

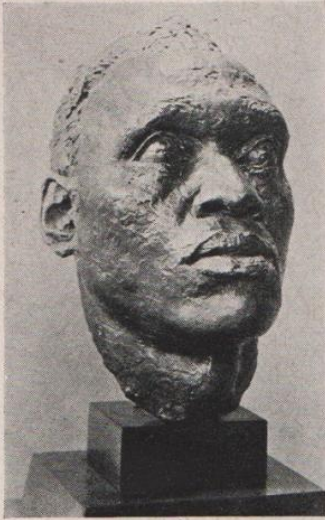


PAUL ROBESON

PARMINDERVIR OF ONE BLACK ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
1961-1986

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P A U L R O B E S O N



Sculpture by Epstein

ONE of the leading vocalists of his race and comparable to the greatest singers and actors of any race or age, Paul Robeson is the popular idol of the American audience in the theatre, concert hall or outdoor stadium.

Robeson's phenomenal drawing power is accounted for by his humanity, his dignity and his artistic integrity. Added to these qualities there is his lofty stature, his noble mien and the majesty of his voice.

But there is something else . . . a deep undercurrent of compassion for the plight of his people, emancipated by words in 1865 but still too often denied in 1945 the simple actualities of that freedom proclaimed eighty years ago.

This omnipresent compassion which gives to appropriate songs sometimes somber fervor and other times a note of exalted protest has moved the heart of masses and bestowed upon Robeson a place high in the leadership of his race.

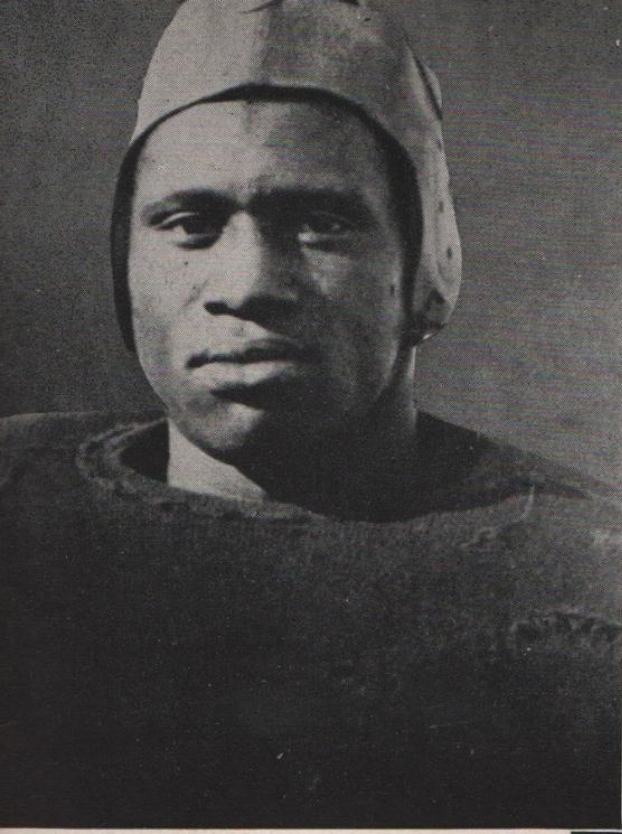
"Giant of Song" the critic of a Chicago paper

has called Robeson. He is, indeed, not only a giant of song, but a giant of a man—just under 6 foot, 4 inches in height, and weighing around 200 pounds.

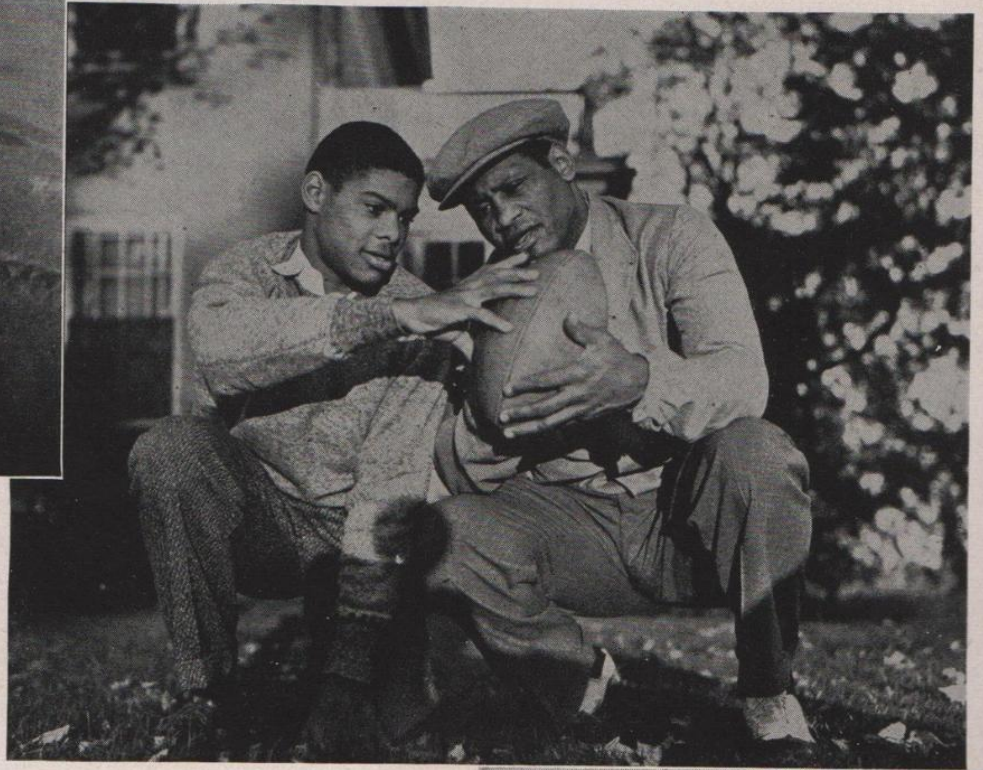
To be actor or singer—that was the question for Paul Robeson to decide early in his career. It was a cast of "How happy could I be with either, were t'other dear charmer away." Not being able to make a definite decision, Robeson accepted both, and as the future proved, has risen to enviable heights of fame.

