

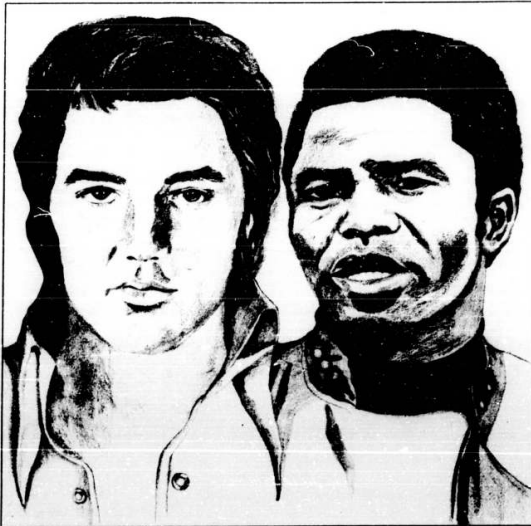
READER

SAN DIEGO'S FREE WEEKLY

May 10, 1973

ARCHIVES
SDSU

Linda Trujillo



ants in my pants and blue suede shoes

—Brandon Wander—

1.

Within one rainless week, nostalgia shimmered twice in the San Diego spotlight. Two aging stars spread their sparkling rays to delight their people. The King of Rock and Roll, The Godfather of Soul, Elvis Presley and James Brown both rolled their hoop-de-doo revues into town.

Innumerable comparisons lie before us. Both men are giants in their respective musical fields. Their fortynish ages show from softening tummies, and critics review them with "over the hill?" queries. The very notion of ever bigger potential productions glosses over the possibility of their decline. The superstars are well aware their names are more than names, that their mere presence is hypnotic.

Both men are extremely popular, and appeal to wide age groups. Their original teen fans have grown up, married, had kids. Now it's Mom and Dad, little Ted and Alice, maybe a mother-in-law or two, all waving their arms in glee at the living musical institutions.

2.

It's Easter Sunday, and finger-snapping is a few minutes away. Waiting for the elevator and for James Brown, one can look out over the Convention Center plaza. Millions, billions, zillions on tear-soaked, Texas-size moles everywhere, from ground level to above the ten-story building, up into the sky like mad stars. Gone batty by spotlights blazing in the plaza, waves of moths dive-bomb, ricocheting from light bulb to light bulb.

The elevator arrives. The convention hall is nearly sold out. Images of Mothra, magnificent creatures of Japanese "Godzilla" films, rise from mothhood. Cool black cats eye the few white honks. But inside it's serene. The J.B.'s, James' twelve-man back-up band, are still tuning up, people scurrying for their seats.

It's a family outing. Mom and Pop are wearing their six-inch lapel flashy clothes. Their four sons sit in order of age and height. The four kids are fidgety. They rise in unison and turn for the refreshment stand, each putting his own little dip in his walk, each with some Superfly or Sly of the Family Stone knit hat pinned to his head.

The J.B.'s swing into a pounding instrumental. Many have been with James for ages. Mayfield Parker, alto sax, is famous for his solos performed on gold Brown hits. He gets a chance to show off early, tilting his saxophone sideways, tooting mad at the mouth. But after his blazing stint, Mayfield tries to sing "Me and Mrs. Jones." He does a fair job with the Billy Paul song. But the tune calls for an extended high note at end. Rumbling towards the finish, it doesn't appear he can make it. Mayfield reaches back, his moustache crinkling, and he's about to let it go when the announcer jumps in, grabs the mike. "Well thank you, Mayfield. Let's hear it for Mayfield Parker! Yes! Mayfield Parker!" Mayfield gets his warm applause for his sax play, despite the amusing 'ol' hook-around-the-throat routine.

The announcer goes into a spiel. He co-stars with the titan, and the same will be true at the Elvis extravaganza. He is the watchdog in the wings, stop-watch in hand, keeping the show clicking tightly. And the announcer adds Las Vegas knowinses, his particular stance acting as a foil for the star.

