

# LINE FROM THE TOWER OF BABB



JASON (Clive Anderson) and SYBLIEN (Jennifer Chang) in ANANSI AND UNSUNG HEROES OUT WEST.



MAJ. JAKE GATLIN (William Jordan) explains to Helen McNair (Anne Schebeen) how her husband died after his jet plane crashed while chasing a UFO over Washington, D.C. in "Sighting 4001: The Washington, D.C. Incident" - a science series which started on JBC-TV yesterday. Thirty per cent of the over 13,000 sightings remain unexplained.

Stafford Harrison's answer to the Pan tomime *Anansi and Unsung Heroes Out West*, at its opening performance at the Ward Theatre a week ago Friday took four hours to tell us that I and I is I. No doubt a commendable statement in these days when everything gets blamed on 'Dem but one that has been made before in less polysyllabic fashion and with considerably less self indulgence.

**CHARACTERISTICALLY THE KEY OBSERVATION MAN IS MASTER OF HIS OWN FATE IS MADE BY THE DREAD Igel on a symbolic mountainside who otherwise seems superfluous to the events unfolding though he is allotted more songs than anyone else. As a talker he is the spouter of philosophy coherent or otherwise a spiritual brother of the gentler Ras Punzel.**

If there is a principal line of action, it deals with young Jason - again illustrative of Harrison's tortuous efforts at symbolism for is not Jason really Jah Son? - whose mother dies suddenly at the beginning on a railway station platform in the country and who is left with no protection except the on-off ministrations of a mad aunt, Madda Wire.

Somehow Jason lands up in depressed Kingston areas which gives us an entree to gunmen police brutality and western culture. Meanwhile immortal forces contend for dominance over the island society. Iva Flegba - wearer of the Anancy mask (and a clever costume it is with that beard reminiscent of oriental theatricals) accompanied by Rolling (alf and Rat Bar are the Black Immortals the HI Prince and the fairies Faybienne and Timber belle are the White Immortals all expect Anansi posture balletically.

The second act, none of which (pace Gilbert and Sullivan) would be missed, serves primarily to introduce the highly unlikely romantic entanglement between Jason and Syblie, daughter of top-ranking police officer Supt. McKen who resides in surroundings similar to Hope Gardens and who speaks in the trite words playwrights are currently wont to assign to Upper St. Andrew. Munair Zacca, playing the role, did marvels to bring the character to life. Had there been a shade more sensi-

tivity in the lines, we might well have burst out applauding this Supt. McKen and what would that have done to the miasmic dread sympathy?

In its last section, "Anansi" goes further along the man's inhumanity to man path, the gratuitous inter-fighting in the West plus the police brutes against Jason vis-a-vis his daughter. However by about 11.30 p.m., the director had obviously given up, people were beginning to stand around and say lines; the epic ground towards its end post-midnight.

Director Trevor Nairne once or twice tried something interesting like the "Follow That Train Line" sequence when Madda Wire valiantly attempted by Andrene Bonner, tromps along the human rails (and we realise we're leaving the "Hair" atmosphere behind); or later when people tangle in the Anansi web. He didn't seem able however to bring the disparate elements together nor for that matter to operate a stopwatch. Ludicrous was the clothed copulation (twice in this one) in real life it would be hard on the laundress!

The basic set designed by Harrison and Nairne was interesting and atmospheric and provided a suitable shelter for the band. The early music was attractive but soon the lyrics continued heavier and heavier and the melodies seemed either previously extant or reminiscently so. Among the cast of forty odd, Charmaine Hemmings stood out prominently if only for her belly at least twelve months pregnant.

IN THESE HARD TIMES one has ongoing and ubiquitous sympathy for anyone protesting anything. The Jamaican Artists and Craftsmen Guild show at the Mutual Life Centre until October 13 offers its members and friends (and even the public cause there's a blank space to write your own protest) opportunity to register their grouses.

