

The Man, Paul Robeson

by William Luce

At a recent dinner party, I found myself in conversation with a young actor. "Have you heard about the new stage play on Paul Robeson?" I asked.

"Paul Robeson?" replied my friend. "Never heard of him."

I realized then that to a large segment of young Americans today, the name of Paul Robeson might be virtually unknown. Thirty years ago, Paul was idolized as a distinguished bass-baritone, a brilliant actor on stage and screen, a recording star, an accomplished linguist, a lawyer, and a former All-American football player who won Phi Beta Kappa honors at Rutgers University.

And now-unknown to newer generations.

Yet, the circumstances surrounding the involuntary exile of the man — like the man himself — must never be forgotten. The curtain of anonymity which fell on Paul's achievements, also obliterated the careers of other American artists. It was the era of political inquisition in our country. Paul, as a black activist and respected spokesman for the American black and for the colonial peoples of Africa — was most particularly a target for harassment.

Once dubbed by Alexander Woollcott as the "Colossus in Bronze," Robeson rightfully carried the standard for his people. As a unique singer of folk songs in concert halls throughout the world, Paul elicited the highest praise from some of the harshest critics who ever penned a review. His was the voice that first sang a repertoire of only spirituals on a concert stage. It was a lush, resonant voice, described by a Viennese critic as "organ-tones of a purity seldom heard... of which the motive force is the soul."

Concomitant to Paul's international successes in *Show Boat* ("Ol' Man River" was composed for him), *Othello* in London and continuing song recitals—was his career as an actor. In 1924, at the age of twenty-six, he appeared in *All God's Chillun Got Wings* and *The Emperor Jones* by Eugene O'Neill. Later, he performed in O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*. Paul also starred in ten motion pictures.

But the triumph of his acting career was his performance in the title role of *Othello* for the Theatre Guild in 1943-45. The production co-starred Uta Hagen and José Ferrer. One writer said that the opening night crowd at the Shubert Theatre went slightly insane over the magnetic presence of the black Othello. At the final curtain, the applause lasted for twenty minutes.

It was the longest running Shakespearean drama in Broadway history, playing almost three hundred performances. The production then traveled to forty-five cities. Paul won the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Gold Medal and the coveted Donaldson Award for his superb acting.

Paul was now the undisputed voice of his people. He spoke out boldly and bravely for the equality and freedom, exercising his right of free dissent in a supposedly free society. His shadow became large, his influence over black America stronger. While still demonstrating a selfless patriotism for his country by entertaining American troops in war-torn countries, Paul showed no compuction in criticising the United States Government for what he called its counter-revolutionary policies abroad.

His style was eloquent, but always embodied an air of humor and modesty. Some called him a titan—others, a maverick. Never an apologist, ever a champion—Paul ventured into new country, upon whose ground no black man had dared to tread with such dignity and authority—the sacrosanct territory of the State.

It was his avowal of admiration for and allegiance to Russia, at a time when politicians were resigning themselves to a Cold War; it was his unrelenting criticism of brutality and bigotry against the black at home; it was his outspoken preference for socialism as a morally and economically superior system—that wrought a dramatic reversal in the public's opinion of him.

Inexorably, the political forces of the McCarthy consciousness implemented the machinery that would remove the "Colossus" from its pedestal. It was an abasement manipulated by what The New York Times described recently as a right-wing racist element in government. In a campaign which included an appearance before a contemptuous House Un-American Activities Committee, concert halls were closed to Paul; book stores and libraries no longer carried books about him; his recordings were not available in stores, nor were they played on radio; he was kept off of television; and his passport was illegally revoked.

It can truly be said, there has never been such a massive, organized, unchecked operation to wipe out the memory of a man.

And yet, so self-contained and whole-souled a man was Paul, that he maintained his hope and poise and sweet nature through that testing time. And in 1958, his passport restored, he again toured Europe, where he was greeted with enthusiasm and love. It seems Paul's nationality was mankind, as he himself once observed. And in Europe, at least, his memory was alive.

