

Music notes

By LOUIS HILGARTNER
Staff Columnist

If you asked the average guy on the street to name a prominent black musician, he probably would say Michael Jackson or Lionel Richie.

The sad thing is that there are zillions of blacks who have contributed to the music industry, and their accomplishments have been neglected or overshadowed by recent superstars.

Don't get me wrong, it's hard to ignore an album like Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, which currently has sold over 25 million copies — that's enough to give two copies to every man, woman and child in the state of Texas.

Also hard to ignore are the musical contributions of Charley Pride. Charley Pride hasn't sold 25 million copies of anything that I know of, but not to recognize his talent or his input in the world of country music is ridiculous.

There are hundreds more like Pride.

Do you listen to jazz? Have you ever heard of George Benson or Stanley Clarke? Certainly you remember Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong. For years, Louis Armstrong and his trumpet were synonymous with the hottest jazz.

Do you listen to rock? Does the name Chuck Berry ring any bells? It should. Berry was the father of today's rock 'n' roll, and his style inspired musicians all over the world.

Many of today's rockers don't realize what a big part blacks have played in the growth of rock 'n' roll.

While many current guitarists imitate the style of players such as Eddie Van Halen, Van Halen was inspired by Eric Clapton. Clapton's major influences were black American blues guitarists, such as Elmore James. Ask ZZ Top's guitarist Billy

Gibbons who his big inspirations were and he'll probably tell you they were Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker and B.B. King.

Do you listen to jazz? Have you ever heard of George Benson or Stanley Clarke?

Probably the greatest rock guitarist to ever take the stage was Jimi Hendrix. Hendrix was a pioneer in the use of effects, and a wizard at getting the craziest noises imaginable out of a guitar.

Other black rock stars include Carlos Alomar (guitarist for the David Bowie Band) and Thin Lizzy's bassist, Phil Lynott.

Let's not get bogged down in rock and blues. Those aren't the only areas of music that have been influenced by blacks.

In movies and show business, there are standouts like Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. Bojangles sang and danced his way to fame in all the Shirley Temple movies eons ago. While some may argue that roles like the ones Robinson often played were stereotypical, his contributions and talents shouldn't be overlooked. Incidentally, "Bojangles" used to hold the world record for running the hundred yard dash — backward.

Keep in mind that the successful black musicians in the '80s owe much to their predecessors.

Would Michael Jackson have gotten a chance to record an album at all without the groundbreaking of Ella Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin or — if you want to go way back — the Inkspots? It was these performers who helped break down the color barrier in music so we could

have bands like Earth, Wind and Fire today.

As long as there is music, there will be black performers, writers and producers who will make sure it progresses. That is not something to be overlooked.

Other note-worthy tips:

Country singer/songwriter/guitarist Willie Nelson passed a tremendous milestone. According to Columbia records, Nelson's 1978 album *Stardust*, which contained his big hits "Georgia On My Mind" and "Blue Skies" has remained on the national country album charts for 287 weeks — over five years. More than three million copies of this album have been sold.

Film review

By PATRICK A. ZINN
Staff Reviewer

Wake up Bryan/College Station, *Star 80* has come to town and I urge every one to see it. This is definitely one of the best films to be released this year. The film is entertaining, intense, well-written, well-directed and well-acted in.

Star 80 belongs to the recent batch of films that concentrates on human drama rather than special effects used to scare and amaze. It is the grim, yet fact-based story of Dorothy Stratten, played by Mariel Hemingway, and her unfortunate end.

Stratten was a naive young girl working at a Dairy Queen when Paul Snider, played by Eric Roberts, swept her off her feet. He then used Stratten as a vehicle to get to success by exploiting her, first in *Playboy* and later in films. He married her only after Stratten was accepted as August's "Playboy playmate." After her film career was launched, Snider continued to see other women while Stratten was on location shooting films. He never seemed to truly love Stratten; he loved only what she could do for him.

As Stratten began to see the darker side of the man she married, she began to want out of the marriage. Her director, Roger Rees, became interested in her and an affair ensued. Filled with rage and jealousy Snider wanted to get even. Snider was one who burned others before he got burned, because for too many years he was always the one who was burned first.

The ending should be no surprise by now.