"Here now, ladies and gentlemen, is a man known throughout the world as not only a writer, producer, arranger, but singer, dancer, and drummer, and organist, and..." The announcer's voice goes way up, then drops way down, a crazy throwback to the Amos and Andy caricatures. "And here he is, the singer's singer, the Godfather of Soul, James Brown! The Godfather of Soul James Brown! The Godfather of Soul—" Three more "Godfathers" bestowed on beat with the band by the Glockenspiel voice.

James coolly struts out. The audience holds its breath at the sight. His white suit sparkling, light-dancers off his knifing legs as the mail-black material ripples. He has a soft, black lei that turned down over his eyes, his head leans back, a natty half-step behind his body. He grabs the mike, peers royally from under the brim, and screams into "Down and Out in New York City," his new hit from the movie *Black Caesar*.

Supercool, he jams with the group on organ. He sings with Lyn Collins, whom he unintentionally leaves for dead with his slow, bluesy solos. Suddenly flash, strobe lights on, James whips a five-circle spin, drops into a split, and he's off and running a 30-second sprint. The audience instantly leaps to its

feet. The strobe is a hot gimmick. It makes him look faster than he is. He finishes with an amazing little jig where he slides off stage seemingly without moving his legs. For a minute, he's mechanical Mr. Mattell, with unbending metal legs and battery-driven tractors hidden in his shoes.

The second half of the show begins with Lyn Collins. Her style is nightclub, her dress is Ella Fitzgerald, and her voice is undistinguished.

James to the rescue. The best is saved for last, and he's snorting fire. He wears a grey jump suit and jacket, with a red bull over his heart. "I'm Taurus and I'm a mean bull!" He starts rapping to his audience, mixing funky ghetto talk with astrological sign nightclub schtick. "Who's Scorpio?" A large roar in response "Well, get down!"

His hair is long and straight, and after a while, stands wildly on end. He's heavier than his youthful version. He's a large, cuddly bear, and he's ready. "I may be old, but I'm clean. And don't you all worry, we're gonna do the good stuff, get down to it just like old times."

James swings into it, punching and jumping, keeping the strobes popping, feet flying. Splits, spins; hand jivings, and square jerkins of a puppet dance. And good songs. The oldie moldie "Poppa's Got a Brand New Bag." Then he updates with sheer, snappy killers. "Superbad," "Get on the Good Foot," "Hot Pants," "Be a Bad Mother." The titles are the tunes. James is pumping them, sweat glistening on his deep black skin, doing badass groins and grinds. Women pack the front of the arena, whooping. He plays the role of the macho sexual dude to the hilt. "Cock it five times and I'm spittin' balls 'n' chain!" People are on their chairs, snapping their fingers and tapping with their feet.

The fancy choreography of the

JB's meshes tightly with the act. The twelve form a Rockette dance line, but bipping and not kicking. The three trampeteers. The Fabulous Flames, are going zoot-suits and wide-brimmed hats, they're prancing in a circle like Indians on the warpath, whooping it up, spinning trumpets like Colt 45's.

The downbeat, hesitation rhythm signals "Ants in My Pants." James rips off his coat, and starts a speeded Charleston. His arms are muscled, his belly is heavy, but he puts out. Razzled by the spotlights, excited by photons, he beats his arms like wings. Holy Mother! "I got ants in my pants and need to dance, so big fine momma come give me a chance!" Faster, faster, faster, he collapses.

The audience whiplashes. The announcer runs to his side and throws a blue-glittered robe over his shoulders. Slumping under the sparkling wings, he starts to flap toward the shadows. But he's drawn to the lights. James heaves, the robe appears, same act. Finally a red robe, and the drenched, twitching star bids adieu and flutters away.

3.

The cars are lined up onto Interstate 8 like elephants in a circus, each trunk wrapped around the tail in front. Oddly, they jam only one lane, and the two-lane off-ramp at Rowdies runs two lanes all the way to the Sports Arena. Never look a gift horse in the...