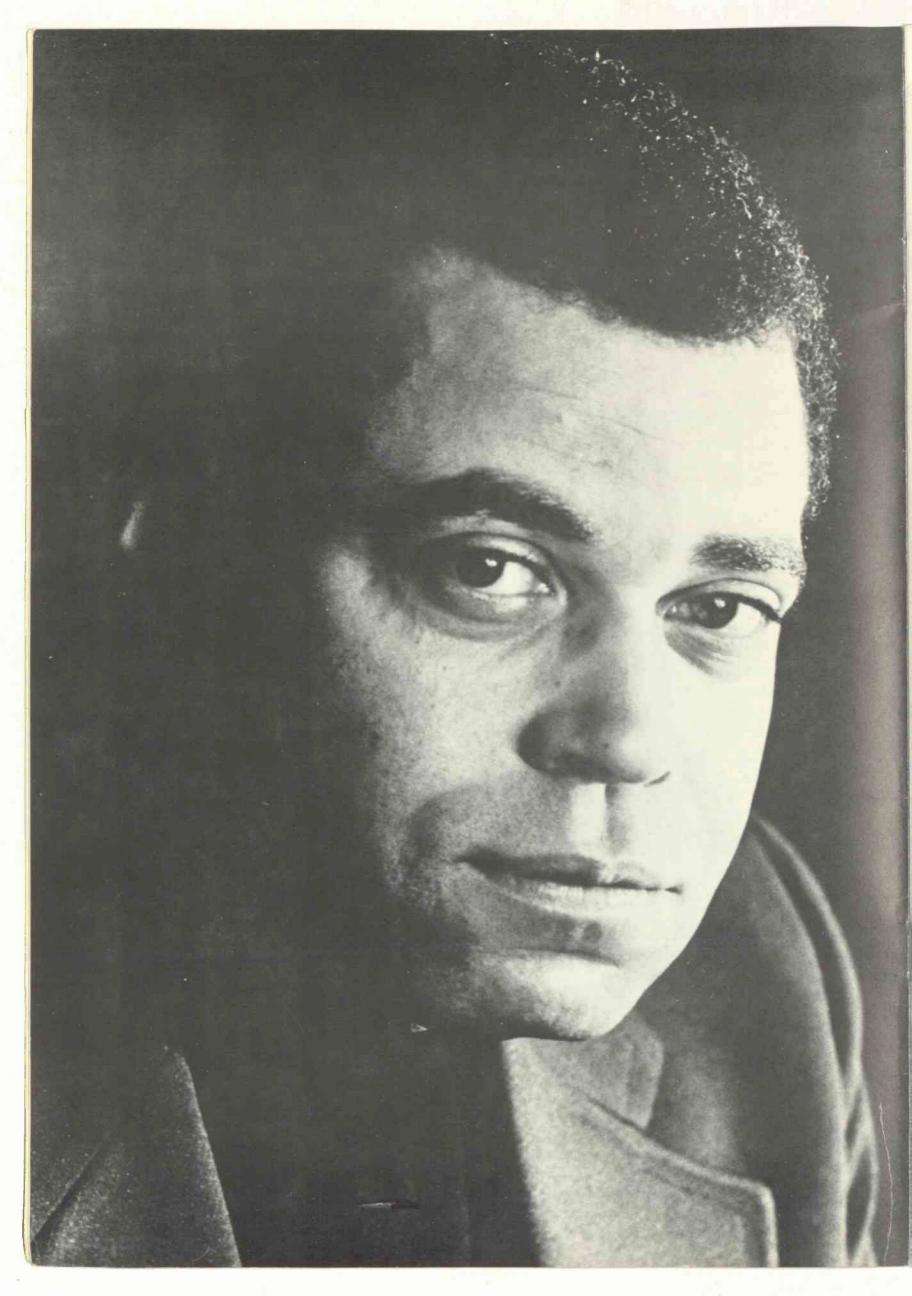
That memory, like the miraculous phoenix, is having a new birth and rediscovery in America. More in his death than in his final years of seclusion—Paul Robeson is again reaching out for an audience. I know of three biographers now at work on his life story. Since his death on January 23, 1976, his records fill the album bins in stores. His music, his art, his thoughts—are a legacy to young America.

Eighty years ago, on April 9, 1898, Paul LeRoy Robeson was born in Princeton, New Jersey—son of a runaway slave. His ensuing life of pioneering and passion is an inspiring chapter in man's cherished dream of human freedom. Young Americans today have the privilege of discovering for themselves this great artist and humanitarian, without the emotionalism of an earlier period.

It is my belief that Paul will one day become an international symbol to generations yet unborn—a model of humility, talent, positivism, faith, and compassion. Long after his bitterest and most vocal political adversaries are forgotten, Paul LeRoy Robeson and his dream will be remembered....

The tumult and the shouting dies; The Captains and the Kings depart; Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice, An humble and a contrite heart. Rudyard Kipling





JAMES EARL JONES/ Paul Robeson

James Earl Jones was a highly respected, though only moderately known young actor with a goodly number of credits in theatre, television and films under his belt until 1968, when his performance in *The Great White Hope* stripped Mr. Jones of any anonymity he might have had left. From that moment stardom was thrust upon him by his talent, his brilliance and his power.

His "overnight success" was preceded by four Broadway plays, including *Sunrise at Campobello* and *A Hand is on the Gate;* eighteen off-Broadway plays, among them *The Blacks, Baal, Next Time I'll Sing to You,* and *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl;* thirteen productions with the New York Shakespeare Festival, (notably as Macbeth and Othello); *Danton's Death* at Lincoln Center; in the title role of *The Emperor Jones* at the Boston Arts Festival and throughout Europe; in the films *Dr. Strangelove, The Comedians* and *The End of the Road;* and in numerous television dramas.

The Antoinette Perry Award for *The Great White Hope* was one of the many awards Mr. Jones had won before and after that production. He had previously received three Obie Awards, an Emmy nomination and a Theatre World Award. In recent seasons, he appeared on Broadway in *Les Blancs* for which he won the Drama Desk Award; as Hickey in *The Iceman Cometh;* and as Lenny in *Of Mice and Men;* off-Broadway in *Boesman and Lena, The Cherry Orchard* and two more Shakespearean roles (making a total to date of 15), as Claudius in *Hamlet* and the title role in *King Lear.*