To be applauded for this film is Bob Fosse. He both wrote and directed the film. He has cre-

ated wonderful dialogue, which gives a firm reality to the film. Also, through great directing he is able to create history and give important details as to the natures of the characters through flashbacks, without boring us with a cumbersome plot.

Fosse has managed to create, capture, and maintain a mood which is carried out during the movie in every detail. The intensity is captured and scenes such as the one where Snider shoots his wife in the head with a shotgun won't make you sick to your stomach. After Stratten is shot, a picture of her is shown on the wall. Blood is streaming down the picture representing her death.

The acting in this film is superb and is as intense as the plot.

Eric Roberts portrays the conning husband who is looking and finds a ticket to fame and wealth. Roberts creates his character through action, insightful dialogue, and interestingly enough, through his dialect.

Mariel Hemingway is wonderful as Stratten. She creates a person that is easy to sympathize with. We see Stratten as a naive and easily influenced individual. Apparently she had been much of a loner in high school. Suddenly, Snider comes into her life and treats her like royalty, in fact he calls her "his queen".

Overall this film is fantastic. There are so many positive aspects. The plot, the writing, the acting, and the direction are great.

I give the film a superb rating — four stars. And again I urge everyone to see this marvelously intense film!

Entertainment

Play ticket to romantic Italian holiday

By BONNIE LANGFORD
Staff Writer

February is a romantic time of the year; it's the valentine season. And what better way to get in the mood for hearts, doves and romance than with a sentimental golden oldie drama.

The Theater Arts program's production of "Death Takes a Holiday" may be the perfect ticket to a love affair in the country of Italy.

The Albert Casella play is about death, with a human touch. "Death," portrayed in the play as a person, is concerned because people don't seem to like him. Death decides to find out exactly why his popularity with mankind is so low, and to do this he becomes a man — not just any man, but a prince.

Death, played by Ashton

Smith, begins his role as the mystic, mysterious prince attending a duke's three-day party. The hosting duke is played by Greg Economides. The Duke's wife is played by Paula Ratliff.

As the play proceeds, Death starts to become more human and more understanding. He begins to see each of the characters as they represent a part of human response to death. Death discovers the hosts and visiting characters basically are afraid of dying.

Only one of the characters shows no fear; she is the sweet innocent Grazia, played by Melissa McDaniel. Grazia is sure there is a love that conquers even death.

This basic theme of love conquering death is carried out as the play proceeds,

when the prince encounters something he wasn't expecting. He falls in love with Grazia; she falls in love with him. Death becomes so attached to Grazia that he doesn't want to leave the mortal world.

The Duke's son, Corrado, is played by Patrick Barrett. The palace guests include: Alda, a divorced woman of the world who is looking for a meaningful experience, played by Anne Suite, Eric, who is in love with Alda, played by Lance Miller, and Rhoda, Eric's sister, played by Wendy Pesek.

The three act play will run Feb. 16, 17 and 18, and again Feb. 23, 24 and 25. It will begin at 8 p.m. in Rudder Forum. Tickets are \$3.00 for students and \$4.00 for non-students.

Classical flutist to perform at A&M

By ROBIN BLACK
Staff Writer

With a repertoire ranging from Vivaldi to John Denver, Flutist James Galway is one of the better-known classical performers.

The Belfast, Ireland native, who will be performing with the Texas Chamber Orchestra Friday Feb. 17 in Rudder Auditorium, got his start in music by playing the pennywhistle as a child.

Galway has been a member of some of the world's most noted orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

After playing for six years

with the Berlin Philharmonic, which is believed by many to be one of the most prestigious orchestras in the world, Galway set out to pursue a career as a solo artist.

Although few flutists have succeeded in their attempts at establishing a solo career, Galway had played in 120 concerts, including appearances with major London orchestras, within a year of his departure from Berlin.

Since then he has recorded more than 20 best-selling albums and has made frequent appearances on the Tonight Show, the Mike Douglas Show, the Today Show and Sesame Street.

Galway's repertoire is enormous. He has recorded most of the masterpieces written for flute and has transcribed many works, including Vivaldi's Four Seasons, originally composed for other instruments.

Appearing with Galway will be the Texas Chamber Orchestra, from Houston.

Only four-years-old, the Texas Chamber Orchestra already has achieved great success.

The concert will be in Rudder Auditorium on Feb. 17 at 8 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at the MSC Box Office in Rudder Tower.