

THEATRICAL WORLD

The Apollo Theatre, which was unsuccessful in its attempt to get "Cleopatra Jones" on a first-run basis, has landed "Save The Children", the Paramount-distributed film based on the PUSH Expo in Chicago. The film will open on Sept. 19. It is one of the best black films yet produced.

New complete shows will be featured at Big Wilt's Smalls Paradise in Harlem, beginning September 3 with The Detroit Emeralds, Brenda and The Tabulations and Sad Sam. Owner-manager Pete McDougal says he's bringing back the old days when the club was Harlem's top.

Nipsey Russell and Barbara McNair have been signed for two of the four leads for the revival of "The Pajama Game", the 1954 hit musical that ran on Broadway for two and a half years.

Singer Stella Marrs had a beautiful engagement at \$3,500 a week with her own trio set up for Palm Springs with a representative of the circuit. It blew up when the boss demanded she cover her Afro with a wig and get a white trio.

Paramount Pictures, producers of "The Education of Sonny Carson" are looking for new faces for leads in the film, based on the autobiography of a young black coping with growing up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant ghetto of Brooklyn. Meanwhile, a party was held at the Brooklyn Restoration building recently to aid the defense of Carson, the one-time head of Brooklyn's CORE who is now facing indictment in a murder and assault case.

An intensive search for the right actor to play the lead in "Campanella", a CBS Movie of the Week has been launched by Metromedia Producers. Movie is based on the life of the one-time Brooklyn Dodger catcher, Roy Campanella who was paralyzed in an auto accident.

Ernestine Jackson has been signed by Robert Nemiroff for a leading role in "Raisin," a new musical based on the award-winning "A Raisin in the Sun" which will premiere on October 18 at the 46 Street Theater after a highly successful run in Washington.

Potent words: "There are 25 million black people in this country whose needs are as varied as the colors of their skin. There is no single black public. There is no single dream, hope or ambition... The Broadcast Industry needs to have a sensitivity to all the needs of the black community." Stanley S. Scott, Special Assistant to President Nixon, in an address before the National Association of Television and Radio Announcers.

The recent "Soul at the Center", involving 19 concerts, three religious services and a film show cost about \$200,000 to put on, according to co-producers Ellis Haizlip. It takes six months to prepare such a festival of black music and arts and Haizlip expects he'll have to start earlier to plan next year's shows.

HEART

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for I wanted by husband to have his chance at life."

Less than a month after he checked into the hospital, Louis Russell got his chance. "His room was on the fourth floor and the operation was to take place on the 11th floor,"

reports McCall's. "So he simply told his wife that he was going upstairs for a while and that if he didn't return, he was at least headed in the right direction."

Now five record-setting years later the Russells taste the sweetness of life more than most and are never too busy to listen to other people's problems.

Highlights Of The Entertainment World



DONNA HIGHTOWER

Spainards Say Si, Si to Donna Hightower in Mag.

NEW YORK — If you ask a Spaniard who Lady Soul is, it won't be Aretha. Their Lady Soul is Donna Hightower. Donna, who first arrived in Europe 14 years ago, has built a pyramid of success in Spain and throughout the continent, in everything from winning international song festivals to breaking the charts with long-staying hits.

When she first arrived in Europe, Donna was literally stranded in London. She remembers, "I didn't dare go back to America. I didn't want to go back and have everybody looking down on me. I told myself that if my manager and

record company had allowed me to be tricked over here because they hadn't investigated the contract, then I just wasn't going back. I decided I would have to make it on my own."

Interviewed by Nick J. Hall for the September issue of Essence, Donna recalls her hard times back in the States. She was discovered by a promoter in a Chicago restaurant working as a cook-dishwasher, and worker her way through the stardom maze from the Apollo, to nightclub dates on the chitlin' circuit, finally ending up in Europe just when the world was becoming more

aware of the civil rights struggle of Blacks. Realizing what this meant, Donna promptly hired a new manager who booked her into a Stockholm nightclub for a limited engagement; she wound up staying for three months. Since that time she has never been out of work.

Throughout Europe, Donna's name is equated with good music; but more and more her popularity in Spain spread so that eventually she became that country's number one attraction and decided to make Madrid "home."