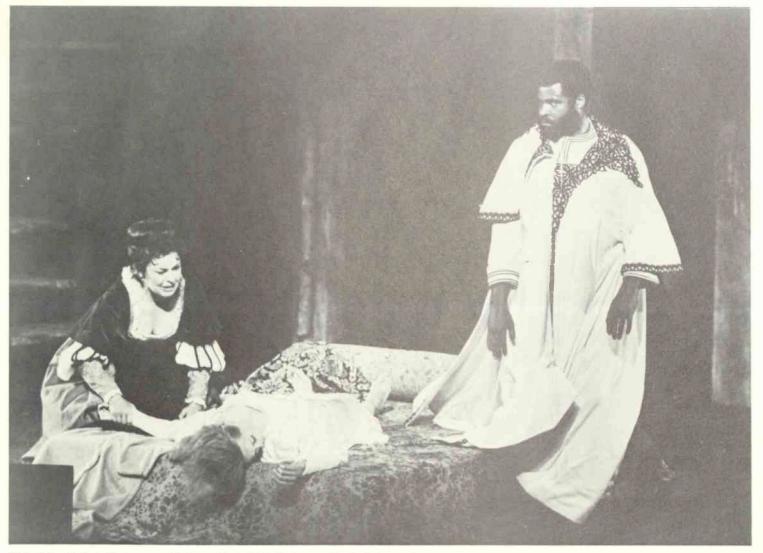
Mr. Jones' film credits have grown to include the recreation of Jack Jefferson in *The Great White Hope* for which he received an Academy Award nomination and the Golden Globe Award; *The Man* in which he played the first black President; the lovable garbage collector in *Claudine*, Malcolm X in *The Greatest*, and the recently released *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings*.

His television appearances have included *Black Omnibus* for which he was host and narrator, the New York Shakespeare Festival production of *King Lear* for the Theatre in America series, *Interrupted Journey*, *The Cay* and as Balthazar in the special BBC series *Jesus of Nazareth*.

Prior to starting rehearsals for *Paul Robeson* he completed the films *The Last Remake of Beau Geste, A Piece of the Action* with Sidney Poitier and Bill Cosby, and a television film *Morris Bird III*.

Born in Arkabutla, Miss., Mr. Jones graduated from the University of Michigan. After completing his ROTC obligation in the Army, he went to New York where he studied drama at the American Theatre Wing and with Lee Strasberg.

Since making his debut in off-Broadway's *Wedding in Japan* in 1957, Mr. Jones has rarely been unemployed. Many of the parts he has played have been small, many of the theatres have been in remote parts of the world, but all have prepared him for his place in American Theatre. James Earl Jones is the son of Robert Earl Jones.



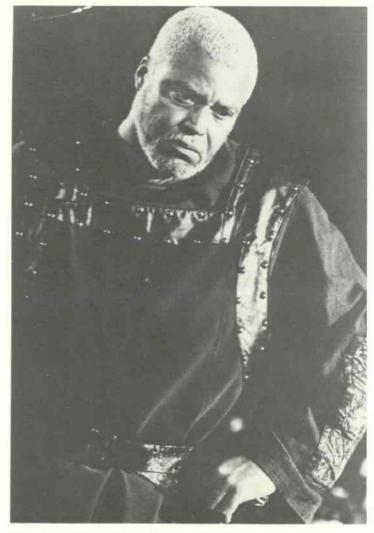
"Othello" with Sada Thompson and Julienne Marie (N.Y. Shakespeare Festival) (stage play)



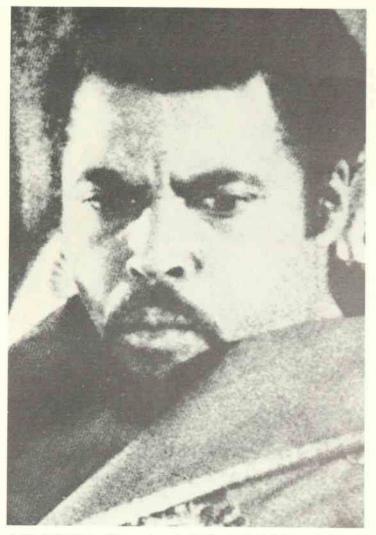
"Hamlet" with Stacy Keach and Colleen Dewhurst—N.Y. Shakespeare Festival (stage play)



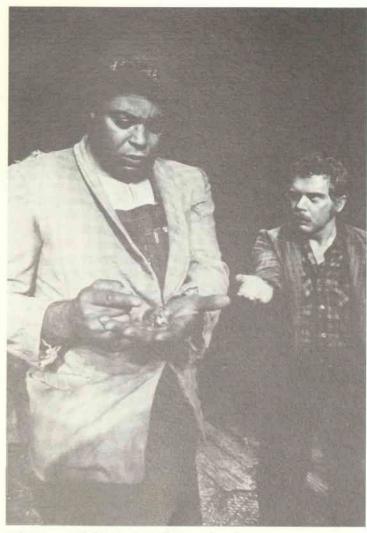
"Othello" with Julienne Marie (N.Y. Shakespeare Festival)



