

New York Showfronts

BY DON DE LEIGHBUD

THE REAL STORY OF THE LITTLE PEOPLE

This is about Little People, Little People in general and Little People in the theatre in particular. You find them among all races, the folk who never break into the \$1,000 a week class, who can say goodbye to the hope that some day their names will be in the Broadway news or on coast to coast radio programs. Many spend a lifetime at \$35 to \$50 a week trying to bring sunshine and happiness into the lives of all. Some are buried with great fanfare and the money that is spent to put them in the ground in many cases would have kept them alive and comfortable for at least two years. But no matter what kind of funeral they receive, their lives are mostly a constant struggle to give to others a little more than they themselves obtain.

A worthy cause is at hand and the first to volunteer their time and talent are the Little People of the show world. Sponsors of benevolent societies, they are busy tracking down the fifth secretary to the private secretary of the agent of Bill Toits, the \$2,500 a week orchestra leader, trying to get the big one's consent to do a number of put in a personal appearance to help raise funds for the orphans of his own race, to provide some comfort for the poor and destitute of his own race around the Christmas holidays. But the benefit sponsor as all the Little People of the theatre can take care of, clamoring and fighting to do their bit.

What prompted this piece is the current situation dealing with entertainment for our servicemen overseas. Big name Negro bands, singers, actors and dancers have avoided this highest type of war effort and the bubonic plague. On the other hand, white orchestras, comedians, singers, dancers, actors, etc., have practically fallen over themselves getting on the other side to their bit to cheer up the men in the front line foxholes who are doing their job for \$50 a month and ruddy or lingering painful death is the 2 to 1 payoff possibility. Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Ella Logan, Marcene Dietrich, Gertrude Lawrence, Humphrey Bogart, in fact, hundreds of the top white stars have made it a major part of their agenda to do something tangible and worthwhile for the boys in addition to the obvious act of buying war bonds.

This column gets many letters each week from all over the world, most of them asking this question: "Why can't we see our own big stars in the theatre and swing music stars? We see all the white ones, but we have yet to see our big colored stars? Why can't we get such folks over here as Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Earl Hines, Jimmie Lunceford, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Lucky Millinder, Erskine Hawkins, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Lil Green, Andy Kirk, June Richmond, John Kirby, Hazel Scott, Ethel Waters, Lena Horne, the Four In Spins, and Paul Robeson? We have pride of race, and it grips us and makes us wonder what the hell is this all about, where we see the whites come over and the colored stay at home just to make all the money and talk about what ought to be done."

On the other hand, without fanfare and tooting of horns, the Little People of the Negro show world are doing all they can to help out. They are fighting for the chance to go overseas. They are getting their own acts together, writing special material for the troops, undergoing long, tedious rehearsals so that they can be something for the fellows who are making the greatest sacrifice. I made a check at USO-Camp Shows to find out what big name Negroes had gone out of the country to do morale shows for the servicemen and was appalled at what I found. The only "names" (and by what I mean those whose earnings have been in the big money class) I found were those of Doc Wheeler, Kenneth Spencer, Caterina Tarrow and Willie Bryant. But the list was large to the Little People who have and are playing such ouch theatres of war as the CBI (Chicago-Burma-India), the South Pacific.

the European and African fronts, the Aleutian and Alaskan bases, in fact, playing every piece where fighting men are stationed.

There's little Jesse James and his circus, teaching soldiers with amputated limbs how to dance as he plays hospitals. There's Lew Crawford with his unit, Alberta Hunter, interpid, patriotic woman of song, needed the first and only colored unit to play the G.I. With her were Taps Miller, Mac Grady, the 3 Rhythm Rascals of Chicago, Cora Green, Chauncey Lee, Dave and Witty, Dodo Proctor, and Lillette Thomas. Snub Mosely's small band, with A. G. Godley, Bernard Addison, Jimmie Robinson, Irvin Trotman, Bob Carroll, and Bill Johnson are in the South Pacific. Ann Lewis played every war theatre they asked her to play. So did Julia Gardner and her accordion. A study of the so-called Little People who have and are still doing their bit shows the following: Laurel Watson, Sandy Burns, Edna Yack Taylor, Joyner and Tosh, Reuben Brown, Honey Johnson, Louis McCarron, Louis Kelsey, Jean Preter, Willis John, John Gark, III, Bobby Johnson, Judy Latimore, only woman conductor of opera, with the "Pony and Bess" unit; Josiah Albert, former postoffice letter carrier; Thomas Mosely, Catherine Van Buren, Audrey Thomas, Elizabeth, Irvin C. Miller, Franese Black, Klose Ugams, Sylvia Medford, Chickie Martin, Emily Foster, Mable Lee, and Claude Heywood.

