

NATURALLY '72

Editor. "A DECADE OF BLACKNESS, A PAN-AFRICAN REVUE!" Naturally '72, January 28, 1972



A DECADE OF BLACKNESS, A PAN-AFRICAN REVUE!

JANUARY 28th, 1962, already considered a historic date in the annals of orthodox African Nationalism, should also be heralded in the works of legitimate Black Theatre. For on that date, ten years ago, those two elements – one, a political philosophy, the other cultural media – merged together to create an institutional for to resurrect the old Garvey credo that truly “Black is Beautiful!”

On that date was born NATURALLY '62, which actually redefined Black Theatre as a positive weapon to be utilized within an arsenal already too limited against the forces of oppression subjugating Black People. This show was the predecessor of a series of politicalcultural affairs “designed to restore our racial pride and standards!”

Our message was simply to institute a new set of A, B, C's through the use of theatrical presentations. Since the majority of our people suffered from an inferiority complex revolving around their distorted views of Africa, Blackness and, as a result, its related Culture then we, along with other concerned members of our Race, must strive to help them become truly — and sincerely — aware of Africa (and themselves as Africans); see beauty in their Blackness, i.e. as Black People; and collectively conscious of our [AFRICAN] Culture.

And so, we promoted through the instrument of psychodramas (more commonly known as the NATURALLY Shows) the concept that all Black People were African People; therefore they should be about loving themselves first, appreciating their Blackness and African heritage; and, above all, we do not need to imitate any other people because “We are beautiful, naturally!”

NATURALLY '62 started out as a “cocktail sip, fashionette & coiffure show starring lovely Models displaying the Natural Hair Style!” in a small club on 125th Street called The Purple Manor. The Amsterdam News reported that “The January presentation drew such and overflow audience, that the show had to be presented twice, a second time for the waiting crowds who refuse to leave until they were admitted.”

A year later, NATURALLY had expanded to such a magnitude, both in production and patrons that it was being held in Harlem's largest ballroom, Rockland Palace, after also overcrowding Smalls' Paradise and the Audubon Ballroom respectively. Another edition of the Amsterdam News, reviewing our first show, prophesied that “It is as the names indicates 'Naturally 62' ... the trend of the Afro (sic) Jazz-Art Society's hair styles could soon leave Harlem and become a leading fashion of the USA.” Since Harlem is admittedly “the cultural capitol of Black America,” the concept lived up to its prophecy.

NATURALLY ['62] has gone on to revolutionize the image of the whole fashion and cosmetic industries, as well as influencing the visual impressions (and verbal expressions) of a countless number of Black folks in various types of theatrical presentations, whether on Broadway or Off-Broadway, film or television. Black has not only become beautiful, today — Black has unfortunately profitable to both Black & white capitalism.

Ten years ago, it was said that, the Black Woman — because of mass inferiority complex, that made her feel inferior in appearance (and intellect) to the white woman, and other non-Black women — were wasting over \$76 million a year on hairstraightening process — just in slick ole New York! And since we [AJASS] believe that the Blackwoman — in her natural state — is the most Beautiful Woman in the Universe, we decided to turn trend

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APOLLO THEATRE
For Reservations, Contact AJASS/RI 9-6880

back around toward normal behavior patterns; hence our ten year campaign in the psychological war in the greatest battle for the minds of our people.

And so, Brothers and Sisters, whether you were born here in America... South and Central America, Canada, or the Motherland, Africa, we are asking you to come and help us celebrate the 10th Birthday of NATURALLY '62 as we present NATURALLY '72: A Decade of Blackness, A Pan-African Revue at the APOLLO THEATRE (yes, that's right!). It will be fund raising program, staged especially for the theatre audiences because we do not want this particular production's message to be evaporated in distracting atmosphere of partying at a dancing-oriented locale. (After we deal with this special dramatization for this single occasion, we will arrange another affair to take care of that need.) So now, even the Brothers and Sisters in the Nation of Islam or orthodox Islam can attend without offending their religious principles. We hope to see all of you when Black People will symbolically take over the APOLLO THEATRE, at 11:30 PM of Friday Evening, JANUARY 28th, 1972!

Oh yes, one more thing. Some of the featured performers and artists will be the GRANDASSA MODELS, The ISHAGI DANCERS, JO GRINAGE, NADI QAMAR, ROLAND ALEXANDER, KWAME NKRUMAH (Ghana's great guitarist); and the AJASS REPERTORY THEATRE, including FRANK ADU, LEROY GILES, CHRIST ACEMANDESE HALL and others. Also, commentary in regards the past, present, and the future of the Pan-African Nationalist Movement will be given by Ndugu CECIL ELOMBE BRATH, in an effort to reaffirm the principles of true goals and establish a pragmatic working relationship with as many groups [BLACK] as possible to strengthen FoPANO/ Federation of Pan-African Nationalist Organizations, The Spirit of Harambee shall be the Spirit of NATURALLY '72. You can help initiate this by attending this affair on JANUARY 28th, 1972!

As an added attraction, we are proud to present, one of the greatest musicians, percussionist and individuals in the world today, MAX ROACH. Max, who was with us on the first NATURALLY production, that time playing piano accompanying Abbey Lincoln, will be a most welcomed, and exciting attraction. Max, a dedicated brother and revolutionary fighter attempting to correct many of the wrongs that exist today, will be looking forward to performing for you on this anniversary of the show that put the Black woman (and Black Man) back into a position where they can again be respected, the show that proved that "BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL". And we will be looking forward to presenting you with the best program of the series that has truly raised the level of consciousness of the Black race, consistently, against tremendous opposition for these ten years- we are looking forward to seeing you on JANUARY 28th, 1972.

"I have long been interested in the Grandassa Models from the point of view of the great work which they are doing to destroy the old myths and false conceptions concerning the beauty of the Black woman - particularly the beauty of her hair. The Grandassa Models have done a lot and , from all indication will continue working to firmly establish a standard of Black Beauty, which is so badly needed."

From a letter written by
Eldridge Cleaver/Folsom Prison June,1965