MIKE DAVIS SAYS:

C rations mighty good to our man in Vietnam

By MIKE DAVIS
AFRO Correspondent

MEKONG DELTA — Though the average soldier curses them and most war correspondents wouldn't think of eating them, I was very happy Monday afternoon to get my hands on a good old box of C rations.

The small food packs, which provide a complete meal for the man in combat, may not be up to par to the Sunday dishes that Mom prepares for the boys when they are home, but it is still a lot better than most people would have you believe.

We left Saigon early Monday morning aboard a Chinook helicopter for a day's journey through the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam and a chance to visit a Navy armada at sea.

Our giant gun ship, which was heavily equipped with the latest in modern weaponry, flew low over the delta swamplands and newsmen crowded every available window to get shots of the rice paddies and the jungles below.

WE LANDED in the Delta region shortly before noon and were quickly shuffled aboard a Navy gun boat, The Monitor, for a trip by water out to the USS Benwah.

The USS Benwah is one of a number of barrack ships stationed off the delta.

From this point small ATCs (Armed Troop Carriers) transport soldiers into the various battle zones.

"Man, it sure gets lonely out here on the water," commented Seaman James French of Kansas City, Kansas. "We are stationed out here on the ships and we never get a chance to get into a city or even have a little cold beer."

As we climbed up on to the narrow two deck, 12 sailors in starch stiffened whites formed a reception line to greet Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, who was scheduled to rendezous on the floatilla.

• • •

TWO OF the elite honor guard, James Ryan of Los Angeles, Calif., and Percy Robbins of Chicago, Ill, were colored.

The Defense Secretary's helicopter came in with a fleet of eight other armed ships, circled the deck and set down for a perfect landing.

As McNamara attended a formal lunch with the officers of the floatilla, the press was invited to tour the ship and then eat in one of the small boats that had pulled up along side.

"The Navy will always feed you well," said Steve Roan of the CBS television network but it wasn't long before his positive statement had been made a mockery of.

• • •

ONCE ON the small boat a general officer told us that the open mess was no longer opened and for that reason we would have to eat C rations or not at all.

Most us elected to struggle with the little brown cans that were dealt out to us.

I had unit B-2 which turned out to consist of meatballs and beans, a piece of pound cake, crackers and cheese, a piece of chocolate, two pieces of chewing gum and four stale cigarettes.

"Must be World War II vintage," grumbled R. W. Apple of the New York Times.

"Are you kidding Johnnie? asked a voice from the back of the boat. "These things must have been left over from the First World War."

ONCE I got my can of beans open, which is no mean feat, believe me, I found that it wasn't as bad as I had anticipated.

It was easy to understand how such substantial a meal could sustain a man for weeks out in the field.

The rations come complete with powered coffee and a dairy product. But we didn't have any hot water, so that was quickly discarded.

The men of the USS Benwah are extremely proud of the fleet and the job they are doing supporting the ground forces.

• • •

THE USS BENWHA and her sister ship the USS Colleton are the only ones of their kind on active duty in the Navy.

In addition to berthing, messing and office spaces, these floating bases can store a 30-day supply of fresh and frozen food and produce 40,000 gallons of fresh water each day.

Essentially they comprise a floating Naval base and are equipped with a sixteen bed hospital, a dental office, a pharmacy, laundry and library as well as cobbler and tailor shops.

In spite of all of these conveniences the men aboard these ships don't appear to be very happy and are envious of their ground based buddies who can spend frequent nights out on the town

• • •

"IT'S LIGHTS out on board at 10 p.m.," said Nelson Brock, of Ithaca, New York, "about the only thing we can do is sit out on the back and watch the bombs drop or fish for our trip back to the mainland."

We returned to the Monitor for sharks off the bow, land and the Chinook that was waiting to take us back to Saigon.

The C Rations had filled a good lunch-time void but it was mighty comforting to know that a good hot meal was waiting for us in Saigon.

'For a while we had it,' Maj. Piland

MIKE DAVIS

SAIGON — Maj. William U. Piland of Hampton is mighty happy to be leaving Vietnam, even though he feels his experience here has been educational and worthwhile.

Maj. Piland, 34, a graduate of A and T College at Greensboro, N.C. has worked closely with the pacification program here, but it has not always been as passive as he would have liked for it to have been.

The pacification program is a project run by the military in Vietnam. It is an attempt to win over the minds of people in small villages and hamlets and to show them that democracy can work.

