

Odza and Shanley, who, it developed, had been on Ike's staff during the Italian campaign. Shanley seemed to recall something about a medal that was awarded to Eisenhower *in absentia* when the American forces liberated Rome in June, 1944. They both felt that such an award would suggest to the American public the complete approval of the general on the part of Italian Catholics, and Odza set about to track down the medal. An Italian count, a friend of Odza's, cabled Rome for confirmation. It soon arrived: Ike had indeed been made a Knight of Malta. More than a hundred thousand letters signed by Tunney and mentioning the award went out to Dunhill's list of Catholics, resulting in a flood of wires and requests for more mailings. Before that particular direct-mail project ran out of money, more than a million of these endorsements had been posted. Incidentally, Shanley is now a secretary to the President.

#### My Two Cents' Worth

With the 1956 political campaigns out of the way, Odza has returned to the normal routine of his working day. One of his current assignments is the preparation of a mailing list for an Irish publishing house. The order is for a hundred thousand names of Irish-Americans in an income bracket high enough to make them prospects for a fifteen-dollar volume. To ensure a mailing list of people the majority of whom have incomes above \$10,000 a year, Dunhill's will cull the requested names from the records of college and university alumni associations.

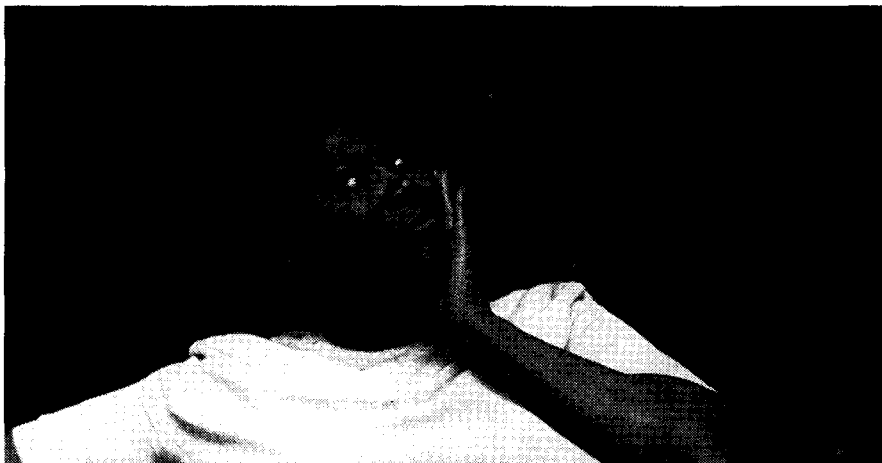
"Are you in an alumni association?" he asked me, and I told him I was. He picked up the list of names that accompanied the request from Ireland and pushed it across the desk to me a second later with his finger opposite my name.

"Does that put me on another sucker list?" I asked.

"Please," Odza answered with a wince. "Don't run yourself down. Why, your material value has increased!"

I did some quick mental arithmetic. "By two cents?" I asked.

"Multiplied by five million," Odza suggested, leaning back and smiling contentedly.



## VIEWS & REVIEWS

# You Can Still Hear Her Voice When the Music Has Stopped

NAT HENTOFF

**M**AHALIA JACKSON is a large, impassioned woman of forty-six whose childhood love of singing with the congregation of her Baptist church in New Orleans grew in joy through the years. Today she is the most commanding gospel singer of her generation.

Miss Jackson does most of her singing in and for churches throughout the country. "Child, I've told you," she says frequently, "the foundation of me is a church singer. I ain't trying to be nothing else." She will sing only religious songs, although she will occasionally convert a pseudo-religious popular song like "I Believe" into honesty. She will not sing the blues, although most jazz experts believe she could easily be the most compelling blues singer since Bessie Smith. She recently turned down an offer to do a "religious" show on Broadway. "Religion," she said in an interview, "is too important to fiddle around with. Now that play might be good. I'm not saying it isn't. But I wouldn't feel right singing in a show."

She does, however, occasionally sing in concert halls, and on records,

radio, and TV. She sings in auditoriums, often to raise money for a church. She sings for the National Baptist Convention (Negro), and is treasurer of its music department. She enjoyed a great triumph in Europe back in 1952, and so mesmerized a Copenhagen audience that twenty thousand recordings of her "Silent Night" were quickly sold in that city. She has appeared six times at Carnegie Hall and, as is true of almost every Mahalia Jackson concert, all six events were sold out.

The one aspect of her expanding success that Mahalia does not appreciate is what has happened to her in several interviews. "I've come up under this in the last few years since I been coming up to New York—everything has to be *analyzed*. Makes me conscious of what I'm doing."

**M**ISS JACKSON performed at Town Hall in New York this spring as part of a unique "Music for Moderns" series that attempted to present superior jazz and classical musicians in programs based on related themes. She shared the "Variations on a Folk Theme" concert with

Martial Singher, a talented French stylist in opera and art songs. Singher, who opened the recital, was received with attentive warmth.

