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Letter, n.d., from Jester J. Hairston to Eva Jessye

Jester J. Hairston

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JESTER J. HAIRSTON

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Day

Dear Sis Jessye:

Please forgive me for not answering your letter at once. I have been up to my ears in work recently. And we work so very seldom here in Hollywood, that when I get work I immediately forget everybody and everything. It's really an occasion when one gets a job here, with all this competition. There are scores of men for every job that comes along. We all have agents and all the agents here about the job, because the studios notify them all when they have a part or some music coming up. It's really dog eat dog. But I love it. It keeps you on your toes. And it's most gratifying to feel that if you can make it in this rat race you must have a little something on the ball.

About the newspaper clippings you asked about, Marge destroyed all the papers we had with the write-ups, before I got to them. We accumulate so many papers that she gets rid of them as soon as we finish reading them. I called some of my friends who keep papers and even they did not have them. The concert, however, so far as she was concerned was a huge success. All the papers gave her the better notice. And all the friends I spoke to, who were at the concert agreed with the papers. They said he had trouble staying on key most of the evening. I know he is a great artist and it was he who got her where she is.

Walter Schumann and I are preparing a new Christmas album for release this Xmas. I shall have three Negro Christmas songs in the album, two spirituals and one original, based on the folk idiom. I have three new spiritual arrangements out now and they are going very well in the schools and colleges. Haven't heard anything from ANTA in months. There is so much to be done here in the field of race relations that we could stay busy for years, without even leaving Los Angeles.

I intend to keep on proposing to you at least once every year, in spite of all you say. And if we don't ever marry on this earth, I'll meet you in heaven? and continue the proposals. You are really a worker, Sis Jessye, and I admire you so much. Yes, the gang is surely seeing the world. The Porgy troupe. When are they coming back home? Wish I could have gone with them. I'm trying to pile up songs now, so that perhaps when I'm in my forties my royalties will enable me to make a trip abroad now and then. Hall is busy composing these days. He sends his regards. He's now working on an orchestration for Mrs. Myers of the Fiske Jubilee singers. It is an ambitious score and I am happy for him. There are six Negro spirituals in the composition. Now I must go to see my grandchildren. Please write again when you have time.

Hairston