"When we first go into a village," Maj. Piland said, "the first thing we have to do is show the people that we can protect them from the Viet Cong. After we do that we can begin to teach them how to care for themselves, health procedures and how to live a better life."

• • •

MAJ. PILAND spent 11 months working in the Delta region of Vietnam.

"It was good to get to Saigon," he said. "at least here the weather is bearable but in the Delta it was hot all of the time."

He had one experience, he said, with enemy fire.

"Yes," he said. "I was shot at a few times. We had gone out on an operation to protect the hamlet and our intelligence told us to expect an enemy force of 12 men.

"But they were wrong. When we got there we found ourselves in an ambush strongly reinforced with automatic weapons.

"For a while we had had it. "We were pinned down for two hours before we got air support in and were able to break contact.

"The only think I could think about was getting air cover and getting my men out of there.

"Later, after the battle was over and we were safe I thought about my family and my children. It was then that I thought about home..."

• • •

MAJ. PILAND said that his experience with the Vietnamese people has been a good one.

"I was the top officer in the village," he said. "My counter part was a Vietnamese captain and I found that it didn't take long to gain the respect of all of the people. I was always treated with respect," he said.

Maj. Piland will take a 30 day leave in Hampton, Va. with his wife and four children.

He is married to the former Janie Stokes also of Virginia.

After his 30 day leave is up he will go to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas to attend the war school there. — MIKE DAVIS

Elderly given $1,900 more

The State Commission on the Aging has approved another grant of Federal funds under the Older Americans Act.

A second year grant of $1,900 has been made to the Baltimore YWCA to broaden the scope of services offered at the Murphy Homes Senior Center. These funds will be used to provide instruction in various kinds of arts and crafts, and to provide other educational and secreational opportunities to the elderly in this public housing project, as well as the elderly living in this general area.

During the first year of this project, the State Commission on the Aging made available $2,533 to this project. The State Commission has so far made well over $150,000 of Federal funds available to Maryland projects for the elderly.

'Who' group on Hermits' bill

Yes, that's right; any teeny-bopper will confirm it. "The Who" is one of the newest of the exciting British groups to take the U.S. record market by storm.

They will appear at the Civic Center on Friday evening, Aug. 11 at 8:30, together with the first "psychedellic" rock group in the country, The Blues Magoos.

These two groups were selected to enhance the return-by-popular-demand appearance of the inimitable Herman's Hermits, led by Peter Noone. The mere name "Herman's Hermits" carries its own magic message to their fans.

VIETNAM Notebook

By MIKE DAVIS
AFRO Correspondent

HELICOPTER TROUBLE

MEKONG DELTA—Sp./4 Carlton Jones of Miami, Florida is constantly amazed at how many things can go wrong with one small helicopter.

He is crew chief of an H-23 light observation helicopter for the 2nd Brigade Aviation Section, and it's his job to make sure that everything is in working order.

After ten weeks of intensive training at Fort Rucker, Alabama, Jones began his tour in Vietnam.

Could he fly the ship if he had to? Jones explained, "I've worked on it for the last nine months and know it inside and out. I could probably fly one, but it would really have to be a crisis."

ON HOSPITAL STAFF

TAN SON KNHUT — Capt. Barrett Coleman is a graduate of Howard University in Washington, and as a physician has been assigned to Third Field Army Hospital in Vietnam.

He is currently the combat physician with the 25th Infantry Division or the "Wolf Hounds" as they are called in Vietnam.

Capt. Coleman has seen action with the Wolf Hounds in battles around Cu Chi.

"That's a real brave unit," Coleman said. "All you have to do is let them know that Charlie is out there and they'll go get him. They have a lot of young colored fellows in that unit and their spirit is real good.

"As a colored man in Vietnam I don't see too much prejudice," he said.

"You are judged more here on your qualifications than you are in the states. Everyone just seems glad to see another qualified face. It makes no difference what color it is."

'A LOT DIFFERENT'

SAIGON — It was his first Sunday in Vietnam and he spent the day walking around Saigon and taking a few pictures with a new camera he had bought in Germany.

E-5 Claude Waverly Carter of Route 1 Franklin, Va. wasn't too sure how much he is going to like Vietnam.

"It's a lot different and a long way from home," he commented as the sky darkened and began to threaten its daily rain.

