

Theatricals Music Features

BILL ROBINSON, TAP KING, MADE HONORARY CAPTAIN

Los Angeles.—The banquet Hall at the YMCA twenty-eight street, Branch was the scene of an elaborate banquet given in honor of the King of tap dancers, world's famous dancing star of stage and screen, Bill "Edgangles" Robinson.

The occasion was the presentation of a beautiful solid gold emerald incrustated badge, making him an honorary Captain of the Los Angeles Police Department.

The presentation of the badge, was made in person by Mayor F. L. Shaw in a most appropriate address. Bill in his inimitable way responded to the presentation and honor in a short that seemed to echo the sentiments of the people of his race and in whose behalf Bill Robinson is such an ardent

worker. The people of the world are proud of Bill Robinson and his achievements, a splendid personality his loyalty and philanthropy is known everywhere and appreciated by everyone.

Dr. H. H. Towles was chairman of the Citizens' committee in behalf of Mayor Frank L. Shaw in the coming recall election and around the table was grouped some of the most prominent citizens of church, social and political life of Los Angeles and the cream of the nation's entertaining world rendered a fitting program of song music and dancing. Among them were Miss Jeni Le Gon mistress of ceremonies; Louie Armstrong, Eddie Anderson and Johnnie Taylor, the famous piano playing Beal Brothers.

NEGRO "MIKADO" OPENS SUNDAY

CHICAGO, Sept. 22 (ANP)—Sept. 25, is the opening date for the Federal theatre's all Negro version of the "Mikado" to be produced at the Great Northern theatre.

Ardent Savoyards who remember Gilbert and Sullivan's most popular work in its whimsical Japanese setting, will see the same setting, the same costumes, and hear the same music, this time, produced by the Negro unit of the Federal theatre, they will hear, also, a syncopated version of the music.

The opera, as it has heretofore been known, is a typical English affair. Without losing any of its charm the cast has made it as American as a baseball game.

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JEAN CHILDRESS GRIEVES UNNECESSARILY FOR DAD

New York City, N. Y., Sept. 22 Little Jean Rosa Childress, age 3, whose father plays the role of the crippled 'Jacques' in the WPA Federal Theatre's production of 'Haiti' at Dally's Sixty-third St. Theatre, begged her mother to take her to see her dad do his stuff on the stage.

In the last act of "Haiti," Alvin Childress (her father) is caught spying on the French, and is swiftly sentenced to the 'wheel.' It was at this point, when Childress presumably falls dead, that Jean Rosa couldn't take it, for with a howl that rocked the theatre, she made it clear she wanted her dad alive if possible. It was not until Jean Rosa was taken backstage and given a mello roll by her dad, that she began to smile.

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PERSONALITIES IN MUSIC

HARRY T. BURLEIGH, A.S.C.A.P.

The Student That Inspired Dvorak



By Daniel I. McNamara

"SWING low, sweet chariot!" The stirring strains of this Negro spiritual are mirrored in the second theme of the first movement of Dvorak's "New World Symphony." Dvorak died in 1904, but the young Negro student who first revealed to the famous Bohemian composer the beauties of this refrain and of scores of other spirituals has lived to become one of the most notable figures in American music—Harry T. Burleigh, A.S.C.A.P., famous baritone soloist and composer.

Burleigh had won a scholarship in the National Conservatory of Music in New York while Dvorak was its head in the early '90's. Born in Erie, Pennsylvania, December 6, 1866, he learned music first from his talented mother, a college graduate whose cultivated mind flowered in the genius of her son. Dvorak often listened hours at a time while the young student played the spirituals he had learned from his mother. Their lasting impression on Dvorak is seen in the music of his New World Symphony, first performed at Carnegie Hall in 1893.

While still a student, Burleigh won appointment as baritone soloist in St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church. Now, as the only Negro member of a choir of 120 voices, he is completing his forty-fifth year of continuous service. Worshipers in the famous institution long since have come to regard Burleigh's singing as an integral part of their de-

votions. As a concert singer he has appeared before distinguished audiences in Europe and America; and twice sang before King Edward VII.

A tireless student, Burleigh is a master of German, French, and Italian. He has an honorary degree of Master of Arts from Atlanta University, and of Doctor of Music from Howard University. When Victor Herbert organized the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers in 1914 as an agency of musical copyright protection, he invited Burleigh to become a charter member.

Burleigh's first successful composition, "Jean," has been a concert favorite for many years. His arrangement of "Deep River" was one of his earlier efforts. John McCormack sang his "Little Mother of Mine" the world over. His list of original compositions runs into the hundreds.

