

Kiddies And Parents Parade Their Easter Finery: 300-Voice Chorus ...

Slaughter, Vera B

The Chicago Defender (National edition) (1921-1967); Apr 18, 1936;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Defender

pg. 15

Kiddies And Parents Parade Their Easter Finery

300-Voice Chorus Thrills Crowd At Metropolitan

Earl Hines And J. Wesley Jones Win
Praise Of Critics

By VERA B. SLAUGHTER

Mark down another triumph for The Chicago Defender's Bud Billiken club. And it was a triumph, for never before has there been such a splendid array of child talent displayed as was evidenced by the smashing success of this year's Billiken programs.

It really doesn't seem plausible that nine music festivals could be held at the same time at nine different churches, but that is what actually happened Sunday afternoon.

Nine Churches Help

The nine churches of various denominations were filled to capacity with parents and well-wishers who had come out to see and hear these children participating in a program of Easter music.

This year's festivals marked the fifth to be staged by The Chicago Defender, and from the sentiment of the thousands of persons in attendance, the programs were bigger and better than ever.

Bright sunshine and mild breezes added to the enjoyment of the children as well as the grownups. The huge edifices of the nine churches were packed from entrance to altar as the voices of these little folk, all trained in song, were raised to thrill music lovers.

Decorate Churches

To add to the beauty of the occasion, the committee of arrangements at the various institutions had decorated the altars and pulpits with Easter flowers—flowers more beautiful this year than usual, and more abundant.

On the South Side, the Easter parade led to three churches where Billiken programs were being held. By far the largest of the crowds was at Metropolitan Community church, 41st street and South Parkway, where Earl Hines' Grand Terrace cafe orchestra held sway in a classic concert. J. Wesley Jones, general Billiken festival director, was all smiles as his proteges, numbering 300 or more, sang classics from the old masters, gave recitations on Easter, besides the rendition of vocal, violin and piano numbers.

Police Escort Party

With the aid of two motorcycle police, Ol' Bud Billiken and a party of Defender executives, together with W. T. Brown Jr., the "Mayor of Bronzeville", and Walter Lowe, both contributors to the success of the festivals, sped around the city "dropping in" on the Billikens to say words of encouragement.

Not in history has there been such a program as was presented at St. James AME church (Lilydale) on Sunday. The Billikens actually did themselves proud and this week finds each of the participants holding high his head after receiving the congratulations of parents and friends.

Show Easter Finery

On Chicago's far North Side, the parade of Easter finery led to St. Matthews M.E. church, Oak and Orleans streets, where some 150 children appeared on program under the direction of J. Walter Davis.

Englewood was proud of its Billikens, appearing for the third time in a festival at Hope Presbyterian

church. The program, under the direction of Mrs. Lilla Jackson and Miss Thelma Payne, won the commendations of hundreds. The Criterion Concert orchestra played a concert preceding the opening of the festival.

Woodlawn kiddies were well rewarded for their efforts in the Billiken festival when, at the close of their program at Woodlawn AME church, they were given beautifully colored Easter eggs. Mesdames Willie Floyd and Mable Malarcher were directresses.

West Side Turns Out

The West Side showed real 100 per cent Billiken loyalty in its response to the three programs. The largest of these was at Zion Hill Baptist church, where a chorus numbering 200 sang beautifully. The church was packed to its fullest capacity. Prof. E. C. Davis, noted gospel song writer, and director of the Billiken chorus, once again established himself as the kiddies' friend.

Just a few blocks away, West Siders were enjoying the renditions of the child artists and the music of the Imperial Opera concert orchestra at Ter-Centenary AME church. Tenny T. Butler was director. These children received lovely Easter eggs as a token of appreciation for their efforts in making the festival a success.

Members of Mt. Sinai Baptist church, 1709 W. Lake street, are still singing praises of the fine choral work done by the Billikens under the direction of Charles Edward Glover. A record-breaking crowd was in attendance.

Praise Editor Abbott

Congratulations are in order for Mrs. Sadie Owens and members of her committee of arrangement for the splendid manner in which they conducted the Easter Billiken program at Southwestern Baptist church, 4735 State street. More than 100 children were on program. The pastor, Rev. B. H. January, paid high tribute to Robert Sengstacke Abbott, editor and publisher of The Chicago Defender.

Indeed this was a great day in the lives of the Billikens. With ideal weather prevailing, certainly 1936 takes the record for the banner year of Bud Billiken Easter Music Festivals.