"I didn't expect it to be this modern," he said. "I thought Saigon would just be a bunch of tumbled down shacks."

Carter, 26, the son of Mr. Claude Carter of Franklin, Va. is married to the former Jean Bowers of Richmond, Va. The couple has one child, a boy.

Carter is a graduate of the Hayden High School in Franklin and has served three years, four months of a five-year Army hitch.

He is assigned to the 101 Radio Research Sqnardon.

Send us names of your GIs

Send us the names, ranks and serial numbers of your relatives serving in Vietnam. As humanly as possible AFRO Correspondent Mike Davis will try to see them and communicate with them.

PFC. RILEY TELLS DAVIS:

'I miss my church and my singing group...'

By MIKE DAVIS
AFRO Correspondent

SAIGON — Pfc. James J. Riley of 2416 Liberty Heights Ave. took time out from his duties at the 14th Inventory Control Center to chat with the AFRO at the USO in Saigon recently.

Pfc. Riley, 19, the son of Mrs. Beatrice Riley, is a member and active worker at Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church at 2320 Reisterstown Rd. The Rev. Olin P. Moyd is the pastor.

The Baltimore youth has been in Vietnam for two months and admits that "so far it's not as bad as I thought it would be."

• • •

HE IS a 1965 graduate of Douglass High School and is a member of Baltimore's Drayton Singers.

He taught Sunday school and Vacation Bible school before entering the Army and he was employed as a paramedic aid at the Charles E. Moreland unit of Spring Grove Hospital.

He is scheduled to be stationed in Vietnam for eleven months.

"I miss my church and my singing group very much," he said as he drank a soft drink and ate a piece of cake that had been passed out by USO workers.

"I can't wait," he said, "to get back to my church and my singing group."

PFC. RILEY lives in Baltimore with his sister, Geraldine Riley and three brothers, Johnny and Charles and Clarence who are twins.

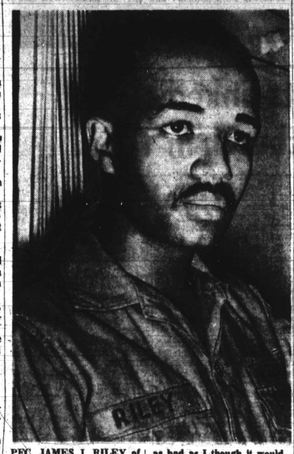
He is the grandson of Mrs. Daisy Riley.

AFRO proofreader Raymond Carpenter taught him English in junior high school.

Pfc. Riley spends most of his time at the USO or trying to learn more about the life and culture of the Vietnamese people.

Next week he will begin taking courses in the Vietnamese language that will be offered at the USO in Saigon.

"Tell the people in Baltimore," he said, "that I am okay and ask them to remember me in their prayers."



PFC. JAMES J. RILEY of Baltimore told AFRO's Mike Davis 'Vietnam not as bad as I though it would be . . .'

Home soon

SAIGON — SP/4 Oscar Lewis Jr. will soon be leaving Vietnam and returning to Baltimore, a place he says he "misses" very much.

He is the son of Mrs. Rose Lewis of 4011 Duvall Ave. and a 1964 graduate of Carver Vocational High School.

He has a sister, Mrs. Joan Campbell, who is also a native Baltimorean.

He has been in the Army for 22 months and has spent 16 months in Vietnam.

"I miss home more than anything else," Lewis said. "I'll be glad to get back to my family and my girl, Cecelia.

Before joining the Service he was employed by the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company and intends to return to the company's employes as soon as he has severed his service connections

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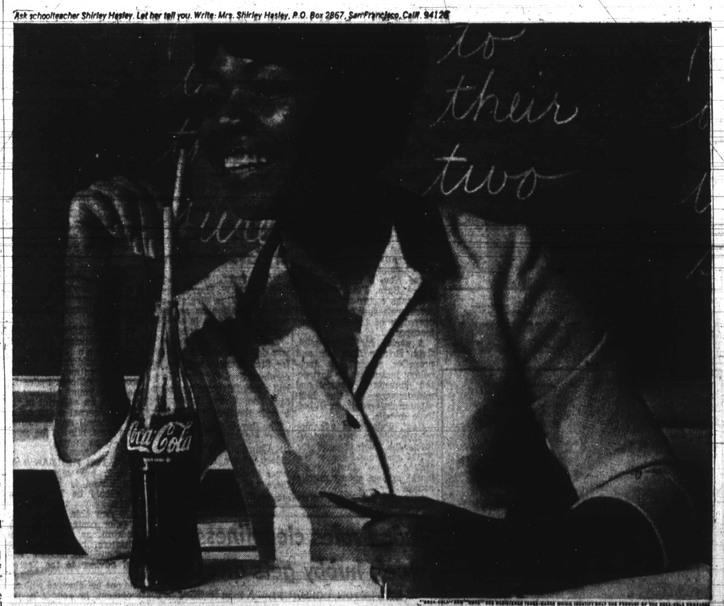