Burleigh leads a busy life, but finds ample time to befriend many struggling young artists. He gave up the concert stage ten years ago for more attention to his church work and editorial duties with a music publishing house. He shows no evidence of advancing years, his rich voice ringing out in solo parts with the full vigor of his early concert triumphs. Burleigh deprecates his part in the New World Symphony, but musicians who know the facts trace in Dvorak's impressive symphonic creation the unmistakable influence of the young student who himself was destined to achieve fame as a composer long after Dvorak had passed on.

(Music Features & Photo Syndicate)

A PERSIAN LOVE SONG

Ah, sad are they who knew not love,
But, far from passion's tear and smiles,
Drift down a moonless sea, beyond
The silvery coasts of fairy isles
And sadder they whose longing lips
Kiss empty air, and never touch
The dear warm mouth of those whose they love—
Waiting, wasting, suffering much.

George Bernard Shaw's "Androcles and the Lion"

Federal Theatre officials chose the Shavian comedy for a Harlem vehicle, bearing in mind the overwhelming success of "Macbeth" and "Haiti" in Harlem.

The play will have a cast of more than 150 Negro actors, including Jack Carter and Edna Thomas of "Macbeth" fame, and Daniel Haynes, movie, stage and radio artist.

BOJANGLES, 10 WHITE PLAYERS DROPPED AT 20TH CENTURY

Hollywood, Sept. 22, (A.N.P.) Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, world's greatest tap dancer, has been removed from the yearly contract list at 20th Century-Fox film studios where he has scored many successes with Shirley Temple, and will work on a picture-to-picture basis. He is currently working in "Hard To Get," which started production last week.

At the same time, it was announced that 10 white contract players had also been dropped, among them Ethel Merman, Simone Simon, Claire Trevor and Helen Westley.

WPA. NEGRO THEATRE TO OPEN SEASON WITH "ANDROCLÉS AND THE LION"

The WPA. Federal Theatre project, in inaugurating its fourth consecutive season in Harlem, has selected for its 13th presentation,

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LOTTE LEHMANN — FIRST ATTRACTION IN MUSICAL ART SOCIETY PROGRAM

Hampton Institute, Va., Sept. 22 —The Musical Art Society of Hampton Institute presents, as its first offering of the season, the famous soprano, Lotte Lehmann, the artist, who according to the Boston Herald, "has everything a singer needs."

Coming to Ogden Hall on Monday evening, October 10, at 8:15 o'clock, Madame Lehmann will be preceded, not only by highest commendatory tributes of language, but by a record of achievement which is above mere lip appraisals.

She has sung under the foremost conductors. At the great Salzburg festival in 1935, Toscanini chose her for his Fidelio performance. Bruno Walter has put aside his baton several times to accompany her.

Current History — THE NEGRO IN CUBA

HAVANA, Cuba, Sept. 22 (by Ben Frederic Carruthers M. A. for ANP)—Cuba, the baby republic of the New World, has had a long and important history as a colony of Spain and for many years was considered the brightest jewel in the Spanish imperial crown. The abolition of slavery of King Alfonso XII in 1880 marks the beginning of the new day in which the Cuban Negro, come into his own at last, was to outstrip all other American Negroes in his fight for justice and a share in the political, social and economic life of the republic.

During the War of Independence 1898, the ex-slaves joined the armies of the Cuban Rebels and by their loyalty and bravery, won the respect and admiration of the Chiefs of the Revolution: Jose Marti, Maximo Gomez, and others. Two of the most highly respected Revolutionary commanders were the mulatto general, Antonio Maceo to whom the Cuban government has erected the most imposing monuments, and the Negro General Guillermo Moncada whose portrait hangs in the magnificent \$22,000,000 capitol building in Havana.

The tradition of active participation of the Negroes and mestizos in the political affairs of the Nation in spite of American intervention in the affairs of Cuba since the War of Independence persists to the present time. Today in the Senate four of the thirty-six Senators are "hombres de color" and fourteen of the hundred and forty representatives are the legislative voice of the 1,500,000 Negroes and Mestizos who have the right to vote and to hold office. In the appointive political offices there are many important posts held by men of color. In the contemporary cabinet of His Excellency, Federico Laredo Bru, President of the Republic the post of Bajo Secretario de Justicia in charge of the efficient police force of the Island is held by a Negro gentleman by the name of Cespedes who is also President of the Club Atonas of Havana, one of the finest Negro Clubs in the world.

