

New York Showfronts

BY DON DE LORENDO

NEW YORK — Suspicion is rife in Harlem theatre circles that Jose Ferrer, who in Paul Robeson's portrayal of Shakespeare's "Othello" has pulled a "way back play" in selecting Walter White's daughter, Jane, for the role of Nonnie in the play, "Strange Fruit". The play, an adaptation from Lillian Smith's best-selling novel by that name, "went into rehearsal here in New York last week. Controversy has raged among thinking persons over the matter, many contending that "Strange Fruit" will duplicate its accomplishment on the stage as in the novel of putting educated Negro womanhood in a bad light. Selection of Jane White daughter of the executive secretary of the NAACP is thought to have been made to quiet criticism of the proposed play.

As they did in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the "Uncle Remus" tales and more recently in "St. Louis Woman," which is to star Lena Horne, those who see issues more clearly than those who look to temporary applause, and a little gold along with it, have sharpened their pencils, their tongues, and their daggers to cry down "Strange Fruit" on the stage. Since Ferrer, as producer and director, plans to stick close to the text of the novel in his version, theatregoers are in for a good dose of the love of a Negro girl, graduate from college, and pretty, also, for a week-wide white youth, son of a leading small-town Georgia family. This love affair is portrayed as typical, showing how white men carry an after-dark romance with Negro women and then attempt to avoid consequences by marrying white women. Drama in "Strange Fruit" is heightened by a lynching of the wrong man who was accused of slaying Nonnie's lover.

The situation in a nutshell is this: The condition of the American Negro today, socially, economically, and morally, is at such a low ebb that all thinking persons are devoting time and energy to helping him climb to his proper place in American life. Improper actions are paramount in this effort and when the white majority sees Negro performers on the screen, stage, or nightclub, or hears them over the radio, in any showing, they are cutting, chicken-stealing, razor-tooting and loud and wrong characteristics. It does the cause of the race no good at all. It has been found that white producers, both in Hollywood and on Broadway, have suddenly done up about face in the type of colored women they pick for theatrical or screen roles. The trend today is away from the Hattie McDaniel, Louise Beavers, Ma Rainey type, big black and buxom, to slim, peach-blossomed beauties of the Lena Horne or Hilda Sims variety. Where they employed the McDaniels, the Beavers, the Ma Rainey (she wasn't in pictures, but on the stage) to portray "mammy" roles or part-calling for blackness and a whole lot of white shiny teeth, they have found a new use for the Lena Horne, the Hilda Sims, the Edna Mae Harris and the Katherine Dunham types.



Erskine Hawkins listens attentively to the hymn his wife, Flossie, is playing in their sumptuous New York apartment. The Hawkins are playing in their sumptuous New York apartment. The Hawkins are playing in their sumptuous New York apartment.

Mrs. Erskine Hawkins Puts In Full Day At Home

NEW YORK CITY (CNS) — To Erskine Hawkins, being a wife of a celebrated bandleader is a full day's work. It means caring for a spacious 3-room apartment, thinking of new dishes for a husband who is predominantly a vegetarian and always worrying on week ends about countless friends who "just drop in and stay days." And of course it means never being too tired to listen to an orchestra leader's problems.

Tall, fragile like Flossie and husky, deep-voiced Erskine first met her at a football game at Daytona Beach exactly 13 years ago. She was a freshman at Bethune-Cookman College and he was in his third year at Alabama State College.

The Alabama Cats liked the Bethune-Cookman Tigers and the college leader of the Alabama State Collegians won the heart of Flossie who says that then she was "just a girl." Four years intervened before they were married. During that time, she finished Junior College and majored in education, taught for a year in a lotus eighth grade class. Erskine, a Birmingham boy, finished 3 years at Alabama State and was teaching in the music department at the time.

Erskine and Flossie are now in their own home in New York City. Erskine is a pianist and Flossie is a singer. They have two children, a son and a daughter.



MR. JORDAN

recorded with Bing Crosby "My Baby Said Yes" and the combination "exploded" the music industry. He gave special afternoon concerts for teen-agers at their Teen Age Clubs. As a result, he became their King of the Bobby Sox Brigade. His transcribed radio show "Here Comes Mr. Louis Jordan" is one of the first all-Negro transcribed radio shows ever to be presented on the air.

Mr. Jordan drew a salary of \$14 a week, paying his musicians mostly out of his own pocket. And that's how he met his manager, Berl Adams, then 23.

But back to 1945, the tonsils came out after the Chicago Theatre date and Louie recuperated in his Harvey, Ill., home (while revising the ultra-band before another middle-west tour which brought him back to the Paramount in July. There they rushed three weeks to make two pictures in Hollywood, "Swing Parade of 1946" and "Breakfast in Hollywood." In "Swing Parade," Louis sings his new tune "Don't Worry Bout That Mule," written by one of his pianist, Bill Davis. On the set, after acting and singing, the entire crew working on the picture broke out to applaud Jordan's talents.

