A Cleveland Boy’s N. Y. Success!

“SHUFFLE ALONG”

Remarkable Testimony to That
Great “Broadway Success”

The Work of Members of The Race Who Are
Presenting it—Noble Sissle, Cleveland.

New York City—“The Billboard,” a local publication (white) well known throughout the entire country wherever there is a theater, has the following article on the great “Broadway Success,” the work of Afro-Americans, one (Sissle) a Cleveland boy.

3rd Street Theater, New York, Elks Production Co., Inc. Presents a
Musical Melange, “Shuffle Along.”

Conceived by Miller and Lyle; Music and Lyrics by Sissle and Blake,
Staged by Walter Brooks.

There is a lesson in “Shuffle Along” which Caucasian producers of musical shows may study with profit.

The production at the Thirty-Third Street Theater is hampered by a small stage—the Hippodrome platform would not be too wide for the exuberant enthusiasm of the company, and the dressing room is the burlesque showhouse of five years ago, but the entertainment is real, wholesome and filled with a spirit of liveliness and good humor which enganges anyone who has endured the languid efforts of ordinary Broadway musical affairs. There is rough comedy in plenty, real sentimenl, well-enabled humor (what is a contrast to the nauseous stuff I have heard done under the name of ‘comedy’), the plotter, in spite of being recently dressed—or because of it—works with a joyousness that is amazing, and the show gives more than generous returns for admission fee. That is another remarkable difference between “Shuffle Along” and its white contemporaries. Get your money's worth from the Negro show.

Miller and Lyle, long familiar to vaudeville audiences, amble through “Be a Sap” almost, but they do it in the most hearty fashion. Their burlesque bit, always sentimenally funny, and the scene of how Stevie Jenkins got the mayor’s office and his conference with his defeated rival (and partner in the grocery business), is excellent. Even old Sam York, is a real travity. There is a lot of chorus work for the top-rater—loud which starts that particular section of the show which is sure to be stolen by more than one white producer before the season gets going very strong. In addition to Sissle, Miller and Lyle, there is a specialty by Rice and Blake. Mr. Blake wrote the music and directs the orchestra which is excellently, the number dedicated to the stein in Europe, being especially good. It handily fitted into the comedy of the show, and the Broadway stage manager would turn up their noses at it if that absurd feat is possible for them—but it does go over with a whoop and is short, well conceived, done intelligently and scored. Lottie Gee works happily and pleasantly, and Gertrude Saunders, the singer of “‘blues,” is a positive sensation. I have never heard the human voice perform such amazing tricks, nor have I listened in a long time to a single woman who landed a song with such astounding maonnering.

Lumas and to such hilarious approval. Miss Saunders’ rendition of “I’m Craving for That Kind of Love” and “Daddy” would “make a preacher lay his bible down,” sure enough, but there is not an atom of suggestions of immorality in the slightest thing she does. Once more, while singers, please copy! “If You Haven’t Been Vamped by a Brown Skin, You Haven’t Been Vamped At All,” delivered in a minute, is another of the song successes. The Board of Aldermen of Jimmerson proved to be a success which is permitted to exist owing to the cooperation of the Negroes. It has a soft and mellow base which turns the gallery topsy-turvy—and the ground floor, too! “Shuffle Along” has deficiencies, but they are not those of unpleasantness, repulsiveness, vulgarity or lasciviousness. It is a good entertainment and I want to see it again. Especially do I crave to hear Miss Saunders’ new vocal fireworks!—Potter James.