

# entertainment

## Ernie Smith: reggae at its best

By VICKI FORRESTER

The Riverview Arms was an electric place to be last week. Reggae artist Ernie Smith kept the current flowing nightly. Assisted by a three man band, Smith and vocalist Charlene Davis provided a performance that occasionally tended towards overload. A visual energy balance was maintained by the band which, though musically capable, assumed a low profile. Smith and Davis were clearly the ones to be watched and enjoyed.

Although their physical energy seemed to be evenly matched, their voices contrasted nicely. The semi religious *Take Me Back* enabled Smith's mellow smoothness to mingle with Davis's more nasal vocal strains. Versatility within the limits of the reggae beat was flaunted by their choice of piece. *The Harder They Come* [The

*Harder They Fall*] was well suited to the rasping power of Charlene Davis voice and her often sulking presentation style.

A soft rock approach to *We Can Make It* with lead vocals taken by Davis and the guitarist, changed the evening's pace rather abruptly but the reggae inclination soon dominated. An underlying hint of an extraneous beat gradually exerted itself upon the aloofness of the rock beat and the band was back in its element once again.

Slight disappointment came in their rendition of *Rivers of Babylon*. Although it was obvious that it could have taken the song in a unique direction with their natural harmonics, they chose instead to rely on beat. The rhythm carried their melody into a final moaning session that did little to enhance an already misguided interpretation.

Even people with little interest in or knowledge of the reggae "religion" could hardly have failed to respond to or be impressed by the energetic enjoyment by this group of its art. The ceiling seemed scarcely able to contain Ernie Smith's body as it participa-

ted in the extension of his voice beyond its audio limitations. A soft red lighting approach minimized any distraction from the focal points of the performance. Each set seemed to demand a release from the tension, much the same as a wire being pulled taut must

be released before the snapping point is reached.

Even if this group's style better suited to an open field amphitheatre, Ernie Smith and Charlene Davis are not the sort of performers to be deliberately missed.



The Harlem Globetrotters will be at the Aitken Center Oct. 13, 7:30 p.m.

Front row (from left): Dallas Thornton, Fred Neal, Hubert Ausbie, Nate Branch. Back row (from left): General Lee Holman, Billy Ray Hobbey, Robert Paige, Lionel Garrett, Reggie Franklin, Eddie Fields.

## Eight to the Bar at TNB

The smash hit musical *Eight to the Bar* by Joey Miller and Stephen Witkin, which premiered to unanimous acclaim on Stage 2 at the Charlottetown Summer Festival in 1978 will be recreated in October when the ten Theatre New Brunswick stages across the province are transformed each night into a tacky bus station drearily decorated with tired tinsel. Into this seedy setting come four unlikely characters who are stranded by a snow storm. Thrown together by chance, these ill-assorted acquaintances are forced to celebrate New Year's Eve in this naugahyde interior with fluorescent tubes. Singing, dancing, laughing, and crying their way through this hilarious holiday of errors and missed connections, they send everyone off full of hope and good cheer at departure time.

There's Ben Henderson, a travelling salesman who secretly wants to be an artist but tells bad jokes instead. With him is Honey MacNamara, drinking chocolate milkshakes at the greasy lunch counter and mooning over Ben, who she picked up in the same bus station last year. In wanders Marshall Slack, a history teacher who yearns for attention but doesn't know how to get it. And finally, there's Shelly Wise, tough, beautiful, the survivor of two marriages that left her wealthy but not wise.

Director of the TNB production will be Grant Cowan who will also play Ben, the role he created in the Charlottetown premiere. Mr. Cowan originated Snoopy in the Broadway production of *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. He has been a featured performer in such

television shows as *King of Kensington* and *Jonathan Winter's Salute To Baseball* but he is probably best known to television viewers as the Sergeant in Listerine commercials.

Starring as Honey will be Marcia Tratt, who was the original Honey in the Charlottetown premiere. A versatile singer, dancer and actress, Miss Tratt has appeared in numerous musicals and revues across Canada.

Hank Stinson will star as Marshall. Mr. Stinson presented his one-man show *A Flash in the Pan* about the Klondike Gold Rush at the Charlottetown Festival this season.

Janelle Hutchison, last seen at TNB in the highly successful *Godspell* will star as Shelly.

The TNB production of *Eight to the Bar*, the final offering of the 1980 season will set about to recapture the feeling of the original Charlottetown production. Not only are two of the original cast returning to the show, but also, Bob Ashley, who acted as musical director on the premiere production and worked with composer Joey Miller on the original vocal arrangements, will be musical director and piano accompanist for TNB. In addition, Bonnie Monaghan, original choreographer for *Eight to the Bar* will choreograph the TNB recreation. Finally, the tattered bus station set which Jack Timlock designed for Charlottetown has been adapted for tour by Theatre New Brunswick staff.

*Eight to the Bar* opens in Fredericton at The Playhouse on October 18. The provincial tour begins on October 27 closing in Saint John on November 8.

## Ali's "last hurrah"

By ROSS A. LIBBEY AND NANCY L. REID

Ali! Ali! Ali! chanted nearly 25,000 fans ringside in Las Vegas and fans at Fredericton's Aitken Centre echoed them. On Thursday, October 2, 3 time World Heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali attempted to recapture the title the fourth time by defeating Larry Holmes in a bout optimistically or perhaps wistfully dubbed "The Last Hurrah."

Via closed circuit television the Aitken Centre was able to bring the fight to an enthusiastic crowd over 1,500 strong. Judging by the cheers and overheard comments, the majority of the crowd were Ali fans, indeed boxing fans at all, who had paid 15 and 20 dollars each for the privilege of viewing one of the most important fights of the year.

From the very beginning, Holmes dominated the fight, being the aggressor in every round. Ali, 38, later admitted to being tired from the first round and it was only in the 5th and 6th that we saw a tiny

vestige of his legendary skill and grace. Ali threw very few punches and his usual light dancing style had been replaced with the slower moments and reflexes of a tired man.

Scoring was done in a 10-point must system and all judges were in agreement, awarding Holmes every round as Ali only managed to land less than 15 punches in the 10 rounds.

Holmes, in peak physical condition, opened and closed every round with his well calculated and timed blows. The fight was called in the 11th round in favour of Ali's former sparring partner. Ali later said in an interview that he would have continued to fight, but his cornerman Angelo Dundee in agreement with Dr. Donald Romeo would not allow him to return to the ring.

The vocal crowd at the Aitken Centre became more and more subdued as the main event progressed and by watching the despondent faces of the people as they quietly filed out, one came to accept the fact that an era had

ended. Although Ali says he will make a comeback, it is doubtful that the 38 year old fighter will be able to recapture the glory he once enjoyed.

The crowd was also treated to the preliminary events of the WBC World Super Lightweight Championship won by reigning champion "Sweet" Saoul Mamby over challenger Maurice "Termite" Watkins and a heavyweight match between the contender Bernard Mercado who lost to #4 contender Leon Spinks in a 9th round knockout during what was deemed by many to be the purest form of the sport seen that evening. It was also announced at this time that there would be a Nov. 2 rematch between Roberto Duran and Sugar Ray Leonard.

While "The Last Hurrah" was a disappointment to Ali fans they can take consolation and agree with WBC World Heavyweight Champion Larry Holmes's comment that "I fought the best heavyweight in the world. He's one hell of an athlete and man."