

# Gospel Singers Must Organize To be Successful

NEW YORK CITY — The majority of gospel singers will never graduate into the big money unless they get organized and let others handle their business affairs, predicted one of Broadway's top booking agents.

Herb Moon, who handles the gospel department of Queen Booking Corp., said that these groups will have to stop booking themselves in whistle stop engagements that sometimes don't gross \$200.00.

He credited the success of James Cleveland, rated the foremost male gospel singer in the nation, to his professionalism. His one night tours start at \$2500 and often he walks away from a concert with as much as \$7500.

"There are a few such as Cleveland, Inez Andrews, Mighty Clouds of Joy, Soul Stirrers and Shirley Caesar," said Moon, "who have signed contracts with our agency. And they are amazed at the profitable engagements we secure for them in comparison to what they once earned."

While most groups and singers in the gospel field have restricted themselves to dates in small churches and lodge halls that seat 200 and 300 persons, Moon books QBC's clients into large concert halls, auditoriums and on college campuses. With crowds of as much as 8000 that can be accommodated in these places, he points out that the artist can walk away with a larger share of the boxoffice.

He laments the fact that these groups are poorly educated into the methods of show business by not having personal managers, accountants and business advisers as do bigtime pop artists such as Sammy Davis, Aretha Franklin, Curtis Mayfield or Gladys Knight and the Pips, all acts handled by QBC.

"It's a proven fact," said Moon, "that performers can't work all night and then arise at daybreak to talk facts and figures with shrewd and sharp business men. They need such advisers to advance their interests."

To bolster his arguments he said that the late Clara Ward and Mahalia Jackson struggled for pennies until they retained professionals to guide their careers which brought them lucrative TV, record and theatre appearances. The late Sam Cooke and Aretha Franklin, said Moon, both were products of the gospel world and amassed a fortune when they placed their business affairs in the hands of competent persons.

The gospel department of QBC is one of the few attached to a major booking agency. Owned by Mrs. Ruth Bowen, president, the agency last year grossed more than \$30 million for its numerous clients.



**STEVIE WONDER SPEAKS AT SHAW UNIVERSITY**—Stevie Wonder, nationally known composer, producer, arranger, and recording artist spoke at Shaw University 108th Founder's Day Convocation. The convocation was held in Raleigh Memorial Auditorium, Raleigh.

Wonder, recently elected to the Board of Trustees of Shaw University, is well known for his work with young people. On April 13 Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm presented him the New Future Foundation's Honorary Award as the day was proclaimed "Young People's Honor Day" by Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton.

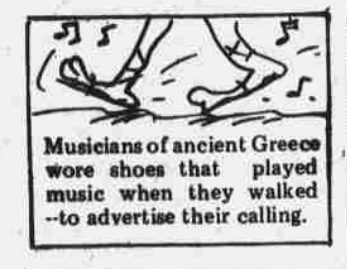
Among the honored guest was Ambassador John Mamma Garba of Nigeria.



**TOUGH DETAIL?**—Producer Gerald Ayres (left) chats with Otis Young, dressed as naval petty officer, during a break in in on-location shooting of the upcoming Columbia Pictures film THE LAST DETAIL, an Acrobat Films Production starring Jack Nicholson, Young, Randy Quaid, Clifton James and Carol Kane. Based on the novel by Darryl Ponicsan, THE LAST DETAIL is a drama with a good deal of salty humor about two veteran Navy men (Nicholson and Young) assigned to take a much younger sailor to the brig after he has been convicted and sentenced for stealing money from a charity collection box. Young, who co-starred with Don Murray in the television series, "The Outcasts," came well prepared for his role, having spent five years in the U. S. Marines, which he joined at the tender age of 16. "I enjoyed the five years in the Marines," he said, "but being a petty officer in the U. S. Navy is a definite improvement." Producer Ayres decided to film THE LAST DETAIL after seeing a two-page synopsis, "before it was published," adding, "I knew immediately I wanted to make it as a film. THE LAST DETAIL directed by Hal Ashby from a screenplay by Robert Towne, was filmed on the East Coast, from Norfolk, Virginia to the Portsmouth, New Hampshire Prison.



