

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

APARTHEID PLAYS A PART

N'YORK CITY -- There are a number of disturbed people in hi-places about the move of Isreal actor Chaim Topol and Abraham Deshe to bring to B'way an all-black South African musical. The production, allegedly designed to win credibility for the hate-aching apartheid nation is titled "IPI-TOMBI." It has played London, Paris, Toronto and Tel Aviv with great success. Scheduled to open Dec. 28th, the official B'way premiere is set for Jan. 12th for a limited run and then goes on tour of the U.S. The opposition to the play is because it is allegedly sponsored by the South African government The backers of "Raisin," the award-winning musical, are rich and getting richer. Currently on tour the hit production is close to the \$4 million gross mark and is expected to reach \$5 million sometime in '77.

Just one block away from each other, in the heart of B'way, two smash hits are coining the do-re-mi in monied ways. One is the black version of "Guys and Dolls," at the B'way Theatre where it has passed its 125th performance and gearing up for special matinees. However, it will nix the usual Wed'day 2 p.m. showings when holidays fall the day before or after. The other, at the Anta Theatre is "Bubbling Brown Sugar," which has passed its 300th performance. Theatre-goers are reliving the Harlem heydays of Eubie Blake, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Andy Razaf, Cab Calloway, Earl "Fatha" Hines, W. C. Handy, Noble Sissle, Thomas "Fats" Waller and Bert Williams. Just think of it -- all this talent only a block apart!

PRE-DATED LINCOLN -- The first episode of a six-part BBC-TV series, "The Fight Against Slavery," will debut on nat'l eye-view Dec.-end. Check your local PBC channel for the time it will be shown in your town. It's heavy!

FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

"Let's be Young Tonight"

Within days after being released, Jermaine Jackson's recording of "Let's Be Young Tonight," from his "My Name is Jeramine" Motown album, has skyrocketed to the number three best selling single in the United Kingdom, according to England's BBC 1 radio, and is headed upward.

As a result of this unprecedented chart feat, Jeramine was deluged with request to visit England. As a result, he made a whirlwind 24-hour visit to England recently.

In the one day that he was on the continent, Jeramine visited with EMI, the distributors of Motown product in the United Kingdom, and completed numerous interviews with major music trade and consumer publications.

Commenting on the hectic schedule he maintained during his brief visit to England, Jackson state: "It was one of the shortest visits that I've ever had in a foreign country, but from the remendous reaction that I've received from all thos connected with the promotion of my single and album, I will return for a much longer period in the near future.

"As a matter of fact, the people in the United Kingdom were so fantastic, we are considering a break-in tour of England with my new band even before we tour the United States."

Written by Evan Jones, a descendant of slaves and slave-owners, it's produced by Christopher Ralling, who won two Emmys and a Peabody Award for his "The Search for the Nile." The story begins in 1750, at the height of the slave trade, and ends with their emancipation throughout the British empire in 1834. This was some 30 years before Abe Lincoln followed suit in the USA... "Doin' It," an uptempo tune with a strong disco appeal by Herbie Hancock, will be used as a title marquee his national tour. More than 25 such are listed for just as many cities, and any teenager will tell you the sound is "serious."

MALICE IN WONDERLAND -- TV shocker is the report that all 256 Public Broadcasting Service stations throughout the country have received a directive NOT to slot black programs on prime time. They must be spotted no earlier than 11 p.m. when viewers go off to slumberland. And this, if true, comes to top of a landmark legal decision won by Emma Bowen's Black Citizens for a Fair Media, a class action case charging NBC with discrimination.

RECORD ATLANTIC CROSSING -- Atlantic Records has its humanitarian side, producing an album to air world refugees via United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Proceeds from sales go exclusively for Commish assistance programs. Album renders some of the greatest soul music ever heard through pipes of such as Ray Charles, Roberta Flack, and Otis Redding. A top hit is King Curtis' "Memphis Soul Stew". Black and white artists are applauding RCA's desegregation of music. With that label it will not longer be rhythm and blues category for blacks and pop for mostly white. Under the new policy it will all be music. On the other side of the label Polydor is discounting the Verve reissues and the Nov. release of Ella Fitzgerald's

"Cole Porter Songbook;" Charlie Parker's "The Verve Yrs;" Wes Montgomery's "The Small Group Recordings" and "Masters of the Modern Piano" can all be had for a song.

It's all systems for a flick star-producer Fred Williamson who has successfully tackled the foreign market barriers against black starred films. Making important end-run he's locking a deal which ties him into making and starring in several pictures in Italy with Alfred

"The Greatest Birthday Party"

Lucille Ball, Jack Lemmon, Liza Minelli, Shirley MacLaine and Mickey Rooney will be on hand Thursday, December 16, when the United Negro College Fund throws "The Greatest Birthday Party Ever Held" for Sammy Davis, Jr., at the Las Vegas Hilton. Frank Sinatra is the honorary chairman.

In addition to Frank Sinatra, the tribute committee will include Bob Hope, Lucille Ball, Steve Lawrence, Eydie Gorme and Pearl Bailey.

Sammy's friends and supporters of the College Fund from throughout the United States plan to usher in Sammy's fifty-first year with a gala dinner and celebration, emceed by Flip Wilson.

"This party is a tribute to a great human being who dedicated hundreds of hours to the cause of black higher education in America," said Flip.

Sammy Davis, Jr., who has originated more "firsts" in the entertainment world than almost any other performer, is chairman of the United Negro College Fund's Special Events Division. He was three times voted the Las Vegas Entertainer of the Year. In 1973 UNCF's Wilberforce University awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Leone of Leone Int'l. Their first joint venture will be called "Greed"...The surprise 13-center from Vincent Tubbs, the Warner Bros. praise agent exec., slaps our wrists 'cause Michael Schultz "ain't" connected with "Greased Lightning." Vince is beating the drums for that, and "the Brothers," a '77 WB major flick which he said could very easily get Bernie Casey an Oscar nomination. "It's a powerful monumentally important movie in which Ron O'Neal and Vonetta McGee are also brilliant."

Curtis Mayfield's soundtrack for "Superfly" won him his wings and he is soaring upwards in the wax and film whirl. The Chgo company he formed in '68 is developing its own stable of stars and should gross about \$9 million by yr's end. It's a biggie and is headed into the flick biz having arranged the financial needs for "Short Eyes," a film set for shooting in N'York in Jan...Peg-Leg Bates hopes to eliminate some of the pain after the surgical insert of a plastic hip...Lovely Lena Hone is making the "write" pitch for the NAACP's 50th Holiday Seal Campaign...George Benson's Warner Bros. Album, "Breezin'" has become the biggest selling jazz album of all time. As you read this it will have sold more than a million pressings. It's his first Warner release and was produced by Tommy LiPuma...Carol Cass, that lovely talented singer we keep writing about, is soothing ears and exciting eyes in Aruba in the Americana...STAY LOOSE.

Join Ray Willis and Maria Donoso for a look at what minorities are doing in Southern Nevada.

Along with special local and nationally known guests, they make this an interesting and informative half-hour

Sat. 4:30 PM Sun. 7:00AM



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