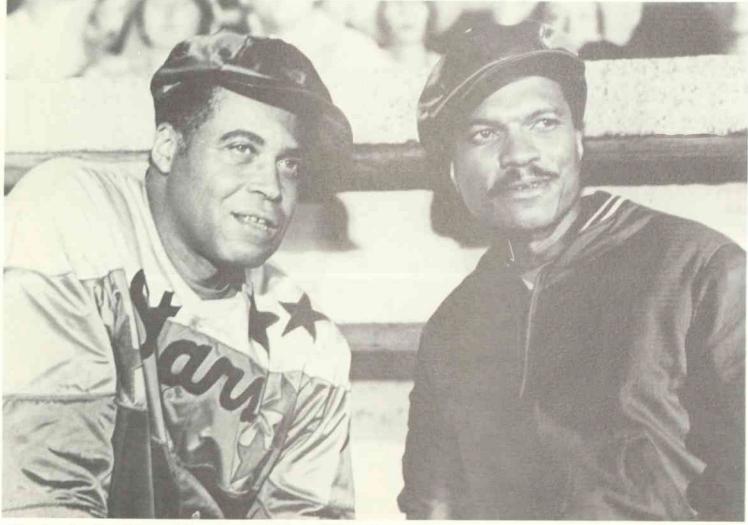
"King Lear" (WNET TV taped live from N.Y. Shakespeare Festival)



James Earl Jones in "Emperor Jones"—Edinburgh Festival (stage play)



"Of Mice and Men" with Kevin Conway (stage play)



"Bingo Long Travelling All Stars and Motor Kings" with Billy Dee Williams (film)



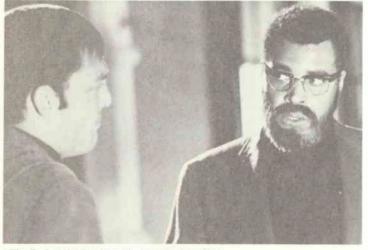
'The Great White Hope'' as Jack Jefferson (stage play)



"Claudine" with Diahann Carroll (film)



"The Blacks" (stage play)



"The End of the Road" with Stacy Keach (film)



"The Comedians" with George Stanford Brown and Richard Burton (film)

BURT WALLACE/Lawrence Brown



Burt Wallace is a native New Yorker and a graduate of the High School of Music and Art. He has played solo piano in numerous New York night clubs and at the Louisiana Pavilion of the New York World's Fair and has accompanied such stars as Freda Payne and Novella Nelson on their personal appearances. This will mark Mr. Wallace's theatrical stage debut.

Cast of Characters

 Paul Robeson
 JAMES EARL JONES

 Lawrence Brown
 BURT WALLACE

Synopsis of The Play

PROGRAM

Part One

Carnegie HallPAUL and AUDIENCE
Philadelphia
Somerville
Trolley CarMr. PILLGARD and LADIES
Rutgers
I. Office DEAN ROBERSON
II. CafeteriaGerman Lady
III. Winants HallGLEE CLUB
IV. Audition
V. Football Field COACH SANFORD, WILLIAM, and POP
VI. Graduation
New York
I. Hospital
II. Harlem
III. Wall Street
IV. YMCADORA and COMPANY
V. Provincetown Playhouse JEROME KERN and GILPIN

Part Two

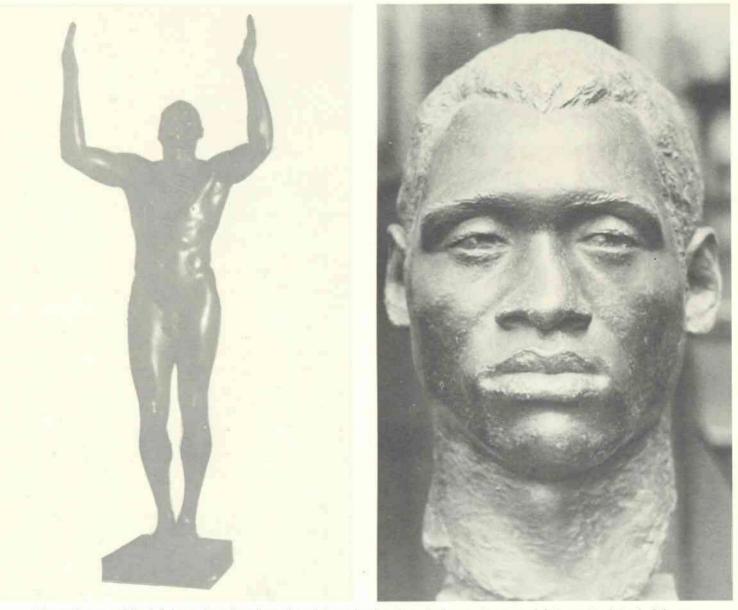
London
BerlinOTTO and STORM TROOPERS
Moscow
MadridBRIGADEERS
New York
I. Cunard Lines
II. Broadway
Washington, D.C TRUMAN and HOUSE COMMITTEE
St. Louis
Mother ZionBen's Congregation
PhiladelphiaMARIAN
Carnegie Hall
TI Design in Lind to design

The Program is subject to change.

Choreographic ConsultantJAMIE ROGERS

Recollections of Paul Robeson

by Antonio Salemme, Sculptor



The sculptures of Paul Robeson have been loaned to this production through the graciousness of their creator Antonio Salemme.

In 1924, a friend came to see me, and said "...you must see this wonderful actor doing Emperor Jones." The next day, we went to see Paul Robeson in the role at the Provincetown Playhouse. I was impressed, not only with his performance, but with the great beauty and power of his body. Backstage after the performance, I asked Paul to come to my studio. I told him I wanted to do a life-size statue of him.