From California to his annual Texas tour and then to New York for the Zanzibar opening. But those are just facts. On the side, Jordan

Louis Jordan: A Number One In Many Ways

EIGHT MONTHS OF HARD WORK ARE BEHIND HIS ZANZIBAR DATE

BY DOLORES CALVIN

NEW YORK CITY (CNS) — When Mr. Louis Jordan comes to the Zanzibar Cafe Wednesday eve to begin an 8 week engagement, it will mark the dapper 38 year old music mack's first appearance in a Broadway nightclub. In fact, the last time Mr. Jordan appeared in a nightclub anywhere in New York was at the FIK's Rendezvous back in 1938 when he was just organizing his company Five. But since then, Mr. Jordan has come a long way.

These last eight months, for instance, in that short time, working every day (except for about two weeks in May taken off to have his tonsils yanked), Louis Jordan's agenda has run like an Ernie Pyle diary — events popping up so often and so outstanding as to insure the title the Tympany Five are tagged with American favorite little band.

A month after the New Year, he made his first appearance at the Paramount Theatre in Times Square and found the managers anxious to get him back within 3 1/2 months. Instead of returning he toured the South, played the Apollo for about the 5th time in the last 2 1/2 years, toured again, then made an initial appearance at the Chicago Theatre for 2 weeks. It was an occasion because across the street is the Capitol Lounge where the original Jordan boys were on the bill with the Mills Brothers and where the famous "Jordan drew a salary of \$14 a week, paying his musicians mostly out of his own pocket. And that's how he met his manager, Berl Adams, then 23.

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SEEN' STARS

WITH DOLORES CALVIN

NEW YORK (CNS) — IN THE NEWS: Benny Carter's band will be co-starring with Eddie Heywood two in "Pride of the Marines" which Kitty Murray who do a hilarious comedy together at the Apollo. A Popular woman's magazine in New York is considering using a story of a young Negro flier, who, flying over Germany, thinks of his girlfriend and the things he loves. The Unit Bill Graham has together featuring Marva Louis, Peg Leg Bates and Joe Ziggy Johnson will debut in Washington in October and may go over in this post war world. Graham is angling to let the Jeter-Pillars band. In Deanna Durbin's new picture, previewing here this week "Lady On A Train," she sees a millionaire murdered from a train window at the 125th Street station in Harlem.

"PAPER MOON" recorded by Ella Fitzgerald and the Delta Rhythm Boys — a rave. Todd Duncan, scheduled for "Il Paggiaccio" at the City Center, caught on Broadway in beige garb and no tie. Kenneth Spencer at the new modernized Cafe Society Uptown with native dancers staged, and directed by Katy Dunham. A tip-off notices that Marian Anderson has very beautiful legs, seldom observed. Erskine Hawkins planned a European tour. Typographical error made when approximate cost was listed of film feature "Caldonia" (starring Louis Jordan). It was \$30,000 instead of \$3,000. The studio alone cost \$4,000 to rent! Lena Horne, Duke Ellington, Andrews Sisters, Woody Herman and others at the 400 Club to welcome Tommy Dorsey and Band.

THE ZANZIBAR gives out with a cute ad day before the new show opens saying: Notice! This space is reserved to announce the cast of the new show opening tomorrow. However, as a gesture of cooperation with the Police Department we are withholding this Atomic Array of Explosive Entertainment to avoid the near-riot that would follow if everybody knew who was going to open at the Zanzibar. We could not stop the word from coming upon this "tantalizing Treasure-Trove of Talent..." but there is no use for us to add fuel to the fire. Anyway, while we may be speechless together and an "A" grade. It is so sensational you wouldn't believe it even if we told you... and furthermore... Does Mucky Tell Gimble? The secret is Duke Ellington and Band, Louis Jordan and Tympany Five, Mantun Moreland and Benny Carter and the new "glamour" troupe as Fredi Washington of PV put it, Savannah Churchill all done up in new hair-do, new gowns and supposed-to-be new names. She's to be the second Lena Horne.

NOT ONLY does Randolph Dunbar conduct the music by William Grant Still in Europe and come all the daily press to look around, but Louis Kaufman out in Hollywood, brilliant American violinist, who is equally well known as an interpreter of the classic masters and as a

Dots And Dashes

BY BILL CHANDLER

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Artie Shaw left Eddie Heywood two in "Pride of the Marines" which Kitty Murray who do a hilarious comedy together at the Apollo. A Popular woman's magazine in New York is considering using a story of a young Negro flier, who, flying over Germany, thinks of his girlfriend and the things he loves. The Unit Bill Graham has together featuring Marva Louis, Peg Leg Bates and Joe Ziggy Johnson will debut in Washington in October and may go over in this post war world. Graham is angling to let the Jeter-Pillars band. In Deanna Durbin's new picture, previewing here this week "Lady On A Train," she sees a millionaire murdered from a train window at the 125th Street station in Harlem.

IRA GERSHWIN TALKS ABOUT HIS BROTHER

BY PHIL CARTER

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Ira Gershwin, brother of the late George Gershwin, whose life story is told in the Warner Bros. musical, "Rhapsody in Blue," has some interesting things to say about George's association with Negro musicians.

