

World of Books

By Dottie Butler



An Anthology Of Verse By American Negroes

This volume of verse was first completed in 1921 by two white men. Their intention was to "help white readers understand the Negro's feelings on certain questions..." They also hoped that Negro readers would not see their "honest, unbiased appraisal" as "debilitating patronage" but as that which it was—"unbiased appraisal."

Poets included are not only well-known greats, such as Phyllis Wheatley, Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Weldon Johnson and Countee Cullen but also lesser known artists, such as George Moses Horton, Joseph Seamon Cotter and John Wesley Holloway. Each poet's works are preceded by brief biographical statements.

White and Jackson clearly state in their introduction that Paul Laurence Dunbar is the leader among black poets. (Unfortunately work on this book was completed prior to the Harlem Renaissance.) They act accordingly by including thirty-one of his poems. His famous "In the Morning" is omitted but some, such as "How Lucy Backslid," do contain the humor and coarse Negro dialect present in the former.

De times is mighty stirrin' 'mong de
people up ouah way,
Dey 'sputin' an' dey argyin' an' fussin'
night an' day,
An' all dis monst'ous trouble dat hit meks
me tiashed to tell
Is 'bout dat Lucy Jackson dat was sich a
mighty belle.

James Weldon Johnson, another leader among black poets, (though not acknowledged by White and Jackson) also writes some of his works in dialect. In "Answer to Prayer" he asks "de Lawd" for a turkey.

Der ain't no use in sayin' de Lawd
won't answer prah;
If you know how to ax Him, I knows
He's bound to heah.

De trouble is some people don't as de
proper way,
Den w'en dey git's no answer dey
doubts de use to pray.

Not all the poems are in Negro dialect. Most are in standard English. They represent a broad cross-section of Negro thought and verse.

The authors of this volume, not only include an index of titles and poets, but also a section of bibliographical and critical notes.

Probably, the most valuable portion of this book is the latter section. It gives very informative critical notes on the volumes used in its preparation with the exception of those by Paul Laurence Dunbar which are easily accessible at any library.

If, for no other reason, this book is valuable because it presents another opportunity for the public to read more literature by talented black poets. Although the authors' personal opinions are questionable (and excusable since the material was collected in 1921), this book offers an abundance of pleasure reading.



Shirley Verrett

Shirley Verrett To Give Recital

Soprano Shirley Verrett, who has won international acclaim for her operatic role as Lady Macbeth, will give a recital at 8:15 p.m. Thursday (Jan. 22) in Wait Chapel at Wake Forest University.

The recital is part of the university's 1980-81 Artists Series. Admission is by season ticket or by ticket purchased at the door.

The first of Miss Verrett's many performances in the Verdi operat "Macbeth" was in 1975 with the La Scala Opera Company of Milan. She also is well-known for her leading roles in the Metropolitan Opera productions of "The Trojans" by Berlioz, "Norma" by Bellini and "The Siege of Corinth" by Rossini. She performs frequently as a soloist with major symphony groups in the United States, including the New York Philharmonic, and has sung with numerous opera companies throughout this country and Europe.

Verrett will sing *lieder* (songs) by Beethoven, Schubert, Chausson, Debussy, Samuel Barber, and David Diamond.

"With Ossie & Ruby" To Premiere On Public Television

"With Ossie & Ruby," a 13-part series of 30-minute variety/entertainment programs reflecting America's multicultural heritage, will premiere nationally Saturday, February 14, at 7:30 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings for area broadcast times).

A varied anthology of comedy, music, drama and literature, "With Ossie & Ruby," hosted by famed entertainers Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, is produced for PBS by KERA-TV, Dallas/Fort Worth. Major funding is from Alcoa Foundation, with additional funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and public television stations.

Each week, "With Ossie & Ruby" will electronically update the ancient art of storytelling. Davis, Dee and their special guests will bring fresh interpretations, through music and the spoken word, to the time-tested techniques of the campfire yarnspinner, the wandering minstrel, the balladeer and blues singer, the turks of Tin Pan Alley and the kings of the Cotton Club, the vaudevillians and the evangelists. Many of the programs will present dramatizations based on the works of some of America's most gifted, though often forgotten or neglected, poets, novelists and playwrights.