I'll never forget Paul, and the times we had together—walking through Harlem and sitting in those wonderful places, where jazz seemed to move even the walls. Paul was so loved and so popular, that whenever I walked along the street with him, all kinds of people came up and put their arms around him—old college friends, wellknown celebrities, everyone. Paul introduced me to Ethel Waters, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and many other talented and prominent personalities of the day. Paul was as much loved by the whites as by his own people. He had great magnetism.

He also had an easy air about him. He moved slowly and rhythmically. He spoke in low tones, and if he teased someone, he would do it with a sly look. If you were looking at him, his lips would barely move and his eyes would be serious and slanted away. That's how I'd know he was joking.

Paul gave the impression of being lazy and unambitious, but when one considers his achievements, it's obvious he was alert and always in the right spot. His ambition was clothed in an air of nonchalance. His clothes were immaculate and conventional. In fact, he was meticulous about his personal appearance. At my dinner parties, Paul and Essie were so gracious and warm. Considering the times, it's gratifying to recall how at home they were, received by all the guests wholeheartedly and without patronage.

Paul had an abundant sense of humor. His friends who worked for him in the theatre realized that Paul was a true gentleman. He was never vulgar and didn't swear or use the common four-letter words. He was at times more hurt than angry. He was never bitter or complaining, when I knew him. He had a way of taking things in his stride.

Paul Robeson was chosen by Walter Camp as All-American End on Rutgers University football team.

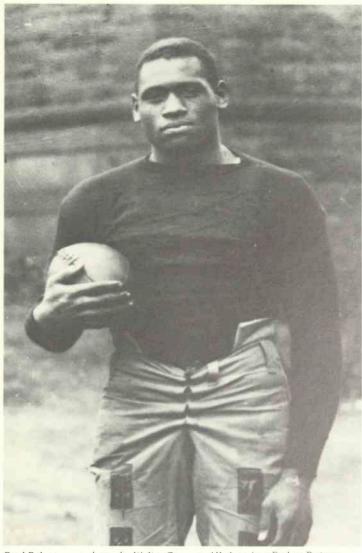




Paul Robeson in concert



Paul Robeson and Lawrence Brown made 32 USO appearances in Germany, Czechoslovakia and France.







Paul Robeson and Mary Blair in "All God's Chillun" (stage)

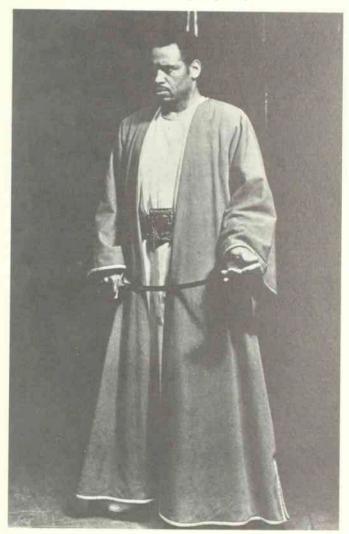
Poster for "Native Land" (film)



Paul Robeson and Nina Mae McKinney in "Sanders of the River" (film)



Paul Robeson in "Emperor Jones" (stage play and film)



Paul Robeson in "Othello" (stage play)



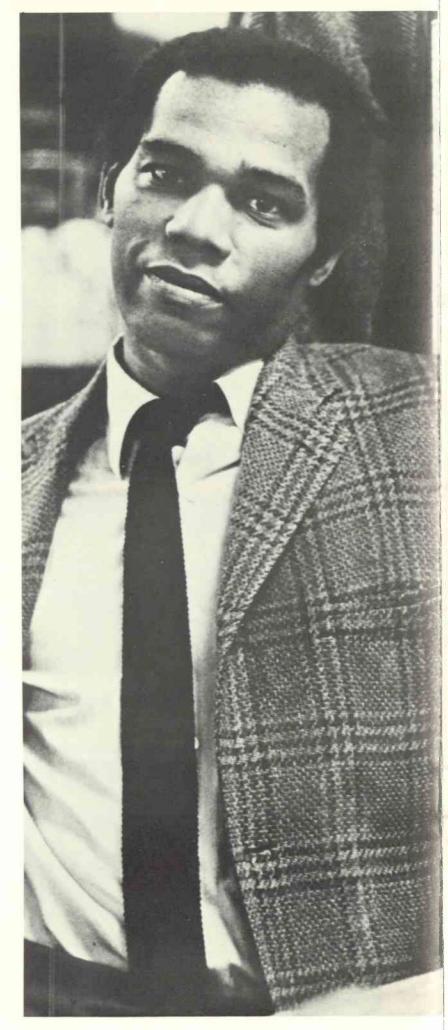
Rochester, Ethel Waters and Paul Robeson in "Tales of Manhattan" (film)



Paul Robeson in "Dark Sands" (film)

PHILLIP HAYES DEAN/Author

Phillip Hayes Dean was given his first professional production in 1968 when his short play This Bird of Dawning Singeth All Night Long was presented at the American Place Theatre in New York and then was booked on a college tour. Since then, The American Place Theatre has done developmental work on four more of Mr. Dean's plays: Every Night When The Sun Goes Down, The Last American Dixieland Band (currently under option for Broadway), Rip Off, and The Collapse of the Great I Am. It was the latter play that was retitled Freeman and will be shown on public television (Visions) later this season. Born in Chicago, Mr. Dean moved to Pontiac, Michigan when he was a teenager. He has taught acting at the University of Michigan and appeared as an actor himself on Broadway in Waiting for Godot and The Wisteria Trees. In 1971 he won the Drama Desk Award for The Sty of the Blind Pig, performed by the Negro Ensemble Company and a collection of his plays has been published by Bobbs-Merrill.