"George knew everyone," he stated. "I used to wonder how he could keep so many names in his head. Me... well I sort of stay in the background. I figured George was the genius of the family so I spoke only when it was necessary." In the picture "Rhapsody in Blue" Ira Gershwin is shown to be just that — a retiring fellow, who although a great lyric writer, always let his brother take the spotlight.

Ira now lives with his wife in Beverly Hills. It will be remembered that it was at their home that the garden party for Brig Gen Benjamin O. Davis and Truman Gibson was held during their Hollywood visit.

"George used to say to me," he continued, "Ira, what you need is to get out more. Get around with the boys. Only it just wasn't my way. I look funny sitting up in night clubs and those kind of places."

Regarding Negro musicians, he revealed that there was one artist on whom George banked at old. That was the late Will Vodrey The, had an interesting experience when George wrote was staging his "Scandals of 1922," the show that featured Gershwin's famous hit tune, "Lady Be Good."

Ferde Grofe composer of the famous "Grand Canyon Suite" was orchestrating some of the music when George Gershwin heard his orchestration of "Fascinating Rhythm" he knew it wouldn't do. So he went uptown to Harlem and got Will Vodrey who produced an arrangement suitable to the syncopated tempo of the song. After that

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Erskine" he calls her "apple dumpling" which she doesn't like mentioned before. As his number one critic, therein lies Mrs. Hawkins' chief job. She hears every new vocalist and her opinion is the deciding one. She never tires of his music and can stand his practicing hours on end. There's a lot to the job of being an orchestra leader's wife but Flossie Hawkins has no intention of giving it up!

Hampton Institute Announces Musical Art Series

HAMPTON INSTITUTE, Va. — "Rigoletto," Giuseppe Verdi's famous opera, will be the 1945-1946 series of the Musical Art Society at Hampton Institute on Wednesday evening, November 7. Don A. Davis, chairman of the society announced recently he said that detailed announcements of the series will be issued shortly to patrons of the society.

According to Mr. Davis, the Charles L. Wagner company is bringing Verdi's masterpiece to Garden Hall, with a cast of well-known operatic singers from the Metropolitan, the Chicago City Opera and the New Opera Company. Paul Breisch and Deane Jeffers, both of the Metropolitan, will be music director and stage director, respectively.

Second artist in the Hampton series this year will be Igor Gorin, baritone, who is well known as a

"Next Door" By T. C.



NEW YORK (IPS) — Laurie Macfie, recently appointed associate editor of the Independent Press Service, leaves on Tuesday of this week all Hollywood, California, to open up a branch office. Miss Mac-

TAN TOPICS

By CHARLES ALLEN



Never mind Mrs. Johnson. I just found that letter, that I've had you looking for all day, right on my desk."

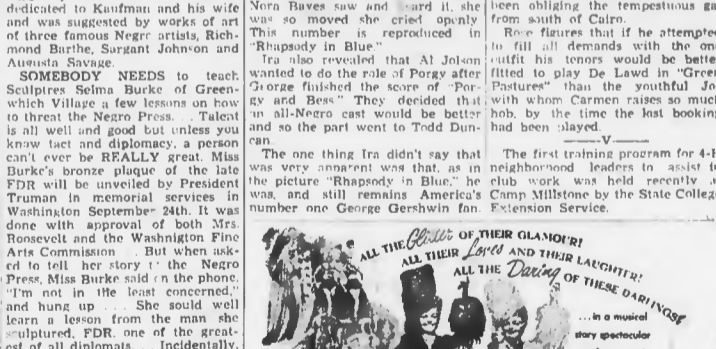
the original troupe would not be duplicated. Now that the war is over, transportation and man-power conditions eased, fabricating another troupe is possible. In Chicago for the premiere Rose, Oscar Hammerstein II, Howard Short and Charles Friedman mull the idea of a replica when that production goes to London in the spring.

It has been the original intention of sending the present company on one of the United States and Canada at the end of its Chicago run. Only New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland and east of the Rocky Mountains have previously seen the show. Australia, South Africa and South America have also been obliging the tempestuous gal from south of Cairn.

Reveals that if he attempted to fill all demands with the one outfit his tonors would be better fitted to play De Lawd in "Green Pastures" than the youthful Joe with whom Carmen raises so much hob, by the time the last booking had been played.

The first training program for 4-H neighborhood leaders to assist in club work was held recently at Camp Millstone by the State College Extension Service.

THE DOLLY SISTERS



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ALL THEIR LAUGHTER!
ALL THE DARING OF THESE DARING! ... in a musical story spectacular as these stars!

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John Payne
June Haver
S. Z. Sakall
Irving Cummings
George Jessel

GALE presents The 20th Century Gabriel
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CREATOR OF TUXEDO JUNCTION
A NEW ORCHESTRA featuring Dolores Brown
Raleigh Memorial Auditorium
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Ace Harris and Jimmy Mitchell