

Rock 'n' Rollin' at the Uptown Theatre!

Listening to the radio in the late 60s was an everyday thing in my house. Georgie Woods, the “Guy with the goods,” would invite me to “See your face in the place” at the Rock & Roll Shows in the Uptown Theatre.

Church came first on Sunday, then on to the “Motown Review” for the afternoon matinee. For \$2, me and my girlfriends saw the Jackson 5 (I told nine-year-old Michael I was gonna marry him!) Temptations! Supremes! Lil' Stevie Wonder! Miracles! James Brown! Drifters! the list went on and on.

**SONGWRITER.
STORYTELLER.
MUSICIAN.
AUTOBIOGRAPHER.***

The bus dropped us on the corner. We entered a world of glamour, popcorn and the best R & B music ever. Sam Reed and his orchestra jammed under each act. We'd scream and dance to Stevie Wonder's *Fingertips*, cry when he missed his handclaps, throw kisses at Smokey, sing along with Diana, and do the Funky Chicken with Rufus!

Between acts, Georgie Woods would invite the kids onto the stage and we were the stars, showing off our wildest dance moves. Pops, an old loose-legged white man, would be dancing up a storm beside us. I was one of “Crazy Armond's Go Go Girls” that performed during the intermissions. *There Was A Time* by James Brown was our featured number and we'd cut loose with every dance from Hot Pants to the Camel Walk.

The *Midnight Show* with Redd Foxx, Moms Mabley and adult comedians was off-limits to anyone under 21...but not to those of us who would hide in the bathrooms and stand on the toilet seats so when the ushers looked under the stalls we wouldn't be put out. Emerging after the lights went down to laughter, we'd sneak up to the balcony, laughing till we cried. I love and miss the Uptown.

– Oni Lasana



* **THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
PROJECT**

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin is the most widely published autobiography of all time. In honor of Franklin's 300th birthday, the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and *One Book, One Philadelphia* invited today's Philadelphians to submit memoirs of their own, using no more than 300 words. At the end of the project – May 17, 2006 – a panel of judges selected twenty autobiographies to appear on bus shelters throughout the city. Visit www.theautobiographyproject.com for more information about the project, and to read more Philadelphia stories.

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary is a non-profit organization established to mark the 300-year anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth. *One Book, One Philadelphia* is a project of the Mayor's Office and the Free Library of Philadelphia.



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