

New York Showfronts

BY DON DE LEIGHBUD

MEET THE NEW SWEET-HEARTS OF RHYTHM

NEW YORK — It's a far cry from the classrooms of Piny Woods College, down in Mississippi, to Broadway, Harlem, and the rest of the world, but the unusual group of girls operating under the name of International Sweethearts of Rhythm has done it and today has the distinction of being an institution of race pride and accomplishment.

Starting out as an all-colored aggregation, the band now has several white girls, making the band a mixed combination.

For credit for the development of this outstanding singing band of all-girl musicians belongs entirely to Miss Ray Lee Jones, a graduate of Julliard Music School here in New York, who started a small band in the college back in 1938, forming it of girls who had to be taught music from the beginning.

Miss Jones and the president of the Mississippi College had a run-in, it is related, and she pulled out in 1940 with the entire group of girls. It seems that the girls had been developed from a purely amateur outfit into a month professional organization good enough to play club and ballroom dates in nearby cities in Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana.

Whether the squabbling between Miss Jones and the school prexy came about because the school wanted to handle the girls has never been made clear. The fact remains, however, Miss Jones borrowed money to continue the girls' band professionally and, after some lucrative dates and smart managing, the girls came to Washington where they sought their own home on a cooperative basis.

The band was rough then. Rhythm was off. Rugged playing was common and all three factors contributed to developing huge headaches for Miss Jones and Company. Several arrangers were tried out, but none saw the real idea and, one by one, they came and left. But Maurice King, who came from Detroit where he had worked at several radio stations, joined the group about a year ago and things started happening, but fast.

The work of the girls improved almost 100 per cent. They developed a new friendship on a part with that of all-male bands.

They learned precision playing in addition to developing soloists among the various instrumentalists. Comedy was added and soon the girls became big time in capital letters.

Dave Gary, manager of the band, and Miss Jones are nominal heads of the orchestra which is a corporation with several of the girls as members. The original members of the band were all Negro. Today only nine of the original number are still with the combination. White girls have been added, and now the only mixed girls' band in the nation, it is believed, and getting on its feet.

Probably one of the strongest features of the band in these times of segregation and prejudice is the fact that the band is brown-skinned, spectacled, Violet Burdette, the outstanding tenor saxophonist in the country, male or female. Such tenor men as Coleman Hawkins, Don Byas, Ben Webster, and others have been great, but none has been as good as Violet.

Pauline Braddy, the sun-cheering drummer, has acquired a "beat" and influences the rhythm of the band more than anything else, including the other competitors of a fine rhythm section.

The band has already done four "Command Performances" on "Jubilee" for the Army Special Services, which is a show recorded and snipped abroad for the boys overseas. Others are to follow.

The band line up is as follows: Saxos—Rosellin Cran, Helen Saine, and Willie MacLee. Trumpeters are Violet Burdette, Gracie Bayron, Miriam Carter, Jonnie Mac Stansberry, Miriam Pollock, and Frances Davis. Trombones—Helen Jones, Ina Byrd, Irene Trubick, and Cary Lynn. Rhythm—John

nie Mac Ritz, piano; Pauline Braddy, drums; and Margaret Gibson, bass. Evelyn McGee is the vocalist. Anna Mae Winbarr, tall, pretty, blonde, is the conductor.

The girls have played every section and travel in a luxurious Pullman bus which has hot and cold running water among other features.

The Sweethearts are decidedly "commercial" today. They have played every section, whether in ballrooms, nightclubs, theatres, or on the radio.

They are now ready for recordings and for radio and movies. They have done much to dispel the old notion that girls are to be temperamental to hold down steady jobs as swing musicians.

Today they are able to engage in battles of jazz with the top male bands, and have done it and held their own.

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LOU SWARTZ' JOTTINGS

NEW YORK (CNS) — June with its October weather is the latest in styles here; and being without heat inside calls for heavy apparel both inside and out, and a special call for blankets might be heard anytime. Don't forget your furs or your fur coats if you are coming here. Just a warning in time, or we could call it a bit of friendly advice.

Altho cold, the sophisticated clientele drop in at Al and Walter Douglas' Heatwave, typifying just what it is called HEATWAVE. It comes in like a wave and carries a plenty of heat in its show, music, service, etc. Having a 3-0-1, a Bar, a Luncheonette, and a Club — makes it lovely because any person or group can enjoy one place without being bothered with going to the other. A sip at the Bar, a snack in the Luncheonette, or a view at a good floor show in the Club will really put you in the groove for satisfaction. Service with a smile and satisfaction seems to be the motto of Al and Walter, and they are going out 100 per cent to give it. The unusual to meet your friends at the HEATWAVE at 266 West 145th any time. Those Calvin Debs

Dolores and Bernice took a little jaunt to Connecticut last week end. PEP NOTES from Alma Featherstone Robinson, formerly of Chicago but now in good old N. Y., is now with the Internal Revenue Office here and enjoys it too. William (Bill) Davis also of the Windy City took a little trip to the Show-Me city recently. Earl J. Morris sends me the skies with his reply to my Pen note. Julia (Zeta Phi Beta) Epistoleus of New Orleans, La., is preparing for her Summer courses at Tuskegee. Julia is one of the up-to-date printers in the Crescible city. Jay, Eddie, and Mamma's dancing daughters, the Edwards Sisters doing their "All" in one of the Clubs in Chicago.