**SAVE THE CHILDREN**—Clarence Avant (L), President of Sussex Records and Executive Producer of the highly acclaimed motion picture "Save the Children," points out to "Soul Train's" host Don Cornelius in a recent appearance on the show that most of the funds from the movie will go toward aiding Black colleges.



## Whispers: A Five-Man Self-Contained Song And Dance Team

The Whispers are a five-man self-contained song and dance team from Watts, California. They wear handsome, tux-type costumes, travel with a basic rhythm section and charts for the horns, and believe in delivering solid entertainment.

The Whispers are: Nicholas Caldwell (Aries), Gordy Harmon (Gemin), Marcus Hutson (Capricorn), and Walter and Wallace (Scotty) Scott (Libra). Walter and Scotty are identical twins with identical voices that could fool a voice check. They are the lead singers.

They have known each other since junior high school, and are all graduates of Jordan High School (Watts). Nobody had any formal music education. With the initial exception of Walter, who put in three years of college with the intention of getting a Business Administration degree, each of The Whispers always wanted to sing in the group, which took two years after high school to organize. The group is now seven years old, and has been together all that time—except, once again,

for Walter, who was a radio operator in Viet Nam for fourteen months.

Their manager, Dick Griffey, first saw The Whispers at the Cinder Club in Houston. They had been working in and around the smaller clubs in the Los Angeles area. Not anymore. In the last year, The Whispers have played all over the country in large rooms and concert halls. Their goal is to pack the biggest halls—the Forum in L. A., Madison Square Garden, Las Vegas, and Miami. Places like that.

One of their earliest professional breaks was appearing in Salt Lake City on a bill with Sonny and Cher in 1965. More recently, The Whispers have played the Hollywood Palladium with the Four Tops and the Apollo with Joe Tex. They got a rare standing ovation at the Apollo, and it whetted their appetites for more of the same. They have appeared on the nationally syndicated "Soul Train" television show out of L.A., and on "Boss City", a local show on WKHJ-TV, also in L. A. They have had five

national chart records under the direction of producer Ron Carson.

They appear frequently at high schools, where they talk to the kids about the importance of finishing school. They play their old high school in Watts annually—and tell the kids that just because they are from Watts doesn't mean they have to be tough, dope-talking dudes from "the street." The Whispers are totally opposed to any kind of narcotics (grass obviously, included). They don't drink, either. But they do enjoy plenty of feminine companionship—two are Happily Married Men. The rest enjoy playing the field and checking out the players.

Their name, The Whispers, evolved naturally when the group was going into a recording studio without a proper name. They sat around passing suggestions and someone came up with The Whispers—a good name for a group which makes its point without histrionics—singing and dancing, but never shouting to be heard.

All five of The Whispers are

expert acrobatic dancers. Nick does their choreography. Nick, Marcus, and Gordy (usually the middle men in the group) do the heaviest dancing. They all do spins, turns, and levels, and they use available mikes, not lavaliers. They avoid cliches and try to express personal involvement on stage. They work hard for a professional look.

They do much of their own writing. Their publishing company is Fran-Oak. Gordy and Nick are the principal writers. Gordy works out the melody on piano and Nick writes the lyrics. They all work on final arrangements. The Whispers' favorite composers include Quincy Jones, Curtis Mayfield, Jim Webb, Dee Ervin, Billy Stewart, Burt Bacharach, and the Beatles. The Hi-Loes, Four Freshmen, Flamingos, Carpenters, and Bread are singers they respect. The O'jays' from Cincinnati, Sammy Davis, Jr., Fred Astaire, "the late, great Jesse Belvin," and Tom and Jack Jones are other musical influences.