In the armed forces of the nation under the direct supervision of the dynamic Chief of the Revolution, Colonel Fulgencio Batista, the Negro is well represented in every rank. The efficient police force of the Republic has hundreds of colored men enrolled and they are not shunted off to the Negro districts which simply do not exist in the cities of Cuba.

In the hospitals and schools of the nation the color line is virtually unknown to staff and patient, student and teacher. The magnificent new Instituto Civico Militar has a student body of some 700 students of which one-third are colored. They all are wards of the government and enjoy the same privileges in the school and dormitory life.

By chauffeurs and conductors

WORDS WITHOUT MUSIC

By LOUIS REID
(Music Features & Photo Syndicate)

WITH the exception of the Duke of Windsor when he was the Prince of Wales, the members of the British royal family rarely express themselves concerning popular music. The last occasion the world got an inkling of the tunes most preferred at Buckingham Palace was several years ago when a list of the music for a court ball was given out by Queen Mary.



Louis Reid

We remember the list, for prominent upon it was our old rumba friend, "The Peanut Vendor." Indeed, it was the only modern tune represented. The Queen, who chose the pieces to be played, seemed to believe that old tunes, like old wine, are best; gave her chief approval to the waltzes of Johann Strauss.

The Duke of Windsor, as Prince of Wales, was an enthusiastic follower of American popular songs, and scarcely a month passed that Tin Pan Alley song-pluggers didn't seek to tie up H.R.H. with some new ditty, under such billing as "the latest favorite of the Prince of Wales." It meant money at the sheet-music counters.

That "Marche Militaire" Leading classical march as rated by the number of performances, is, according to the surveys of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, Schubert's "Marche Militaire." But there is good reason—so much military marching going on throughout the world. Aside from its public recitals, it is also a pet of piano teachers and their students.

Next to this composition the most favored classical marches are Bizet's "March of the Toreadors" from "Carmen"; Tschalkowsky's "Marche Slav"; Wagner's March from "Tannhauser" and Grieg's "March of the Dwarfs."

Reply to reader: Alfred Lee was the author of the old comic song, "The Man on the Flying Trapeze."

Most often heard of the oldtime tunes are those associated with Blue Ridge mountaineers, cowboys, New England farms, the plantations of mammyland, the Broadway of the Teddy Roosevelt era.

Sentimental America ever has an ear for its old songs. Yet they must be well played, well sung. It even calls loudly for the old airs of Broadway, of the gay and brilliant Broadway before it had succumbed utterly to blatant ballyhoo, fruit juice stands, cheap little stores, second-run movie houses. The old Broadway inspired George M. Cohan, Irving Berlin and a dozen others. The Broadway of today brings them nothing but a sigh.

It's almost time for another seasonally successful American song. We haven't had one since "The Last Round Up." It is the tunes of foreign origin—such as "Ti-Pi-Tin," "Vieni, Vieni," that have dominated America's popular music world in the last two years.

Symphony orchestras and their assisting pianists have for some inappreciable reason practically overlooked Grieg's Concerto this season. Yet, for sheer beauty of melody there is no concerto in its class.

Dance bandleaders seem to have ceased their custom of marrying their vocalists. There was a time, not so long ago, when the bandleaders and their songbirds were generally abiding by the spirit of the Tin Pan Alley serenades which they were performing. Notable examples of such romances were George Olsen and Ethel Shutta, Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hilliard, Herbie Kay and Dorothy Lamour, John Kirby and Maxine Sullivan. In each of these cases professional separation followed. Their careers have profited, as a result.

are of both races and both sexes, bands and orchestras both municipal and private are bi-racial, the faculty of the National Conservatory of Music is composed of the outstanding musicians from both races. The popular and much of the classical music of Cuba rests frankly and alluringly upon an African base and many of the popular congas, rumbas, and danzas proclaim the charms of the Negro woman in the lyrics and the charms of Negro rhythm in the music.

All public places are open to the dark skinned Cuban and the natives actively resent American and British attempts to set up their fetish of a color line. The Cuban's standing in the community, is determined by culture and by breeding rather than by race or money. The traditions of old Spain govern to a great extent the social life of the nation.

All English speaking people are assumed to be Americans and as such fair game for exploitation by the Cubans. Because of the deplorable conduct of the non-Spanish speaking Americans who swarm to Havana, the American dollar commands respect where the American himself does not. Of all foreigners the Mexican command most respect because of the out and out Socialist program of the President of Mexico, Lazaro Cardenas. The Cuban people are ninety percent pro-Loyalist in the current Spanish Civil War.

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