

# The Lansing Star

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## Return of the son of the Robber Baron

By CAROL HADDAD

Remember the so-called energy shortage of last summer?

Remember those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer that brought us:

- Long lines at the gas pumps?
- Talk of gas rationing that was actually done in some areas?
- Diesel fuel shortages that led to the truckers strike?

-Gas prices that topped one dollar a gallon for the first time in U.S. history?

The so-called "energy crisis" of 1979 stands out as one of the *biggest hoaxes* ever perpetrated upon the American people in the history of our country.

Despite the fact that our own government is forced to rely upon the oil industry for information about domestic and foreign supplies and production, we do have some information about domestic supplies last summer.

-A CIA study showed that American oil companies exported more oil in each of the first five months of 1979 than in the two previous years.

-The Federal Trade Commission found that gasoline supplies in April of 1979 were up 22.9 percent over the previous year, and that consumption was down one percent.

-The Justice Department discovered that in the first quarter of 1979 oil drilling went into its steepest decline in seven years, costing our country 11 million gallons.

-The American Petroleum Institute, which is the lobbying mouthpiece of the oil industry, actually admitted that during the second week of June - at the height of the so-called "crisis" - refinery production had been cut back to its lowest rate since 1962, even though supplies of crude oil were plentiful.

-In the meantime, gas prices jumped from 68 cents a gallon in January to over one dollar a gallon by summer.

-The shortage was timed to coincide with President Carter's decontrol plan.

How could the oil companies have pulled off such a large-scale rip-off of the American people? The answer is found in one word - monopoly. 200 million Americans are being held hostage by a cartel of seven oil companies, five of which are entirely American-owned.

They are: Exxon (formerly Standard Oil of New Jersey); Standard Oil of California; Gulf Oil Corporation; Mobil Corporation; Texaco, Inc.; British Petroleum, which is British-controlled; and Royal Dutch/Shell, which is British- and Dutch-controlled.

These seven giants produce, refine, market and transport most of the world's oil. They rank among the top 11 of the world's largest industrial corporations. They built their empires ruthlessly, exploiting both the people of oil producing countries, particularly in the Middle East, as well as the workers right here in the United States. The Ludlow Massacre of 1914 stands as a grim reminder of this in our own labor history.

These seven oil giants have managed to virtually eliminate competition in the industry, and are able to tighten their hold on the public through an elaborate system of interlocking directorates (where directors of oil companies sit together on the boards of third companies, such as banks). What this means is that the policy-makers of the oil giants have an opportunity to sit down with one another in the boardrooms of major banks - like David Rockefeller's Chase Manhattan - and de-

cide how to fix prices, eliminate competition and cooperate in ways to promote their interests.

This cooperation has paid off. 93.6 percent of our country's known oil reserves are held by 20 major oil companies, and the eight largest firms alone control nearly two-thirds of these reserves.

This means that our country gets domestic oil, which supplies 80 percent of our energy needs, only if this small cartel agrees to its extraction.

Any government policies on prices, taxes, etc., with which these companies disagree can result in the oil simply being left in the ground, where its value will increase as demand rises.

This type of power amounts to pure and simple blackmail.

And why are we being blackmailed? The answer can be found in two words - *profit and greed.*

Third quarter 1979 showed the following profit levels for Big Oil over the previous year: Exxon's profits up 118 percent (which means they more than doubled); Mobil's profits up 131 percent; Gulf's profits up 97 percent; Texaco's

profits up 211 percent; Sohio's profits up 191 percent; and Standard of California up 110 percent.

Even these obscene figures don't tell the whole story of tax deductions and other financial benefits for Big Oil.

Right after announcing these staggering profits, Big Oil financed a multi-million dollar advertising campaign to tell us that the profits were needed to explore for more domestic oil, so that we might be less reliant upon those nasty, unpredictable foreign oil producing countries - especially the Arab ones. What the ads failed to mention were some of the other areas Big Oil has been investing in, like: Montgomery Ward stores and a paper box company which were purchased by Mobil for \$1.8 billion; luxury homes built near Chicago by Amoco for \$90 million; Reliance Electric which was purchased by Exxon for \$1 billion; and Ringling Brothers' Circus, which Gulf considered purchasing.

Big Oil also invests in American politicians. According to some analysts, it outspends all other industries in political contributions. This enables Big Oil not only to get favorable legislation and tax

advantages passed in this country, but also to directly influence our foreign and military policy in its quest for cheap oil and high profits.

Every major oil producing nation that has even attempted to nationalize its oil has been slapped with boycott (as in the case of Mexico in 1938 and Algeria and Libya in 1970), loss of American aid (as with Ceylon in 1962 and Bolivia and Peru in 1969) or covert action by the CIA and State Department to overthrow the nationalizing government.

One of the most blatant examples of this was the CIA-engineered coup that, in 1953, overthrew Iran's popular Prime Minister, Dr. Mossadegh, after he nationalized that country's oil in accordance with a vote in Parliament and the will of his people. The CIA helped to restore the power of its friend the Shah by developing and training his terrorist secret police force, SAVAK, which tortured and killed hundreds of thousands of Iranians until last year's elections.