Our big name stars have many excuses. In total, all of which help them to keep away from an obvious duty. Some claim they are ready and willing to go, but their agents must be contacted. The agent then claims that he is willing, but the star is "sold" for the next eight years. It would seem that if agents are so greedy that they refuse to put the war effort ahead of their own pocketbooks and desire to gain off the efforts of colored performers, somebody should stand up for a principle. There are thousands of Negro boys fighting and dying on the other side who ask nothing save a little sacrifice on the part of us who are more fortunate, situated to be left at home and given a head start on getting all that we can.

To mind comes the story of Noble Sissle who was the first Negro band leader to play morale shows for the soldiers in World War I. What Sissle and James Reese Europe did in World War I was enough to carry Noble Sissle for 20 years as a top attraction and favorite among showgirls and dance lovers. Elsie Janis, the white actress, went over in World War I and was tops for 20 years on that reputation. Sissle, even at this stage, is thinking of going over again so that he can first do something for the boys and, second, get another 20 years on his career. A point many of our big name performers are missing is that some day this war is going to end.

SEEIN' STARS With Dolores Calvin

NEW YORK CITY (CNS) — "CARMEN JONES" TO CITY CENTER... I'llly Rose has booked his "Carmen Jones" into the City Center with most of the original cast for three weeks beginning May 1st. After that time, he states, the company will make their tour from Cleveland. During the summer, they will be part of the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera Association's season. On Labor Day, the modern troupe arrives in Chicago.

"MEMPHIS BOUND" cast is rehearsing now. National Negro Opera Company goes in at Town Hall again April 20 and 21. Paul A. Smith, tenor, sings Verdi's "Otello" at Brooklyn Academy of Music. Mary Bruce Newspeck's "Cover Girl" for April. Calypso hats are the latest rage — selling from \$18 to \$22 on Fifth Avenue. April 18th, Todd Duncan begins his tour of Latin America in Guatemala. Marvin Louie promises to give out with something big very soon, MGM Publicity Department still wondering how Michael Carter (Afra) arrived at the



NEW YORK (CNS) — Love... Lena Horne who last week closed a month's engagement at Broadway's Capitol Theatre, went through 4 shows a day and a hectic schedule. Luscious Lena, featured in New York's April issue, is heading now for a short theatrical tour on her way back to the coast to make another MGM movie. The center pic is a shot from her latest film not yet released, "Ziegfeld Follies."

HARLEM BEAM BY FLOYD G. SNELSON

NEW YORK (CNS) — GLORIOUS EASTER. Thanks to the weather man for the balmy day with sunshine and breezes that were ideal — the finest Easter in years. I always love Easter for one particular thing — ladies' hats give us the most superb showing. This year I glimpsed such styles as primrose, straw, flowery, cheif type, shredded something, wide brim and veil, flat top, victory garden, fruit orchard, and of course the old repeater. Gardenas were \$2.50 each this year. So I had to miss mine; I'll make up next week at a quarter each.

HOUSE OF BEAUTY. Rose

Meta, Inc. Beauty is skin deep. Hair is her crowning glory. Skin you love to touch. Charm is woman's greatest possession. THOUGHTS. Keen foresight, sound judgement, actual analysis and public requisites — might be some of the reasons for the "House of Beauty". The lovely gals, Ros Morgan and Oliva Clarke, owners and prime factors of the gorgeous \$100,000 "factory of beauty" are highly commended in their efforts to give New York and vicinity the greatest beauty thrills. "Head To Toe" is the "blessing to women" that didn't come from "above." All this \$12.00 (no tax) introductory offer, 30 days only — 5 hours or more — \$20 value for just \$12. Beasts and Brutes (men's department) offers the same treatments (except hair), including Shampoo and hair style, Cabinet Bath, make up, Swedish Massage, eye-brow arch, manicure, pedicure, health lunch, pine and bubble bath, 401 W. 148th Street, corner St. Nicholas Avenue, N. Y.

