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FILM ★ SCREEN ★ The Pittsburgh Courier ★ DRAMA ★ MUSIC

KEITH CIRCUIT MAY FIRE ALL COLORED ACTS, RUMOR

GOING OVER BIG

DUKE ELLINGTON

Leader of one of the most famous bands in the country, who opened a two-week engagement at the Palace Theatre, New York, last week. According to a rumor, The Duke will hit the road for an extended tour.

RUSSELL'S BENEFIT A SUCCESS

CHICAGO, Ill., June 5.—The testimonial to Sylvester Russell, given at the Indiana theatre at midnight Saturday, May 31, drew a full house, following the line-up at 11:45, which lasted until after the performance started. The appearance of Erskine Tate's orchestra from the Metropolitan theatre, which was in high favor, was met by thunderous applause as they played symphonic and lively numbers preceding the stage show in which they supported most of the acts. Jerome Carrington, who played for the entire performance, deserves much credit. Erskine Tate, who can now boast of having the most popular orchestra in the Windy City, led his buglers with glowing aplitude, art and grace, to such an extent that the audience went wild over every selection and repeatedly demanded encores. It was Tate's orchestra and the loyal comedians who appeared at their best in comedy acts, that won the pennant in generous humor on current topics of the day, and gave ample satisfaction.

Sylvester Russell Sings

The appearance of Sylvester Russell, after being introduced by Fulton Alexander, master of ceremonies, was met by a rousing reception which attested his actual popularity with the public, and the large number of personal friends he has made in Chicago to which he had to bow several times before making his speech in which he thanked first of all, Manager Harold Jacobs, who saw fit to benefit him on his record as a constructive critic of experience, retired singer of note and hero of several charities for actors and other people in his earlier days of activities, as well as thanking Mr. and Mrs. Paley who donated the theatre; thanking the actors who appeared, the orchestra and Messrs. Wesley and Hunter, the operators who threw a spotlight on Russell who wore some flashy clothes, and admitted that he looked pretty young much to the amusement of the audience. When Jerome Carrington took his seat at the piano, Mr. Russell announced that he would sing a little song, "Brighter Days Will Come Again," which he sang in Keith's Boston theatre 38 years ago, much to the delight of the younger people. He appeared in good voice and was given a wonderful reception. The absence of several performers, some who had cabaret engagements, did not mar the general good will and indulgent generosity of the audience, for their anxiety to see and hear Mr. Russell sing was proven when the audience began to file out directly after his appearance. Fulton Alexander, who interspersed his announcements with ample humor, was a good competent stage manager. Madell Thompson, the greatest Bert Williams exponent, but all around comedian and actor, carried his audience with him; Chinese Walker was another big favorite, and Oliver Hillsdale sang "Country Boy Blues," written by his late brother, Charley. Every act pleased, and while one scubred and one female singer present, did not appear, the Russell benefit was a grand financial success.

OFF-STAGE CONDUCT ALLEGED CAUSE

According to reliable information received, colored acts, which have for years' been drawing top-notch prices on the Keith (RKO) circuit, are seeing the handwriting on the wall.

A rumor, current for many months, gained considerable headway recently, with the knowledge that during the past six months, many of the acts have been laid off.

Off-Stage Conduct Bad

The conduct of the performers insofar as their audiences is concerned is O. K., according to those in the "know." Insofar as entertainment is concerned, their work is of high quality and commands nothing but respect. Those booking them, looking at their qualifications in a purely monetary way, are able to sell the acts for top prices.

But once these performers reach Keith time, they begin to show their true colors. Most of their indiscretions are committed off-stage. But all too often, they appear late for their calls, and in many cases have even appeared intoxicated.

Then again, off-stage their actions keep everyone in hot water. Fights with them are common occurrences, and managers have been kept busy getting them out of trouble, and paying "hush money" in an effort to keep the names of the stars out of the newspapers.

Then, too, their affairs of the heart, with their "sweethearts" oftimes traveling with them, and other "sweethearts" in every port they enter, keep them in continual hot water.

Men and women alike, the majority of them delight in these little "affairs of the heart," and in some cases, their unnatural relations lead to rumors of scandal which leave their taint upon the profession at large.

