

Woman .the first Christmas music over fields of Bethlehem



MS. XERMONA CLAYTON

NEW YORK — Xernona Clayton could well be called the first lady of "color" TV. Back

in 1967. Ms. Clayton began hosting her own weekly TV talk show on WAGA in Atlanta — a first for the country, and the beginning of a prestigious career in media that has spanned more than half a decade. When superactive Xernona isn't busy producing and starring on her own television show, or organizing fund-raising events for the MLK, Jr. Birthplace Memorial Restoration Committee or for sickle cell anemia research, she might be found at a meeting of the Television and Motion Picture Commission for the State of Georgia, or on location for her role in "The House on Skull Mountain," a Black horror film being shot in Georgia.

As an active member of the TMP Commission, it was recently one of Xernona's duties to show young, Black producer, Joe Hartsfield, various sites in the state suitable for location shooting. Hartsfield was so impressed with her that he proposed her taking a part in his film "I wasn't at all interested in acting at first," recalls Xernona, "but I became interested because I was so committed to his project. I like to see people who have energy and the emotional vitality to identify a goal and see it through to the end."

The late Ralph McGill, a famous journalist and publisher of The Atlanta Constitution, once called Xernona a natural communicator. And it was McGill who was in many ways responsible for her beginning in television. Says Xernona, "I sincerely believe that white people don't hate us because we are Black. They just have not had the privilege of knowing us. They need to be educated."

During the early years Xernona doubted her talents at show business, but her beaming charm, optimism and intelligence made her show an instant hit. In the past six years, she has had a full spectrum of guests on her show, from governors to welfare mothers. And, on almost all her shows she features whites as well as Blacks, because that's her philosophy: "Racism is what we've been fighting to get rid of."

Editor, Maurice Peterson, profiles Atlanta's first lady of television in the December issue of Essence, and finds her life devoted to helping others. Concludes Peterson, if Xernona Clayton could have one wish, she would be a philanthropist. However, stuck with reality, she can't afford to give money, therefore she gives of herself — and she has much to give.

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Hymns and carols to celebrate the Child's birth have come down to us through the ages. Mortals from many different ethnic origins have expressed their love, awe, joy and praise, the music varying according to their particular culture and the customs of the day.

Certainly inspired, the beloved favorites still retain all their charm and appeal, probably because of their simplicity and sincerity which generations identify with, through the ages.

Carols are primarily folk-songs, even if motivated by

so that my feeling of devotion overflowed, and the tears ran from my eyes, and I was happy in them".

St. Ambrose, 340-397 A.D.



religious impulse. As such, they are often in the popular vein, and some are even comically unrestrained.

Hymns, on the other hand, are songs of praise for God, according to St. Augustine. To quote the Saint, writing about hymns by St. Ambrose: "I wept at the beauty of thy hymns and canticles... the truth streamed into my heart."



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