Incidentally, the CIA agent who organized the coup, Kermit Roosevelt, be-

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# Only the finest garbage

By TIM DURKIN

The folks at Showcase Jazz ended what has been a banner year, in terms of the quality of talent brought to MSU at least, with a show-cum-party featuring two Detroit groups last Saturday, May 16. The result was an opportunity to see one band that seems to know exactly where it's going, Griot Galaxy, and one, Prismatic, that's trying to figure out what to do.

Griot Galaxy has undergone considerable personnel changes since last spring's appearance as part of the Detroit Jazz Artists on Tour show, shrinking from a septet to a quartet. While the results weren't quite as exciting as last year's performance, especially Elreeta Dodd's blistering bass clarinet work, there was nothing that could be called a let-down in any sense of the word.

The current Griot persona is the "new wave African." Their pieces generally mix world music inspired work with powerful woodwind duets and solos anchored by drums and bass. The Galaxy was basically divided into two star clusters: one composed of David MacMurray, formerly of Sun Ra's Solar Arkestra, and Faruq Z. Bey on saxophones and clarinets; the other composed of Tani Tabbal on drums and Jaribu Shahid on bass.

MacMurray and Bey, whether alternating solos or playing duets were never less than thrilling. Both played as if they were possessed. Although less in the lime-light, Tabbal and Shahid were as impressive on their duets. Shahid's bass work was the most impressive I've ever heard.

One of the finest, and least characteristic pieces, with Bey and MacDonald on congas, was interrupted by a poem opening with "I am a new wave African" re-

cited by all four men. The drum work was highlighted by great percussion on galvanized steel wash tub and garbage can. This, combined with the silver paint on their faces, might inspire them to drop the "new wave African" label and switch to "World Music goes Cargo Cult."

Prismatic was nothing if not surprising. I had no idea of what to expect, having only heard the dreaded combination of rock and jazz (as in fusion) used to refer to them. I was in no way prepared for what came along. The opening number, which began with a heavy emphasis on congas and a Latin beat, exploded into a potpourri of bright pop melodies, each one lasting two or three minutes before being succeeded, all the while with this Latin beat tying everything together. It was sort of a jazz-pop combination that truly deserves the label *kitsch* — garbage. But it was high-quality, fun garbage, the kind you wouldn't want to throw away.

The band members fit this trasho-eclectic approach perfectly. The conga player waved his head and long hair like a demented hippy. Penny, the percussionist, swirled around in salmon chiffon and black sequins, conducting herself with the demeanor of a lounge lizard comedian's assistant.

The stage and the sound were dominated by the guitarist, whose left ventricle, at least, belongs to rock 'n' roll, and the saxophonist (no names to protect the guilty). The guitarist provided an immense amount of punch to the proceedings, giving full rein to a well-developed penchant for the gandy. The sax work was solid, although at times it tended to be a bit monotonous.

Prismatic needs to improve its quality control. The saxophonist needs more variety. The guitarist needs to learn to shut up between numbers. Penny needs jeans, a shirt and posture lessons. An effort ought to be made to highlight the fine bass guitarist more. Similar changes need to be made in song selection. Few of the pieces were bad, but on the whole, the bravado of the opening number promised more than the rest of the set delivered. Then Prismatic will be all good, clean fun.

group and you can at least imagine what a totally entertaining evening it was.

In addition to doing most of the show's organizational work, Rhonda performed three songs. A duet of Peabo Bryson's "Feel the Fire", which she sang with Nate Calhoun, was one of the show's high points.

The show's net profits — some \$300 — will go to the Sickle Cell Anemia Fund.

After such a successful first venture I wondered what Rhonda would change if she decided to do it all over again.

"Next time I'll spend more time distributing responsibility," she said without hesitating. "I had too much to do for one person."

*For those who missed the show, segments of it will be aired in an upcoming edition of Black Notes, on Lansing Cable Channel 26 and East Lansing Cable Channel 11.*

# Home movies grow up

By TIM DURKIN

Vengeful spirits of defiled Indian graves, how not to handle a job interview and delusions of shopping centerhood were just a few of the topics of the films. Their common point was the medium. They were all "home movies" on the road to professionalism.

The Second Annual National Super-8 Film Competition was held at MSU last Tuesday and Wednesday, May 13 and 14. If the results were indicative of a national trend, and with about 30 entries from

# Stroll in paradise



By SUSAN R. DICKEY

Bonnie Raitt makes a cameo appearance, and it has a bluesier beat than her earlier album, but *Strange Paradise* still sounds more like Cris Williamson than anything else.

Which is fine — Williamson's sonorous voice and unique mystical pop-rock style have already earned her a well-deserved following. Her Saturday night (May 24) concert at Erickson Kiva, MSU, is already sold out (there are tickets available for an additional concert 4 pm Sunday), and her earlier album *The Changer and the Changed* has sold more copies than any other album released on a women's label.