SPOTTING 'EM. Day, Dust, and Dawn bringing 'em down at the Zanzibar. Willie Bryant setting ready to travel a bit with Mamma's Daughter. Una Mae Corlie, chatting with Andy Rizzo about their common interest, Music and more Music. Ted Yates — rushing to get his Press material on his "Big" people. Lillian Fitzgerald enjoying the Spots. Palm Cafe, and Bells with friends. Rubby Blakely popping champagne like soda water the other night in Bells. Evelyn Purvis singing "The Man I Love" at a special guest artist the other night at the Heatwave, with Una Mae Corlie at the piano. Flitz Pollard on the Movie lot doing his FBI role. Abe Hill and Fred O'Neal as busy as ever at ANT Sammy (pianist) Stewart hitting on all corners with his plans and aims. The Great Erskine Hawkins giving his audiences just what they want at the Lincoln. Ethel Waters readying for the revival of Mamma's Daughter, with Maude Russell being Gardena, but seems as if she didn't know it. A little chat with Maude and her friends. The production might go into rehearsal. Funny about people, but that is life. Joe (People's Voice) Bostic: Izzy (Courier) Rowe; and Abe (Amsterdam News) Hill; really cover the Spots. Broadway Show to Anti-Segregation in the Armed Forces. A great cause handled by a "Five-wire" Committee. Cedric (Bass Fiddle) Wallace holding the spotlight at the La Ruban Bleu Club. Mary Lou Cafe Society. Williams, a little change, while being interviewed by the lovely Adrienne Ames, News Commentator. Until next week. Lou Swartz, Hotel Theresa, New York.

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SMILE AND CHEER UP, BOYS—



Exclusive to Ted Yates Publications

LOVELY SAVANNAH CHURCHILL, America's favorite song stylist who will be co-starred with the Big Three Unit that also includes "Deek" Watson and His Brown Dots, plus, of course, Luis Russell & His Orchestra: is set to thrill song lovers throughout the nation. This star-studded show will go to theatre goers high class entertainment. Exclusive Manor recording artist Miss Churchill's "Daddy, Daddy" and "All Alone" is a best-seller.

SEEIN' STARS With Dolores Calvin

NEW YORK CITY (CNS) — ORSON WELLES GOES TO BAT — Openly requesting that Jack Benny, flat-voiced radio comedian, take Rochester along on his trip overseas, Orson Welles wrote a letter to his friend Jack, saying, among other things, how much the boys comedians were over seas. The Negro comedian never went overseas because the USO Camp Shows don't provide for mix units which would mean separate sleeping and eating accommodations, according to Army regulations. Rochester wanted that he intended that was reported, by asking to go over with two white musicians from Phil Harris' band.

But Camp Shows said they would allow him to go over, but with two Negro musicians, thus making it an all Negro unit, which would be keeping with Camp Shows and Army restrictions.

However, Orson was appealing directly to Jack to do something about it. And he said: "Without meaning it at all, you and Eddie have been doing the Negro people

is by Buddy Reine in Germany, an army boy himself. Featured as "over boy" for Billboard (June 2nd) Louie has organized to include his arranger, Bill Davis (who was scoring music for the El Grotto in Rumborgie shows in Chicago recently) for piano work, his former drummer, Eddie Byrd, who kept getting draft notices and trumpet player Aaron Isenhall, last with Ernie Fields. Billboard says Eugene Ramsey, bassman with Jay McShann as in Louie's manager says, tenor sax and bass are still pending. Main idea of reorganizing was to get more showmanship out of the unit. We're moving to the new set-up that is to be better than the last. They are waiting for "Shirley Price" and Lillian Smith has rewritten a script for a special stage production, Joe Furrar (lago in "Othello") has bought the rights and intends showing it to Fall audiences.

It is no longer necessary for OPA gasoline ration tickets to be played on windshields of automotive vehicles.

Raleigh District OPA Director Theodore S. Johnson said recently that display of the stickers no longer is necessary as "use of serially numbered coupons, plus the endorsement of each coupon with the car license number, eliminates the necessity for further identification of the ration holder."