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Patterson observes soldiers 'living just like a big family'

By MIKE DAVIS
AFRO Correspondent

SAIGON — "I've seen the white and the colored men in Vietnam living just like one big family. If we could do this back in the United States we would have no problems."

That's the impression former boxing champion Floyd Patterson got on a recent tour of military bases in Vietnam.

He spoke with the men about the future of his career and about the current troubles of deposed champion Muhammad Ali (Cassius Clay).

"Regardless of what Ali is outside the ring," Patterson said, "I have to respect him as a champion inside of the ring. The only way I could feel like champion again is to fight and beat him."

Asked what colored athletes could do to help avoid racial problems in the United States, Patterson answered, "more colored athletes should get out into the ghettos, the poor sections and talk to the people. A lot of them have never seen a celebrity and I've been guilty of this myself. I think it would help to cut down the rioting."

AFTER TALKING with a number of colored servicemen in Saigon hospitals, Patterson said he was impressed with their cheerfulness and their moral.

"When I first thought about coming here," he said, "I wanted to box exhibitions for them. But the government said 'no' — just a hand shaking tour this time."

Patterson said his immediate plans include a number of fights in which he will once again attempt to win the coveted heavy weight crown.

"I am booked to fight Jerry Floria and if I am successful I'll go right on.

"But if I am fortunate enough to win the new heavy weight crown, I could never feel like the champion until I fight Ali again."

Patterson said he didn't know if other fighters in the top eight shared his views.

"I can't speak for them," he said, "but I would think that most of them would feel the same way."

• • •

PATTERSON SAID that all of the top contenders are "tough" and will make worthy ring opponents.

"It's hard to say who's the best. They're all good and all have different styles. You have Milton Burton, a southpaw and a long handed fighter who does everything backwards. He's a good fighter.

"You have Ernie Terrell who is 6' 7", has a tremendous left jab and is hard to hit.

"And there is Jimmy Ellis who is a good puncher and a good boxer. He's a tough one too."

Patterson left Vietnam after touring the country to prepare for his next fight.

THE AFRO-AMERICAN, BALTIMORE JULY 25, 1967

HOLLYWOOD HAPPENINGS

'Second banana' role in TV isn't for Nipsey Russell

By WALTER BURRELL

At least one prominent comedian has gone from standup comedy to the brighter avenues of television fame, but this won't happen to comedian Nipsey Russell.

"As far as television is concerned," says Nipsey, "I'm just not interested in working on a series. Why should I settle for being someone's second banana? And that weekly grind is unrewarding and too demanding.

"Six good guest shots on top shows during one season are more than enough and any producer who wants to make me happy could offer some floating guest dates for discussion and panel shows. It's generally agreed that I love to talk, so shows of this kind are right down my alley."

• • •

TO THOSE close to the famous funny man, this attitude comes as no surprise. They know a TV series would interfere with his sometimes lengthy engagements at Harlem's Baby Grand club, where he's returned every year since 1951.

In fact, there have been times when Nipsey has been on the scene there for as much as ten months within a given year.

"I keep returning to the Baby Grand for two reasons," says Nipsey. "I like the crowds — the East side people and the college kids — who come there. And they're great sounding boards for new material."

• • •

"NOT THAT I try to inject any particular messages into my social protestations. All I do is talk about things in the news.

"Our country's social revolution lends itself to jokes and I use them. This is certainly nothing new. Our people have used humor (and religion) to fight off frustration for centuries. Otherwise, we'd have all gone crazy."

"Any good psychologist will tell you it's much healthier to laugh at someone's misplaced feelings of aggression and hostility than to hate them and wind up destroying yourself in the process."

