

Theatricals Music Features

GOSSIP OF THE MOVIE LOTS

By HARRY LEVETTE

Hollywood—(ANP)—The Golden State Art award is the newest departure in all-colored cast motion picture circles and although it has modestly made its debut it is to be a permanent institution. It will fill a need toward establishing a goal for Negro Artist to strive for in their portrayals of modern Negro life or in historical or in period plays, if in the future they too are brought into being on the screen.

The idea originated with a little group here who deplored the fact that no colored screen player has won the annual award allotted to Hollywood stars, nor has even been listed among the runner-ups.

Nor during the number of years when the famous "Wampus Babies" or new starlets were named from the ranks of young actresses were ever any colored ones even considered. So representative men 11 in number, located in as many key cities of the United States, were asked to make their selection of the most outstanding players who had appeared in all colored cast pictures during the 1937-38 season.

These included Ralph Cooper, Herbie Jeffries, Martan Moreland, Flournoy Miller and others who appeared in "Bargain with Bullets," "Spirit of Youth," "Life Goes On," "Harlem on the Prairie," "Two Gun Man from Harlem," and "The Duke is Tops."

The plan was absolutely fair and impartial; no suggestions or advice tending to influence the judges was sent and the decision will rest on the majority of the votes when all are in.

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ance company with headquarters here, generously put up the first trophy, which will be awarded the winners. Incidentally the award was not named after the Insurance company, but after the nickname of California, "The Golden State." As soon as all the votes are in, a public reception will be held and the winner personally presented with the beautiful expensive trophy.

The judges asked to serve this year were Messrs. Robert E. Abbott, publisher of the Chicago Defender; C. A. Franklin, publisher of the Kansas City Call; C. B. Powell, publisher of the Absterdam News; Cliff Mackay, Atlanta Daily World; Carl Murphy, Baltimore Afro-American; Billy Rowe, theatrical writer of The Pittsburg Courier; George Ross, of the Denver Star; Roscoe Dunjee, Oklahoma Black Dispatch; Wm. Nunn, Pittsburg Courier; Albert G. Barnett, news editor of the Associated Negro press, and Russell Jackson, theatrical editor of the Ohio State News. Mr. Barnett and Mr. Jackson were the first to mail in their votes. The rest are urged to hasten, so the outcome may be made public.

All the studios both major and minor are hitting on all cylinders, getting as much production before the holidays as possible.

LESLIE'S 'BLACKBIRDS' OPENS IN BOSTON

Boston, Mass.—It is the first time all-Negro musicale in five years, the stage has seen such an attraction other than Federal projects. Lew Leslie international impresario presented "Blackbirds of 1939." Opened at the Majestic Theatre, election night.

Principals: Lean Horne, Hamtree Harrington, Pigmeat Markham, Bobby Evans, J. Rosamond, Johnson Choir, Taps Miller, Baby Hines, Norman McConny, Atta Flake. Van Grona's Swing Ballet. Music by Rube Bloom, lyrics by Johnny Mercer, Dorothy Sachs, Louis Haber, Choral arrangements by J. Rosamond Johnson; Dialogue by Nat Dorfman; Choreography by Eugene Van Grona; orchestrations by Frede Gerfe and Ken Macomber; settings by Mabel A. Buell; costumes by Veronica; entire show conceived and staged by Lew Leslie. Blackbirds owned by Elbony Productions, Inc.

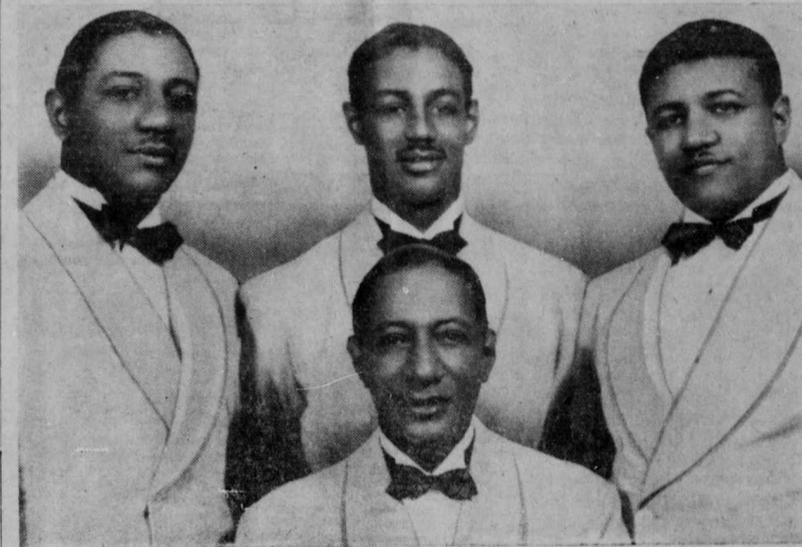
Blackbirds is of the typical Negro show variety enveloping interesting and novel scenes of Harlem life, chock full of comedy, love, romance and melody divulging the modern trivialities with numbers rackets. Father Divine cultists in the life of a happy people.

