



Photos by Nick Lacy

University group goes on tour for the USO

A group of University students will be leaving Friday to travel through the Orient with the military. They haven't enlisted or been drafted, they are members of a USO tour.

Although visions of Bob Hope's Christmas tour usually appear with the mention of the USO, this tour is not quite the same. The United Servicemen's Organization sponsors several types of tours.

The current tour is a college tour. The USO selects universities around the country who then prepare a show for touring. Every two months during the year one of these groups leaves the U.S. for different parts of the world.

The University tour is different in several ways from the standard college tour. Normally a full length musical and a variety show are taken. The present tour involves only a variety show. Approximately five hours of material have been prepared for the show. Since the average show will run an hour and a half, the director will be able to organize a multitude of different presentations. Not only will this allow selecting the most appropriate material for the varied audiences, but it also relieves the performers of the monotony of constantly redoing the same show.

Another unique aspect of this tour was its method of selecting company members. Normally the selected school prepares its musical as a part of the regular theatre season. The cast of the show is then cut to the appropriate touring number. Because the University was not sending a musical, a new method of company selection had to be developed.

After a long audition period, the director picked the first member. The director and member number one met to select number two. As each person was selected he became part of the group to choose the remaining people. The entire process took a little over two months.

Horace Robinson is head of the tour. This will be his fifth tour, and his second one to the Orient. Through his work, the University has become one of the most active schools participating in the USO program.

The company, who call themselves "The Celebrities," will possibly tour Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, Guam, Korea, and Taiwan. They will not know their exact itinerary until they make their first stop in Korea.

"The Celebrities" call their production, "A Summer Celebration" and it is a true variety show. Included in the show are all types of music—from classical to rock and from solos to choral work. Dancing in the show will range from light soft shoe to modern interpretive dance. A number of dramatic and comic pieces will be presented as well as several novelty items such as a musical saw.

Preparation for a tour is very different than for a normal show. The entertainers must be able to adjust to all kinds of acting areas, from large stages to the front end of a naval ship. The show must also be very portable. The performers are allowed only 500 pounds of "show luggage." This amount was filled rapidly with costumes, sound equipment, sets, props and instruments.

Throughout the duration of the tour—June 22 to August 15—the Emerald will carry articles concerning the activities of the group and the places that they visit.

Glen Bushey