MARVA LOUIS, says her manager, Bill Graham, just back from Pittsburgh, was a sensation at the concert Monday night with Lionel Hampton band. Bill also says Marva is in better shape than she ever

was and is all ready for Hollywood and a fat movie contract. At the RKO Palace in Columbus, Ohio, Marva was backed with Jimmy Gleason and Guy Kibbee with the Tommy Reynolds Band. After the first show they moved her down to closing the show which was really something. Bill leaves for the coast Tuesday.

LOUIS JORDAN, up and out since the tonies were yanked, is excited about his new song "Johnny Heptat, Pt. 1" although Decca didn't want any more war tunes. His "G. L. Jive" — but this one is by Buddy Reine in Germany, an army boy himself. Featured as "over boy" for Billboard (June 2nd) Louie has organized to include his arranger, Bill Davis (who was scoring music for the El Grotto in Rumborgie shows in Chicago recently) for piano work, his former drummer, Eddie Byrd, who kept getting draft notices and trumpet player Aaron Isenhall, last with Ernie Fields. Billboard says Eugene Ramsey, bassman with Jay McShann as in Louie's manager says, tenor sax and bass are still pending. Main idea of reorganizing was to get more showmanship out of the unit. We're moving to the new set-up that is to be better than the last. They are waiting for "Shirley Price" and Lillian Smith has rewritten a script for a special stage production, Joe Furrar (lago in "Othello") has bought the rights and intends showing it to Fall audiences.

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Proposed All Negro Ice Show Chooses Skaters For Beauty And Color

BY DOLORES CALVIN

NEW YORK CITY (CNS) — In an interview this week with James Evans, white Broadway producer and talent scout for the proposed all-Negro ice show at his offices at 1650 Broadway, we learned that Mr. Evans, in selecting talent for the gigantic show which is scheduled to our Negro theatres in Baltimore, Washington, Detroit and Chicago and a string of one nighters, is choosing skaters not for their talent or ability to skate but for their beauty and the color of their skin.

This was made clear when Mr. Evans admitted he wanted as the star of this show, Mabel Fairbanks, a known professional skater, acclaimed by severe New York critics as the best skater in the world, regardless of race, but being a brownskin girl, the promoters felt she wouldn't be considered beautiful enough by her own people to warrant their hiring her and offer in keeping with her known ability.

However, they could use her to advantage provided she was willing to accept \$125.00 an 8 week guarantee out of which must be paid road expenses (food and hotel bills, etc.) To the average person, like a \$125.00 a week may sound like a lot of money but one must remember that any unknown featured in the most insignificant production would receive that and more. This makes the Evans offer so

attractive, in fact, to the group who Miss Fairbanks, for the past three years has been publicized in such nationally known publications as Time Magazine, New York Journal American, Dance Magazine, Newsweek Magazine, Ice-Skating News, to say nothing about most every important Negro newspaper and publication in America.

But because he's not a Negro of light color, and that Mr. Evans contended Negro people are more interested in rather than ability, Miss Fairbanks was willing to accept any offer at any price. And Wally Hunter (Mabel's coach since 6 months after she began skating) asked: "Since when must the color of a Negro's skin be the determining factor in the success of his or her career? Mr. Evans implied that it wasn't what he thought personally or what Mr. Hunter thought personally but was what the public (Negro public) — as this show is designed to play colored theatres almost exclusively) wanted. The Negro Press, would swallow it."

Mr. Evans, who has never seen Miss Fairbanks on ice, contends that he can take any beautiful colored girl, regardless of her skating ability and build "the greatest colored skater in the world and cut the Negro public, through the Negro Press, would swallow it."

Mr. Evans seemed to have great confidence in his ability to influence the Negro Press with any kind of publicity he may turn out to boost his affair. He held up a poster of Sonja Henie and asked: "How does Miss Fairbanks compare in beauty to Sonja Henie?" His idea seemed to be that Negroes wanted their ice skating start not only to have exceptional ability but to look as much like Sonja Henie (in color) as possible. That being willing to let Miss Fairbanks on a poster depicting her lack of beauty as he puts it, he should consider that sufficient compensation plus the minimum sum of \$125.00 a week, to warrant her signing up with him.

Mr. Evans and his backers, who ever they are seem to be definitely sold on the idea that with the Negro public in general, should let Mr. Evans Evans and his group know in no uncertain terms that colored people are not the dopes those gentlemen believe them to be.

Arasan (cream) of peanut seed helps to keep corners and foxes from eating the peanuts says Warren Bateman, a Tyrrell County farmer.

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Mr. Evans and his backers, who ever they are seem to be definitely sold on the idea that with the Negro public in general, should let Mr. Evans Evans and his group know in no uncertain terms that colored people are not the dopes those gentlemen believe them to be.

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