

ENTERTAINMENT

BEHIND THE SCENES

with Lisa Collins



Lee Hall Jackson

Public Enemy Has Change Of Heart: Last month, Public Enemy made headlines when leader Chuck D. announced that the group was disbanding. This move, following charges of racism against the group for anti-Semitic statements made by a group member. However, latest word has it that the group will resume full operations. In fact, the unit had continued to perform live even after the suspension announcement, but only to fulfill contractual obligations. Chuck D. who denounced the anti-Semitic statements by the group's minister of information, "Prof. Griff," was said to have fired Griff. Yet while he may have missed some performances, "Prof. Griff" was recently cited on stage with the group. As of press time, a spokesman for CBS confirmed that the group was back together, Griff included, adding that it was "business as usual."

"Everything is cool" were the words of director-actor Spike Lee to Radioscope's Lee Bailey with reference to his ongoing feud with Arsenio Hall. Even still the two - Hall and Lee - didn't appear to be warm to one another at the fourth annual Magic Johnson All-Star Classic. In fact, they coached opposite teams. Talk show Hall coached the blue team which included Isaiah Thomas, Dominique Wilkins and Spud Webb. Spike Lee's white team included Magic Johnson, Charles Barkley and Michael Cooper. Proceeds from the event will benefit the United Negro College Fund. Just days prior to the event Hall cancelled a scheduled second appearance by Lee on his syndicated talk show to end the whole mess, which began with Hall's response to Spike Lee calling him an "Uncle Tom." Hall gave no reasons for the cancellation....A handful of other celebs were on hand for Johnson's "Midsummer Night Magic," including Sheryl Lee Ralph, Robert Townsend and Mike Tyson, who caused quite a ruckus when he got into a scuffle with an overzealous fan.

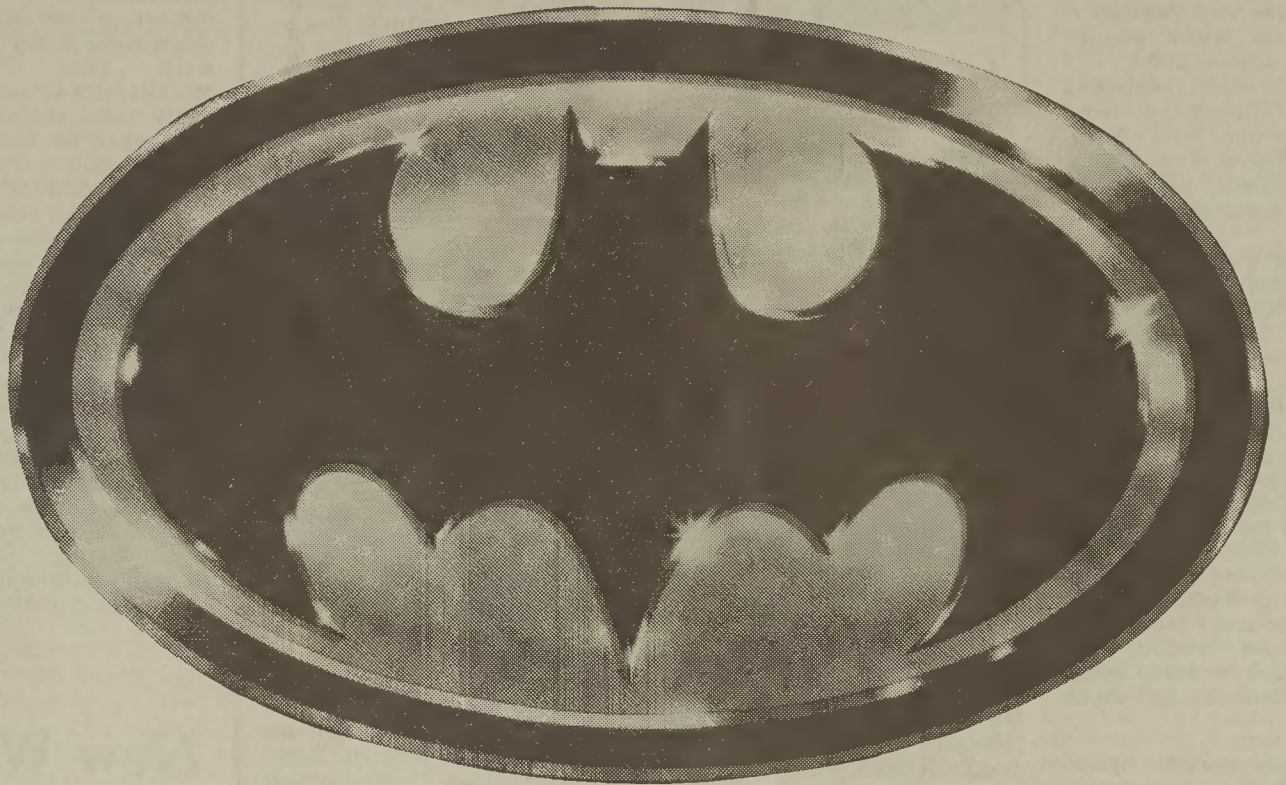
On The Home Front: Sources confirm that Nicole Mitchell, Eddie Murphy's current girlfriend is indeed pregnant, but the Rancho Cordova native is not speaking all that openly about her pregnancy or Eddie, for that matter. And neither is her family. The 27-year-old model recently purchased a house in the Sacramento area. As to the disclosure of another baby (in the recent issue of a supermarket tabloid), with ex-girlfriend, 26-year-old Paulette MNeely, **Behind-The-Scenes** could not get no comment.

