

ENTERTAINMENT

BEHIND THE SCENES

with Lisa Collins

What A Week! It started with a star-studded tribute to Sammy Davis Jr., and just about everybody was there. There was Michael Jackson (who sang a song he'd written especially for Sammy), Frank Sinatra, Bill Cosby, Eddie Murphy (who served as host), Richard Pryor, Anita Baker, Shirley Maclaine, Stevie Wonder, Jasmine Guy, Goldie Hawn (who recited a song), Whitney Houston, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Paula Abdul, Clint Eastwood, Dionne Warwick, Mike Tyson, Diahann Carroll, Ella Fitzgerald, Gregory Peck, Dean Martin, and believe it or not, the list went on. Proceeds from the event, honoring his 60 years in show business, went to benefit the United Negro College Fund. The highlight of the evening came when Davis took to the stage for a little tap routine with none other than Gregory Hines. Davis couldn't say much due to surgery for his throat cancer, but all could see how very touched he was. "I got good news from the doctor," Davis said backstage in a barely audible voice. "In about four or five weeks of recovery, I'll be back yelling and screaming again." After the show, he invited 50 or so of the guests back to his Beverly Hills home for a more intimate celebration. (Incidentally the show was taped for broadcast on ABC sometime in January) . . . Just two days later, a **star-studded crowd turned out for the 10th Anniversary of the UNCF's Parade Of Stars telethon.** Honorary Chairman Eddie Murphy came accompanied by (just good friend) Whitney Houston. Of course, Lou Rawls was also there, and it was so crowded you couldn't breathe. But what else can you expect when the type-written invitations signed by Murphy, imparted that he would be on hand to personally greet guests. Those who came out included Vanessa Williams, Suzanne DePasse, Sidney Poitier, Nell Carter, Quincy Jones, Jeopardy's Alex Traber (who received a special award), Jackie, Rapper Jazzy Jeff, Marilyn McCoo, and Sheryl Lee Ralph. Later that night, Murphy turned up at pal Arsenio Hall's promo party in conjunction with the release of his new MCA album, "Large And In Charge". Hall, as Chunky A, videotaped a special message to guests at the chicken-and-champagne bash. The very next night, **Murphy's "Harlem Nights" opened to mixed reviews.** The film which just could breathe life into the career of Richard Pryor and co-stars like Della Reese and Redd Foxx. But Murphy's first attempt at directing has not met with critical acclaim. One major complaint has been the language, reminiscent of humor that has at one time or another given himself, Pryor and Foxx bad reps on the touring circuit.

Honoring R&B Pioneers: Percy Sledge, Mary Wells, Etta James and Ruth Brown were among those honored with Career Achievement Awards from the Rhythm & Blues Foundation at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. Speaking of awards, the **Hollywood-Beverly Hills chapter of the NAACP announced nominations** in the categories of recording, movie and television industries for the 22nd Annual Image Awards Program. The awards ceremony, which is slated for December 9 in Los Angeles, will be broadcast on NBC in January. Oprah Winfrey was named "entertainer of the year", while Sammy Davis Jr., Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis will be inducted into the Hall of Fame. . . . **In Short:** "In The Heat of the Night" star Howard Rollins is taking it

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Harlem Nights

Murphy's Directing Debut OK



Eddie Murphy and Richard Pryor of "HARLEM NIGHTS".

A.C. TURNER
Post Staff Writer

What happens when you cast the most talented black comedians in one movie? Eddie Murphy asked this question and his

answer is "Harlem Nights."

Unfortunately, the movie is exactly what the public expected it to be. The audience drowned in obscenities. "Harlem Nights" did not offer any surprises.

The cursing soon became secondary because the movie was hilariously raw. The interactions between the characters came across as being spontaneous and natural.

Richard Pryor plays Sugar Ray, a night club owner who deals in gambling and ladies. Sugar Ray adopted Eddie Murphy's character, Quick.

Quick and Sugar Ray meet in 1918 when Quick was seven years old. Sugar Ray decides to keep Quick around after he rescues him from an angry crap shooter.

Sugar Ray and Quick find themselves on the hit-list of a big time dealer, appropriately named Bugsy Malone, played by Michael Lerner.

Malone makes several attempts at Quick's life, all of which were unsuccessful. Enter Dominique La Rue (Jasmine Guy) the beautiful love interest of Quick.

La Rue works for Malone and weasels Quick into a compromising position.

Sugar realizes that Malone's attempts to exterminate his business will make life impossible, so he concocts a scheme to leave town with a bang.

Also featured in the film are Della Reese, Redd Foxx, Danny Aiello, Belinda Tolbert, and Arsenio Hall.

"Harlem Nights" proved to be an extremely entertaining movie. Reese, Aiello, and Foxx gave good performances.

The fight scene between Reese's character, Vera Walker, and Quick was undoubtedly the funniest. I was impressed by Reese because she was consistently in character. The audience was able to look further into Vera Walker. Reese presented her as more than an everyday madam.

Of course Murphy was hilarious, but this was by no stretch of the imagination one his best films.

"Harlem Nights can not compare to "Beverly Hills Cop 1 or 2" simply because the script and the characters (with the exception of Vera Walker) are not well developed.

Murphy fell a little short of the mark with "Harlem Nights." This is the first film he has ever directed, written, and produced.