The son of a Princeton (N. J.) preacher, Robeson attended Rutgers College, winning honors in both the scholastic and athletic fields. Class valedictorian, Phi Beta Kappa, he was 4-letter man as well, and also Walter Camp's choice for All-American End on the football team for 1917 and 1918. After Rutgers came a course in law at Columbia. Mr. Robeson holds degrees from both Universities, as well as honorary degrees from Rutgers, Hamilton, Moorehouse (Atlanta University) and Howard.

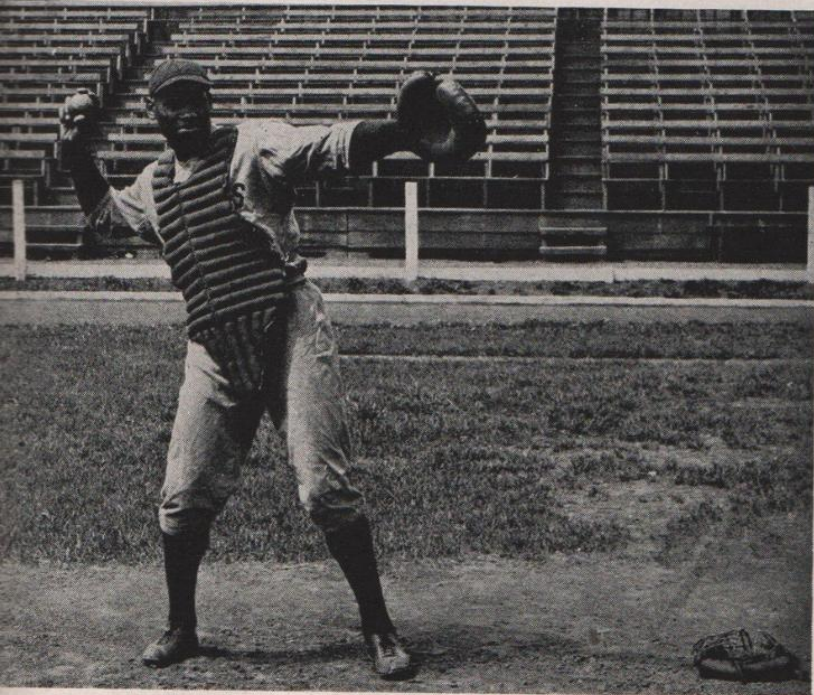
Other honors bestowed upon Robeson include



Twice chosen by Walter Camp as All-American End on Rutgers University football team.



His son, Paul, Jr., who has played on the Cornell varsity is following in his father's footsteps.



Robeson also caught on the varsity baseball team.



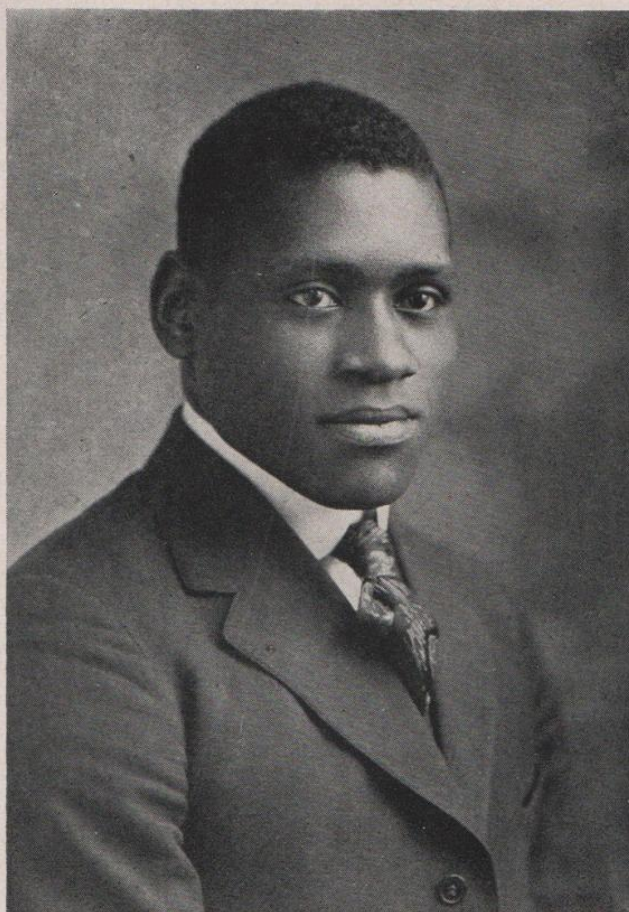
And played center on the varsity basketball team. He also won a letter in track.

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PAIN THE ARCHIVE

the Spingarn Medal for outstanding achievement, awarded by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1945); Gold Medal for best diction in the American Theatre, from the American Academy of Arts and Science (1944); Donaldson Award for best acting performance (1944); Abraham Lincoln Medal for most notable and distinguished services in human relations in New York City (1943).

