

For Immediate Release
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THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY TO MRS. FORD

Singer/dancer/actor, Ben Vereen, will entertain at the White House Wednesday evening for the state dinner honoring the Prime Minister of Ireland and Mrs. Cosgrave.

Ben Vereen is perhaps best known for his performance in the Broadway musical "Pippin." He was first recognized for that performance with the Drama Desk Award for Best Actor in a Musical in 1973. He later received the 1973 Tony Award, also for "Pippin," and the CLIO Award for best television commercial in 1974 for Pippin.

Vereen was voted the 1975 "Entertainer of the Year" by the American Guild of Variety Artists for his portrayal of Satchmo in ABC-TV's special "Louis Armstrong-Chicago Style." The Guild also honored him with its "Rising Star" and "Song-and-Dance Star" awards. He is the first performer ever to win all three awards.

Another performance Vereen is noted for, is the role of Judas in "Jesus Christ Superstar" for which he won the Drama Desk Award for Best Actor in a Musical in 1972.

Ben Vereen has also performed in Broadway's "Sweet Charity;" "Golden Boy" in London; "Hair;" and the Mary Tyler Moore Special for CBS-TV. Vereen hosted his own variety show on NBC last summer. His act includes sets, ballet, drama, jazz and magic.

Ben Vereen is 29, was born in Miami, Florida, and reared in Brooklyn, New York. His interest in the performing arts date back to his singing in the church choir at four years of age. He was accepted at the High School of Performing Arts and in his senior year received the Helen Tamiris scholarship for his achievement in dance. During high school, Vereen was a member of Brooklyn's Bernice Johnson Dancers.

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