FASHION PARADE. May (1) Day Tondaleyo presents her Fashion Parade of glamour, glitter beauty and charm, at Renaissance Casino, in Harlem. Beautiful models from stage, screen and radio will appear, including bathing beauties who will display the latest in bathing beach attire. Maria Louis, ex-wife of the champion, will be on hand to display her charm and fiery.

CHATTER HANTER. Duke Ellington opened at the wanky 4th club, 3th Avenue and 43rd Street. Cab Calloway and his five Justice thrilling the jitterbugs of Broadway at Strand Theatre. Hazel Scott, the imp of the ivories

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Critics Rave Over Valaida Snow's Hot Trumpet And Her Solid Torch Songs

CINCINNATI, Ohio — Widely acclaimed as one of the greatest tenor trumpets and torch singers, versatile Valaida Snow is an all-out sensation, bringing audiences to their feet cheering wherever she appears. To hear her terrific trumpet rendition of the "St. Louis Blues," to rest your ears on her groovy, sultry-toned torch singing, is an experience not soon forgotten. It's no wonder critics rave — like A. L. Morris of *Amateur Musician*, who says: "Valaida Snow is the answer to any audience's prayer. Greater artist I've seen in years." Or this from *Variety*: "Valaida Snow garners a big hand with her torch singing and terrific trumpet playing. She puts the audience in a groovy mood."

Miss Snow has appeared in many leading Broadway revues. She has also starred at many of the nation's foremost hotels, night clubs, and outdoor theatres. She is, in fact, an international star, having appeared before the world in Paris, Rome, Berlin, Sweden, Holland, Russia, England, Bombay, Shanghai,



VALAIDA SNOW

and numerous other foreign locations. Her versatility is little short of astounding. In the Broadway show, she sang songs in English, Jewish, and Italian, and played the piano, wrote trumpet and drums. Her amazing variety of accomplishments has won highest praise from such critical light as Walter Winchell, John Simon Brown, and Adolph Seltzer, the great Chicago critic.

A quelling experience was endured by Miss Snow as a result of the war. She was playing in Denmark in 1940 when the Nazi invaded that country. She was thrown into a Nazi prison camp, and during 20 months of brutality by the Gestapo she clung from her former weight of 130 pounds to 83 pounds. Exchanged for two Nazi spies, she returned to the U. S. in 1942. Since beginning her normal weight over a year ago, she has appeared before wildly enthusiastic audiences in theatres and night clubs throughout the country. Always a great artist, she is now acclaimed a greater artist than ever before.

Miss Snow is possessed of a gracious personal charm. She knows how to care for her loveliness, too. She gives very special attention to her glamorous hair, being sure to keep it soft, easy to comb, always smooth and perfectly groomed. Like so many celebrated entertainers, men and women, Valaida recommends Snow White Hair Beautifier. "I heartily endorse Snow White Hair Beautifier," she says. "It is my first choice of a hair dressing."

Hobbies: Miss Snow has many. She loves baseball and horse racing. She's an ardent admirer of opera, her favorite being AIDA. She dotes on movies, etc. Her favorite actor is Charles Boyer, favorite actress, Bette Davis. Oh yes, and her favorite musical instrument — you guessed it — the trumpet!

CANADIAN ACTOR-DANCER APPEARS AT BENNETT

GREENSBORO — David Lee, Canadian born actor-dancer, was presented in recent recital at Bennett College by the sophomore class. The capacity audience in the Little Theatre gave the recital an enthusiastic reception in tribute to the superb artistry of Mr. Lee. He charmed the crowd of autograph seekers with his gracious personality.

The youthful artist displayed unusual versatility, excellent control of voice, manner, and dramatic stage presence. His dances were refreshingly unique.

The first half of the program included dramatic interpretations from Browning and Longfellow and a reading, "Murder in the Cathedral" by T. S. Eliot. The latter half of the program consisted of humorous monologues in dialect and dances in the classic, native, and modern styles, creations of the young artist.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG SCORING ON ROAD

Louis Armstrong after a three-week vacation, his first in two years, makes it for a sensational tour beginning Easter Week. Satchmo's sensational Decca recordings "I Wonder" and "Judy Man" are top sellers. Vocalist Valaida Middleton also has waxed for Decca and the Armstrong platters are popular with the bobby-sox crowd. The King of the Trumpet will appear in Warner Brothers "Pillar of Fire" soon to be released.

