Travel Toughest Chore of USO, Says D.C. Magician

(AFRO Bureau)

WASHINGTON.

While the man in uniform deserves all the credit he is given for his role in the war, the real unsung heroes of the conflict were those USO-Camp Shows' entertainers who carried on a war against gloom and despondency the worse enemy the GI had to combat.

This is the impression garnered from Fetaque Sanders, Washington magician, just returned from a three-year tour of camps who revealed that although the men in uniform liked to refer to him as a Jodie, his life was no bed of roses.

Fetaque, who is one of the few remaining practitioners of the art of making the hand quicker than the eye, found his job of keeping the boys entertained was one of the happiest of his long career, but also the toughest.

Greatest Problem Travel

The hardest part of camp shows he said was the problem of transportation. Entertainers on the GI circuit traveled on a fixed schedule and nowhere was the rule, "the show must go on," more rigidly adhered to than in army camps.

"Many is the time," says Fetaque, "when after traveling all day and night by bus, train and jeep and any form of transportation which happened to be available, we wound up in camp just in time to go on the stage with our tongues hanging out, tired and dirty.

"But we were supposed to smile and make the boys laugh. And we dare not complain because the boys were quick to ask: 'What have you got to grumble about? You are still a civilian, ain't you?'

Boys Didn't Know

"But the boys didn't know half the story and they did not know that often we wished for their uniform when we were forced to stand aside with other civilians while men in uniform were given the right-of-way on trains and busses while we had an engagement to make."

Although things are improved a little since the war, Fetaque is of the opinion that the lot of the entertainer would have been made lighter had they been given some kind of distinguishing uniform instead of the tiny buttons of identification which could only be seen upon close examination.

Although the boys were really not boys at all, but grown men, Fetaque was surprised to know that one of his best entertainment features was his Punch and Judy show which he usually reserves for very young school children.

"The boys were just hungry for anything which helped them to laugh and forget," he said.

FETAQUE SANDERS

NEVA PEOPLES AT SMALL'S

NEW YORK — Neva Peoples, songstress, has been signed by Ed Win Smalls to star in his forthcoming extravaganza at Small's

Sailor Does Second Tour in Pacific

Seaman James C. Williams, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Williams, 1126 N. Carey St., is serving overseas for the second time since joining the Navy in June, 1943.

He was stationed on the Solomons and New Hebrides Islands for 22 months before returning to the U.S. Last August he reported to Saipan where he is still on duty.

Noted Theatre Figure Passes

NEW YORK—William E. Fountain, 46, well-known theatrical figure, died here Dec. 6 following an illness of seven months.

He was identified with Tutti and Whitney's Smarter Set, Irvin C. Miller's Brown Skin Models, Sandy Burns, Eddie Hunter, Florence Mills, The Exposition Four, Four Chocolate Dandies, Emperors of Harmony and The Brown Buddies with Bill (Bojangles) Robinson and Adelaide Hall.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Isis Fountain; one son, William Jr.; two sisters, Mesdames Ida Tuck and Edna Alixson, and other relatives.

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AIR MAIL SPECIAL — Georgie Auld
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VARIETY BOOGIE — Lillette Thomas
WHITE CHRISTMAS — Freddie Martin
SWINGING ON CENTRAL — Herbie Haymes
GHOST OF A CHANCE — Charlie Ventura
SYMPHONY — Jo Stafford
COME TO BABY DO — Duke Ellington
ALL AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE — Dick Todd
BLOND SAILOR — Andrews Sisters
BUZZ ME — Louis Jordan
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KING COLE FAVORITES—4 Records in Album, $5.62
ON THE MOONBEAM—Vaughn Monroe 5 Records in Album, $3.15
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GRIMMS FAIRY TALES—3 Records in Album, $2.89
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PIED PIPERS COWBOY SONG—4 Records in Album, $1.10

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Pennsylvania Avenue

By E. B. REA

Brother, if the present weather keeps up, we'll not only be singing of a "white Christmas," but we'll be right in one with both feet, coldly speaking.

However, nightteries are going right ahead planning for business as usual—if not as much business as usual—then the usual business.

Everybody was out Tuesday night trying to get a view of the moon as it passed through the eclipse. All seemed to marvel over it except a "stew" who didn't wanna see no "eclipsed" moon.

"Why?" someone ventured to ask.

("Hic, hic," he began, "I'm a half Indian."

"What's that got to do with the moon?" another asked.

"Plenty," he answered.

"You see I'm John Moon. My father was Quarter Moon. My mother, Half Moon. When I get through drinking I'll be a full-Moon. When I go home my old lady will be an angry Moon, slug me on the head, and I'll be a 'eclipsed' Moon, myself."

The first casualty of the snowy spell was Cortlandt Brown, the cake box king, who slipped down Thursday of last week and fractured his hip. He's a patient at Provident Hospital where he is reported as doing nicely. David Mitchell, who held down the floor manager's spot at the Casino, is doing the same good job at Gamby's, where Happy Jack rolls out the comic jive in front of Mack Crockett's fine little band and Mable Smith, a solid chirper, dishes some real ready tunes. Miss Rhapsody's trio is billed here.

