

Motherhood No Hindrance to Stage Career



ALICE DIXON

CHILD BEARING ROBS FEW OF SEX APPEAL

By JIM JAMES

Does motherhood interfere with a stage career? Is it necessary for the girl or woman who seeks fame and fortune to forego forever the thing that will bring her the supreme happiness—children?

There are those who will tell you that the surest way for a woman to commit professional suicide is for her to take on the burden of child bearing. They will contend that such an experience not only unfits a woman for the rigors of theatrical life, robs her of much of her virgin physical



BABY COX

That motherhood need not interfere with a stage career is proved by these two comely matrons. Alice Dixon, the wife of the dramatic actor, Billy Andrews, is an entertainer of no mean ability in her own right, and Baby Cox is the Connie's Inn star. Neither find the burdens of family rearing a handicap to their professional ambitions.

charm, but also detracts from her ability in that the care of a child in its infancy detracts from the time she could be putting into self-improvement. There are many cases however, that tend to refute this argument. There are many celebrities on the stage who have attained their greatest success after motherhood, and as many others who have interrupted their careers for this blessed event, as the Broadway columnist would say, and return to the stage none the worse for their experience.

Just a Chorus Girl

This fact was brought to me forcefully years ago, when I went back stage at Daley's old 63rd Street Theatre, where Earl Dancer had "Africana," starring Miss Ethel Waters on the boards. At a matinee rehearsal I noticed several of the chorus girls making such ado over a three-year-old baby girl, who was giving a clever exhibition in terpsichore. "She's just like her mamma," said one of the girls, and I made it my business to find out who her mamma was. Her mamma was one of the most comely, vivacious and agile members of the chorus. The fact that she was the mother of a three-year-old child, seemed to interfere not at all with her ability to keep up with her childless sisters. In fact she out-stripped them in many ways.

Last week I dropped in an apartment on Edgecombe Avenue in Harlem, in the chorus-girl-infested heart of Sugar Hill. A little night club entertainer, who could have passed the most blase nightlifer's inspection as an unsophisticated lassie in her teens, was curled up in a big Morris chair that seemed to engulf her, busily sewing.

"I've made all these tonight," she said, pointing to a string of tiny one-

piece fully dresses of voile that were hanging on pink and green hangers, over the bridge lamp rack. "You see, I had to rush," she explained, "because I'm sending my babies to the country tomorrow." A prouder little mother you would not want to find, although she is the family's sole support.

Baby Cox

This same story could perhaps be written about Baby Cox, Connie's Inn, and former "Hot Chocolates" star. Although I have never visited her at her St. Nicholas Avenue home. She has two sons, Herbert Davis, Jr., age 6, and Frederick James Davis, age 5 months. The last child came after her success on Broadway in "Hot Choco-

lates." After that she went back to Connie's Inn. Baby Cox's real name is Gertrude Jordan Davis, and she was born in Little Rock, Ark., and is only 24 years of age.

Aida Ward

It is a striking coincidence that her co-star at Connie's Inn is likewise a mother. Aida Ward, the crooning bit of pulchritude, who stepped into the breach left by Florence Mills in "Blackbirds" was a mother, and had settled down to the uneventful task of home-building long before she took Broadway and Europe by storm. Her son, Jerome Gist, is now 12 years old.

Adopted Child

Baltimore's own Alice Dixon (Mrs. Billy Andrews), is still winning lau-

rels, although she made her mamma a grandmother quite sometime ago. And even Ethel Waters, the star of the current "Rhapsody in Black," and hailed as the greatest comedienne of the race, could not resist the call of the mother instinct, and she adopted a child, upon whom she might lavish her affection. Her time between shows is spent in mothering the little orphaned daughter she adopted.

Ene'tta Casanova, the most talked of member of the current Ziegfeld Follies, is likewise the mother of a beautiful child. Her charm was none the less impaired, and she is accepted as the most exotic of Spanish beauties, although she is a former Baltimore school girl.

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