Soon after Miss Jackson began, heads began to move, feet to tap, and some members of the audience found themselves clapping without quite realizing that they had started. "Always," commented the *New York Times*, "there was an underlying beat so insistent that it continued through the silences."

There was the beat, but there was also a tidal flow of emotion. For example, she even transformed a song with lyrics of crushing banality: "Help the cripple by the wayside. Help the blind man across the street. Speak kindly to strangers. Speak politely to those you meet."

The conviction and strength of her rendition had a strange effect on the secularists present, who were won over to Mahalia if not to her message. Most of them were amazed at the length of time after the concert during which the sound of her voice remained active in the mind.

"That's why I liked the songs the congregations sang down South," Miss Jackson later remarked of this lingering quality of gospel singing. "Not the anthems the choir sang. The anthems were too dead for me, but what the congregation sang had something that made me listen, that made me still hear the sound long after the singers were through. It takes something powerful to stay there like that."

### 'The Spirit Feel'

Centers of gospel singing include New Orleans, Memphis, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York. In almost every city with a sizable Negro population, there are disc-jockey programs specializing in gospel records; and in the South especially, these programs reach increasing numbers of the white people. Gospel recordings, an increasingly lucrative business, appear regularly on such labels as Specialty, Gotham, Savoy, Vee-Jay, and Chess. A gospel hit can sell a quarter of a million copies or even more. Several years ago Mahalia Jackson's "Move on Up a Little Higher" passed the two-million mark, and her "Even Me" went over a million. Both were on the Apollo label.

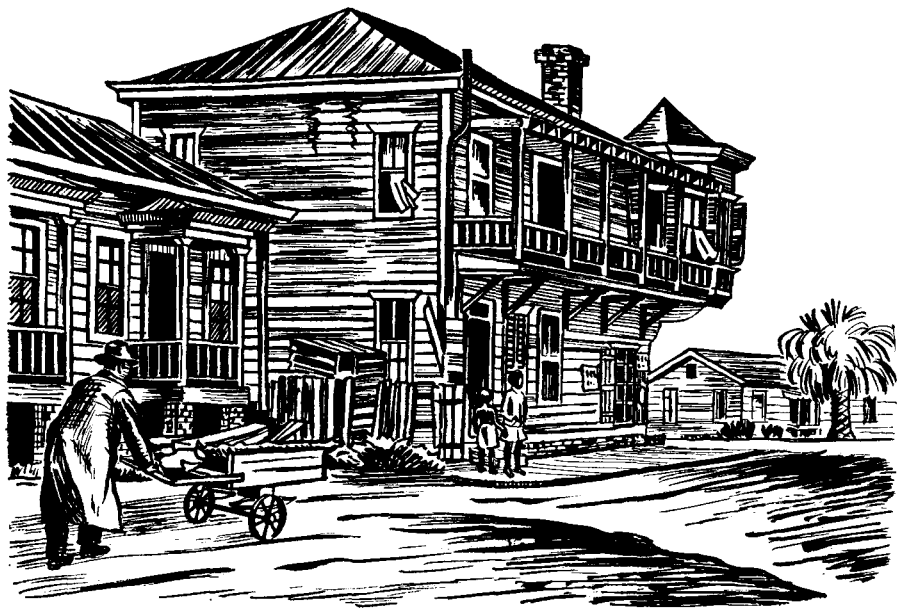
Gospel singing derives in large part from spirituals and jubilees. Joe Bostic, who promotes Miss Jackson's Carnegie Hall concerts, believes gospel is one idiom removed from the spiritual. According to Bostic, the spiritual, which was created by slaves and dates back to at least the eighteenth century, "told that there was no hope on earth but there would be a home over there in heaven where the streets would flow with honey and everyone would wear a white robe. After the close of the Civil War, the jubilee came. The jubilee tied in with the beginnings of Negro colleges in the South, but mostly it came with the new feeling of freedom. The jubilee was an outburst of the freedom idea into song. It was somewhat less devout—or rather, less sad—than the spiritual. The jubilee still told of life after death but it was joyous, too, about what was here on the way. It added a good deal of comedy and down-to-earth raucousness to the traditional Biblical stories." Bostic feels that gospel singing began to emerge in the early 1930's.

songs came out of our Baptist hymn-book that's published by our National Baptist Convention.

"Now the spiritual and the gospel song are called Negro because the Negro was first to sing them," she added, "but anybody can sing them that feels them. You can be white or colored—so long as you have the spirit feel."

"GOSPEL MUSIC," Bostic explained further, "began to concern itself more than the jubilee had with tonal qualities and music stylings. In content, it was the interpretation of Bible passages—'Come unto Me,' 'Carry the Cross,' 'Trouble in My Way'—and emotionally, it was even more uninhibited than jubilee singing. There was a greater humanization of the Deity. It was as if God walked on the street and you could talk to Him.