Mr. Brown

The boys around the Vilma listening to 86-year-old Thomas Downs tell why he smokes his pipe upside down. And, by the way, Mrs. Wendell Wilson, wife of the proprietor, is a patient at Provident Hospital.

Little Barbara Ann Stepteau, daughter of the Harold Stepteaus, valet shop proprietors, will see her first Santa Claus come Tuesday. She'll be one year old in January, then she'll get her first birthday party. Teddy Easter, vocalist, of 1319 W. Lanvale St., has composed a Yuletide ditty entitled "I Want to Be Home on Christmas Morning," which was aired over Station KWKW, Hollywood, at 1:15 p.m., Thursday. Teddy's a dispatcher at a downtown department store.

Barbara Ann

Howard County has given the Casino, Florence Jones, a new waitress, while Lawrence and Viola Bundy have joined the force at Kenny Bass's Club Barbecue. Ellen Dungee taking in the show at Gamby's.

Eddie (Lemons) Lemonte, veteran comic, confined to his home, 539 W. Lafayette Ave., with a case of "flu," which he couldn't laugh off.

The Mighty Mites, Mitchell and Elnora Blue, jitterbug team at the Avenue Cafe, are back at the spot after getting snowbound down in Virginia. Pee Wee Wooden's band and Geneva Howard, chirper, will spring joy surprises during the holidays, including overseeing the big talent contest on Wednesday night.

Jack Solomon, who used to work out of Peoples' Court, is magnetizing 'em into the Spot.

It wasn't too cold Tuesday night for an unidentified drunk to sit down on the curb at Pressman and the Avenue and take a snooze.

The Mus-Art Studio and the Avenue Cafe are collaborating in a jam session to be held Wednesday night of next week at the studio, 1854 Pennsylvania Ave., in benefit of the Telephone Fund for Wounded Soldiers. Andy Kirk's revue from the Royal will be the guest artists, plus local talent.

Old St. Nick will be right in there tossing 'em, come Monday night, so, I scribble off here to give you more time for that last minute shopping rush. And, in the vernacular of some of our nearby States, A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOALL.

New Face at Gamby's

ERMA DORSEY,
who has joined the waitress's staff at Gamby's, he formerly served at Jean Clore's nitery while residing in Washington. Sort of pin-up, don't you think?

Mrs. Roosevelt Praises "Fruit"

NEW YORK—(CNS)—Though professing herself no theatre critic, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt judged the play "Strange Fruit" by her own standards and discovered it rated highly.

In her syndicated column dated Dec. 11, she says:

"I had been told that the book was better than the play. That may be true, but nevertheless there are strong, tense scenes in the play. It will be a long time before I forget the ones between Dr. Sam Perry (Juano Hernandez) and Tom Harris, the kindly courageous Southerner who tries unsuccessfully to stop the lynching. It (the play) isn't pleasant drama but neither are life and some conditions in our country."

Marva Louis Misses Shangri-La Opening

PHILADELPHIA

Mrs. Marva Louis, former wife of the world's heavyweight boxing champion, did not appear as scheduled Friday night at the Shangri-La Restaurant, the management announced Tuesday.

Mrs. Louis had been given top billing in "Broome Follies of 1946," a revue, which also included Peg Leg Bates, Eddie Rector, Ziggy Johnson, Hortense Allen, Jimmy Anderson and Coleridge Davis and his orchestra.

The management of the restaurant did not give a reason for Mrs. Louis's failure to appear as advertised.

Jackie (Moms) Mabley, veteran comedienne, is replacing Mrs. Louis.

Silvera Gets Role of Joe in "Anna Lucasta"

BOSTON. — Frank Silvera, whose stage career began in Boston, has taken over the role of Joe, the father of Anna Lucasta, in the Broadway hit of the same name at the Mansfield Theatre in New York. Though born in Jamaica, Silvera spent most of his childhood in Boston. He attended Boston University and Northeastern University Law School. In 1934 he forsook law when he created the role of Zeb Vance in Paul Green's "Roll Sweet Chariot."

Frank Silvera

This was followed by a series of engagements with the Boston Players, New England Repertory Theatre, New Hampshire Repertory Theatre, and the Federal Theatre.

First Broadway Role

Although "Anna Lucasta" marks his first Broadway appearance, he has played leading roles on the road in myriad Broadway plays, including "Emperor Jones," "Bloodstream," "Macbeth," and "Othello"; presented dramatic recitals throughout the East, and has shared the spotlight with Paul Robeson on USO programs.

Silvera is an expert on dialects, and has been heard on many radio programs, including the NBC series "Massachusetts on the March."

Frank has just received his honorable discharge from the Navy, after a three-year hitch. While in the service, he wrote, directed, and even announced a series of Sunday evening broadcasts from the Great Lakes Naval Training Center over CBS and station WBBM.

Hampton Tops Trian Record

LOS ANGELES—Lionel Hampton and his musicrew established an all-time attendance record for four weeks at the Trianon, drawing a total of 44,500 cash-on-the-line customers.

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