CHARLES NELSON REILLY / Director

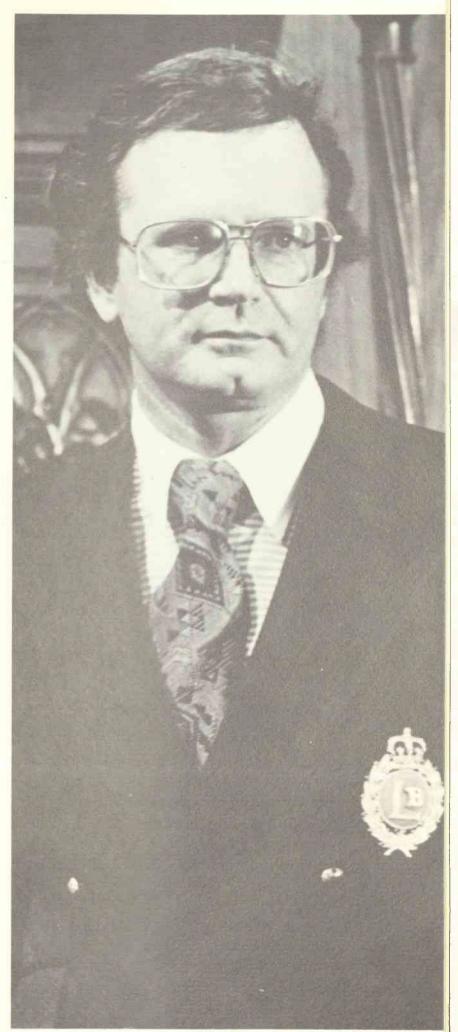
Charles Nelson Reilly acquired a national reputation as an award-winning actor on the Broadway stage and on television before he turned to directing at the prompting of famed producer-director Herman Shumlin. After staging a number of noteworthy showcase productions in New York, Mr. Reilly directed a highly successful revival of *Private Lives* starring Elaine Stritch. And just recently he directed Roberta Peters in her first Mimi in Puccini's *La Boheme* with an all-Metropolitan Opera cast in Providence for Artists International.

Mr. Reilly has roots deep in the theatre, having performed in more than thirty New York productions including the original *Bye Bye Birdie* before winning a Tony Award and national fame for his performance as Frump in the Broadway hit, *How to Succeed*.... He went on to other major roles, notably in *Hello Dolly!* (winning a Tony nomination for originating the role of Cornelius Hackl) as well as in the recent Neil Simon comedy, *God's Favorite*.

The range of Mr. Reilly's television activities has been nothing short of prodigious. For his role of Claymore Gregg in *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* he received an Emmy nomination, and while with this show he appeared as a regular on four other network programs: *The Dean Martin Show, The Golddiggers, The Steve Allen Show* and his own children's show, *Lidsville.* He is currently on *The Match Game,* and recently hosted *The Tonight Show.*

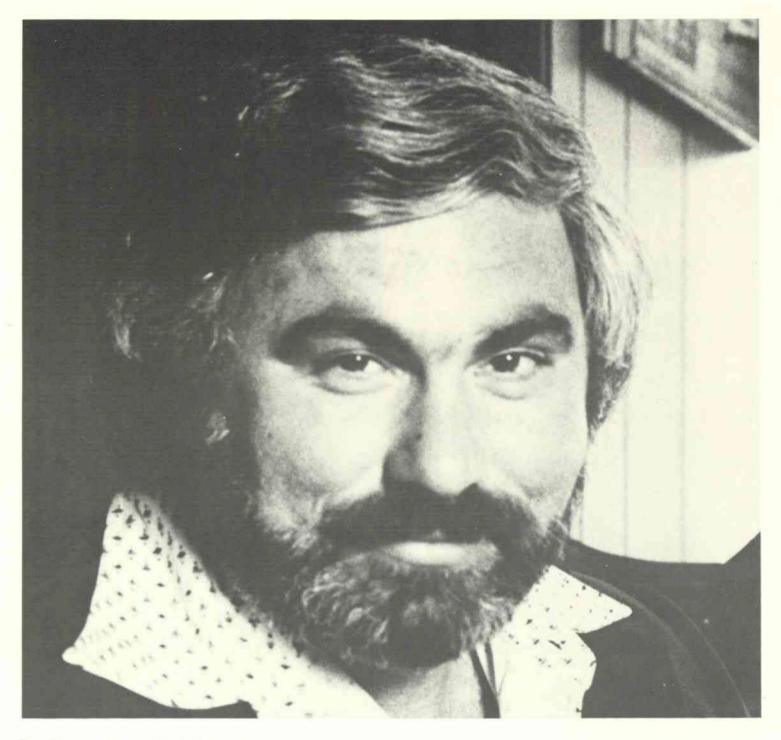
Mr. Reilly founded the musical comedy and opera departments at HB Studios in New York as well as his own school in Los Angeles, The Faculty. His former students include Liza Minnelli, Peter Boyle, Lily Tomlin, Gary Burghoff and Donna McKechnie. His advertising and creative services company, Creative Image Productions, has won three International Broadcasting Awards in addition to Cleos, Andys and the Belding Award.