Once I unexpectedly heard a cut from that first album, "Sister" being played as background music in an East Lansing restaurant. It was like suddenly running into a sympathetic friend — the effect of the lines "Lean on me, I am your sister/Believe on me, I am your friend," was so powerful it brought tears to my eyes.

The music of *Strange Paradise* is less intimate. In some ways it is even more "spiritual" than *The Changer and the Changed*. Songs like "On, Judah!" "Native Dancer," and the title cut have a rather esoteric personal symbolism. It is worth noting that on this album of "women's music" the word "woman" was not used once.

But this heaviness is balanced by high-flying songs like "Rock-and-Roll Child" — "Let it stroll, let it stroll, let it rock and roll!" — and "Live Dream," with their catchy hooks and flying dragons.

All in all, a good album to take you "Back to the mountains again."

*The album Strange Paradise is available at the Book Co-op, Elderly Instruments, Sounds and Diversions, the Disc Shop and Jocundry's.*

Boston to Berkeley they might be, Super-8 moviemaking has come a long way from the home movie idea. Only the limitations of Super-8 movie showing — a general murkiness if the projector is more than 10 or 15 feet from the screen — should be keeping it from developing into a nifty, low cost, popular art form, one that could be accessible to a fair number of people, unlike fairly expensive 16 mm. movies.

The potential is staggering. It offers a whole new vista in creative home entertainment. No need to worry about being put to sleep by Josh Becker's home movies of the trip to Grand Rapids last February. No! Tonight he's showing *Holding It*, a hilarious parody of spy chases featuring microfilm, mistaken identity (nerd for suave agent), changing names, a chase on foot through the suburbs, a shoot out and lots of laughs.

Or you can take your dreaded relatives from Toledo, in the 30th week of an endless visit, to Sam Raimi's for dinner and movies. If *Within the Woods*, with its surreally thick blood (cherry cobbler) and constant tension, scares them out of the state for good, you will have been well repaid for whatever goosebumps you suffered.

*Within the Woods* represents the cutting edge of the Super-8 movie movement. It's a sophisticated, well-acted work that milks all the cliches of the monstrous intruder genre of horror film. Raimi cleverly brings up some of these conventions just to keep the audience on edge, without inflicting any more traumas on his heroine for the time being. Raimi, who goes to horror films repeatedly to study audience reactions, calls it torturing the audience. The star, Ellen Sandweiss, is a fine actress from U of M who has gone on to star in a feature film Raimi is mak-

ing with money hustled on the strength of *Within the Woods*, an unheard of feat. The new flick, *Book of the Dead*, is scheduled for late summer or fall release.

Other highlights of the second evening's program (the only night I caught) were: an "educational" how-to film on job interviewing (by a local, Paul Hart), a superior display of sophomoric humor; a surreal little number called *The Trombone Player Who Thought He Was a Shopping Mall* by Bob Hercules; and Joseph Bernard's (an instructor at the Kirby Center for Creative Studies in Detroit) *Implications of a Totality* which, with its close-ups of an autopsy, turned off some members of the audience although I felt that a body that's been pickled in formaldehyde doesn't look very real. Bernard used some moderately sophisticated techniques like fast cuts and superimposition to create a montage — heady stuff for Super-8.

Two black and white (almost all the Super-8s were in color) 16 mm movies, *Soundings* by Joel Coen and *Buffalo Chip Chips* by Timothy Philo, were shown. Both were quite impressive. *Soundings* is about urban ennui and alienation (doesn't that make it sound dull!). *Buffalo Chips*, which was made in Detroit on a grant from Wayne State, is an assemblage of g fragments (chips) of dialogue from David Mamet's *American Buffalo*, with plot added.

The festival was lots of fun. Brains-behind-it-all Ivan Raimi, who has made movies with his brother Sam, maintained an informal party atmosphere. He wore wound makeup over the corner of one eye, an assured us of the high quality of the movies we were watching (It's art!). If the quality of the movies, either in conception or execution varied, neither they nor the festival (the winner will be announced within a week) was ever dull.

# Campus queen gets serious for charity

By JEFF LOCKETT

Rhonda Hughes has long been one of the most visible blacks on the MSU campus. A gifted entertainer, she's appeared in numerous events on campus, was a winner in WMSN's first Sound Challenge, and recently won the title of Ms. Black MSU. But she's not resting on her accomplishments.

"Since I got here in 1977, the [Ms. Black MSU] queens have been pretty much out of the public eye. Along with Nouveau Noir [pageant sponsors] I hope to change that."

She took a giant step in that direction last week by promoting, producing, directing and performing in a four-hour fundraising Soul Train called "Let's Get Serious"

More than anything, the show's format resembled that of a three ring circus. At the east end of Shaw Hall's lower lounge two bands, Battle Creek's Primo and Lansing's Precision shared a stage that was barely large enough for one band. Both performed admirably in their campus debuts.

At the lounge's west end the ever-popular Most Valuable Players laid down their energetic blend of funky dance music.

On the South wall WKAR's Earle Robinson kept the music flowing with the latest disco sounds.

Add seven more acts which ranged from a jazz singer to a New Wave Dance