

Lewis: A-2

New York, N.Y.
April 3, 1945

Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D.C.

APR 9 1945

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

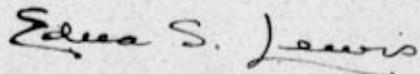
When you so graciously attended the Council House Presentation Dinner at the Hotel Commodore on March 27th under the auspices of the New York Section, National Council of Jewish Women, I neglected to make a personal request.

Mr. Frederick O'Neill, one of the leaders of the American Negro Theatre, who had done much to help us with our Dinner, was eager to have your sponsorship in connection with the fund-raising drive about to be launched by the American Negro Theatre. The enclosed release gives a full picture of the plans and indicates the need for the funds which they are about to solicit.

I believe you are interested in this type of cultural activity and realize how much your sponsorship would strengthen this movement.

With very cordial greetings, I remain,

Sincerely yours,



Mrs. Clarence M. Lewis
Executive Director
New York Section
National Council of Jewish Women

1819 Broadway
Room 412.

From American Negro Theatre
103 West 135th Street
New York City
Au 3-4747

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Abram Hill

The American Negro Theatre (ANT), original producers of "Anna Lucasta" and current producers of "Garden of Time" which ends its seven weeks run on April 14th, has for the past four and a half years produced plays and operated a workshop in the basement of the 135th Street Library. Despite the limited facilities of the tiny library theatre with its inappropriate seating accommodations, the group has, through its high standards of productions, established itself as the foremost experimental theatre in New York City.

Now the group is taking its first concrete step towards building its own modern playhouse in Harlem. Setting a campaign of \$300,000 as its goal, ANT, in association with several of its friends, will give its first Building Fund Benefit Ball on Sunday evening, April 22nd at the Golden Gate Ballroom, 142nd St. and Lenox Ave. at which time Erskine Hawkins and his band and stars of the stage, screen and radio will entertain in the interest of the project.

The affair will be the first of a series. From each one the group seeks to raise \$10,000. Since ANT is a non-profit organization, all of its proceeds above the cost of its productions, contributions, donations and the 1% John Wildberg pays the group from the gross weekly box office receipts of "Anna Lucasta" are set aside for the building fund. This, the producer does because

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Early in the post war period, ANT will begin building the new playhouse or renovating a building which can be converted into an appropriate community theatre. Through its large following the confidence gained through consistent production standards, the group believes it will be able to raise the necessary building fund.

The General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation granted ANT an award of \$9,500 last April for its 1944-45 season. As a result of this grant, the group has been able to pay off the production cost of three shows (the third, "Henri Christophe" is now in rehearsal) and set aside \$6,500 for its building fund.

The Golden Gate affair is being sponsored by Sam Jaffee, Hilda Simms, Canada Lee, Jan Struthers, Louis Calhern, Dooley Wilson, Dr. Lawrence M. Riddick, David Brooks, John Wildberg, Harry Wagstaff Gribble, Will Geer, Mitchell Grayson, Lee Sabinson and others. *Vera Zornai, Celine Holm, Cheryl Crawford, Vinton Freedley, Samuel O. Allen*

Unique on the program will be a five minute documentary film of the history of the ANT. Rather than make platform appeals to those in attendance on April 22nd, the movie, which was shot at the Library Theatre last fall, will dramatize the cause most effectively. An average of 5,000 people have seen each of ANT's seven productions. Any of the approximate total of 35,000 persons who have attended the "vestpocket" 135th St. Workshop, know that a larger playhouse with comfortable seats would make their visits to ANT more comfortable.