Last season, Mr. Reilly made his Broadway directorial debut with the highly acclaimed one-woman play, *The Belle* of Amherst starring Julie Harris, for which Miss Harris won her fifth Tony. He also directed the London production. Mr. Reilly's other activities include lecturing and teaching master classes in acting at such institutions as Hart College, Carnegie-Mellon, the University of Indiana and the Library for Performing Arts in Lincoln Center, New York. Mr. Reilly and Paul Robeson's paths crossed in 1948 in Hartford, Conn. when Mr. Robeson was soloist in "Ballad For Americans" and Mr. Reilly was a member of the All City High School Chorus in the same show.



DON GREGORY/

Producer

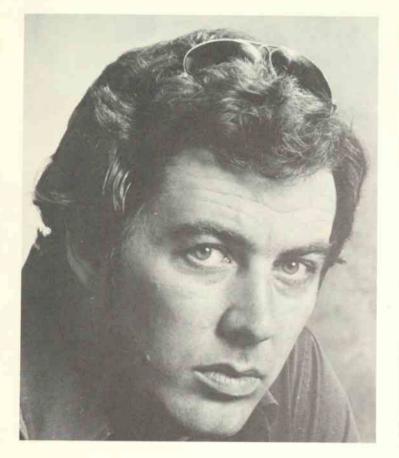


Don Gregory has established himself as a major theatrical producer through his highly successful ventures in a unique area: the one-person play. He first achieved national recognition with his production of *Clarence Darrow* starring Henry Fonda. Last season he followed with another great success, *The Belle of Amherst* starring Julie Harris. Both Mr. Fonda and Miss Harris won Tony Awards for these productions. *Clarence Darrow* earned for Mr. Gregory the 1975 Christopher Award, the American Bar Association Gavel Award, and the Peabody Award for the television production, while *The Belle of Amherst* brought the 1976 Christopher Award.

After a brief fling as an actor, Don Gregory began his show business career in earnest by not only launching but also naming New York's "Coffee House" movement, for a brief and exalted period one of the best incubators of new talent to be found anywhere, giving impetus to the careers of the likes of Joan Rivers, Vaughn Meader and the team of Stiller and Meara. He was then offered a position as an agent with the newly-formed Agency for the Performing Arts, where he stayed for eight years, becoming vicepresident responsible for such clients as Bobby Darin, Harry Belafonte, Rowan and Martin, Frank Gorshin, and Red Buttons (whom he also manages). Born in New York, he attended the University of Connecticut and was the head of World Wide Variety for the International Famous agency. He currently produces the popular Celebrity Bowling syndicated TV show and the Celebrity Tennis TV series. Also on Mr. Gregory's agenda this season is Dore Schary's *FDR*, a one-man show starring Robert Vaughn which will open on Broadway this season.

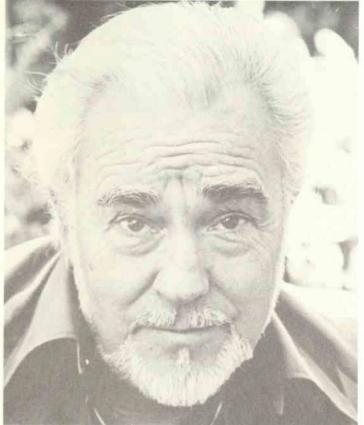
H.R.POINDEXTER/ NOEL TAYLOR/

Scenic & Lighting Designer



H.R. Poindexter won Broadway's 1971 Tony Award for his lighting of Story Theatre. At the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles he designed the setting for Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope, and created the lighting for Chemin de Fer, Godspell, The Hot L Baltimore, Story Theatre, Metamorphoses (for which he won his first Los Angeles Drama Critic Award), Too Much Johnson and the Pulitzer Prize winning play Shadow Box. Mr. Poindexter has designed the sets and/or lighting for 14 productions at the Ahmanson Theatre, among them: Idiot's Delight, the subsequent Broadway revival of A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Richard II, The Crucible, A Streetcar Named Desire, Private Lives, Ring Around the Moon, The Night of the Iguana, and Long Day's Journey Into Night. For his work on Cyrano de Bergerac, he was again honored by the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle. He has been production supervisor and lighting designer for the American Ballet Theatre, the Martha Graham Company, the Dallas Opera Company, and the Margo Jones Theatre. He designed the lighting for the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera's production of Gone With the Wind, The Day After the Fair, as well as The Constant Wife starring Ingrid Bergman. For producers Don Gregory and Mike Merrick he created the sets and lighting for their Broadway and television hits Clarence Darrow, starring Henry Fonda, and The Belle of Amherst, starring Julie Harris. Mr. Poindexter created the lighting for director George Abbott's Broadway musical, Music Is, and that same season he designed the set and lighting for Night of the Iguana, at Circle in the Square. Most recently Mr. Poindexter designed the set and lighting for Vincent Price as Oscar Wilde in Diversions and Delights. He has also created the sets and lighting for FDR starring Robert Vaughn.