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MILLS BROTHERS PAY FT VALLEY INFORMAL CALL



Fort Valley, Ga.—The N. and I. School's student body received a rare treat when the famous Mills Brothers sang at chapel time Tuesday morning November 18.

The students had to wait for a few minutes before the Mills Brothers arrived and so enthusiastic

were they, that Principle George Towns found it difficult to talk to them about anything else but the Brothers. When these singers swung into such numbers as "The Lambeth Walk" and "Lazy Bones" with real instrumental music, the students were pleased beyond the

extent of their fondest hopes.

During their stay here to appear at the local theatre in a tour of the South, the Mills Brothers were given lodging and meals in Fort Valley's ultra-modern home economic building.

ON THE AIR BOJANGLES' AT APOLLO

By SALLYE BELL for ANP

One of the most stimulating Negro musical forms which will be heard at New Masses' "From Spirituals to Swing" concert at Carnegie Hall, New York, on Dec. 21 is the "Boogie-woogie" style of piano playing, characterized by its tremendous volume and masterful left-hand technique. It is the result of the poverty of Negro Americans who could not afford orchestras on their festive occasions, and so were forced to give their piano playing the drive of a jazz orchestra. The greatest living masters of this Boogie-woogie style are Meade "Lux" Lewis of Louisville, Albert Ammons of Chicago, Bob Johnson of Robinsonville, Miss., and Pete Johnson of Kansas City, Mo., all of whom are going to New York for the concert.

The story of "Lux" Lewis life is an interesting one and a typical of the neglect of native genius. In the early twenties he recorded one of his compositions, "Honky-Tonk Train Blues," for a cheap record company, and through the years this recording became a classic of jazz to a few American and European enthusiasts. But no one knew what had become of Lewis, so five years ago John Hammond, who is producing the New Masses' concert, started to look for "Lux." He found him last year washing cars in a Chicago Southside garage, and took him to New York where he recorded "Honky-Tonk Train Blues," "Yancy Special," "Whistling Blues," and "Celeste Blues," for American consumption. After these recording Lewis again dropped into obscurity because there was no appreciation in America for his talents. He returned to Chicago where he is now working in a garage, and his appearance in New York for New Masses' "From Spirituals to Swing," concert will bring him before an audience whose interest may finally break the jinx for him.

"From Spirituals to Swing" was conceived and produced to John Hammond and directed by Charles Freedman, and will portray American Negro music as it was invented, developed, sung, played, and heard by the Negro himself—the true untainted folk song, spirituals, work songs, songs of protest, chain gang songs, Holy Roller chants, shouts, blues, minstrel music, honky-tonk piano, early jazz, and finally, the contemporary swing of Count Basie, presented by the greatest living artists from the South. Southwest and Negro communities in the North. It is the first comprehensive concert of the true and exciting music of the



Bill (Bojangles) Robinson, better known as the Mayor of Harlem makes his first theatre appearance in three years at the famous 125th St. Apollo Theatre. This will be Robinson's only New York Theatre appearance, Wen Talbert's Band, Ford, Marshall and Jones and Three Peppers will be prominent in the revue cast.

Club in San Antonio, Tex., is featuring a number of name bands on a week-end policy, and has already signed up Erskine Hawkins for Nov. 24-26 and Chick Webb for Dec. 15 and 16. "What Do You Know About Love" and "Strictly Swing," new Bluebird recording by Erskine Hawkins, was released last Wednesday. . . . If you enjoy Rochester on Jack Benny's program you'll rave over his performance in "You Can't Take It With You" it's a killer diller.

As a climax to the celebration of Negro achievement in Atlanta last week, Prof. R. E. Cureton, head of the Department of Social Science at Boker H. Washington high school, spoke over station WAGA last Sunday on the achievements of the Negro press.