"The growth of gospel singing is also connected with the growth of the Church of God in Christ and the various groups in the Holiness churches. Gospel singing blossomed in the Church of God in Christ be-



Miss Jackson's perspective is the same but is phrased differently: "We've had gospel songs as far as I can remember, although years ago they used to call it jubilee singing, and the Fisk Jubilee Singers used to go all over the world singing those songs with just a little bounce—not as much bounce as now, though, in gospel singing. Most of the gospel

cause it's a music of abandon, and this is a church that bases its being largely on its music rather than on a ritualistic approach.

"Twenty or thirty years ago," Bostic continued, "these were all little store-front operations with mostly illiterate people, but now the Church of God in Christ has from three and a half to five million mem-

bers. There are intelligent people directing the church, and young people coming in. At one time these churches were not socially acceptable, but they're becoming accepted. And the gospel music has spread to the Baptist churches, though not so much to the Methodist and less to the Presbyterian."

"Why, rock 'n' roll was stolen from the Holiness people and the Church of God in Christ!" Miss Jackson exclaimed. "They're more emotional than the Baptists and the Methodists. The Holiness people sing strictly like they feel—on the beat, off the beat, between the beat."

Miss Jackson paused. "Now, about the more bounce in gospel singing in recent years," she said with a faint smile. "I think I'm the cause of a lot of that bounce. I felt it. When I came out of New Orleans to Chicago when I was sixteen, I went to a Baptist choir rehearsal. They asked me to try a solo, and I sang 'Hand Me Down My Silver Trumpet, Gabriel.' I sang it with expression and people liked it. It was a song I'd heard the people in the church sing—any little child and any old person at church on Sunday would sing it. And what helped me to come up this far is nothing but the songs I've heard the congregations sing down South. And always I've sung what I feel as I feel it."

### 'God Is That Wide, That Broad'

The Town Hall program noted: "Miss Jackson will choose selections from her repertoire on the spur of the moment."

She leaned back and gave a side glance to the TV set in her hotel room. "I'm a person that doesn't like to arrange a program. A lot of times I change my program because I change my feeling. And I don't sing the same song the same way twice. There's something the public reaches into me for, and there seems to be something in each audience that I can feel. I can feel whether there's a low spirit. Some places I go, up-tempo songs don't go, and other places, sad songs aren't right."

Miss Jackson is not entirely happy about her current record association with Columbia. "One thing I'll say about Columbia," she conceded, "is that they put me in a new field. They got me on TV and they paid

me well. The only thing they haven't been too particular about is my songs. I like to sing the songs I feel. They got ideas of what's commercial. Some of the songs they pick for me I don't understand, and those I couldn't put myself into. At least at Apollo I picked what I wanted.

"But there's one recent Columbia record I made," she said, nodding firmly, "that's made the disc jockeys say 'There's Mahalia again.' It's 'God Is So Good to Me.' They didn't want to make that. I just begged them. The song was so much of my life. I thank God who brought me from down in Louisiana to the present day. I forgot I was in the studio making it when I sang. And as for albums, there's more original Mahalia in 'Bless This House' than the other albums I made for Columbia."

She spoke of her pain at what has been happening to gospel singing as the potential market has increased. "Some of it is getting into the hands of hustlers. They're meeting a lot of weak-minded gospel singers and trying to make gospel singing 'entertaining.' Gospel singing is bigger than entertainment. It does something for the soul. But some of these record companies are trying to make gospel singing a competitor of rock

the earth to bring up vegetables and sell them and live off that, it's all right. If man can make gospel records and sell them, that's all right. But the records should be real gospel singing, and real gospel singing is uplifting. I don't care if he's a gambler, a thief, or a murderer, man has to have something to look up to. I do believe gospel singing can be commercial and uplifting at the same time. God is that wide, that broad. He supplies all our needs."

### 'I Wasn't For Sale'

Miss Jackson's experience with the less spiritual aspects of the music business is not new. She recalls, with a bitterness that is rare in her, the time a few years ago when she sang at a convention of the Music Operators of America—a juke-box conclave.

"None of the big wheels had heard about me. Nobody didn't want to present me. I could see them passing the buck. When the time came to call me, I could see they were shoo-shooing and getting their heads together. They didn't know what to do with a gospel singer. This big man that's head of the convention finally said: 'Now, friends, we have a lady who is going to sing for us. We don't know what kind of song or what she sings.'

"That was a hurting way to introduce an artist. I looked at him. It hurt my pride so bad. After I saw that others there were hurt for me, I tried to smile. They were all drinking. Half of them were half drunk and didn't hear when he said what I was nohow. I got on up to sing and I sang out of my soul. I wanted them to know that if they didn't believe in me, I believed in what I was singing.