Generations Celebrates 100th episode: The cast and crew of "Generations" was on hand in the Burbank studios for a champagne reception celebrating the 100th taping of daytime's newest serial. Said Joan Pringle, one of the leads: "It's a lot of fun and challenging, because we're breaking new ground in history. We're up against a lot of competition -- shows that have been on a long time but that's all part of it. It's like a throw of the dice. I don't know what to expect. I try not to think about that. At this point the ratings don't mean very much. We're so young, and we're up against the number one show."

Short Takes: Singer Mary Wilson filed suit against Motown Records in Los Angeles Superior Court, alleging that she is owed a 50 percent interest in the recent sale of masters and recordings by the Supremes. Motown reportedly sold the entire Supremes catalogue for \$10 million or more. Michael Jackson is currently in the studio recording new tunes for a greatest-hits collection that is slated to be in the stores by Thanksgiving. Jackson is hoping the new material will add sparks to the specially priced multi-disc anthology.

Next Week: A look at how blacks fared in the recent Emmy nominations and the latest on Lionel Richie.

Prince Rocks Royally With Score



Warner Bros. took a huge gamble on asking Prince to contribute music to the movie Batman. True, he is an excellent musician and the sinner/saint conflict in his music made him an obvious choice for this good vs. evil epic, but many of his critics and fans feel he has made too much music in too short a time.

Prince has made 11 albums in 10 years, two of which are double albums and two are movie soundtracks. To put that into perspective, look at Michael Jackson's output. He has done only three albums during the same period and has sold millions more records. To make matters worse, Prince's last album, "Love Sexy," didn't earn him a gold record. That had not happened since his first album, "For You."

But the movie itself was a gamble. Here was Warner Bros. spending an estimated \$40 million on a subject for a movie that had only limited appeal as a television series in the mid '60s. Spending that much money meant every aspect of the movie had to be near perfect: casting, promotion and soundtrack.

Prince, of course, was not bothered by any of this. Warner Bros. asked him for four songs; he gave them nine in two weeks. Now there would be a soundtrack by Prince and the original score by Danny Elfman.

To avoid a possible backlash, Prince's name does not appear

on the front of the album's cover. All that's there is the movie's logo. And although he is listed as the writer and producer in small print on the back, the

character: *If a man is considered guilty/4 what goes on in his mind/Then gimme the electric chair /4 all my future crimes.* Not in the movie.

like much of a song, almost like warmed over disco. But it does its job by reminding you of the circus atmosphere the Joker has created in the streets of Gotham City.

"Lemon Crush," isn't in the movie and isn't much of a song. In fact, the most interesting thing about it is the fact that Prince plays the role of Vicki Vale instead of Sheena Easton. It's nothing more than synthesized dance music.

The album's next song, "Scandalous," is by far the best song offered here. Done as Batman, it features Prince using his stratospheric falsetto over lushly arranged simulated strings. It's not used in the movie but should have been. The song is one of the best r&b ballads of the year. It was co-written with his father, John L. Nelson.

The album closes with "Batdance," the first single from the album. It is not in the movie. It uses a medley of two other songs, "Electric Chair" and "The Future." It also uses a bunch of dialogue from the movie. It gets pretty hectic and busy but I like it just the same. The song is sung as all the main characters.

Maybe Warner Bros. didn't gamble after all. They probably figured his Royal Badness could come up with some good stuff if he got the inspiration. Call the movie what you will, anything that inspires Prince to write like this has to be good.

Reviews

By
WINFRED
CROSS



songs are credited to being sung by the movie's characters.

Credit these songs to Vicki Vale, the Joker or even that silly logo if you like, this is a Prince album--a phenomenal Prince album. And just as it's from the summer's biggest movie, this is the summer's biggest and maybe best album.

The album opens with "The Future," a dark and sinister song used near the beginning of the movie. Sung as Batman, the song rolls along on Prince's percussive synthesizers.

The pace changes quickly with "Electric Chair," done as the Joker. This is what Prince does best: vicious guitar solos with searing vocals. This is full-tilt rock-funk. The lyrics point out the psychotic nature of the

Prince then teams up with Sheena Easton as Bruce Wayne and Vicki Vale on "The Arms of Orion," a lilting ballad that does not appear in the movie. It is a bit middle-of-the road for a Prince song, but the two sing it very well.