The people are skipping through the parking lots for the shows. High heels click on the pavement. Men's stoles adorn a few women. A fiftyish mother and a thirtyish daughter have matching elephant print pant suits. Hair is short, flashy garb scarce.

Inside the bowl, the place is

crowding. Sold out for ten bucks and less, much more than the \$5.50 top for James. And 70 per cent in their \$8.00 seats can't see a thing without binoculars. A comic is on, some Kahane fellow, who does a cute ritualized Borscht Belt act (the Catskill resort circuit where every Jewish-Irish comic learns his trade). Elvis has brought the Las Vegas act intact. The Sweet Inspirations, his black background singers, do slick pop arrangements of Aretha Franklin tunes and that is the meager first half of the show.

Intermission is where the real act begins. "Buy your Elvis Aloha from Hawaii pinup \$2, Elvis photo book \$2, giant Elvis poster \$2, Elvis metallic portrait \$1.50." The moustached mafioso barker bellows on and on; his conservative grey business suit strained by his hard sell and his ponderous middle.

"The next half of the show will have Elvis himself. And now is the time to buy food and drink. There are many extra helpers manning the concession stands for the fan's convenience. And hurry to the front of the stage. For the fan's convenience, we are selling Elvis Aloha from Hawaii pinup \$2, Elvis photo... right below my feet! But you only have 4 1/2 minutes left!"

House lights off, the 15 piece band plays a flat version of Stravinsky, better known as "2001." Elvis strides on stage, the arena blazes. Volleys of flashcubes bombard the King. There are more cameras here than anywhere on earth, Nikons, Minotas, 500mm lenses, and 10,000 Instamatics. Every female fan yearns for a photo keepsake of Elvis, sexual idol.

Elvis looks good. His tall, dark features photogenic. His white jump suit, slit down hairy chest to belly button, covered with tiny mirrors. But his belly. May it not appear like belly fixation, but his tummy has a little corset

(continued on page 3)

events

lectures and talks

STEWART UDALL - Mandeville Lecture Series, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, Tuesday, May 8, 8 P.M.

OCTAVIO PAZ - USCD Regent's Lecture Series, Mexican author and diplomat. The Poetry of Spanish America in Spanish, 1449 Humanities Library Building, Riverside, Tuesday, May 8, 7:30 P.M.

CORKY GONZALES - Antonio Rodriguez and Raul Ruiz, Mexican and Chicano humor and politics. Third Gallery, UCSD, Friday, May 4, 1:30 P.M.

KHIGH ALX DHEIGH - actor, writer and playwright. Theory of Acupuncture and I Ching, Montezuma Hall, San Diego State, Wednesday, May 9, 8 P.M.

"AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: Equality of Opportunity - Yes or No?" debated by Dr. Wale Madison, Department of HEW and Dr. Robert J. Sessien, dean of faculty at San Jose State, Grossmont College's Fine Arts Recital Hall, Thursday, May 3, 7:30 P.M.

"THE AFTERMATH OF VIETNAM: possible effects on the international balance of power. Admiral L.S. Sablin, USN (ret.), DeSales Auditorium, UCSD, Tuesday, May 8, 8 P.M.

NORMAN ROCKWELL - sixteen original drawings from Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Collection, Fine Arts Gallery, May 5 through May 27.

NEW UCSD PERMANENT COLLECTION with works of Van Gogh, Manet, Monet, Chagall, Renoir, and Cezanne, through May 16 in Main Gallery, Humanities Library, UCSD.

Mandeville Lectures 1972-73 presents

Stewart L. Udall
former Secretary of the Interior

Casa del Prado - Balboa Park
6:00 P.M. Tuesday, May 8th

These lectures are free and open to the public. Made possible by the Mandeville Foundation. No tickets are necessary.

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music

SAN DIEGO STATE FOLK FESTIVAL. Arts Center, San Diego State, May 3, 7-10 P.M.

ALICE COOPER. Fri. & Sat. San Diego Sports Arena, May 6, 8 P.M.

