travel and people. He plans to continue arranging while becoming more involved in songwriting,

producing and singing.

**Mervyn Warren:** Mervyn Warren knew at an early age what he wanted to do with his life. "I started my first group when I was 10 years old," he says. Since then he has completed a master's degree in music theory and arranging from the University of Alabama in pursuit of his goal to become a multifaceted musician. In the tradition of his favorite producer, Quincy Jones, arranging for and producing a variety of musical acts. Always on fashion's cutting edge, Mervyn enjoys swimming, running, reading, meeting people and collecting eclectic articles of clothing.

**Cedric Dent:** Currently enrolled in a doctoral program as a graduate fellow in music theory at the University of Maryland's College Park campus, Cedric Dent would like to teach the world to sing. He dreams of arranging, film scoring and ultimately opening his own school of music to share some of his gifts with aspiring, young Christian musicians. Cedric has at times been interested in trivial pursuits such as table games, roller skating, baseball and basketball, but is now consumed by one overwhelming passion - his new bride, the lovely Beverly Dawn Dent.

**David Thomas:** David Thomas is a man with a plan. Covering all the bases, the sophomore chemical engineering student planned to relocate to Atlanta, Ga., launch his engineering career and start his family. The success of Take 6 has altered those plans slightly,

urging David to spend more time in songwriting, one of his favorite pastimes. He has numerous songs to his credit and would like to start his own publishing company. David plays classical guitar and among a typical list of hobbies (basketball, skating, swimming, skiing, etc.) the engineering student adds "I like to read math books."

**Alvin Chea:** A classically trained pianist, Alvin "Vinnie" Chea won the San Francisco Music Teacher's Association Piano Competition while a junior in high school, but didn't start singing seriously until the following year. The junior communication and English major plans to put his resonant voice and commanding presence to good use as a network anchor person, but says "singing with Take 6 is a personal dream of mine. It shows me that with the Lord's help, if you put your mind to it, there's nothing you can't do." The son of a Liberian father and Guianese mother, his interests include writing, cycling and basketball.

Take 6 is also the title of the sextet's dazzling debut album on Reprise Records. Produced by Mark, Claude and Mervyn and featuring such breathtaking a cappella game as "Gold Mine," "David And Goliath" and "Let My Words," Take 6 brings all the excitement, energy and joy that really great music sparks, right out of the studio, and into your heart.

So take one idea whose time has come. Take two different musical idioms: jazz and gospel. Take four-part harmony and toss it out the window! Then take five, relax and get ready to enjoy...Take 6!

## Balladeer Freddie Jackson To Perform At Carowinds

By M.L. LANEY  
Special To The Post

A silky-voiced, solid-gold class act, Freddie Jackson's name means romance. The tracks on his latest album, "Don't Let Love Slip Away" only hints at what lies in store by listening to the whole album.

Jackson, who will perform at the Carowinds Paladium Saturday at 8 p.m., said his music's popularity can be attributed to his romantic ballads.

Admission is \$5, plus admission to the park. Tickets are available through area Ticketron outlets or the Paladium box office. Call 588-2600 for details.

"I fantasized about my own experiences or what someone else might have been going through," he said. Through my songs people get to know the real Freddie Jackson."

Charlotte and the South are special, Jackson says, because fans are really appreciative of his music.

"People in the South really seem to love you. They don't need to be told anything, they come with the party, ready to party live," he said. "I like the West Coast scene too, but the South is really coming into its own. Charlotte is definitely one of my favorite cities...I've got so many friends there."

Though he's a humming success, Jackson remains objective and enthralled with the possibilities in his life. For instance, he has other interests to pursue.



Freddie Jackson

Presently, he's producing an album for long-time guitarist Vince Henry. Of this project, Jackson says, "Vince Henry is one of the hottest musicians working currently."

Jackson also wants to try his hand at acting, particularly comedy, but first there's a very hard-hitting movie in which he plays himself. Although Jackson wouldn't reveal too much about the movie "The King of New York," he says he's looking forward to public reaction and the possibility of more acting opportunities.

"The movie is going to be about

the downside of life in the drug world," he said. "I've always wanted to do some acting and the movie affords me the perfect opportunity."

So what are Jackson's plans for his singing career? Well, he plans to continue performing, recording and producing musical projects. Jackson embraces the idea that he belongs to a select group of today's (and yesterday's) top crooners.

"I love to croon and I love to sing. When I think of some of the fine singers that have been around, I don't mind paying homage because it keeps me in

good company," he said.

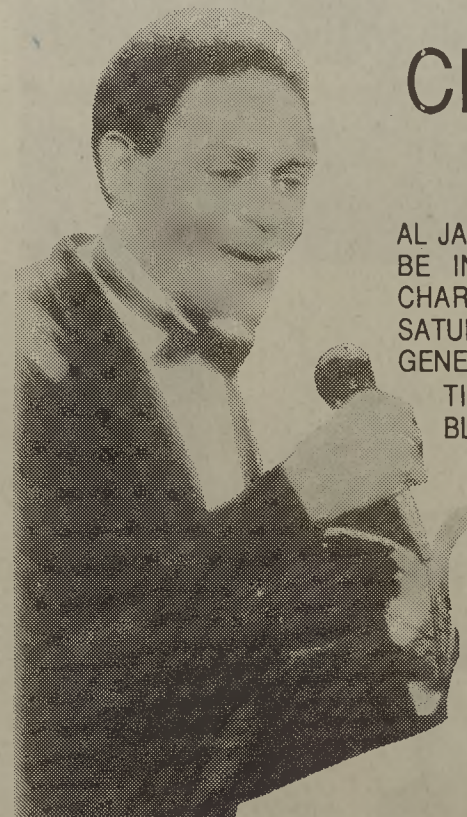
"You're talking about Nat 'King' Cole, Peabo Bryson, Luther Vandross, Sam Cooke and a host of others. I am honored that people want to emulate me, because I've been influenced by all those singers who felt a sense of responsibility."

Jackson's glimpse into the current music scene has its dark shadows amid the highlights. "When I look at all the rappers that are so popular right now, I can't help but wonder where they're headed," he said. "The rap mode is so desolate. I love singing great songs because they are always being covered by later generations. Tell me who'll do a cover of Kool Moe Dee 20 years from now."

"I don't like the messages that rap conveys to the youth of today," Jackson continued. "Rather than singing along, kids are rapping along, and that frightens me. My niece was in a school recital of Shakespearean works and they rapped through some Romeo and Juliet. That just destroyed the whole impact of the passages."

Jackson said he knows what his fans expect and he always goes out to give it to them. Whether listeners are in love or getting over one, music has a way of touching people.

"People who aren't in love like to imagine that they are," he said. "I feel like that when I listen to other people's music...like I'm getting something from it."



Al Jarreau

## CHECK IT OUT!!

AL JARREAU & TAKE 6 WILL BE IN CONCERT AT THE CHARLOTTE COLISEUM ON SATURDAY JULY 15, 8 P.M. GENERAL ADMISSION IS \$20. TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT ALL TICKETRON OUTLETS.