Hollywood no longer asks Robert Townsend if it's cash or charge. With him, they know it's comedy. Of course, Tinsel Town needed

With him, they know it's comedy, to Course, Thisal Town needed some constincing. The medical metal of the course o

up comedy Is still one on me mean pursults.

"I really enjoy what I do," said Townsend, who will perform on Sat-urday at the Fisher Theatre in De-troit, "and I try to share Robert. That's really the toughest part, shar-ing Robert, sharing my views, what I Sallows in.

That's reany the coopers person ing Robert, sharing my views, what I believe in.
"It's like being naked."
Returning to the comedy stage makes the circle complete for Townsend. He began pollshing his stand-up routine in New York after graduating from Hunter College.

were the two finalists in an audition for a pot on "Saturday Night Live." Murphy not only got the part, but went on to instant stardom. Townsend later produced Murphy's concert movie, "flaw."

Townsend was left behind to toll on the nightclub circuit. Undaunted, be began working on other assects of stand-up comeely some between the member stand-up comeely some between the member stand-up comeely some began working on other assects of

he began working on other aspects of his career, such as writing and acting.

The latter proved fruitful, landing him parts in such films as "American Flyers" and "Soldier's Story" along with Denzel Washington (who costars in "highly Quinn").

Nonetheless, Townsend was frustrated by Itollywood and the limited roles there were fer blacks in movies. "Hollywood shuffle" was a semi-autoblographical painting of that.

The film was not only humorous, but proved a point. And perhaps the work of Townsend and Spike Lee will open the door for other black filmmakers as well.

"I think It has had an effect," Townsend said, "and I have seen some changes. There's still not crough.

"I think Spike Lee and myself want to do something about the images that we disagree with. Making films is the only way to change that."

Already, Townsend is bustly work-

up routine in New York later gradualing from Hunter College.

HE BLAZED the comedy trails with another upstart comedian. His burling the phone interview, the whin fact, Townsend and Murphy script for "Heartbeats" could be

THE FILM is about a black sing-ing group similar to stand-up groups like the Spinners and Four Tops and focuses on the friendship that devel-

focuses on the friendship that devel-ops between the members.
Stand-up comedy somehow finds a place in it all. Although he's noted for film and television work, the stage is the glue that holds it all to-gether for Townseid.
"It's therapeutic," he said. "When you get out there and you start work-ing your chops, I discover a lot of things about me that I didn't know before.

"I let my guard down and I discover all these things. It's great."

Townsend's calling card is being able to find humor in any situation, whether as a struggling actor/comedian in New York or growing up one of four children on the tough west-side of Chicago.

At 16, he became a member of The Experimental Black Actors Guild, and later, Second City. Town-send was started on the Jaugh path.

Townsend lists a wide variety of comedic influences, from Lily Tom-lin to Danny Kaye, from Richard Pryor to Bill Cosby. The latter might be used to compare both Townsend and fellow comedian Eddie Murphy in their early days.



be used to compare both Townsend and fellow conveidan Eddie Murphy and in their early days.

"I wasn't as clean as Cosby."

Townsend said. "I was a little blue, is a sharshy approach to humor. He

IN THE END, Townsend believes whatever works best depends on the individual.

"I love Richard Pryor. I dig what he does," Townsend said. "But I can't do it. If I try I'll hear, 'Robert why did you curse? It doesn't look good on you, man." is no smoking night. For informa-tion, call 261-0555.

good on you, man."
"Then there's confrontational type of humor. . . . I'm not into the black

versus white thing," he added. "I get uncomfortable in that arena. But Richard Pryor will say, white peo-ple are cray: . . He'll pour it out "There's a different zone there. I'm more of an array comedian, like a picture. In the end, you know who I am."

Robert Townsend will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday, March 11, at the Fisher Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$21.50 and \$18.50. For information, call 872-1000.

COMEDY CLUBS

Here are some listings of comedy clubs in our area. To let us know who is appearing at your club, send us the information: Comedy Listings, Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

CHAPLIN'S EAST
 Heywood Banks will appear
Wednesday through Saturday, March
8-11, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Groesbeck, Fraser. Showlimes are 8:30
p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and

8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 792-1902.

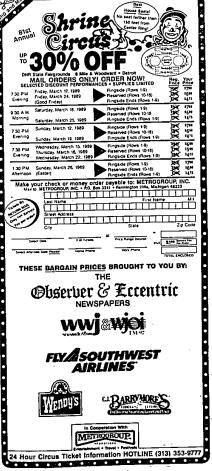
CHAPLIN'S WEST
 Glean Farrington will perform on
Tuesday through Saturday, March 711, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph Road, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The club is at 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. Showtimes are 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. For reservations, call 995-8888.

Glean Farrington will perform on Tuesday through Saturday, March 711, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph Road, south of Six Mile, Description For information, call 533-8866.

COMEDY SPORTZ Comedy Sports at the Heldelburg will bave improvisational comedy at

● COMEDY CASTLE
Dennis Wolfberg will appear Tuesday through Saturday, March 7-11,
at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle,
2593 Woodward, Berkley, Showtimes
are 8.30 pm. Tuesday through
Thursday and 8.30 pm. and 11 pm.
Friday and Saturday. For reservations, call 542-9900.





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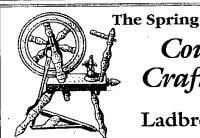


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