BECK, ROBERT AND AFFRICE. San Diego Sports Arena, May 6, 8 P.M.

VERDI'S REQUIEM. San Diego State Symphony Orchestra and Choral Groups, San Diego State, Peterson Gym, May 6, 8 P.M.

UKRAINIAN BANDURIST CHORUS. San Diego Civic Theatre, Saturday, May 5, 8 P.M.

AZTECA. Cheech and Chong, Ruben and the Jets, USD Circo del Mayo Fiesta USD football field, Sunday, May 6, 11 A.M.

SOUL GROUP. Civic Theatre, May 4, 8:30 P.M.

HANDEL'S CONCERTO IN F, conducted by Kenneth Fox, First Methodist Church, 2111 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, Sunday, May 6, 8 P.M.

VIOLINIST ROBERT EMILE AND PIANIST Larissa Janczyk, Grossmont College's Fine Arts Recital Hall, May 4, 8 P.M.

CLASSICAL GUITAR ensemble concert, San Diego State, Recital Hall, Thursday, May 3, 8:15 P.M.

LA JOLLA CIVIC/University Orchestra Concert of Romantic Music, Sherwood Hall, 700 Prospect St., La Jolla, with Earl Witt playing Chopin's Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21 and August Aulen Richards, 1971-72 Youth Talent Winner, Sunday May 6, 3 P.M. and 8 P.M.

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PIANO QUARTET with Jim Stark, William Stein, Martin Owen, cello; and Jerry Owen, piano, Rachel Hall, Matthews Campus, UCSD, Friday, May 4, 8:30 P.M.

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SAN DIEGO YOUTH CHORALE. con. Directed by Robert Boucher. Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, Sunday, May 6, 2:30 P.M.

A UCSD BRASS ENSEMBLE will accompany choral groups from San Diego and Point Loma from schools, Ross Auditorium, 1426 Ross, San Diego, Sunday, May 6, 8 P.M.

MUSIC FROM THE NEAR WEST. Recital Hall, Matthews Campus, UCSD, Saturday, May 5, 8:30 P.M.

CLASSICAL GUITAR QUARTET CONCERT. Recital Hall, San Diego State, Saturday, May 5, 8:15 P.M.

THREE PENNY OPERA. adaptation of Benoit Brecht's opera, USD's Camino Theatre, Sunday, May 3, 4, 5, 8:30 P.M.

NATURAL ACT, formerly Beautiful Day, plus the Rockers, Palace Complex, 4022 Pacific Highway, San Diego, Saturday, May 5, 9-12 P.M.

AZTECA, CHEECH AND CHONG, Ruben and the Jets, Tower of Power, Mayo, Tavia, Euph, through May 5, 8 P.M.

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THE BIRTHDAY PARTY by Harold Pinter. San Diego State's experimental Theatre, May 3, 4, 5, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 8 P.M., Saturday at 2 P.M., through May 19.

EASTER. An adaptation of the August Strindberg play by the Genesis Theatre, the Grace Lutheran Church, 848 W. 13th, Escondido, Sunday, May 6, 7:30 P.M.

THE HERESS. Ruth and Augustus Goetz's play based on Henry James Washington Square, South Bay Players, Kimball Park Community Building, 140 E. 12th Street, National City, Fridays and Saturdays, 8:30 P.M., through May 19.

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the knicks and how to lose it

coasted through last year's playoffs, winning the World's Championship by beating the New York Knicks five games. Continuing downhill momentum carried the Lakers to this season's Western Division Championship, and now all the way into the playoff finals. But they have finally reached the bottom of that long hill, and the current championship series against the New York Knicks is going to be an uphill struggle.

The Los Angeles Lakers are the most popular winners since Bill Walton's last game. The only exciting thing about the Lakers is their announcer Chick Hearn.