"I sang 'I Believe.' You could hear a pin drop. All them big money hounds, cutthroats, and meat sellers were falling on their faces running after me to get me. The same man who introduced me offered me ten thousand dollars a week if I'd sing at a night club in New York. I wanted him to know I sang out of love and that I wasn't for sale and my songs weren't for sale. I turned him down. Every year after that, that same man said it was a joy for him to present me. He just didn't know me. And," she added, "a lot of folks don't know."



'n' roll. They're putting all kinds of peculiar drums behind the singers and making it sound half jazz. It isn't.

"Gospel singing doesn't need artificial, unnecessary, phony sounds. Gospel singing is commercial but in its own right way. If man can till



# Sukiyaki

## On the Kona Coast

MAY SARTON

THE SINGLE IMAGE that will best bring back for me the peculiar pleasure of that evening on the Kona coast of the island of Hawaii is an incongruous one—my friend and I trying to climb the wall of a room empty except for us and the lizards we were trying to catch. They gathered round the horizontal light fixture over a great window that might have been plate glass but was actually open onto the Pacific Ocean, and thus we could get leverage on the lintel, placing one foot on the sill. Of course we were trying to capture lightning, as elusive as thought itself.

In the end it was we, hanging precariously there, who were caught by our polite Japanese host, who did not betray the slightest surprise to see two middle-aged *haoles*, or mainlanders, in this undignified position. He was bringing us coffee, the final ingredient of a remarkable dinner. We got down rather sheepishly and tried to be properly serious, for we had been in the middle of a conversation with him.

### Window onto Paradise

Outside we could hear the incessant lapse and fall of the ocean breaking over the reef. Two dilapidated palms were outlined against a sky that was just turning black after a long cloudless red-gold sunset. Every now and then a bard dove gave its plaintive, flutelike trill. Every now and then the palms clattered like paper in the breeze.

We were on the largest of those extinct volcanoes which sit in the middle of the Pacific, the result of quite recent explosions as geologic time goes, and which still pant now and then like whales troubled in sleep, and tremble; and as late as 1955 saw rivers of burning lava run ravaging down to the sea. We had that day walked in forests of huge tree ferns and we had crossed frozen stretches of lava. This sterile sub-

stance was the foundation under all we had seen; no single plant, no tree, no bird but had been brought here from somewhere else, far away, the coconuts floated two thousand miles or more, the seed of a flower carried in a bird's craw.

These islands, as they slowly greened over, had attracted human migrants in waves, first the Polynesians bringing taro, dogs, bananas in their canoes and setting up the primitive principalities and powers of what eventually became Hawaiian royalty; the whalers, the sandalwood merchants, the missionaries, the sugar planters and ranchers, the Chinese and Japanese traders and laborers, and finally the tourists. We were among the last to come, and we would not be staying long. But on this evening we felt the enchantment and the peril of living on the island volcano, born in fire, flowering, and slowly dying in an illimitable relentless blue of sea and sky.

An hour before, we had been sitting in the cocktail bar of one of the big hotels, looking out on a swimming pool and at two soft white American men playing shuffleboard. The hotels might be ocean liners, their verandas decks. The same people—or people who seemed interchangeable—inhabited them season after season, changing as little as the sea urchins, purple, white, and black, we had found that morning in a sea pool, making a sort of hotel out of a piece of hole-indented lava. We looked back across the half mile we had just traveled and it seemed a continent away.

### Sukiyaki by Appointment Only

It had happened by the merest chance. Driving along the coast that morning, looking for a place to swim, we had noticed a faded sign announcing sukiyaki dinners by appointment, and pointing down a rough dirt road in the middle of dense kiawe brush. On impulse we



turned in, bumping and bumped along till we came to a rough clearing, where we saw a new Ford and a couple of sleeping mongrel dogs. The ocean was hidden by a series of one-story wooden buildings, more like shacks, somehow welded together. A few papaya trees, banana plants, and coconut palms stood about casually among piles of rubbish and the creeping lantana that flows out over every waste place unless the morning-glories have already taken over. There was no sign of anything resembling a restaurant, and no human being appeared when we slammed the car door and walked gingerly past one of the dogs who woke up to growl.

We had to shout "is anybody home?" a couple of times before a middle-aged Japanese woman came to the door, but she was evidently at a loss in English. She called back into the recesses of the house and finally a young man with black hair standing straight up on his head came out. Yes, they could serve us a dinner at seven that evening, he said, but with such a dead-pan expression that it was impossible to guess whether ours was an exceptional visitation or the routine thing.

At seven that evening we drove back in the fading light, wondering what we had got ourselves in for. This time we were greeted by an older boy, perhaps twenty, in an immaculate pair of khaki pants and bright-flowered Hawaiian shirt. He