



**SHARP EXCHANGE . . .** Billy Creamer and Edd Linsky are pictured in a scene from the Palos Verdes Players' current production of "Sweet Bird of Youth" by Tennessee Williams. Rosemary Buell stars in the story of an aging actress and her flight from both time and reality. Curtain is 8:30 p. m. weekends through May 13 at the Palos Verdes Playhouse in Malaga Cove Plaza.

## Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

Television, The Cautious Medium, has no higher barriers than those it has raised against the use of racial humor. This understandable effort to be considerate has also deprived the medium of access to the richest vein of comedy in a nation whose laughter has been, from the start, one of its most hearty and healthy characteristics.

A breakthrough was made recently with "A Time for Laughter," a look at Negro humor that could only have been taken by Negroes themselves.

The "Stage '67" revue was produced by Harry Belafonte and performed by some of the top Negro entertainers in the business. The material poked fun at such heretofore off-limits objects as the freedom song "We Shall Overcome," the forbidden word "nigger," civil rights, the Black Muslims, minstrel shows and watermelon.

Bravery in exploring the uncharted lands of racial humor is one thing — and it should be applauded—but the true test of such a production is the quality of the humor itself. Some of what was on "A Time for Laughter" was second-rate material by any standards. But it must be observed that what we saw may be a compromise.

SIDNEY POITIER narrated in a most attractive manner, at once gentle and manly, that gave the show polish. "There are few things that express the mood of the Negro better than his humor," he said. "Unlike his music — Jazz—which has been able to break out and move free into most of the societies of the world, Negro humor has stayed home. And through generations of fermentation it has become a heady wine rarely tasted by the outside world. For the most part America has seen only a caricature of our humor."

## Alondra To Get Fencing

Installation of new protective fencing at the Alondra Park County Golf Course will be under way soon, Supervisor Kenneth Hahn said today.

Approximately 1,000 feet of 30-foot high protective chain link fence will be installed along the east side of Prairie Avenue to prevent golf balls from landing in the street.

A contract for the project has been awarded the A-A Fence Co. Work is expected to be completed within five months.

## Plan Reunion

The 1929 class of Belmont High School will hold a reunion Saturday, May 13. Members of the classes of 1925 through 1932 have been invited to attend. Information may be secured by writing to P.O. Box 671, Pasadena, P.O. Box 671, Pasadena, 91102.

The program opened with a rousing minstrel show which is a part of the American heritage but has been taboo on television for fear of offending Negro viewers.

"Yes, that's how darkies were born—and the impact of the minstrel show was to plague us, the Negro, for generations. But there was one good thing that came out of it. Being forced to live isolated, we developed our own comics, our own vaudeville."

AMONG THE examples which followed were a Negro version of the classic burlesque courtroom scene wherein Pigmeat Markham played the judge in a Godfrey Cambridge skit poking fun at the suburban social climbing of a Negro couple trying to forget their color but finally succumbing to a suppressed taste for watermelon.

"Integration does have its hangups," observed Poitier.

Redd Fox, one of the most popular Negro comedians, did a poolroom hustler's monologue:

"Now, you've seen those marchers. Man, I wouldn't march from here to some money! I'd take a cab but I ain't marchin' nowhere. You got to be a fool to get out there and let somebody hit you on the side of the head with an ax handle and all you're supposed to do is lay there and hum 'We Shall Overcome.' I don't like music that well. A guy came by my house in Los Angeles and said, 'Man, why don't you go down to Alabama and see what you can do?' I wouldn't fly over Alabama with Lindbergh! With my luck there'd be a crash and I'd have to lie there and wait for the Negro ambulance."

DICK GREGORY, whose Negro routines were the first to hit the big-time in the white world, said: "Do you realize that colored folks use the word nigger more in one day than all the white folks on the face of the earth use in a lifetime? So why do we get mad when white folks use the word? Because they haven't learned how to say it as pretty as we have. Every morning my wife wakes me and says: 'Hey, pretty nigger — GET UP!'"

Despite the show's intention to be a revelation for whites, most of the Negro humor was, on closer observation, not so different after all. Basically it was a black man laughing at himself and that is the essence of humor—to laugh at one's foibles and hardships. It is a remarkable human trait that crosses all color lines. It is good to be reminded of it.

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