Costume Designer



Noel Taylor has created the costumes for over 50 productions, among them Auntie Mame, Night of the Iguana, Teahouse of the August Moon, Desire Under the Elms, and Slapstick Tragedy, for which he won the Maharam Award for the best costumes of 1967. He also designed the wardrobes for two Actors Studio productions: Strange Interlude and Marathon 33. Since moving to the West Coast, Mr. Taylor has designed for several of the Ahmanson Theatre and Mark Taper Forum productions including Merton of the Movies, Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope, Major Barbara and A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum. He designed the Hallmark Hall of Fame television shows for fifteen years including such Emmy winners as Green Pastures, Victoria Regina, Macbeth and The Magnificent Yankee which starred Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt. In his younger years, Mr. Taylor also acted in the theatre notably in Reunion In Vienna which starred the Lunts. He recently completed the wardrobes for the all-star production of Our Town and the film An Enemy of the People starring Steve McQueen, as well as for the Broadway production FDR starring Robert Vaughn.





William Luce

Timothy Helgeson

William Luce/Music Consultant

William Luce is both composer, poet, and playwright. His recent Broadway and television success, *The Belle of Amherst*, a one-woman play starring Julie Harris, won for him the 1976 Christopher Award. Born and raised in Portland, Oregon, Mr. Luce majored in piano at Boston University, University of Washington, and Lewis and Clark College. He is an ASCAP composer-lyricist. Singers including Doris Day have recorded his songs. Mr. Luce has sung with the Norman Luboff Choir, the Gregg Smith Singers, the Roger Wagner Chorale, the Johnny Mathis Show, the Ray Charles Singers, and the Julie London Show in Las Vegas. He has authored two books, and is currently writing a new play.

Timothy Helgeson/Assistant to the Director

Timothy Helgeson is a Minnesota-born writer, director and musician who attended the University of North Carolina, garnering his B.A. degree in English and Theatre Arts. He did production work in television before meeting and teaming up with Charles Nelson Reilly in Creative Image Productions of which Mr. Helgeson is president. He is the recipient of the Internationl Broadcasting Award for his work as writer and director for this advertising and creative services company. He has written for stage and television. Mr. Helgeson's knowledge of Emily Dickinson's life and work led to his deep involvement as compiler of *The Belle of Amherst.* He also teaches classes in meditation.

Ed Gazich/Production Co-ordinator

Ed Gazich, a native New Yorker was last involved in *The Belle of Amhherst*, starring Julie Harris, for which Miss Harris won her fifth Tony. Prior to his theatre activities, Mr. Gazich was vice-president of several major advertising agencies, during which time he wrote three award winning television and radio commercials, two of which were judged "best in the world." With Messrs. Reilly and Helgeson, Mr. Gazich owns Creative Image Productions, their theatrical producing organization, and Commercial Clinic, Inc., their company for commercial presentation. A graduate of Hofstra University, Mr. Gazich now lives in the woods of Laurel Canyon in Los Angeles.

Nora Dunfee/Dialogue & Script Consultant

Nora Dunfee was first associated with James Earl Jones in 1955 in her capacity as faculty member of The American Theatre Wing and recently in 1974 he directed her produc-





Ed Gazich,

Nora Dunfee

tion of *The Road to Rome* at New York University School of the Arts. She trained for theatre at the Actors Lab, where she was assistant to Margaret Prendergast McLean, author of *Good American Speech*. Ms. Dunfee wrote and directed *Autobiography of an Attitude*, a one-woman show for Julie Haydon based on her life with George Jean Nathan, was assistant to director Mel Shapiro for the Broadway production of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and coach and production consultant to Debbie Reynolds for the musical *Irene* on Broadway and the road. She recently acted the role of Mary Burns Brent in *Never A Snug Harbour*, written by her husband, David Ulysses Clarke, produced by the New Dramatists. Ms. Dunfee made her acting debut in *Our Town* with Sinclair Lewis, followed by *Coriolanus* with Robert Ryan and *The Visit* with the Lunts.

Philip Stein/Production Stage Manager

Philip Stein has been associated on Broadway in his capacity as Production Stage Manager with such memorable productions as *Peter Pan* starring Jean Arthur and Boris Karloff, *Finian's Rainbow* starring Ella Logan and David Wayne and the Jose Ferrer production of *The Insect Comedy*. In his busy career he has worked at the Bucks County Playhouse with such stars as Helen Hayes, Shirley Booth, Kitty Carlisle, Joshua Logan and Moss Hart. In recent years, Mr. Stein has turned his attentions to producing television specials garnering awards for *Tonight With Belafonte*, *New York 19*, both directed by Norman Jewison, *The Strolling 20's*, *100 Years of Laughter* and *Pueblo*. He is Executive Vice-President and Producer for Belafonte Enterprises, Inc. and as such was responsible for Mr. Belafonte's highly successful world wide tours and many television appearances.

The producer wishes to thank Nora Dunfee for her invaluable artistic contribution to this production.

The producer gratefully acknowledges the tireless efforts of Mr. Ed Gazich in the production of this play.

We acknowledge the gracious assistance and cooperation for the materials and photographs used in this book by: Rutgers University Archives. Theatre and Music Collection of the Museum of the City of New York. U.S. Army Signal Corps. Bettman Archives.

Staff for "Paul Robeson"