Mildred Johnson Speaks

By Howard Cole

For centuries past, every nation and race of recognized ability to extend in the world's history has taken pride in overcoming some outstanding feature of its existence: pointing to some particular type of culture or accomplishment which in turn adds to its national glory and makes its people known to the world.

When word reached me at my desk today of the passing of Dr. Nathaniel Dett, a great musician, a fine artist and a true friend and neighbor, I thought of another Rochesterian, Frederick Douglass, who did so much for his people. It seemed to me that another great American had joined him in the immortal hall of fame, for the black man throughout the ages and in every climate has struggled through observation and a natural ear for music, had learned to play by ear many of his brothers' pieces. On many occasions, he had the habit of slipping up onto the piano stool whenever the teacher left the room, satisfying his desire to "make music" and slipping down when he heard the teacher returning. In these moments at the piano, a new world was opened up before the eyes of this young musician and since those days of his childhood, he had been making music the world had listened and been enriched by what it heard. His early musical education was received as a child, and his mother who had a very unique method of teaching him to read music. This was a small switch which when young Dett played to right note was brought down with a degree of force on his fingers. It was not long before he learned to play the notes right.

During the late 1890's the Dett family moved to Niagara Falls, U.S.A. Here he was given the opportunity to continue his music education under the instruction of Professor John Weiss, an Austrian, and later at the Oliver Halstead Conservatory in Lockport, N.Y. Prof. Weiss was a disciple of tutor who taught Dett the first movements of Beethoven's "Sonata in F Minor" as well as significant parts of the printed musical terms; and the young musician added to his repertoire the classics of Haydn's "Gypsy Rondo," the "Pest and Peasant Overture" and others.

While at the Halstead Conservatory, he received special instruction in technical and formal instruction. At the end of the school year, he was sufficiently well versed to give a recital, but the young Dett, being of challenge around him and when the eventful hour arrived, he felt that those beautifully sensitive hands glide gracefully over the keys and an extraordinary look of innocence and simplicity characterized his countenance as he played from memory Chopin's "Nocturne in G Minor" and "Clair de Lune," in F Major." MacDowell's "To Make Music" and "Sonata of Beethoven's "Soaring." At an early age, Dett had begun to put poetry and music together. He caught the rings of his young soul, the impression of every-day life and these pieces he modestly offered at his first recital.

Young Dett had stood at the base of the mountain; had proved he was anxious to explore and now was ready to start scaling the rugged sides toward the summit and the fulfillment of his dreams. During the sixteen years of his life prior to that time had passed unnoticed and he hadn't thought much about music. Now he knew he must begin to make his own way and also wait until the impossible help out at home. First he tried selling papers; later he took a job at the historic Cataract Hotel, amid the splendid grandeur of the old world that young Dett waylaid Destiny and bid him and his brother free of charge. It came about in this manner. Young Dett had accompanied his two elder brothers to the home of their music teacher and through observation and a natural ear for music, had learned to play by ear many of his brothers' pieces. On many occasions, he had the habit of slipping up onto the piano stool whenever the teacher left the room, satisfying his desire to "make music" and slipping down when he heard the teacher returning. In these moments at the piano, a new world was opened up before the eyes of this young musician and since those days of his childhood, he had been making music the world had listened and been enriched by what it heard. His early musical education was received as a child, and his mother who had a very unique method of teaching him to read music. This was a small switch which when young Dett played to right note was brought down with a degree of force on his fingers. It was not long before he learned to play the notes right.

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Young Dett lived with Music and his people
It was at this point in his career that Dett began to pay more attention to the Negro spiritual which was so high an artistic plane, but was esteemed only by local music critics, in- stead of recording so high an artistic plane, but was esteemed only by local music critics, in- stead of recording...
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McCurdy's
Former Rochesterian Passes Georgia Bar Exam

Ms. Carla Jeanne Friend, daughter of Mrs. Alyce Kelso Friend and Mr. Charles W. Friend, Sr. was sworn in as a member of the Georgia Bar in Atlanta, GA. on 15 June 1984.

The former Rochesterian, a graduate of Madison High School, (class of 1967) received her bachelor's degree from Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina and has a master's degree in psychology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. For several years, Ms. Friend worked as a health planner in Chicago, Ill., and as a fund raiser with the United Way in Cleveland, Ohio.

In August 1980, Ms. Friend entered George Washington University in Washington, D.C. and received the Juris Doctor degree in May 1983. During summer vacations, she worked with Legal Aid in Atlanta and is presently employed with the Southern Prisoner's Defense Committee in Atlanta, GA.

The FREDERICK DOUGLASS VOICE offers its most sincere congratulations to Ms. Friend and her parents, and wishes her great success in her chosen Profession.

—by Howard C. Coles

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FREE Fanta Season Concert

The Asian-American Dance Theatre

Exotic & familiar traditional & contemporary, the Old World & the New...

Director/Choreographer Eleanor S. Yung, trained in India, China, and the United States, founded the Asian-American Dance Theatre in 1978. The group was formed in the belief that dance is a means of cultural expression and a medium for sharing and understanding diverse cultures. The company is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating Asian dance traditions through performance, education, and research.

The group has performed in many countries and venues around the world, including the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and Australia. They have also appeared in major international festivals and in television and film productions.

The Asian-American Dance Theatre has received numerous awards and recognition for their contributions to the field of dance. They have been invited to perform at prestigious venues such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Kennedy Center.

The group's mission is to promote cultural understanding and appreciation through dance, while also fostering the development of new works that incorporate traditional elements with contemporary expressions.

For more information, please visit their website or contact them directly.
Rochester City Council Member Ruth Scott

City Council Member Ruth H. Scott, chairperson of Council’s Public Safety Committee, today announced that the City has been allocated $25,000 for expansion of the Police Department’s Police & Citizens Teamed Against Crime (PAC-TAC) Program from the State Supplemental Budget through the efforts of Assemblyman Gary Proud.

The funds will help underwrite the costs of equipment and training for citizen patrols in several city neighborhoods, including those served by the Police Department’s Goodman, Clinton and Highland sections. PAC-TACs supplement the crime prevention efforts of uniformed officers.

Together with $35,000 in funds awarded by the State Office of Crime Control Planning, the Supplemental Budget allocation will enable the Police Department to expand the program citywide by the end of July.

Council Member Scott also announced that the City has received a pledge of 2,000 blue light bulbs from Empire Electric Supply Co. for the Department’s Blue Lite Program. The program allows elderly, handicapped and bedridden citizens in trouble to alert neighbors and police patrols by switching on a small flashing bulb placed in the front windows of their homes.

Council Member Scott commented that programs like PAC-TAC involving a partnership between police and citizens and the cooperation of private sector firms like Empire Electric deserve much of the credit for reductions in city crime statistics over the past few years.
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