All big colored Broadway shows have felt this same stigma, according to stage managers. Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds," it is alleged, was "rotten." "Shuffle Along" and Chocolate Dandies" were little better. Owners and managers of shows have been forced to get rid of stars because of this condition. "Green Pastures" is feeling the effect of this insubordination. The Fox movie people, whose filming of "Hearts in Dixie" netted them a nice sum, have stated positively that the effort and worry to make another such picture isn't worth while, and they've thrown up their hands.

With the door of opportunity slowly closing in their faces, because of their own shortcomings, our actor-folk should "get next" to themselves and realize that respectability is an asset rather than a liability—regardless of what they think—and should be considered seriously.

If they don't, they're going to find themselves out in the cold—and we don't mean perhaps.

INDIANA GIRL NOW STUDYING IN ITALY

ROME, Italy, June 5.—Luvena Wallace Dethridge, popular soprano of Richmond, Ind., who recently sailed for Rome to continue her studies, arrived here last month and is at work under the direction of Italian and American maestri.

She is planning a concert tour for the near future. She can be reached at present via Sicilia No. 241, Rome, Italy.

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Mrs. Robeson's Ambition Is For Her Two Pauls, She Tells London Scribes

Pretty Wife of Noted Actor, Now Playing Role of 'Othello' In London, Is Brilliant Chemist—Gives Her Views On Race Question

Says Ivan Browning—

In a letter to the theatrical department of The Pittsburgh Courier, Ivan Browning, famous singer with the Four Harmony Kings, now going big in London, made the following comment:

"While the southern crackers are lynching our people down south, all Europe and England are bowing at the feet of both Robeson and his wife. Such is life."

ROBESON'S TRIUMPH PERSONAL

By HANNEN SWAFFER

(From the Daily Express)

LONDON, England—Paul Robeson's first night as Othello was an extraordinary affair.

Semi-celebrities poured in by the dozen. Half the unemployed stars were in the stalls. The vestibule was decorated by Epstein's bust of Robeson, and you also saw old playbills announcing "The African Roscius." The Negro who played Othello in London nearly a century ago. One of them showed how Othello was followed by a sensational feat on the flying wire. This seemed to have given Maurice Browne's producer an idea, for a strange dance is introduced into the new "Othello," one in which two young women jump about for reasons I have not yet understood.

Robeson was being congratulated everywhere upon his own personal triumph. Oh! but how dark the stage was, and how dull the play seemed except when Robeson was dominating the stage.

The Black and White Problem

Paul's own feelings about playing Othello must have been mixed. After he began rehearsals he became conscious of the prejudice against a black man acting with a white woman.

I received complaints . . .

"It was Paul Robeson's air of aloofness that made such an appeal to me at the Albert Hall," wrote one woman. "An isolated figure giving out the sorrows of his race through his marvelous voice and personality. As Othello, he would have to make love—and touch—a white woman.

"We all know that if a white woman marries a colored man she renounces her God and country, and is held in contempt by all her husband's relatives."

All I can suggest to this woman is that she stays at home.

How They Found Desdemona

Paul Robeson and his wife had one of their little arguments.

The only thing I had found them disagreeing about, hitherto, was Marcus Garvey, the Negro apet-hinoo who was in London not long ago. Paul believes in him. His wife does not.

It was when they saw "Jew Suss," however, that the other argument began. When they came out Mrs. Robeson said, "Now, don't agree with me this time. I hope you do not think what I thought."

"I thought that Peggy Ashcroft ought to play Desdemona," said Paul.

"That is what I thought," said his wife, "but I hoped you would not see it" That was how Peggy was chosen.

(London Daily Express)

Monday was an important day—though he does not know it—in the fortunes of a coffee-colored small boy called Paul Robeson. He is the two-year-old son of the Negro actor-singer, who played Othello on Monday night to Miss Peggy Ashcroft's Desdemona, and of Mrs Eslanda Goode Robeson, the wife of the Negro Othello, whose book about her husband also appeared on Monday.

The most striking thing about small Paul at present is his absurd likeness to his father. His blank head is to be seen every afternoon on Hampstead Heath; he is as tall and as strong as most boys of four or five, and his mother believes he is going to be even taller than his father, who was known in America as "the giant athlete" for years before he came to England.

Brilliant Chemist

The power which plans and arranges the lives of both big and little Paul is Mrs. Robeson. She is an attractive brown-eyed woman, with creamy brown skin and a sleek head of black hair.