The pace quickens again with "Partyman." The Joker steals the show again with the album's funkier offering. It's a great dance song and it's almost worth the \$5 to see Jack Nicholson dance to it in the movie.

"Vicki Waiting" as Bruce Wayne has a '60s sound to it, like something Sly Stone would have done. I like it but it's not in the movie.

But "Trust" is in the movie. Another dance song done as the Joker. At first, it doesn't sound

Ross Makes Hits With Motown Again

Diana Ross spent 10 years with RCA records making some dreadful music. Yes, "Why Do Fools Fall In Love," and "Swept Away" were OK albums. And "Muscles," "Missing You" and "Dirty Looks" were decent singles. But the bulk of her work was just plain awful.

Ross, however, has never been a quitter. She is now reunited with Motown records, not only as an artist, but as partial owner. "Workin' Overtime," her first album since being back with the company that made her famous, shows the lady still has some life left in her career. Without question, this is her best work in years.

This album has everything that her past work has lacked: consistency good songs and, most importantly, good singing. Credit that to the album's producer, Nile Rodgers. He, along with Bernard Edwards, produced Ross's biggest selling album, "Diana," in 1980. Again, Ross and Rodgers are a great combination. Rodgers leads Ross through some very wicked

dance tunes such as the title song, "Paradise" and "Bottom Line" (possibly the most r&b sounding song this woman has ever done) with ease. The sound is clear, the production slick and Ross's voice hasn't sounded this good in a loooooong time.

Her voice is especially pleasing on "This House," a very lovely ballad that showcases the sweetness in her voice. Ross has never had a strong, soulful voice, just very, very pretty. That's why the ballad "We Stand Together" doesn't work. The sweetness isn't there. Rodgers must have thought this song needed some good old gospel-like vocals. So he must have told her to "just sing your heart out, honey." The results are almost disastrous. Ross is not that kind of singer. She ends up screaming at the top of her lungs somewhere left of pitch. Certainly, this is a case where less would have been a lot more.

Still, if you forget that song, this is a great album. Diana Ross has always been one of my favorite singers. I bought



all of the junk she made in the early '80s just because it was her. It's good to hear good

work coming from her again. I hope it's another long career with Motown.



Byron Allen

Byron Allen's Weekend Talk Show Set For September Debut

They call Byron Allen fresh, fast and funny. They also call him one of the comedy world's brightest stars. And soon they'll call him host, when the one-hour talk/variety program -- "The Byron Allen Show" -- premieres Saturday, Sept. 9, at 11:45 p.m. on WBTV, Channel 3. Allen, who starred on NBC's "Real People" for five years, will serve as executive producer, as well as host of the show, finally realizing his childhood fantasy. At the age of 14, Allen would sneak onto "The Tonight Show" set, where his mother was a tour guide, and sit behind Johnny

Carson's desk. He made his TV debut on "The Tonight Show" at the age of 18, becoming one of youngest comedians ever to appear on the show. Recently, Allen was the co-writer of CBS' "Case Closed" and has toured the largest showrooms around the country, opening for such acts as Lionel Richie, Kenny Rogers and The Pointer Sisters.

Designed specifically for the weekend late night audience, "The Byron Allen Show" will feature as guests a cross section of the hottest names in television, film, music and comedy.

Jacksons Need More Michael, Fewer Producers

The Jacksons, now down to Randy, Tito, Jackie and Jermaine, have released their first album since 1984's "Victory." It is also the first on which Michael Jackson does not sing lead on most of the material. In fact, he appears briefly on only one song. And that is one of the two factors that keep "2300 Jackson Street," named for the street on which they grew up, from being a great album: too many producers and not enough Michael.

Yeah, I know, Michael Jackson is the biggest name in music

and has proven he needs to be a solo artist. But let's face it, when you think of the Jacksons, you think of Michael, then the rest.

By no means is this a bad album. In certain spots it's quite good. But there are five different sets of producers for this project. That takes away from the album's consistency. And without Michael leading, the Jacksons come off sounding like any of the current vocal groups, depending on the production team. On "Nothin' (That Compares To You)," produced by LA and Baby-

face, they sound like the Mac Band. On "She," produced by Teddy Riley, they could easily be mistaken for Today. There's nothing wrong with either song, or any of the others for that matter, but when you hear them you don't think of the Jacksons.

The bright spots on this album come from the writing and the singing of Jermaine. He participated in the "Victory" album and four but now he is a permanent member of the group again. He is in fine voice throughout this album. His voice is especially fine

on "Maria," which he wrote and produced. It has a pulsating dance beat and features Spanish guitar and a harmonica solo by War's Lee Oskar. Jermaine singing is almost flawless.

But the brightest spot is the title song that features the entire Jackson family, including Michael. Sure, it's a little corny, but it brings back memories of when they were the Jackson Five. And those are good memories.

See JACKSONS on page 9a.