It was during his course at Columbia that the fair charmers, Drama and Song began their rival claims. As Robeson, himself, relates: "It might never have happened, if I hadn't been living right next door to the YMCA in Harlem, and was easy prey when a substitute was needed, and I was dragged in to take over the part in a play that was being staged. I was going to law school at the time and coaching a football team. I didn't want to act, but I didn't know how to refuse. So before I knew it, I was rehearsing with the others. On the opening night, Robert Edmond Jones and Kenneth MacGowen were in the audience. It seems they spotted me then for 'Emperor Jones' that O'Neill was thinking of reviving. It took plenty of persuasion to get me to consider doing the Emperor, but they broke me down, as you know."

Everyone remembers the tremendous sensation Robeson created in the part of Brutus Jones. It was in this part that the Robeson singing voice was discovered. In the part where Jones is lost in the jungle, he is supposed to whistle to keep up his spirits. Robeson's whistling, however, wasn't anything to write home about; so it was decided he



Rutgers Valedictorian, Class 1917.

would try singing a spiritual instead. The effect was tremendous—so much so that Robeson found himself acclaimed as both singer and actor.

Two years later (in 1925) he made his first appearance as a professional concert singer in a recital held in New York's famous Greenwich Village, to an audience of Who's Who in the arts and letters. The emotional splendor of his magnificent bass-baritone held the throng spellbound. First his next concert, a long line waited in a snowstorm, only to find the house sold out. Soon after, he went abroad, and sensational reports of his successes drifted back from London,

Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Moscow, and Leningrad.

Meanwhile, in London, Robeson was approached about playing the role of Othello in a contemplated production. He accepted, and in May of that year (1930), the production opened with Robeson in the role of Othello, Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona, Dame Sybil Thorndike as Emilia, Maurice Brown as Iago, and Ralph Richardson, as Roderigo. In the audience that night was Margaret Webster, but Robeson did not meet her until several years later, when she suggested an American production of Othello.

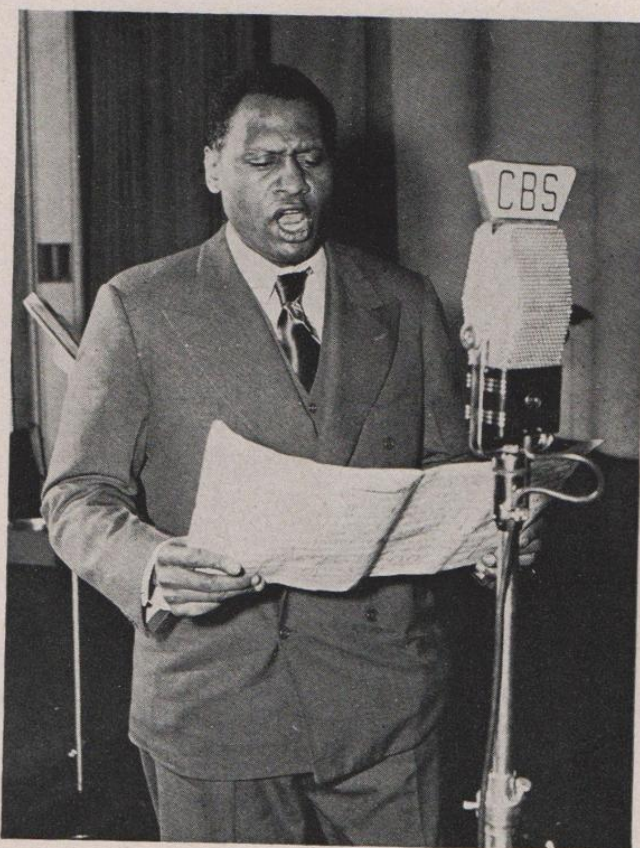
Robeson remained abroad for several years. His return to this country in 1939 signalized by one of the most exciting radio adventures of the season, with the first performance of Earl Robinson's "Ballad for Americans," broadcast in CBS's Pursuit of Happiness program over a national hook-up.

In 1943 the Theatre Guild agreed with Robeson that the time was right for him to revive "Othello" on the American stage and the Margaret Webster production assembled a remarkable cast, including Jose Ferrer, Uta Hagen, Edith King and James Monks, which was presented in New York for a full season followed by an equally full second season on the road. This production enjoyed the extraordinary success of no empty seats for two years, and was a personal triumph for Robeson the actor.

Finishing his long run as Othello, Robeson sandwiched in a USO tour to Europe with Lawrence

Brown, appearing before enormous GI crowds in France, and Germany. His present coast-to-coast concert tour is one of the longest he has ever undertaken and includes engagements on the greatest subscription courses in the United States and Canada, with the usual generous sprinkling of college concerts—always favorite audiences to Robeson, the perpetual undergraduate.

Stage, concert, radio and screen have all shared the magnificence of Robeson's voice. Whether in song or speech it exercises the same magic spell. This with the simplicity and friendliness of the man wins all hearts. He is in the words of a Canadian critic "a great personality, a great artist, a great soul."



WORLD PREMIER OF "BALLAD FOR AMERICANS"
OVER CBS NETWORK



FAMILY GROUP AT HOME

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Robeson and Paul, Jr. are seated on the steps of the Robeson house, at Enfield, Connecticut. The Robesons gave up their Harlem apartment some years ago for this permanent home in the country. The colonial house, which stands back from the road, was selected because it had ceilings high enough and rooms wide enough to house Robeson's huge bulk.