## Theatrical World

NEW YORK — Sonny Carson, the Brooklyn activist, is leading a campaign to get 12-year-old Tommy Hicks, who plays young Sonny in Paramount Pictures' "The Education of Sonny Carson", out of Wiltwyck Training School. The youngster, who is making his acting debut in the movie now shooting in Brooklyn, was placed in the institution over a year ago after he couldn't get along with his father. He also had a fascination for cars—just like the real Sonny did as a kid.

Tamara Dobson, of "Cleopatra Jones" fame has signed a six-figure contract with Warner Bros. for two more pictures next year.

Three Hollywood studios are vying to do the film based on the life of Josephine Baker. Her asking price at the moment, however, is astronomical.

"Sesame Street", the popular educational TV series for pre-schoolers enters its fifth broadcast season on Monday, Nov. 19.

Warner Bros. to release "Black Belt Jones" in January, co-starring Jim "Enter the Dragon" Kelly and Gloria Hendry.

Irwin Yablans, producer of "The Education of Sonny Carson" is keeping his figures crossed when, for three days, he has five Brooklyn youth gangs reenacting street rumbles. He's afraid they might act "for real".

N.J. Daniels, a black member of the Dallas police department has a role in "Executive Action", the motion picture dealing with the planning, execution and aftermath of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Daniels has been in New York City this week for publicity prior to the film's premiere. Burt Lancaster, Robert Ryan and Will Geer star in what has been billed as "the most controversial film of our time".

Arrangements have been completed for Warner Bros. to hold a special education-oriented preview screening in Hartford, Conn. of its critically acclaimed epic of 19th Century Swedish settlement in North America, "The New Land". The film a continuation of "The Emigrants," will open Nov. 17.

Gordon Parks, Sr., who will begin directing Paramount Pictures' "Leadbelly", says the hunt for a new Black actor to portray the title role is "wide open". Says Parks: "I feel that out there somewhere is a really great young actor who's going to be just perfect for this role."

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Benjamin S. Ruffin



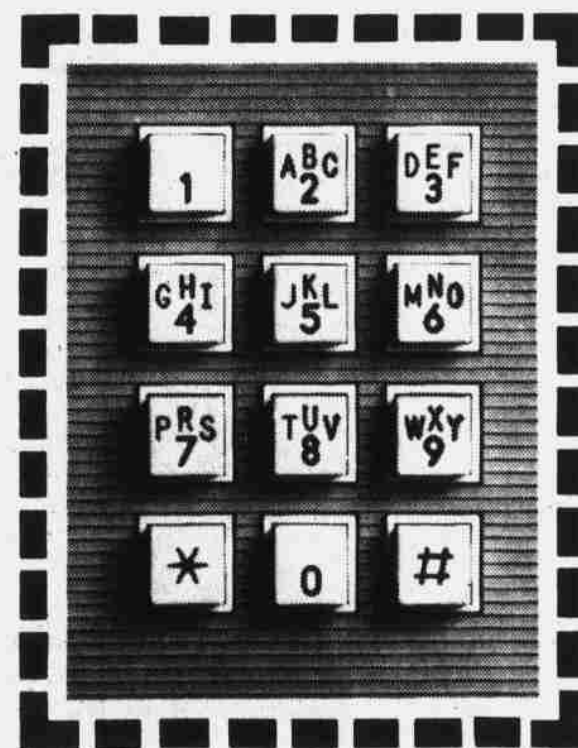
**MISS BLACK SOUTH CAROLINA**—Rosetta Barnes of Rock Hill (center), is the star of the Winthrop College production of "Dr. Vanilla and the Short Tall Tales," an original musical comedy for the young and the young at heart. Miss Barnes, a Winthrop freshman, is shown rehearsing with other members of the cast. The play will run Nov. 14-17 in Johnson Auditorium on the Winthrop campus. Winthrop is a 3,770-student South Carolina state college.

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