GETTIN' IN TH' GROOVE—Jimmie Mundy, former arranger, with Benny Goodman has signed with Gene Krupa, one time drummer of the same band who now has his own orchestra playing the Palomar in Los Angeles. Jim Mundy left for L. A. via the airlines last Friday. The Olmos Dinner

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FOOTLIGHT FLICKERS

By Al Moses for ANP

New York, Nov. 24.—Theatre-goers who come from far and near to watch what's going on in the "Harlem Sector," are saying right out loud today that Chick Carter has the finest drummer boy any band can boast of. That means that when Chick Carter and his troupe received the top billing for the parish in which you reside, . . . get out there and see for yourself if this 22 year old youngster deserves rating over such as Lionel Hampton, Chick Webb, Sonny Greer, Walter Thompson, et al, et al.

Henry Armstrong bounded into the Apollo the other night and tried to make himself very obscure in a darkened side box. But such was a well nigh impossibility with Ralph Cooper, Hollywood star doing the "MC" for a week. In a raucous voice that carried to the exit doors, Ralph demanded that Henry take a bow after announcing his presence to the crowd. Tsk--tsk--tsk--such is fame. One never knows the meaning of privacy after they get on top. . . . did you say Henry was hiding out all the time and someone hadn't tipped Cooper off that he was in the house? ??—we'll strangle you if you say—YES.

WILLIE BRANT, without the band, or. . . with it, is still Harlem's Glamour Lad Number One, and that is all one needs to be in order to keep the landlord from hanging out the "dispossessed sign" . . . eh what William does the announcing at the Midnight shows amateur nites, and in between, draws down a sizeable check for doing something you'd never guess—plain and fancy—"MUGGING".

That rag called "TOPS", is just what it's advertised, the Solid Tops, get a copy of it and stick it away in your trunk, one day in the distant tomorrow, you'll thank me for telling you to do so.

GOODMAN ADDS ANOTHER ARRANGER, F. D. NORMON

New York, (ANP)—Latest colored musician to crash Broadway and its attendant fame is Fred D. Normon, a Harlem arranger who has been acclaimed by both white and colored critics as one of the best.

Norman has been added to the staff of arrangers employed by Benny Goodman. The number which sold Norman to Goodman was an original tune, "Smokehouse Rhythm," which was waxed for Victor last week by the Goodman aggregation. It will be on sale within the next two weeks.

In an exclusive interview Norman said, "Now is the time for all good colored arrangers to cash in on the popularity of swing numbers. I find white orchestra more than willing to work with colored arrangers, and Goodman is one of the best with whom to work."

DUKE SCORES BEFORE 1,800 'JITTERBUGS'

KANSAS CITY.—Approximately 1,800 "jitterbugs" voiced their approval of the music poured out by Duke Ellington and his orchestra last Wednesday night at the Roseland Ballroom.

Already put "in the groove" by Harlan Leonard and his Kansas City Rockets an the Ellington fans found little difficulty swaying to the more than delectable rhythms poured out by the number one dance band in the country.

From the opening number until the final one the dancers could be heard voicing their approval of the affair.

Ellington was masterful in his handling of the band. Seated at the piano with the ease and poise that only becomes the most polished artists in the theatrical world. Ellington went about his every move graciously and knowingly.

Unemployment Compensation

Lincoln, Nebr. Nov. 12.—The Nebraska Unemployment Compensation division today appealed to Nebraska employers, who are subject to the law an have not yet filed their report forms for the quarter ending September 30, 1938, to do so immediately.

R. T. Malone, Director of the Unemployment Compensation division, pointed out that filing of these reports are necessary so that inscribing of individual employees wage credits can be completed before the payment of benefits begins next January.

DISCUSS NEGRO IN UNITED STATES LITERATURE

New York, Nov. 19 (CNA) —Margaret Bourke-White's series of photographs, "Picture of the South" served as a setting for a forum, "The Negro as a Force in American Literature," held by the league of American Writers last Sunday at the Mid Town Music Hall, 846 Seventh Avenue.

Langston Hughes, well known poet, novelist and playwright, and Genevieve Taggard author of "Calling Western Union" and several other volumes of poetry, headed an impressive list of speakers which also included Jessie Fauset Harris author of "The Chinaberry Tree, and Sterling Brown, Professor at Howard University," author of "The Southern Road" and an outstanding authority on Negro culture.

TWO NAMED TO CITY COUNCIL IN NORTHERN INDIANA

GARY, Ind., ov. 17 (ANP) Gary and East Chicago, Ind., will have Negro aldermen results of last Tuesday's elections shows.

Wilbur J. Hardaway, formerly alderman for two years but who lost in 1934 to William Anderson, Democrat, was elected from the Fifth district on the Republican ticket, beating out Benjamin Cresswell, local undertaker and Democrat.

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