A few years back a Philadelphia newspaper headline asked, "Will Chamberlain, Man or Machine?" Chamberlain replied, "Prick Me. Do I not bleed?" An independent research group was assembled under the auspices of the Consumer Union, and a Lumbur Puncture needle was chosen to draw the blood from the arm of Will the Stilt (as he was then known). In the presence of Walter Kennedy, Commissioner of the National Basketball Association, an impartial doctor prepared to inject the hypodermic. With flashbulbs popping, Chamberlain laid bare his arm, and the doctor proceeded with his task. The needle broke on contact with Will's skin. Three succeeding needles met with similar fates. The independent research group was disbanded. The newspaper's question had been answered.

The Los Angeles Lakers Basketball Team, led by this very same Will Chamberlain, won thirty-three straight games during the 1971-72 season, and have been going downhill ever since they

The Knicks have a starting line consisting of four Knicks, Russell and a Volkswagon. Put them up against the Laker five of Jerry West, the tightest clutch in the league. Gail Goodrich, equipped with overdrive, Bill Bradley, a Patton tank, Jim McMillan, tuned with AC spark plugs, and Will Chamberlain, a Bentley convertible with no overheat; and you have a championship series worth watching.

Here are the individual matchups: **Walt Frazier vs. Jerry West** - These are the two finest guards in basketball, but Jerry West is just too old to keep up with Frazier. When it comes down to the fifth, sixth, and seventh games of this series, Frazier will be eating West alive.

Dave DeBusschere vs. Bill Bradley - After a Laker game you can walk on the court and see the impressions left in the floor were Bradley plamed himself. If he was collecting tiles, he'd be in good shape. But playing against DeBusschere, he doesn't stand a chance.

Earl Monroe vs. Gail Goodrich - Every impossibly contorted layup made by Earl the Beard will be worth three baskets by Goodrich, so the only way the Lakers can win this matchup is if Goodrich out-scores Monroe three to one.

Bill Bradley vs. Jim McMillan - Bradley still has recovered from last year's finals when McMillan sent him unsigned love letters, then outscored, outrebounded, and outplayed him. Bradley, a Rhodes Scholar, was simply setting McMillan up for this year. It will be interesting to see if brains can beat ability.

Willis Reed vs. Will Chamberlain - This is why the Lakers are favorites to repeat as champs. Who in the world can match-up against Will? Certainly not Willis Reed with bad knees, arthritic shoulder, and missing shot. But Chamberlain's head is not equal to his body, and a dumber man than Reed have psyched him out of victory before.

There is no comparison between the benches. Who wouldn't trade the Laker substitutes of Keith Erickson, Pat Riley, and Mel Counts, for the Knick backups Meminger, Jackson, Lucas, Barnett, Bibby? No one can account for possible injuries, but without any fear of self-incrimination, I can safely predict a Knick victory in seven games, if not less. The Lakers are class. And class will out anyway.

their hot seats. The sexiest he gets is on "Hound Dog," where he plays with his slipping jewel studded belt and makes an aside, "I've got to get it up."

"You Give Me Fever" is better. Elvis' voice becomes earthy as the show nears its close. And Elvis sloops like St. Laurent at end. One, two, three, an aide brings a matching blue and white mirror cape. He grabs the cape, spreads it like wings. He's sharper at it than James Brown, his wing span far more impressive. The trumpet signal the Sylvia Blue Dots' final surge, and women rush the aisles. Last chance for those a mile away to see the immortal pelvis. Elvis doesn't like the lights. He has done the same thing over and over, but still, a Bela Lugosi lunge, turns and makes the proverbial last exit. Three steps behind is the mafioso announcer, chanting "Elvis has left the building. Elvis has left the building." God, the only way he could leave that quickly is if he turned into a bat and flew. Well, maybe he did, chased into darkness by flashcubes and sully reminiscent eyes.

Elvis & JAMES BROWN (continued from page 1)

When he opens his mouth to sing, a shallow voice comes over the speakers. Where'd his deep, vibrating voice go with choir, country-rock quintet, and big brass band behind him. Elvis stands with guitar for one number, and then just stands there. At each song's end he repeatedly crouches and whips a karate chop.