Because sleeping is one of Robeson's biggest problems—he is bothered by the slightest sound—his room is placed in the quietest part of the house and is equipped with a seven-foot bed. This room also houses Robeson's great record collection, which alone contains 300 records of spirituals and folk songs. He also has a large number of songs of

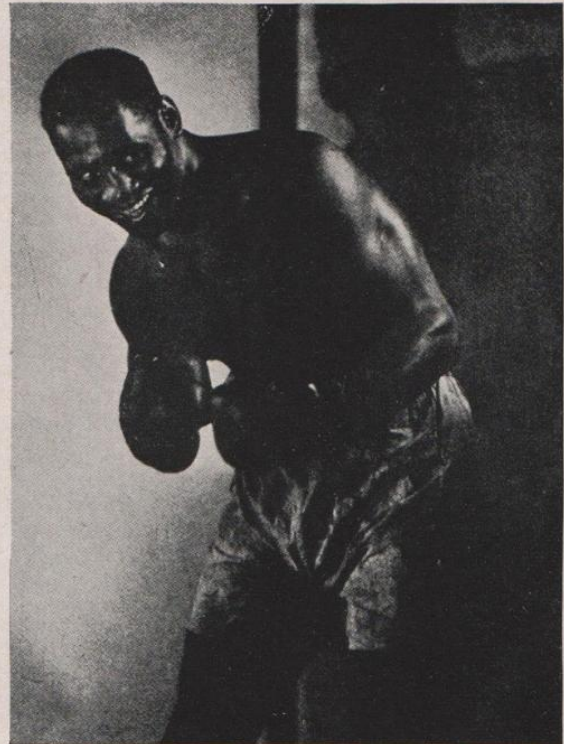
the working people of all nations, and uses records to study foreign language diction.

Mrs. Robeson (Eslanda Goode Robeson, called "Essie" by intimates), is an author and lecturer on her own. A graduate of Columbia, she is now studying for her Doctor's degree in anthropology, has just written a book "African Journey" published by John Day. It is an account of a trip she took through Africa in 1936 with Paul, Jr., then eight years old.

Paul, Jr., reaches his eighteenth birthday this year, attends Cornell University where he is studying electrical engineering. He is a big boy with a frame similar to his father's, and has already distinguished himself in football and track, in the latter sport having several times high-jumped better than six feet.



"ALL GOD'S CHILLUN"



"BLACK BOY"



ROBESON AND RUBY ELZY
in "JOHN HENRY"



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Scene from
In the foreground

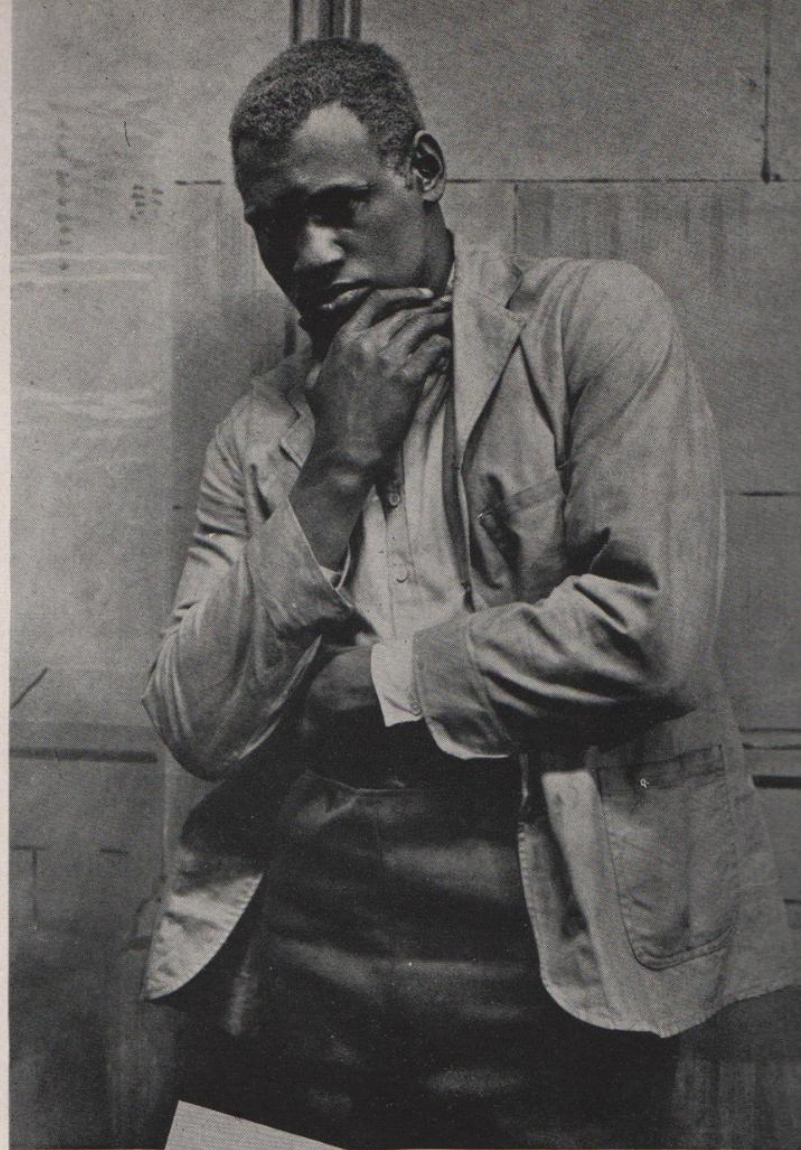
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MOUS BY ROBESON