At this point in her career Donna has begun to explore other aspects of the music world. She is now part owner of a jazz club in Madrid and is producing records. Under her guidance, some of the best, yet little known, musicians now appear at her club.

Never having lost sight of reality, Donna has not forgotten who she is or where she comes from. There is many a story of young Americans who have come to her for help and received it. She also admits that one of the reasons she likes Spain so much is because the people have always accepted her for who she is.

Donna doesn't think about moving back to the U.S.; she has found a new home, and both she and her new country have benefited. Many a Black person traveling in Spain may never see Donna Hightower in person but at least some of the hospitality enjoyed while there will be direct result of Spain's Queen of Soul.

ASSISTANCE

(Continued from Page 1B)

I program, which was approved by the subcommittee 9-6. Rep. Carl Perkins, chairman of the full committee and the subcommittee led the opponents of the measure.

Payments to the states for the program would be 40 per cent of the state of national per pupil spending average — or about \$400 for each disadvantaged student.

But the protection for states that lose funds because of the revisions would be limited. The proposals stop far short of the President's proposed revenue sharing plan.

Austria To Observe 'Day Of The Tree'

VIENNA (AP) — A special "Day of the Tree" will be celebrated here in October, it was announced by the Austrian Press and Information Service. Everyone in Vienna, especially children, is invited to join the festivities and help plant 2,000 deciduous trees, 500 conifers and 2,000 blooming bushes and evergreens all over the Austrian capital.

Black Works Are Published By Hallmark

A new book of prose and poetry titled "Black Light — Selected Writings from American Negro Literature" has just been published by Hallmark Cards.

Contributors to the 61-page book include Langston Hughes, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), Margaret A. Walker, Vanessa Howard, W.E.B. Dubois, Jean Toomer, James Weldon Johnson and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., whose moving "I Have a Dream" speech is among the book's excerpts.

"Black Light," which is illustrated with 10 color photographs, was edited by Talmadge Spratt, director of educational programs for the Douglass House Foundation, which had its beginnings with the famous Watts Writers Workshop. The "New Writers" section of the book includes selections by Workshop members.

In his introduction to "Black Light" Talmadge Spratt writes: "Black literature has blossomed and attained an identity in the past one hundred years. In essays, short stories, novels and poetry, black people have articulated their feelings as never before. Their words are sometimes loving, sometimes sad, sometimes harsh. But the harshness is a means of lifting veils from long-perpetuated myths and uncovering the truths to be found there. Most of the pieces in this collection are of this century. But no matter what their age, they were chosen because they make a significant statement about the black experience."

The "Black Light" book is obtainable at card shops and department stores offering Hallmark products.



JIMMIE WALKER

Jimmie Walker; Young Black New Comic Hits The Big Time

Jimmie Walker gave up security just for laughs. His mother begged him not to leave his post office job, but he did. He became a comic.

Today, at 24, he is one of the youngest comedians to make the big times. On Sept. 13 he will be featured with such stars as Dan Rowan, Dick Martin, Harry Belafonte, Bob Newhart and others on the new RCA special, "Opening Night, Starring Rowan and Martin" on the NBC network from 8 to 9 p.m. EDT.

A ripple of laughter breaks through his conversation as Jimmie recalls his life in New York's South Bronx. "I was six or seven months with the post office as a mail clerk," he said. "Mommy would rather I stayed at the post office for a while because it was a very secure gig, and in 20 or 25 years I could retire. I was 19 then and could retire at 39 or 45. She'd rather I'd done that."

Jimmie is a likable, friendly young man whose 130 pounds of lean flesh and muscle stretch over a 6-foot 1 inch frame. His talk is spiced with idioms of the "now" talk of the younger generation.

"Now that I'm doin' a little bit better," he added, "my mother's kind o' like on my side now. But, man, that post office! I didn't like that gig at all. I just blocked it out of my mind."

Jimmie's bid to debut on prime time network TV came after "Laugh-In's" Dan Rowan saw the young comic's guest appearance on the Jack Paar show.

"I had done six minutes of the Paar show in April," Jimmie said. "They told me I got 382 pieces of mail, 31 of which said they didn't dig me. I was asked to make another appearance on the Paar show but I refused because I wanted to improve my act, so I waited until June when everything was ready."