His massive shining stature is his sole support for the tunes. "Blue Suede Shoes" and "Heartbreak Hotel" come in succession, but Elvis the Pelvis has been reduced to shake-a-leg. El. He walks about stage, teasing hysterical middle-aged women with his blue scarves. The husbands get a kick from watching their wives act so silly. "Johnny B. Goode" rocks, but the El doesn't. On "Love Me Tender" he squats for two awkward pelvic upstrokes. On "Love Me Tender"? But the image is bedlock, and women leap from



The UCSD show gives ample evidence of the Impressionists' love for static subjects - the humanized landscape (garden, park, country lane). The still-life, the interior portrait - and their amazing power of investing these rather dull corners of upper middle-class life with a vitality that has its source not in society or in human character but in a radiating core of nature and of objects. The most interesting of the Post-Impressionists works on display belong to a radically different world. Morisot's garden, Monet's village in winter, the lush summer parks of Pisarro - these all look like the reality we ourselves see, only transformed and revitalized. A painting such as Marc Chagall's *Dream of Joy* (1955), displayed on the left near the entrance, does not transform visual reality but creates its own fantastic world where, under the laws of the imagination operate. A red girl with breasts like cantaloupes rotates in the sheer air accompanied by a swirling little vogue; a 'luxe' of flowers pulsates mysteriously. What is it all about? You would make a great mistake even to ask the question, for neither reason nor (as in the Impressionists) the artist's sharp-eyed observation of the external world plays any part here. The imagination speaks to the imagination, and in a language you will find you know quite well if you simply stand before Chagall's painting for a while and allow its world to engulf you.

Quite different in its language, though equally far removed from Impressionism, is the superb drawing of a girl's head by Edward Munch, located in the section opposite the Chagall. Here the artist's concern is neither the energies of nature nor the flights of the imagination but the intricacies of character. With a profile like that of Greta Garbo, and a character as intriguing and as opaque, this lovely, pallid girl looks off into nowhere, lost in an inner world of illness and suffering. The heavy strokes of the pencil points to a secret truth of the soul, and both the face you see and the soul you intuit behind it are unforgettable. UCSD's fine new collection is dignified with an admirable sense of the viewer's needs. The gallery is spacious, the lighting generous, the arrangement intelligent. Especially to be praised are the simple frames, which show off these paintings and drawings to far greater advantage than the usual ornate extravaganzas of bevels and carvings. When you see the rich greens of the Pisarro landscapes or the intense green and gold of the marvellous Braque still-life against the plain white of the gallery walls, you will know what I mean.

The Gallery is located on the ground floor of the Humanities Library Building on Revelle Campus. The collection will be on display until May 16. Don't miss it.

Two of the best works in the current show at the UCSD Art Gallery demonstrate, with wonderful beauty and power, how strange and moving this combination can be. The two, prominently displayed on the far wall opposite the entrance are *Little Girl in the Garden* (1887) by Berthe Morisot, and a stunning Monet winter scene (1878-1880). The Morisot painting shows a static whirlwind of foliage, trellises and gossamer clothing, all lightness and transparency, a motionless vibration of living greens and ochres. The banal scene, with no story to tell, no drama, no subject but the placid leisure within nature of a stable, moneyed class, is transformed into a revelation of hidden, explosive energies.

The Monet, next to it, conveys an exquisite sense of winter atmosphere - patches of snow reflecting the grays and blues of an overcast sky, leafless trees, the facades of a few village houses, a wall, a path, a solitary figure in the distance. A quiet, empty, lonely winter scene. But, at the same time, a scene filled with the point of bursting with movement not of things but within them. The naked leafy branches seem to be in perpetual, fine agitation; the house-fronts bend and billow; the snowy path almost wriggles; and over everything there is a ceaseless shimmer, a shimmer not only of the light but of the world itself.

READER

Elvis & JAMES BROWN

(continued from page 1)

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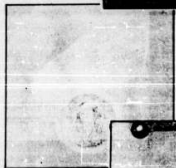
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