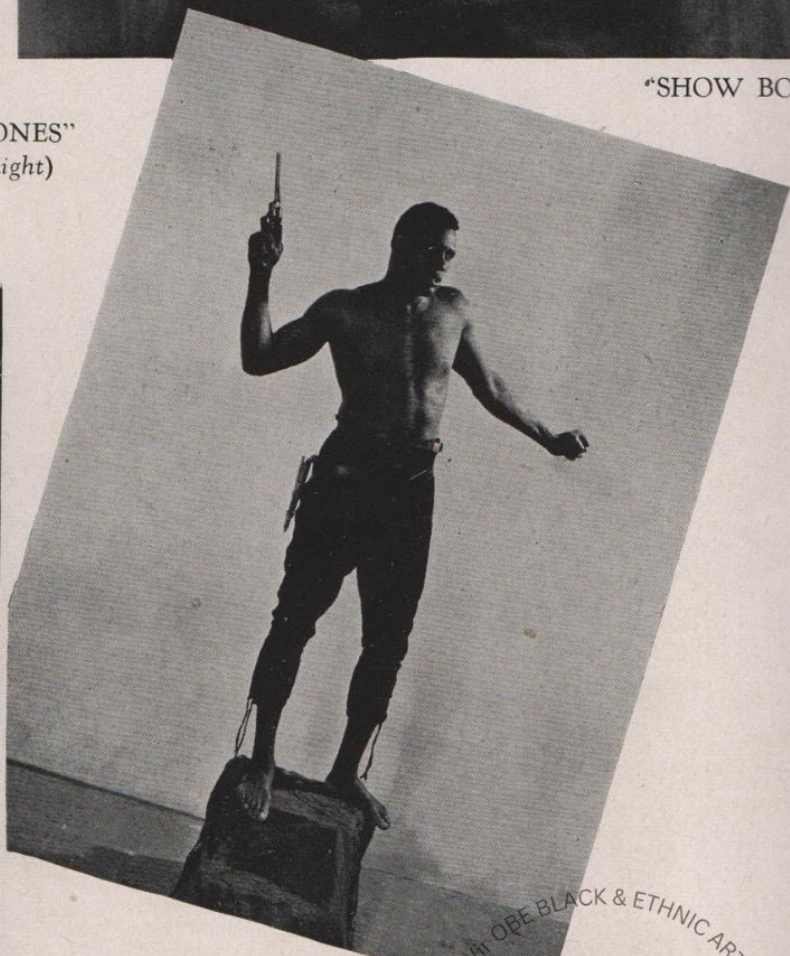
"THE EMPEROR JONES"
(Above and to the Right)



"SHOW BOA



at II, Theatre Guild production of "OTHELLO."
nd, Jose Ferrer, James Monks and Paul Robeson.



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FOUR FAMOUS FILMS

Starring Paul Robeson

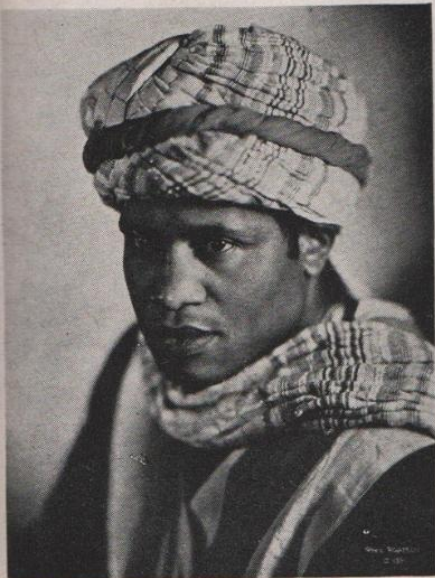
"The Emperor Jones" is American made, the other three having been produced in the British Isles. In "Big Feller" Lawrence Brown became an actor. "Proud Valley" was a Welsh story.



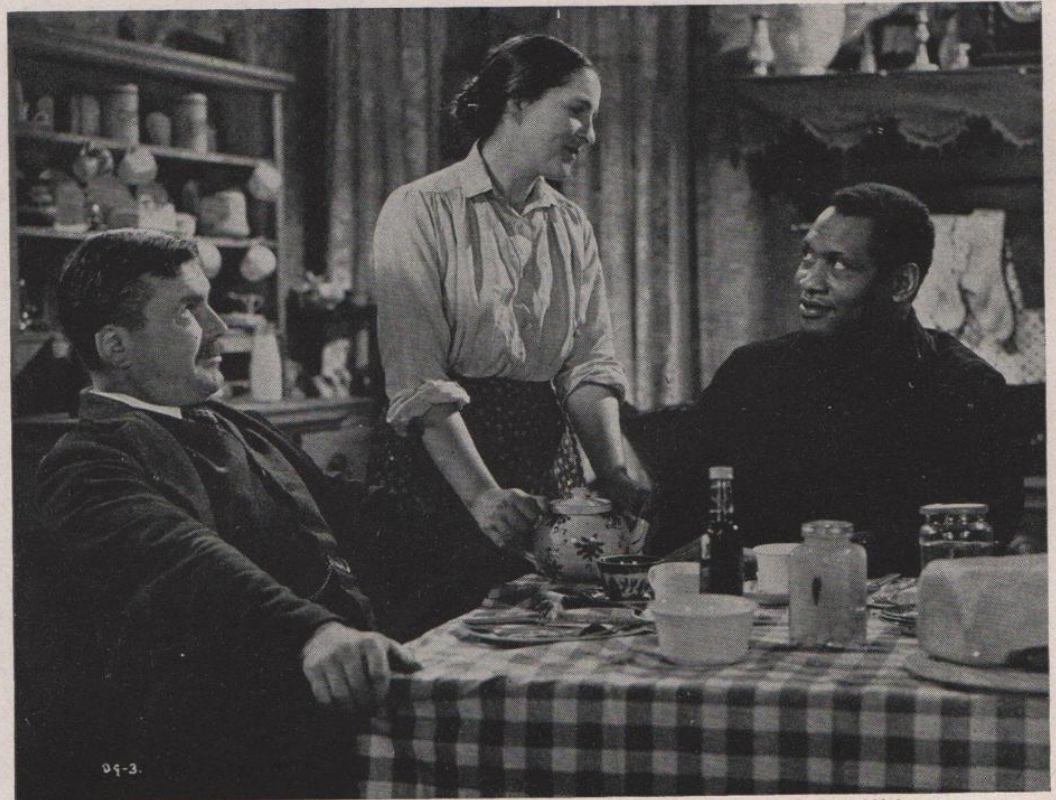
"THE EMPEROR JONES"



