

Lagniappe

Ex-'Smartie' Holliday Planning New Musical

By THOMAS GRIFFIN

TODAY'S MAIL brings a letter from comedian Bill Holliday, late of the "Nobody Likes a Smartie" cast, explaining why he left the show. Its preface concerns his desire to broaden his activities in the world of show-biz after having appeared in four major movies ("Waik on the Wild Side," "Alvarez Kelly," "Hotel" and "Pro") and having been tested for two more ("The Lenny Bruce Story" and "Cabinet of Terror") coupled with the reluctance of the other members of the cast to give up a satirical revue that literally has been "a howling success" for the last eight years. Now, let Bill take it from here:

"In July of 1968 I called a meeting of the cast to discuss the possibility of entering into the production of a new show and the opportunity to experiment with new forms of comedy. For a variety of reasons we did not agree (our first and only artistic difference). At this point I decided to leave the show as of the first of the year. However, we agreed that to give the understudy (Jere Holliday) the opportunity to become accustomed to the timing that he would come into 'Smartie' Dec. 1.



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"At this juncture all responsibility of 'Smartie' was delegated to Sam (Adams), Butch (Benit) and Walter (Perseveaux). In the future all rewrites, staging, production plans and outside negotiations and the sole responsibility of 'Smartie' rests with them.

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"MY PLANS for the future are to establish a home for topical, musical comedy in the French Quarter as new in concept as 'Smartie' and Cabaret theater were eight years ago. I feel that as New Orleans grows, there must be a commercial outlet for the development of local talent. Too often New Orleans has been a victim of runaway talent.

"I intend to build a home for topical musical comedy. I have just completed writing the script for 'Wheryaat,' and I am presently collaborating with Mike Williams (a New Orleans resident and former member of The Benedicts Trio) in writing the music and lyrics for the show.

"Between now and July, I intend to keep busy by appearing in the following films: 'The Undeclared,' three weeks in the Baton Rouge area; 'Darker than Amber,' two weeks in Miami; 'Hall of Mirrors,' five weeks in New Orleans in April and May.

"Your column has prompted many phone calls as to my plans. My plans are to remain in New Orleans and to gain knowledge of every phase of the entertainment business

so that as I grow in the capacity of actor, writer, producer, director and comedian, I will increase my value to the city, a city that is growing into a major tourist and convention attraction."

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POTPOURRI — Most of the Brennan clan, with the exception of Pip, Dick and Adelaide, have returned from the Dallas opening of their new restaurant with raves about Charlie Gresham's decor of the interior of the premises; spot occupies below-street-level quarters overlooking a plaza of the new multi-million One Main Place complex; Ella says the new Brennan's is packing 'em in despite no formal opening; only casualty of the festivities was a black eye for Dick from a popping champagne cork . . . Prime-mover Mary A. Brown for better bus service to the International Trade Mart building sent a petition containing names of 1,302 employes to NOPSI with a prayer "that our efforts have not been in vain." (Mary says some petitions still are circulating in the building.) . . . Jaycees' naming of Ed Butler as "Outstanding Young Man of the Year" is a tribute to 100 per cent Americanism; no one is more patriotic or does more to combat Communism in the U.S. and South America than this young Orleanian who is vice president of the Information Council of the Americas.

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HITHER AND YON — Mrs. Ellie Schill, past national prez of the auxiliary to the VFW, packing duds for a trip to Washington, Feb. 5-7, to confer on "Movies From Home," a VFW project to send filmed messages from families to GIs in Vietnam . . . Retired assessor Charlie Degan, dining with Pittsburgh's John Schuster and Dallas' R. R. Greenlee at Delmonico, twitting a columnist for an oversight in omitting the restaurant's name in a recent column . . . Dr. Richard Oster, the Saints' dentist, making plans to accompany the players to spring training in San Diego . . . Thelma and Louis Schmitt livin' up their 41st wedding anniversary via cocktails at the Top of the Mart and dinner in the Blue Room, a "first" for both places.

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SHOW BIZ — The new Krewe of Bacchus, which promises bigger floats than you've ever seen, also will have a big name show-biz personality to reign as king . . . Gotta admit Barbra Streisand is fantastically good in "Funny Girl" at the Robert E. Lee even though I've never liked her singing nor what I've read of her personality; the movie, by the way, is doing capacity business on weekends, and near capacity week nights, according to manager Shirley Grishaw . . . Impresario Perry Brown returned from New York with quite a package of musicals and plays for next season, to wit: musicals "I Do, I Do," "Mame," "Cabaret" and "Your Own Thing." Plays: "The Price," "Spofford" and "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead." (The latter troupe will do "Hamlet" at children's matinees.)