Guest stars featured on various programs include the prima donna of jazz, Della Reese; father-and-son actors Robert and Kevin Hooks; jazz masters-pianist Billy Taylor and drummer Max Roach; actor/playwright Samm-Art Williams, author of the Broadway hit "Home"; legendary humorist John Henry Faulk; and comedian Cleavon Little.

Also featured on the series are outspoken politician and former UN Ambassador Andrew Young, poet and educator Sterling Brown, actress Miriam Colton and her Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, journalist Felipe Luciano, film critic Donald Bogel, novelist Toni Cade Bambara, actress Butterfly McQueen and many others.

"With Ossie & Ruby" reaches backward to the tradition of the storyteller," explains Davis, "to reaffirm positive human values. The series is a joyous celebration of life, a tribute to the melting pot that molded the American character. We're going to



Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee are hosts of WITH OSSIE & RUBY, a new variety-entertainment series of 13 half-hour programs, premiering Saturday, Feb. 14 at 7:30 p.m. on Channels 4 & 26 (check local listings). Produced for PBS by KERA, Dallas/Fort Worth, the series is a celebration of life reflecting America's multi-cultural heritage. Photo: Kawame Braithwaite.

present some very talented actors, musicians and writers to achieve the spellbinding charm of the storyteller. We're going to entertain our viewers by igniting their imaginations."

"In other words," adds Ms. Dee, "we're going to share with our audience the poems, stories and music that have meant the most to us. The show's about the fun, adventure and struggle of life. It's a show about spirit, soul and heart."

"With Ossie & Ruby" also features profiles and vignettes of some very special people who daily demonstrate their commitment to helping others. One program, for example, profiles Mother Hale, a Harlem woman who has devoted her life to rearing orphans born addicted to drugs. Another show spotlights the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, a dynamic group of young thespians that has become one of the most respected repertory troupes in New York.

"Each program features a different format depending on the subject being presented," explains producer-director David Dove. "We're trying to push television into an exploration of its fullest potential. Everyone involved with the series has a

tremendous excitement and enthusiasm because we all recognize nothing quite like it has ever been done before. Sure, we've broken a few rules and taken a few chances, but we want to give our viewers something new and refreshing. I think television has become too predictable. "With Ossie & Ruby" is full of surprises."

A major emphasis of the series is to introduce American television audiences to little-known minority and ethnic writers, performers and artists; however, stresses Davis, the series is not only about being black or brown or white, but it also explores the common landscape shared by all Americans.

"Black? You bet," says Davis, whose show business career has included dozens of stage, film and television productions, including the much-praised Broadway play "Purlie Victorious," which he wrote and starred in. "And brown and white. Minority, you ask? Who isn't a minority in this country? All of us, no matter where we come from or what color we are, have a story to tell, and when you get right down to it, all our stories are pretty much the same. Our aim is to make clear the connections shared by all people. That's what 'With Ossie & Ruby' is all about."

"With Ossie & Ruby" was conceived and written by Ossie Davis and Ruby

REYNOLDA Cinema 1&2 1401 11th St. - METRO CENTER STIR CRAZY R 2:30-5:7-15-9:30 Daily	University Plaza Cinema 1&2 722 28th St. - UNIVERSITY PLAZA FIRST FAMILY R Daily 9-5-7-9
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restrict the executive branch's duty to enforce the Constitution by vetoing the bill. But the anti-busing crowd has promised to come back with it in the new Congress, hopeful the new President will sign it.

Mr. Reagan can disabuse them of that notion. Even if he's not a fan of busing, and even if he doesn't understand the need for busing in some cases, he should understand the threat to the powers of the presidency posed by such a restriction on a federal Department to enforce laws and constitutional rights it is sworn to uphold.

Another endangered piece of civil rights legislation is the Voting Rights Act. Senator Thurmond, the former Dixiecrat, wants to kill it either directly or by making it applicable to all 50 states instead of those that have a proven history of restricting the right to vote.

Making the Act apply to all the states would effectively doom it. Even if such a move passed the Congress it would mean a statute almost impossible to enforce. It's a back-door way to steal the vote away from many blacks.

Other issues too, are on the horizon. The new President will have to decide early on whether he will aid, and abet vicious attempts to deprive black people of their constitutional rights in issues of key importance, or whether he will fulfill his promise to be president of all of the people.

The President swears to uphold the laws of the land, of which none are higher than the Constitution that protects our rights. I hope he will be true to his oath and demonstrate his support for civil rights.

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