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SHELBY BACON FEATURED IN REPUBLIC'S WESTERN



Shelby Bacon, juvenile Negro actor, featured in Republic's action-packed thriller, "Carnegie Christ: Bandits," is shown with the star, Allan Lane. "Zwinkle Watts, Dickie Dillon, in a scene from this exciting Western."

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"R C tastes best to me!" says VALAIDA SNOW

Some solid advice from Valaida... "For the world's best blues-chaser, try Royal Crown Cola," urges Valaida. She took the famous taste test one lucky day — tried leading colts in paper cups — picked R C best-tasting. Say R C, the quick way to ask for a Royal Crown Cola "quick-up."

R C is the quick way to say...

ROYAL CROWN COLA BEST BY TASTE-TEST

NOT 1 BUT 2 FULL GLASSES 5¢

IN THE BIG RED AND YELLOW BOTTLE

BUTTERFLY MCQUEEN FEATURED IN REPUBLIC'S "FLAME OF BARBARY COAST"



Butterfly McQueen, talented Negro actress, best remembered for her incredible performance in "Gone With the Wind," is featured in Republic's 10th Anniversary picture, "Flame of Barbary Coast," a lusty romantic melodrama starring Ann Dvorak and John Wayne.

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\$1,000 a week figure for Lena Horne's salary. They never give out that kind of info. Louis Jordan at Washington's Howard Theatre being told to have his tonsils taken out by Duke Ellington busy scoring for a musical. Sleek and Slack, named at Small's Paradise, dance barefoot with bottle tops attached to their toes — and well, too. They recently arrived from Florida. Anne Brown (former Pevy) and Bess stars asking for divorce a surprise. When Marva Louis was reported suing Joe, Anne's manager, Neil Scott, called Marva's manager, Bill Graham, for a "blow by blow" description. Graham told him: "I'm the woman's manager, not her lover." Now Scott is in for a lot of calling regarding Anne's marital status. Frank Sinatra did a wonderful job for kids in Philadelphia. After a session, a little colored boy came to Sinatra, looked him up and down, sighed "Geel!"

LENA HORNE, who got her fame straight from Cafe Society Downtown in the Village, told us when she was at the Capitol Theatre that the Downtown spot was one of the best. Miss Graham claims she "went into a restaurant and cried like a fool" when she read the headline announcing that Mussolini had invaded Ethiopia. "I knew then that the world I was used to was dead."

This is all a Southerner has time for. How about the Senator introducing a bill to stop some of the race prejudice? But the Senator is really aroused over that lipstick business. In fact, every time he looks at lipstick, he positively sees red!

SPAGE FOR ACTION previews its newest play "Skin Deep" based on Races of Mankind. It's written by Charles Polachek. Negro Marches On, Inc., announces they will produce 12 feature length movies for the 1945-46 season. Congress, Gertrude Graham, author of "Earth and High Heaven," a book on Anti-Semitism, says one day she will surprise people at meetings when she'll ask Lillian Smith to speak on Anti-Semitism while she takes over the Negro question at a chance. Miss Graham claims she "went into a restaurant and cried like a fool" when she read the headline announcing that Mussolini had invaded Ethiopia. "I knew then that the world I was used to was dead."

JOKE OF THE WEEK. In Nashville, Tenn., State Senator Senator Hubert Brooks sponsored a bill to prohibit the use of lipstick, with a possible punishment of a \$10,000 fine and or 10 years in prison for violations. Said the Senator: "Married men are condemned by their wives upon arriving home with lipstick on their coats... and courts are flourishing with divorce cases due to the evils of lipstick."

Raymond Massey and Canada Lee, both noted actors, are shown making an electrical transcription at the NBC studios of "Two Men On A Raft," recordings of which are currently being broadcast over hundreds of local stations as part of the national USO-YMCA race relations program. In the story, the Negro on the raft sacrifices his life for his white companion, Mr. Massey is perhaps best known for his portrayal of Abraham Lincoln and Mr. Lee is currently playing on Broadway in the Tempest. Such programs are made possible through contributions by the American public to the National War Fund which supports USO.