"BIG FELLER"



"DESERT SANDS"



"PROUD VALLEY"

LAWRENCE BROWN

Lawrence Brown, pianist and composer, has been accompanist for Paul Robeson so long that he is an indispensable part of a Robeson concert. In fact, Brown occasionally does more than accompany on the piano, he chimes in some of the vocal refrains.

He was born in Jacksonville, Florida, and in early youth went to Boston to study music. Later he went to London where he was a pupil of Alec Rowley in composition at Trinity College, and Miss Ira Aldridge, pupil of Jennie Lind and daughter of the great negro tragic actor, the first of his race to perform "Othello."

For four years Brown toured as accompanist with Roland Hayes, the tenor, appearing in Great Britain and on the continent. In 1921 he played before Their Majesties The King and Queen at Buckingham Palace.

In 1925 he joined Paul Robeson and has been with him ever since the first recital given by Robeson, in Greenwich Village, New York, in April of that year.

Widely known for his research in negro music, Brown arranged over thirty published negro spirituals — some of which are synonymous with the name of Robeson, such as "Joshua fit de Battle of Jericho," "Steal Away," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "Lil' David," "Ezekiel saw de Wheel."



F. C. COPPICUS, veteran manager of singers, one time General Secretary of the Metropolitan Opera Company and for 28 years a leading concert manager, met Robeson in London and engaged him on the spot for his first concert tour in the United States and Canada. Mr. Coppicus, who has managed such stars as Caruso and Chaliapin and now represents Lily Pons and Andre Kostelanetz, is rated as the top voice discoverer in this country. He is Executive Vice-President of Columbia Concerts, Inc., Robeson's concert management.



F. C. SCHANG, concert manager, is the man who supervises Robeson's concert and radio appearances, and has booked all of his tours in this country and Canada. During the war, while Robeson's Othello tour was in progress, Schang was a Major in the Army Air Forces. He is an indefatigable scout for new talent, once flew by clipper from New York to Shanghai just to see a tryout of a show. After graduating from the Columbia University School of Journalism, Schang was theatrical reporter on the New York Tribune, advance man for the Diaghileff Ballet Russe, and has since managed many leading concert stars. He is a Vice-President of Columbia Concerts, Inc.



JEROME KERN Every great popular singer has had one or two songs inseparably linked with his name. Caruso had his Pagliacci aria; McCormack, "I Hear You Calling Me;" and Paul Robeson has "Ole Man River"—a great song by Jerome Kern, which he wrote with Robeson in mind when he composed the score of Show Boat. Robeson has sung this role in both England and America, and rarely gives a concert in which this number is not demanded by the public.



HEYWOOD BROUN. The late Heywood Broun had a literary career which by coincidence was closely coordinated with that of Paul Robeson. When Robeson was a great athlete, Broun was a sports writer; later when he made his stage debut, Broun was a dramatic critic; and when Robeson became a singer, Broun was a columnist whose purview covered all the arts. In each of these fields Broun was a devoted friend and admirer.



FOSTER SANFORD, great Yale football player and Rutgers coach, who made an All-American end out of Robeson. Sanford played football at Yale in the fabulous 1890's as a contemporary of Hefflinger and Hinkey. He graduated from Yale in '94 and from the Law School in '96—but he gave up his law career, as he couldn't keep away from football. He retained an insurance business in New York, and coached Rutgers for ten years without pay—bringing this small college to national prominence in the football world. Actually, Sanford did much more for Robeson than make a great football player out of him—by his friendship and encouragement to a young negro on a white campus, he established in Robeson's mind for all time that character and accomplishment must prevail against any odds. Sanford died in 1938, at the age of 67.



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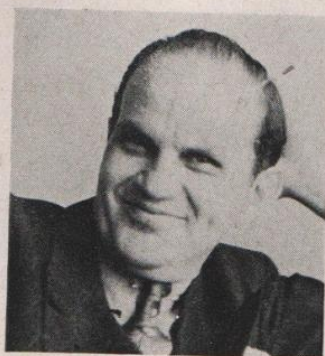
PEOPLE in ROBESON'S LIFE



EUGENE O'NEILL, great playwright, wrote "All God's Chillun Got Wings" especially for Robeson and adapted "The Hairy Ape" for him. Also wrote "The Emperor Jones," often revived by Robeson, which role he has played not only in the United States, but in London and Berlin as well. A prized book of O'Neill's plays presented to Robeson by the playwright, bears this inscription: "In gratitude to Paul Robeson, in whose interpretation of Brutus Jones I have found the most complete satisfaction an author can get — that of seeing his creation born into flesh and blood; and in whose creation of Jim Harris in my "All God's Chillun Got Wings" I found not only complete fidelity to my intent under trying circumstances, but, beyond that, true understanding and racial integrity. Again with gratitude and friendship.—EUGENE O'NEILL, 1925."



ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT. When Robeson visited Hamilton College several years ago to receive a degree, he found an old-time friend there officiating on the Board of Trustees — the distinguished author and critic, the late Alexander Woollcott. When Woollcott was dramatic critic of the old New York World and Robeson had just graduated from college, he was a frequent caller at Woollcott's apartment in lower Manhattan. Woollcott has written of Robeson: "Of all the countless people I have known in my wanderings about the world, he is one of the few who, I would say, had true greatness."



ROBERT ROCKMORE, lawyer, showman and art connoisseur, is one of Robeson's closest friends and represents him in all his business dealings, an arrangement which started in 1930, when both were connected with the Provincetown Playhouse. Rockmore not only handles all of Robeson's contracts and financial and legal affairs, but produced the London production of O'Neill's "The Hairy Ape," which starred Robeson. He has an enormous interest in the theatre, has produced many plays on Broadway, among them "Run, Little Children." He owned a share of the recent Theatre Guild production of "Othello."



CARL VAN VECHTEN, novelist and top-flight music critic, gave advice and written support to Robeson in the crucial years when his career was in its formative state. This writer's opinion not only influenced the general public, but what he had to say was read with respect and attention by fellow critics. It was Van Vechten who likened the art of Robeson to that of Yvette Guilbert and the great Chaliapin.

PAUL ROBESON VISITS EUROPE IN USO TOUR TO THREE COUNTRIES



Finishing his long run in "Othello" last June, Paul Robeson took a vacation and then heeded a call from the USO. With Lawrence Brown as pianist, he departed in a giant C-54 and was soon winging across the Atlantic by Air Transport Command. The day after his arrival he gave his first concert, and by plane and staff car squeezed

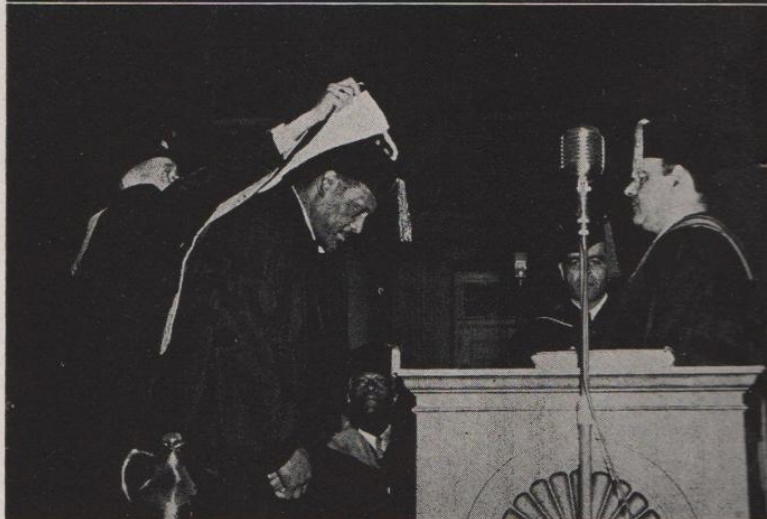
in 32 appearances in Germany, Czechoslovakia and France. He was greeted by some of the largest GI audiences ever assembled in this theatre, as his programs appealed specially to soldiers. Some of the towns visited were Munich, Nuremberg, Berchtesgaden, Garminsch, Pilsen. The favorite GI songs proved to be "Water Boy" and "Ole Man River."