She qualified brilliantly in chemistry at Columbia University, and now that she no longer has opportunities for chemical research she "experiments" with her two Pauls.

"It's even more engrossing than chemistry," she said to a "Daily Express" representative, sitting by an open window looking into a green hollow of Hampstead Heath, "though a scientific education is a good training for experimenting with people. I want to make a good job of Paul and little Paul, but it's a whole-time job."

Just then the smaller of the good jobs was brought in from the Heath, clasping a colored ball, and as brown as a coconnut.

"He really is going to be dark," said Mrs. Robeson. "I was afraid he might be fair, for most of my family are almost as fair as white people. But I wanted him to be a brown rascal.

Race Question

Mrs. Robeson has for a long time believed that her husband should play Othello. "I don't believe there will be any fuss about the race question," she said, "though, of course, you have a type here corresponding to the Southern crackers in America—South Africans, Anglo-Indians and so on—who will always cry their own prejudice against black people.

"But the same things were said before, 'All God's Chillun' was produced in the States, and the same Southerners who threatened to riot at the presentation on the stage of a black man marrying a white woman came back-stage afterwards, in tears."

Small Paul attends a nursery school, and will go to an English public school when he is old enough."

4 HARMONY KINGS ARE BIG HIT

(Carlisle (Eng.) Evening News)

In the way of entertainment we in this country have little cause to be thankful to America; there are so many who have become nauseated with the Americanism of the "talkies" that the cinemas may soon find it necessary to ban films from over the Atlantic to keep their audiences, and one wonders if it is possible to estimate the amount of damage to British vaudeville by the permitted invasion of positively horrible dances from the same source. It is, therefore, a matter of some satisfaction to be able to commend, and commend very highly, the delightful work of the Four Harmony Kings who top a strong variety bill at the Palace Theatre this week. They are styled as "America's foremost quartet"—a title to which, one would imagine, they are truly entitled, for it is impossible to imagine anything of such a high standard coming from the United States.

In their turn they even make one have a measure of respect for certain kinds of American music. They are so different—they are colored folk who have dignity and they sing with all that charm of tone which one can associate with the most pleasing of British quartets, and yet preserve that characteristic "atmosphere" that can be associated with the cotton fields, but not, we are afraid, with Broadway. Their rendering of "Ole Man River" is brilliant, and "Singing in the Rain" and "Walking With Susie," to mention only two more of the so-called "popular" numbers, are sung with an effect which is certainly not attained in the average American production.

ETHEL AND HER REVUE IN NEWARK

NEWARK, N. J., June 5—Ethel Waters, the bronze "Queen of the Blues," is appearing at the Orpheum Theater this week and is being acclaimed by capacity audiences.

This talented singer of the blues, who was received by the crowned heads of Europe and who made famous the slogan "Fifty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong," is heading her latest "Vanities Revue."

She is supported by a stellar cast of musical and comedy stars and the famous Addison Carey dancing girls.

RETURNS FROM ABROAD IN FALL

VALADA SNOW

Pretty little singing and dancing star, who is expected to return from France early in September. According to dame rumor, she will be featured as the soubrette of Lew Leslie's 1930 edition of "Blackbirds."

DUKE ELLINGTON PLAYS PALACE FOR TWO WEEKS

Famous Orchestra Leader and His Bunch Forced To Remain At Big New York House For Extra Week

By CHAPPY GARDNER

There is an old and familiar saying among performers which says that "when you play the Palace on Broadway, you're made."

This is one of the most costly of the Keith (R.K.O) chain of theaters and pays more money to actors for their work. But the audience is considered "hard-boiled." It's very difficult to please them. Yet they seemed to like the "Duke of Ellington" and his wonder jazz musicians. For they went in to stay one week and were held over for another by popular request. At each performance they stopped the show. The assisting artists, Dailey and Carter, "up-the-steps" and tap dancers, were well, while Cora La Redd, the "smiling bunch of human ebony" from Newark, N. J., topped the performance with her taps.

The Duke's band is nightly engaged at the Cotton Club and can be heard over the radio in all parts. Recently the jazz wonders journeyed up to the soldiers' convalescent home, where for a solid hour they made hundreds of war vets feel better and smile longer with less pain.