The young comedian remembered how he was waiting to go on for his second appearance on the Paar show on June 25, his 24th birthday, when Jack Paar approached him with the announcement: "Dan Rowan wants to use you on his show."

"I said, 'Oh, yeah?' and he said: 'Oh, yeah, he'll call you.' Then I went on and started doing my gigs and later the producer of the Rowan and Martin show confirms what Paar said."

But it wasn't always that easy for Jimmie.

His father disappeared when he was very young and his mother, Lorena, had to work as a registered nurse to support him and his sister, Beverly, who is a year younger. After graduating from DeWitt Clinton High School he studied speech and drama at City College. His ambition at this time was to be a disc jockey and the courses were aimed at helping him achieve this goal.

He never thought of being a comedian "because I was the least funny guy in the neighborhood." But the seed to be a comedian was planted one day during an oral interpretation session at City College.

He gave a speech on comedian Dick Gregory, using his own material. If he flopped he'd blame Dick Gregory. But his initial appearance was a success.

Eventually he asked his student adviser to help place him where his talent would pay off. She did, but he failed miserably.

"Oh, man, was I terrible," his long thin fingers reached for his cheeks. "My material wasn't right. I didn't have enough punch lines. I was just learning how to write my material."

His first success was at the East Wind in Harlem. From there he moved on to colleges and community centers for one-night stands. Later he moved downtown to the African Room at 44th Street on Broadway. Most of the time he worked for little or no money. He supported himself working as a technician for radio stations WRVR, WQXR and WMCA. His material was basically black and ghetto-based.

When he moved over to arenas that catered to an audience that included whites he realized, he now says, "that a lot of my stuff was too black. A lot of white folks didn't understand what I was talking about. I had to make changes."

Several white comedians, including David Brenner and Marvin Braverman, helped him.

Ben Vereen, Broadway's Newest And Brightest Star of "Pippin"



NEW YORK — At 26, Ben Vereen is Broadway's newest and brightest star. As the leading player in "Pippin", he won the year's Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical, and has been signed for more stage plays, movies and recordings. A far cry from a few years ago when he was just another unknown chorus boy.

Interviewed by Maurice Peterson in the September issue of Essence magazine, Vereen tells of his initial interest in the theatre and confides that he sang his first song at age four on a reverend's knee in a church in Brooklyn, New York. "I loved being a child, says Vereen, and I still love being a child. I did all the things that children do; and everyday I'd go with the other kids down to the shoeshine parlor and watch the two owners, who used to be in vaudeville, perform their routine. One Sunday when I was hanging out in the streets, a lady asked me why I wasn't in church. She went to my mother and the next thing I knew I was a member of her church. I sang my first solo song in front of that audience, and she taught me how to stylize, told me what to do with my hands, how to move my body and eyes. She made it more than just singing a song; it became a show. And, she is

the person who made a performer out of me. Once that inspiration was planted in me, I just had to entertain."

Kicked out of school in seventh grade because his reading was only at the third grade level, Vereen was admitted to a special school. He recalls, "I soon learned that if you had something of your own — something other than basketball or football — the little girls in school would go crazy for you — so I faked tapdancing. It not only worked for the girls but the faculty as well!"

Recognizing his raw talent, his principal suggested he apply to Manhattan's prestigious High School of Performing Arts. Once accepted Vereen admits that's where it all started. "That's when I found out that performing was a lot more than just fooling around, he says. It's a culture, and it is serious work."

In his senior year at Performing Arts, Ben met a Pentecostal bishop's daughter and married. He moved in with his in-laws and after graduation looked briefly for show business work. Having no success he then felt the "Lord's calling," became very religion-conscious and enrolled in the Manhattan Theological Institute for a while. Theology wasn't the answer, and neither was marriage. Vereen separated from both and discovered Arthur Mitchell's Dance Company. After being with the company for several years he won a job in "Sweet Charity" and met producer Bob Fosse who started grooming him for stardom. When Fosse hired him last year to star in "Pippin" his star took off and has been

One day they counseled him: "You've got a good head. You've got a lot of talent. You either are going to fight a revolution or you're going to be a comic. It's got to be one of the two."

Jimmie thought over the advice.

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