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A Lawyer Turns Vitaphone Artist

This is the Story of how a Brilliant Baltimore Lad after preparing for Law, Discovered that the Charms of the Screen were Superior to those of Blackstone and Webster.

By Ruby Berkley Goodwin
Prepared Exclusively for The
Illustrated Feature Section.

"Hearts in Dixie" Star
With an enviable national
reputation as one of the fore-
most artists of the race, Clar-



Clarence Muse has one of the most remarkable memories in Hollywood. He has committed to memory a different play each week for twenty-six consecutive weeks.

Is Master of Art of Make-up
Muse is perfect in this role. His deep vibrant voice thrills you to the depth of your being as he tells Agnes of his love for her—the half-animal snarl and the fiendish laughter of drug-crazed Hyde fills your soul with terror. The lightning-like changes Muse effects are startling, and his capacity as a make-up artist may be judged when one learns that he has played as many as five different roles in this drama at one performance.

His Ability Wins a Gold Watch
For enacting this superb role, Muse was presented with a beautiful gold watch by Mr. Schiffman, an authority in New York dramatic circles.

On one occasion a reporter said: "In the portrayal of Hamlet, 'the mantle of Booth' has been handed down to Muse. He runs the gamut of human emotions."

As a Character Actor, Muse Is in a Class by Himself
Muse loves to think of his role in the Hunchback of Notre Dame.

"No," he told me, "I didn't play the lead in that show; but read this." He pointed to a clipping and I read—"Muse as a character actor is in a class by himself. He stole the act."

"Leaving the Lafayette Players, I became a producer of floor shows and presentations in de luxe picture houses.

"I produced and staged a version of the famous Mary Garden opera 'Thais,' with an all-colored cast and chorus. One hundred and ninety people were used in the production. I played the role of Daniel.

Mary Garden Compliments for Achievement
"On our opening night, I received a cablegram from Mary Garden, who was in Europe, complimenting me upon the achievement. Later I produced 'Miss Bandana' and 'Charleston Dandies.' I hate vulgarity, and I received much praise because my shows were clean and moral."

Muse Possesses a Remarkable Memory
Mr. Muse has a unique way of memorizing.

"I never attempt to commit lines until I have a mental picture of the entire play. When I receive the play, I read it over two or three times. After my second rehearsal, I know my lines perfectly. I have used this method in committing a different play each week for as many as twenty-six consecutive weeks."

Says Judging in Beauty Contest Was Most Trying Experience
"I suppose the stage has brought many trying experiences to you," I said.

"Well yes," he agreed, "but do you know that one of the most trying experiences I ever had was judging a beauty contest. The contestants were angry. The sponsors disagreed. I bore the brunt of everybody's fury simply because we disagreed on awarding the prizes."

Hard to Find a Negro Girl with Beautiful Face Figure, and Grace

"Most people do not realize that beauty is judged from three standpoints: beauty of face, beauty of form, and grace. It is easy to find a Negro girl with a beautiful face, but the other two requisites are harder to find.

"I believe that girls who intend to enter beauty contests should train for the contest as studiously as an athlete trains for a race. They should correct slight defects that have a tendency to crop out in a bathing suit."

Can Make-up to fill Role of Caucasian

Muse is a typical Negro, very dark and a trifle heavy. Yet in some of his characterizations he makes up to resemble a Caucasian, even adopting a blonde wig. The secret of this is Muse's own, but this is the story of why he learned to use this make-up:

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ence Muse is now being seen and heard the world over as Nappus, in "Hearts in Dixie." The reactions of the race to this epic of reconstruction days will be varied, but it must be admitted that it is a true portrayal of that time.

It cannot be called a drama, because of its insufficient plot. But it is an epic of Negro life and should be regarded as such. It has been called by critics "The Plantation Opera" and is considered in picture circles the most important gesture the industry has made in years.

Clarence Muse, the Nappus of the story, is a veteran stage artist, and will tell in his own words the story of his earlier achievements and his future hopes:

Early Ambition to Be a Lawyer

"I was born in Baltimore. I received my earlier educational training there. After completing high school, I entered the Dickerson School of Law in Carlisle, Penn., and later took a post graduate course in law at the University of Pennsylvania.

"My early ambition was to be a lawyer—a Blackstone or a Webster winning out over my opponents by oratory and legal knowledge."

Muse is a Phi Beta Sigma man of the Alpha Chapter, Washington, D.C.

"My earlier dreams of wealth and prominence, through my law career, I abandoned, and took up singing. I knew that a Negro would have a fairer field in this line of endeavor. The public believed in the Negro's voice; whereas, at that time, it did not think of him as a possessor of high intelligence.

Was a Member of One of the Country's Finest Quartets

"I became a member of a quartet known as 'The Royal Poinciana Four.' Our quartet entertained at Palm Beach for many of the country's wealthiest people. After this engagement, I joined a colored stock dramatic company and toured the South. Eventually I found myself in vaudeville, billed under the act of 'The Muses,' then later, 'Chappelle and Muse.'"

Press Loud in Praise of Muse's Ability

Muse claims no credit for any of his work. His many scrapbooks are filled from cover to cover with press reports speaking in a superlative way of his ability as an actor, producer and dramatist.

"I abandoned vaudeville," he continued, "to become a theatre manager in Kansas City, but after a short while the lure of the stage intrigued me again, so I went to New York and joined the notable Lafayette Players."

Is Master of the Role of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"

For months Muse played to capacity houses. At present he is one of the few actors who enact the entire drama of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" without the aid of an understudy.

This role, besides being extremely exacting, offers a wider range in dramatic acting than that of any other stage drama—one man who is at one time noble, kind, thoughtful and a master scientist; at another time he is a fiend incarnate, capable of committing the most heinous crimes.

Lawyer, singer, vaudeville star, theatre manager and dramatist—he tried them all. He likes the movie game best.