Some use canvas covered with graffiti like Audrey Wong's Jamaican Landscape with their collections political and more personal. Samer Lansley protests the downpression of women. Eugene Hyde's two could be heads could be seen.

## Spotlight on music

(Continued from Page III)

Mama sunduwah  
Tahta lu  
Tahta lu  
Tahta lu mama sunduwah  
Mama sunduwah tahta lu  
Musical and phonetic spelling can give only an idea of the music these people produced.  
"Eh yeh yeh  
Eh yeh yeh  
a wukulu pung  
Elumi jagumah

As time went on they felt the need of a drum. Time no longer mattered. They sang and danced - they laughed and talked, then danced and sang again. Words could not convey the extent of my gratitude but they too were grateful. Grateful that the new Jamaica represented by an outsider with a notebook pencil and taperecorder, had sought them out, to try to learn from them the truths and the customs which had survived among them for centuries, shaping their way of life and giving to them that sense of pride and security which they had seen slipping away, even from their own offspring.

advanced music training with practical and painstaking research in the traditional African cultures made him unique. After a visit to Abeokuta he wrote:

I am an Egba of the Yoruba my hometown being Abeokuta in Western Nigeria. By no stretch of the imagination could I have foreseen that I would travel thousands of miles to Jamaica to visit another Abeokuta in Waterworks in Westmoreland to meet with a ninety six year old lady with a headie and a face that brought my late Egba mother vividly before my eyes, and possessing a stock of Yoruba words in surroundings which looked in places like a physical transplantation of areas of the Abeokuta in Nigeria of my youth.

It is difficult to stay away from places like Abeokuta,

but each visit is sadder than the last. There is always another face missing and in the words of the African saying:

"Every time an old man dies a book is lost"

## Sings for children

ELVIS - Sings for Children, and Grownups, Too (RCA) - The Presley legend continues to grow. The songs on the LP are mostly from old Presley movies - with the musical background done by The Jordanaires and The Mello Men. Could be that songs like "Old MacDonald" and "Cotton Candy Land" will corral a whole new age group of Presley fans.

## Selectively Yours

### Music

The Old Harbour Jaycees present a fund raising variety concert at the Spring Village All Age School 6:00 P.M. today.

Variety concert to be held at the Donald Quarrie Secondary School Harbour View Sunday 6:30 p.m.

### Films

"Murder on the Orient Express", from one of Agatha Christie's best selling novels continues at the Harbour View Drive in Stars Ingrid Bergman, Jacqueline Bisset, Sean Connery, Vanessa Redgrave among others.

### Theatre

"The Mother" Bertholt Brecht's piece plays at the Creative Arts Centre Mona 5:30 p.m. today.

"Anansi and Unsung heroes out West" Stafford Harrison's musical plays at the Ward Theatre Fridays, Saturdays and Mondays 8:00 p.m. and Sundays 5:00 p.m.

"The Mousetrap" Agatha Christie's masterpiece at the Little Theatre Wednesdays to Saturdays 8:00 p.m. and Sundays 5:00 p.m. for four weeks only.

### Galleries

Gallery Barrington, 5 Union Square Collection of Barry Watson's recent paintings on display Tuesdays and Fridays 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

John Peartree, 3 Houghton Ave. Exhibition of paintings by Eugene Hyde continues.

Gallery in the Valley Denmore Ave. Chapelton. Paintings, sculpture and drawings on show daily.

Bolivar Gallery, 1d Grove Rd. Exhibition of pottery by Belva and Donald Johnson opens Tuesday and continues until October 22.

### Unique

During the year following my first visit to Abeokuta it was proven without a doubt that both the words and the music sung by the Nagos were of Yoruba origin.

In 1970, through the generosity of UNESCO, Professor Fela Sowande an eminent Nigerian ethnomusicologist and scholar of traditional African religious philosophies visited the Jamaica Folk Music Research Project and gave invaluable assistance. He could look and listen for African survivals in our folk music and its physical and spiritual environment as perhaps no one else could. His combination of highly specialized and

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