"Harlem Nights" is definitely worth a look-see, but it is not anything to run and see twice.

"Harlem Nights" Premier Turns Into Gang Fights And Stabbings

BY LESLIE DREYFOUS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

BOSTON (AP) --- About 20 undercover police officers and the mayor attended the weekend premier of Eddie Murphy's new film amid a crowd of rowdy teen-agers who went into the night rioted up by the showing.

Kids from around Boston came out to see "Harlem Nights," the story of two black nightclub owners, but as crowds left the theater after the early show what started out as entertainment turned sour.

"Had we not been there, there would have been hell to pay. I almost went so far as to order that the movie close down," Mayor Raymond L. Flynn said Saturday.

"And it's unfortunate because

there are a lot of good kids who went to the movie interested only in having a good time."

At least one brawl broke out immediately outside the theater and at least one gang attended the showing. Two separate stabbings were reported within 90 minutes on nearby streets.

Flynn said scenes depicting violence and "glorifying" drugs goaded some audience members to act up as they went back out into the Boston night.

The offices of Paramount Pictures and Eddie Murphy Productions, the film's producers, were closed Saturday and officials weren't immediately available for comment.

The cinema's assistant manager, Andre Brown, said the theater was rowdy and raucous, with

teen-agers running up and down aisles.

"It was a good thing the police were there because things would have gotten out of hand," Brown said. "But people were kind of decent because they saw them around."

Flynn said he watched unnoticed, and appalled, as the crowds streamed out, reenacting scenes from the film and "talking about the glorification of the lifestyle - the gold, the cars."

"I don't want to censor movies, that's not my intention at all, but I wish we could look up to good hard working people and family environments rather than this life of fast drugs and gang violence," he said.

Two separate stabbings were

reported near the theater before 11 p.m. and police said they had about 15 or 20 suspects, all of whom were between 15 and 21 years old.

Sgt. John Walsh said it wasn't immediately clear whether the incidents were related, but they both occurred in the downtown theater district that lays between the movie house and the city's South End.

The city has reeled recently from a string of shootings, including one in which a suburban man was wounded his pregnant wife fatally shot. Officials and community activists have been working to ease gang violence and diminish drug trade, particularly in the Roxbury, Mattapan and Dorchester neighborhoods.

And they say movies that pro-

mote negative images only make matters worse.

"We inherit students who spend the majority of their time either being influenced by the media outside the home or in front of the television," said the Rev. Hubert E. Walters, a college professor and pastor at the Southern Baptist Church. "Unless there's some connection between what they're doing and we're doing, we're defeated."

Dorcus Dunham, the owner of Chez Vous Roller Rink, a Roxbury gathering spot that promotes alternatives to drugs, said she hadn't yet seen the film but was wary for similar reasons.

"If it's pertaining to any type of violence or drugs that is not a good image at all, especially with all the problems we're hav-

ing in the community," she said.

Community activists agreed any movie sending out the wrong messages was a blow against their cause, but gang warfare and crack dealing go beyond the images Hollywood filmmakers produce.

The Rev. Roland C. McCall of Grant African Methodist Episcopal Church said the violence that cropped up this Friday night -- or any other -- can't be pegged on celluloid suggestion.

"It goes far beyond the movie. It's something in our culture and our society," he said. "We're in a society where success is money, having a nice car, that kind of thing. And that makes children more susceptible to the drug lords."

Jive Jazz Collection Features South African Artists In Trilogy

BY M.L. LaNey II
POST CORRESPONDENT

From the heartland of South Africa come many time-honored musical forms. Now there is another realm of musical turf coming into view - the mostly unheralded jazz of South Africa.

As part of the continuing influx of foreign influences, South African jazz has found a well-deserved if belated respect in America.

Despite the rigors of apartheid, nothing has served effectively to snuff out Southern Africa's emerging musical identity through the medium of jazz.

The means of expression best suits the gravity of the political and social upheaval that smolders beneath the everyday boredom of a repressive regime.

In many ways South Africa is just emerging from a long period of isolation brought about by the constraints of apartheid. For more than 30 years the main-



streams of South African jazz were by-and-large vagabonds and refugees scattered across the globe.

As such, expatriates were denied access to the continuing evolutionary developments of the rich and fertile heritage that was left behind.

For instance there is the advent of the first combination of American ragtime and Zulu chorales in the 1920s.

By the 1950s other innovators witnessed the transition from wild localized exuberance to more recognizable big band blowouts, a la Ellington.

Now the 1980s are closing and a check of the latest practitioners shows more vitality getting through than ever before. One recent attempt to capture the musical impressions of South Africa's jazz is a collection of three albums known as the Jive Jazz Series.

It introduces three brilliant players drawn from the genera-

tion that grew up under apartheid, "...who chose to develop South Africa's jazz rather than its 'pop' traditionals. Series producer Koloi Lebona, was instrumental in the making of Paul Simon's smash "Graceland" project.



J I V E
J A Z Z

That particular endeavor was partially responsible for the rapid interest that developed in the United States for groups like Ladysmith, Black Mombasa and Jonathan Butler.

The trilogy includes; Barney Rachabane's *Barney's Way Vol. I*; McCoy Mrubata's *Firebird, Vol. II* and Ezra Ngukana's *You Think You Know Me, Vol. III*.