• • •

HOWEVER, all hasn't been fun-and-games in Nipsey's life, especially in 1940 when war drums were beating all over Europe. He enlisted in the Army, figuring to serve his hitch for a year and pick up civilian life after that.

On Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese saw to it that Nipsey's Army option was picked up for another four years and by the time he was discharged he'd risen to the rank of captain.

When he did get out, Russell impressed husky-toned singing star Billy Eckstine with his flair for comedy and Eckstine added the comedian to his traveling entourage.

• • •

BUT IF was Sammy Davis, Jr., who really catapulted Russell into the limelight. Sammy and the notorious Sinatra clan were putting on a huge benefit at Carnegie Hall to raise funds for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the tireless civil rights minded minister.

Since Sammy had used Nipsey in theatres and nightclubs a year or so before this event, he asked Russell if he's emcee the first half of the star-studded bill. Nipsey accepted and scored a huge success.

• • •

BUT NIPSEY Russell, the Atlanta (Georgia) boy who made good, doesn't figure he can rest on his laurels.

"The source of my type of humor — our country's social revolution, foreign policy, etc. — changes every day and I have to keep on my toes. Nobody does quicker and deader than a comedian who dares to tell an out-dated joke."

Entertainment

SHIRLEY BASSEY

Shirley Bassey scores London's 'Talk of Town'

End Tape — Singleton

Shirley Bassey — M-4

LONDON — Thrush Shirley Bassey chalked up a new record in her fourth appearance here at Talk of the Town.

Such is Miss Bassey's popularity that she is always welcome at this rendezvous — as, indeed, elsewhere — but this particular engagement needed a brave touch of the Pagliacci, with her ex-husband and manager, Kenneth Hume, dying shortly before the first night.

But she gave the audience the full on-with-the-show works without any playing for sympathy.

• • •

SHIRLEY is a real sexy vendor of songs, and her costumes, one a particularly revealing stunner, augment her appeal.

She moves seesuously around the stage and when she elects to play to individuals at ringside, she gives them the full treatment.

• • •

THE chanteuse shows that she can score as well with quieter ditties such as "On A Clear Day."

She starts with "Don't Rain On My Parade" and "I'm Glad There is You," joshes herself with a song specially written for her called "Shirley."

After that, for an hour, she gives with such pop favorites as "Big Spender," "The Impossible Dream" and half a dozen others.

JAMES CLAVELL, Sidney Poitier and Suzy Kendall Principals chat during lull in filming of 'To Sir, With Love'

Poitier 'To Sir' film wins peak Soviet enthusiasm

MOSCOW, USSR — Soviet enthusiasm reaches a rare peak here last week as the first American entry in the Moscow Film Festival turned out to be "To Sir, With Love," starring Sidney Poitier.

The movie scored tremendously in all respects — theme, action, timeliness and production.

In it, Poitier, winner of an Academy Award in 1964 for "Lilies of the Field," portrays a teacher who prevails over his unruly white pupils.

• • •

IT WAS shown to the patrons prior to the arrival of the U.S. delegation, thus the audience reaction could not be mistaken for anything but genuine acceptance.

At its conclusion, "To Sir, With Love," with beautiful Suzy Kendall as the female lead, was accorded several minutes of unison hand-tapping which is the supreme Russian accolade.

• • •

ACCORDING to Variety, the internationally accepted entertainment authority:

"It was a moment which alone 'made' the festival.

"A predominantly Russian audience rose to the occasion, following every line and nuance thanks to Russian subtitles on the 'To Sir' print, (another major feature in the local American effort) and appreciating film's theme as well as its style and the performances, obviously delighted by what it saw."

Poitier, who was due to visit the festival, cancelled at last moment and remained in Manhattan. Reasons not known here.

"When I take a case, I thoroughly study the background. Events happening years before, can win a day in court."

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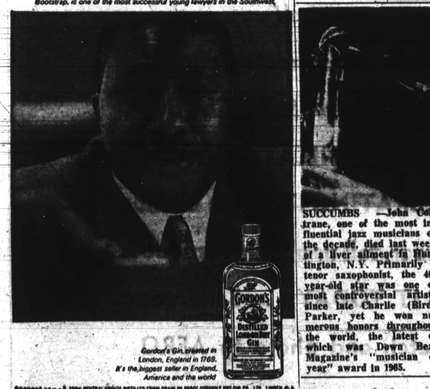
Charles E. Lloyd, Attorney, Advisor to the Stevson-Washington Coordinating Council, Counsel for The Bank of Finance, Advisor to Operation Bootstrap, is one of the most successful young lawyers in the Southwest.