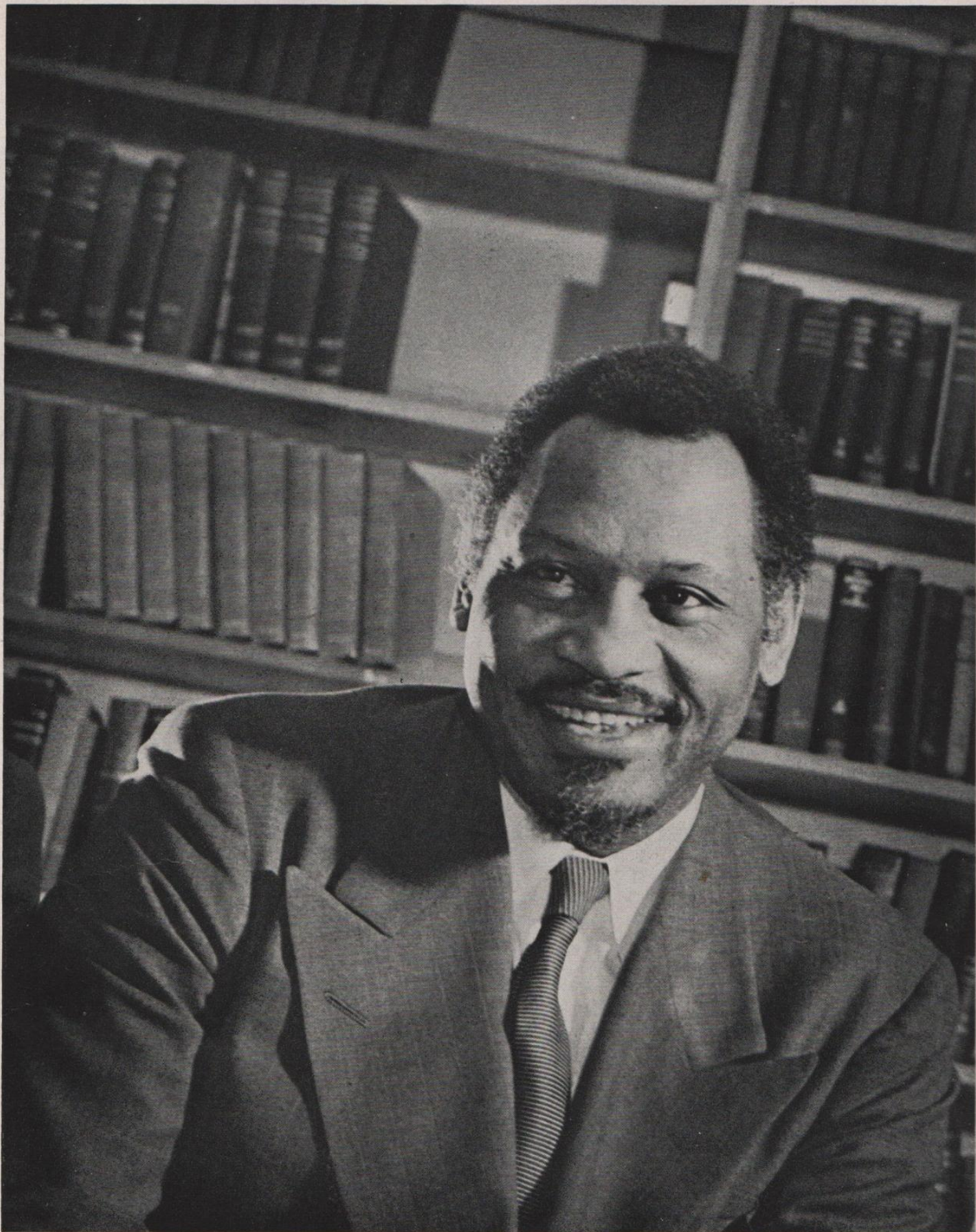
ROBESON IN THE NEWS

The four news photos on the right-hand panel of this page, from top to bottom, show Robeson singing at an RAF Camp in Toronto; receiving his Degree from Howard University in Washington; with other famous members of his race (Joe Louis, Marian Anderson, Bill Robinson); singing before a crowded Albert Hall in London.



It's an outdoor concert at the Dell, Philadelphia. Will Robeson sing tonight before 10,000 excited patrons? Or, will he sit in his room and wait for tomorrow? This question will only be settled by the weather man, and just at the hour of taking this picture, it looks bad.





An excellent recent photo of Paul Robeson in his library, still sporting the hirsute adornment of "Othello."

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*LICIA ALBANESE
*ROSE BAMPTON
JEAN CARLTON
*NADINE CONNER
ENYA GONZALEZ
DESI HALBAN
*HELEN JEPSON
*FLORENCE KIRK
*DOROTHY KIRSTEN
DOROTHY MAYNOR
*ZINKA MILANOV
EDNA PHILLIPS
*LILY PONS
*BIDU SAYAO
*MAXINE STELLMAN
*HELEN TRAUBEL
JOSEPHINE TUMINIA
*ASTRID VARNAY
CAMILLA WILLIAMS
FRANCES YEEND

MEZZO-SOPRANOS

NAN MERRIMAN
*HELEN OLHEIM
*MONA PAULEE
*RISE STEVENS
*JENNIE TOUREL

CONTRALTOS

KARIN BRANZELL
*BRUNA CASTAGNA
*MARGARET HARSHAW
*ANNA KASKAS
KATHRYN MEISLE
MARY VAN KIRK
JEAN WATSON
PORTIA WHITE

'CELLISTS

NIKOLAI GRAUDAN
GREGOR PIATIGORSKY

TENORS

*JUSSI BJOERLING
NESTOR CHAYRES
RICHARD CROOKS
*DONALD DAME
*EMERY DARCY
WILLIAM HAIN
WILLIAM HORNE
*CHARLES KULLMAN
MARIO LANZA
RALPH LEAR
*NINO MARTINI
*JAMES MELTON

BARITONES

*LORENZO ALVARY
*WALTER CASSEL
TODD DUNCAN
NELSON EDDY
IGOR GORIN
*LANSING HATFIELD
*ARTHUR KENT
*ALEXANDER KIPNIS
JAMES PEASE
JOHN TYERS
*LEONARD WARREN
*ROBERT WEEDE

BASSO

PAUL ROBESON

VIOLIST

WILLIAM PRIMROSE

TWO PIANOS

APPLETON AND FIELD
BARTLETT AND ROBERTSON
MORLEY AND GEARHART
VRONSKY AND BABIN
WHITTEMORE AND LOWE

PIANISTS

ROBERT CASADESUS
RUDOLF FIRKUSNY
DALIES FRANTZ
SASCHA GORODNITZKI
WALTER HAUTZIG
ERNEST HUTCHESON
EUGENE ISTOMIN
WILLIAM KAPELL
CONSTANCE KEENE
EUGENE LIST
SOLVEIG LUNDE
THEODORE PAXSON
SERGE PROKOFIEFF
MANSA REGULES
SANROMA
GYORGY SANDOR
RUDOLF SERKIN
ZADEL SKOLOVSKY
HILDE SOMER
REGINALD STEWART

VIOLINISTS

ADOLF BUSCH
ZINO FRANCESCATTI
CARROLL GLENN
HEIFETZ
ARTHUR LE BLANC
MENUHIN
ERICA MORINI
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*Mimi Benzell, Soprano
*Helen Olheim, Contralto
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*John Baker, Baritone
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WILLIAM PRIMROSE
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*HELEN JEPSON AND *NINO MARTINI
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HARPIST

MILDRED DILLING

HARMONICA

LARRY ADLER
JOHN SEBASTIAN

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PAUL ROBESON

To Parminder Vir
with warmest best wishes
and deepest thanks for your
thoughtfulness and gracious
kindness.

Paul Robeson Jr.
Souvenir Book

May 8, 1985

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