In their turn they even make one have a measure of respect for certain kinds of American music. They are so different—they are colored folk who have dignity and they sing with all that charm of tone which one can associate with the most pleasing of British quartets, and yet preserve that characteristic "atmosphere" that can be associated with the cotton fields, but not, we are afraid, with Broadway. Their rendering of "Ole Man River" is brilliant, and "Singing in the Rain" and "Walking With Susie," to mention only two more of the so-called "popular" numbers, are sung with an effect which is certainly not attained in the average American production.

JORDAN EMBREY AND BAND IN FAIRMONT

FAIRMONT, W. Va., June 5.—With Sylvester Brisco sliding his trick trombone and Miss Lil Thornton, a late star of "Shuffle Along," will appear here under the auspices of the Bears Club, in their first cabaret dance of the season. The inimitable Perry Smith will be master of ceremonies. The Alabama Quartet will sing, and Little Miss Lil will sing and dance as she did in that up and going stage success, "Shuffle Along." Don't be late. The dance is at the Armory on Jackson street, June 12. Tables reserved.

STARS THAT SHINE

By BILLY B. JONES

Billy Jones, popular radio and vaudeville singer, arrived in New York this week after a successful tour of Canada and the Northwestern states, featuring the popular song hits, "Carolina," "Funny Dear What Love Will Do," and "I Still Remember," and presenting a novelty piano specialty. Mr. Jones was a big hit in all the vaudeville houses.

* * *

Mike Jackson, radio star and song composer, is scoring a big success and is featuring many song hits. Mr. Jackson is a versatile artist.

* * *

Burton Carey, "Ukelele Kid," is playing through Pennsylvania and will arrive in New York in September to open on one of the vaudeville circuits.

* * *

Leigh Whipper, well known actor, will also produce a new show next season, which is said to be different from any other show produced, and will introduce many new features.

* * *

Clarence Williams and his band are recording some hot numbers. The vaudeville singers are featuring many song hits published by Clarence Williams, music publishers, 1547 Broadway, New York City.

* * *

Miss Henrietta Williams, featuring "I'm Funny What Love Will Do," and "Carolina," is meeting with much success.

* * *

Miss Mabel Winchester, popular Bayonne girl singer, will broadcast this summer in New York.

* * *

The manager of the show entitled "Porgy," which has scored success on the road since their Broadway run, is reported ready to launch a new show next season with Frank Wilson as star.

LEW LESLIE BROKE, REPORT

NEW YORK, June 5.—Bad checks given by Lew Leslie, the "Blackbirds" producer, to pay off his star performers in his "International Revue," are said to have "bounced back." One of $5,000 to Al Richman, star lead, is reported by Variety to have been returned marked "no funds," while one given Miss Gertrude Lawrence for $3,000 was declared "no good" before she could get on a boat to take her engagement in London. Mr. Leslie will try to stage a comeback with his 1930 edition of "Blackbirds," which goes into rehearsal in late July.

GILPIN'S BODY BROUGHT TO NEW YORK FOR BURIAL

Wife Has Body Dug Up—Funeral Auspicious As Actors Pay Final Tribute To Noted Dramatist

By CHAP. J GARDNER

NEW YORK, June 5—Carrying out the desire to give his many stage friends and acquaintances the last look at the lifeless body of the man who made "Abraham's Bosom" and a hundred other role popular, Mr. Chas. Gilpin had the body of his distinguished husband dug up from the grave in New Jersey and brought to New York for burial at Woodlawn Cemetery on Sunday afternoon.

Jessie Shipp and Sam Patterson aided in the final arrangement, both being friends for many years to the deceased. Crowds looked on a procession of various theatrical troupes viewed the body. Among them were members of "The Green Pastures" company, "Blackbirds," "Hot Chocolates," "Mot 'n' Bothered," "Rugged Road," "Run Down," and many stage and screen star. The funeral was directed by Duncan Brothers.

THEATRICAL NOTES

By CHAPPY GARDNER

Silver Leaf Quartet in New York

The Silver Leaf Quartet of Norfolk, Va., that has been heard on records in these parts for some time, rendered a three-day program at Day Star Baptist Church on the Heights, beginning last Monday night. Most of their numbers were spirituals and varied church hymns familiar to churchgoers. Mrs. Robinson, prominent church worker in Day Star, was the instigator of the large coming to sing to her congregation. Bradford Wilson, long an important factor in church work and well known for his recitals in the city, had charge of the program. "Silver Leaf" will return to Day Star June 13, staying until the 20th. Day Star's own quartet rendered several pleasing numbers.