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SUCCUMBS — John Coltrane, one of the most influential jazz musicians of the decade, died last week of a liver ailment in Huntington, N.Y. Primarily a tenor saxophonist, the 40-year-old star was one of most controversial artists since late Charlie (Bird) Parker, yet he won numerous honors throughout the world, the latest of which was Down Beat Magazine's "musician of year" award in 1965.

Harry Belafonte buys estate

NEW YORK — Harry Belafonte has contracted to purchase a 70-acre estate in Chatham, Columbia County, not far from the location in which his "Odds Against Tomorrow" film was shot at Hudson in 1959.

The property includes a Georgian colonial home.

Belafonte, on a concert tour until Oct. 15, told newsmen that the property is "not for my personal use right now."

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ARTISTS' CIRCLE

Piano genius of Andre Watts captured on 2 new classics

By EARL CALLOWAY
Negro Press International

An estimated nine million television viewers heard the young virtuoso pianist Andre Watts perform Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-Flat major at the "Alumni Reunion" of the New York Philharmonic Young People's Concert this spring, under the direction of Leonard Bernstein.

In four years, Watts has become one of the most dynamic pianists on the international scene. This month he will debut with Berlin Symphony orchestra in Germany to celebrate his 21st birthday.

His meteoric rise and entrance into the realm of the distinguished artists began when he, on short notice, substituted for an ailing Glenn Gould. Since that day the young pianist has been in constant demand performing with orchestras and in concert.

• • •

COLUMBIA Masterworks recently released an album which contains the pianist's historic performance of the Lizst Piano concert and an exquisite and electrifying rendition of Chopin's Concerto No. 2 in F minor.

This phenomenal young genius of the piano tosses off easily, the arduous technical virtuoso demands of Liszt's concerto as a young boy tosses a basketball.

There is ever present in his playing of the work the depth of his innate musical perceptibility in the subtle beauty of the Second Movement.

Then turning to the romantic lyricism of Chopin, the pianist renders it with a placid sensitivity gliding through its phrases with complete authority. Whenever it is necessary, Watts provides a profusion of expressions for contract.

HUES AND CRIES:

Basie, Fats Domino, Sarah stir old jazz memories

BASIE SCORES

CHICAGO — (NPI) — Count Basie and his swinging orchestra last week scored a big hit with nightclub patrons in a one-night stand at The Club (formerly the Club De Lisa).

The Basie group was billed as "The Most Explosive Force in Jazz," and it lived up to the billing with a program that kept fans on the edge of their seats.

FATS ROCKS

CHICAGO — (NPI) — Fats Domino found his rollicking piano style to be still in demand as he drew sizeable crowds into the Scotch Mist Night Club for his three-shows-nightly stand last week.

Fats rocked, rolled (on the keyboard) and even got the audience to join him in singing his popular tunes.

NEWPORT STARS

NEWPORT, R.I. — (NPI) — The Newport Festival (1967) paraded a glittering of big name stars of wide range and variety for a series of one-night concerts last week.

Among those putting on stellar performances were Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, Earl Hines and Woody Herman orchestras, the Modern Jazz Quintet, instrumentalists Miles Davis, Dizzie Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, Wes Montgomery, Roy (Little Jazz) Eldridge, and singers Joe Williams, and Sarah Vaughn, who was making her first Newport appearance since 1963.

FEATURED

FOREST HILL, N.Y. — (NPI) — Pop singer Johnny Mathis proved that he is still a very popular entertainer, as he was featured in the Forest Hills Music Festival last week.

Assisted by Our Young Generation, a singing group, Mathis swooned the crowd with his typical warm, sometime dreamy mode of singing. He was heavily applauded.

JAZZ FINALE TREMENDOUS

LOS ANGELES — (NPI) — The final one-night stand of the 23-year-old Jazz at the Philharmonic concert presented what might be considered one of its greatest shows to a highly enthusiastic audiene here last week.

Such renown artist as Duke Ellington and his orchestra, singer Ella Fitzgerald, Coleman Hawkins, Oscar Peterson, Benny Carter and many others were featured by jazz impresario promoter Norman Granz. Ganz said he was closing the JAPT one-nighters because "it isn't worth all the aggravation."

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