Fine Arts Studio and Grill Opens

Thursday evening was a big banner day for residents on Washington Heights. Many residents turned out with their lower Harlem friends to listen to the gala program of new song and recital offerings by artists of known ability. Among them were Geo. Gray, Thos. Jefferson, Sterling Grant, Leroy Smith and band, and Smiling Marie Wayne. Those in official capacity who made the "big doings" possible were Wilford Thompson, Earnest Hunter, Marie Wayne, Chas. Francis and L. Cherry, manager.

"West" Talbert's Band Turned Down

After hearing his band play stirring numbers over the radio last week—a Manhattan Beach resort proprietor wired his booking agent to "book the Talbert outfit right away—and forward pictures." His orders were immediately complied with. But he threw up his hands in "Caucasian American" disgust when he saw the many Negro musicians' faces. "I don't want them at any price," he is reported as saying. So big band in this stellar jazz productionist is out of a job.

"Dusty" Fletcher, whose work as comedian in the local New York theatres has gained him much renown, was held for the grand jury Saturday for assault on Pedro Castin, back stage doorman. "Dusty," as he is familiarly known, was charged with striking Pedro over the head with an empty whiskey bottle and the butt end of a gun. He was held for further hearing under a $1,000 bond. Trial is Wednesday of this week. The affair took place at the Alhambra Theater where "Dusty" has been employed for the last three weeks.

Cora La Redd of Newark, N. J., dancing tap wonder who scored heavily at the Palace last week, assisted by Duke Ellington's band, is a late addition to the cast of "Change Your Look" comedy which opens at the Geo. M. Cohan Theater next Wednesday. Miss La Redd although in her teens has attained stage laurels on Broadway and in Paris.

"De Promin' Leaf," sponsored by the Negro Art Theater and showed in a one night stand at Carnegie Hall, last Wednesday, was a flop financially. The acting of several members of the cast was noteworthy. Ollie Burgess, Inez Dough, Betty Martina, Hemsley Winfield was of high order.

Dailey and Carter, well known Harlem artists and vaudeville duo, who "varied on" at the Palace last week with Duke Ellington's fine orchestra, will open for Pubix in the near future, with the consent of Bill Robinson. The boys danced up and down the steps in a way that pleased the cus-

Roland Hayes' Seventh U. S. Tour Is Booked

NEW YORK, June 5.—Roland Hayes, noted concert tenor, whose sixth tour of America has just been completed, has once again proved himself the most popular singer of the season. He was the only recital artist to give three separate recitals in Carnegie Hall, New York City, and Symphony Hall, Boston. He made 6 appearances last year, and his seventh tour, which is practically booked, will open in October of the year and continue until April.

Inquiries should be addressed to Management, Roland Hayes, Symphony Hall, Boston, Mass.

TEN HOWARD DENTAL GRADS PASS BOARD

WASHINGTON, June 5—(CNS)—Ten graduates of the 1929 dental class of the Howard University have passed state board examinations in seven states, while five others are doing graduate interns work before taking their state board exams.

Those who passed the board examination are Drs. W. W. Wallace, Ohio; Fred P. Dade, Florida; Leonard P. Doles, Maryland; Alexander Farmer, Florida; Benjamin Jones, Pennsylvania; Leon Lewis, Jr., Connecticut and New York; Conrad C. Long, Florida; Julius Wilson, Virginia; Samuel Wright, New York; Theodore Bundrant, also New York.

A girl walking home from an auto ride must find it comforting to think that a blister on the heel is worth two on the conscience.

Rudolph Dawson, best tap dancer in New York, has been scoring a big success in vaudeville.

lumors at every show. They looked great in their clothes, too.

Al "Prince" Bowman, the original "Porgy," the character, alone in Harlem and form long while head of his own staging, debating comedy team on Broadway, and leader of the "Chocolate Dandies" quartet, formerly headed by Wm. Fontaine, now in Paris, is back in Harlem for a flash. Mr. Bowman has booked his company for the Paradise of Atlantic City for this season.

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