

Mercury
3/9/42. 4. magazine 5

Witchcraft

ONE of the superstitions which dies hard among the Native peoples is the efficacy of so-called "cures" of disease. "Throwing the bones" and sucking blood from the cheek through a tube are some of the practices employed to "cure" blindness.

Much has been done by the Natal Bantu Blind Society to counteract these harmful superstitions. One old Native, living "out in the blue" in the Inanda district, who was overtaken by blindness, has regained his sight through the good offices of the Society, and he now spends his days painting water-colour pictures of Native life, from the sale of which he manages to maintain himself, his totally blind wife, and a large family of children.

His name is Simon Mnguni, and although he has had no training whatever his work is surprisingly good. At the foot of this column is an example of his art—a witchdoctor "throwing the bones" for the "benefit" of a blind Native.

I hear that the Bantu Blind Society proposes to make posters from some of his pictures for propaganda purposes.



Here is a reproduction of one of the water colours painted by the once blinded Native referred to above under the heading "Witchcraft." It shows a witch doctor attempting to cure a blind Native by "throwing the bones."

Mercury 5/4/41.

Isigongo to S.A.A.F.

"Behold the unquenchable fire,
(The S.A.A.F.)
Which envelops all
mountains,
And gives relief to jaded
warriors."



Warriors of Abyssinia,
Who on seeing it sought their
shields
Amid the acclamation of their
women folk;
Beholding men of a man,
By name Gasa the aggressive
one,
Famous for his armoured
chariots,
For he flew and disappeared
beyond Kenya;
He the cockroach that
penetrated
The ears of Mussolini,
And denied sleep to his
warriors;
The unquenchable fire which
devours the foe
And blends itself
With the King's Stone
Crushers" (The Royal
Air Force).

This Zulu song of praise to the S.A.A.F. was chanted impromptu the other night by Mpanza, the Zulu who reads the nightly war news bulletins over the radio to his countrymen.

They "Died" With Their Sacks On

The Junior Certificate classes of the Inanda Seminary in Durban recently acted "Julius Caesar." Here is an account of it, written for a local Zulu paper by Maggie Shobede, who took the part of Julius Caesar:—

"As the play was staged outdoors, the stage was the front of the Industrial Building. There was the Senate House at the back of the stage and outside were statues of Caesar and Pompey. As the play was made up of five acts, there were one or two re-arrangements of the stage.

"The costumes were so realistically made that the performers appeared as if they were real Romans. Caesar, the main character in the play, wore a purple mantle decorated with gold designs. On his head he had a crown of shining leaves. The citizens wore white togas made of two sheets joined together. The shoes, which all the performers had on were of sacking, and they showed a great deal of skill on the part of the makers.

"The soldiers showed a wonderful display in their armour of sacking, their silver hats of paper with red and purple plumes, their silver shields of grass mats, and their long spears of bamboo and silver points.

"In acting, all the performers did very well. Those who were killing did the killing seriously, and those who were dying did it as if they were really dying. There were two running scenes of the soldiers and this interested most of the spectators. Everyone had mastered her speech, and so, although there were some long ones, they were uttered without hesitating."

Mercury 13/6/42.

INDIAN AND BANTU SHOW

An Indian and Bantu Garrison Theatre show, the first to be staged in Durban, was presented last night at the City Hall by Mr. Edward Dunn.

The most popular feature of the evening was the Ngoma dance led by Sikwili Ganyaza. This was Lever Bros' championship team for 1941 and despite the area of the stage made an impressive spectacle. Another notable item was the Bantu greeting song, "Xaula," by the Midnight Strutters, presented in modernised form.

A delightfully whimsical sketch, "Qomisa," depicting a young Zulu making love overtures to a maiden was in traditional dress and well handled.

P. R. Singh and his troupe performed a very beautiful Krishna Leela ballet in traditional costumes. Based on old Indian paintings, this was made outstanding by the delicate movements of P. R. Singh's dancing. The S. N. S. Sabha Girls' Chorus sang in Tamil accompanied by the Sabha Girls' Orchestra, conducted by Iyavoonurphi Pillai.

PRODUCED BY THE
KILLIE CAMPBELL AFRICANA LIBRARY
FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

ZULU DANCE IN DURBAN

Mercury — 21. 12. 42.

Six teams of Zulu dancers took part in a spectacular Ingoma dance at Kingsmead, Durban, yesterday afternoon. The performance was arranged by the Durban branch of African Consolidated Theatres on behalf of the Ouma Birthday Fund instituted by Mrs. I. W. Schlesinger.

The Native dancers, led respectively by Mketshezi Zulu, Kyanjana Nzuza, Sikwili Ganyaza, Manegudu Zungu, Ginger Beer Msane and Nomasekeni Lutuli, gave their services free. This year the dancing was not competitive, but was given as an exhibition of the teams' ability.

Messrs. Lever Bros. provided the transport for the Lever Natives, who were dressed in impressive tribal costume. Where possible the teams attempted to achieve uniformity in regalia; though where some dancers were forced to participate in "civilian" dress this in no way detracted from their zeal.

The Municipal Native Affairs Department co-operated with African Theatres in securing the teams.

Before the performance the pipe band of a famous visiting regiment paraded, followed by the band of the Women's Voluntary Air Force. The W.V.A.F. were also responsible for the collections, which were undertaken with the aid of large squares of material intended as targets for the marksmanship of the crowd. Many of the collectors were forced to dodge smartly before a cascade of coins.

One of the incidental highlights of the show was the spectacle of an earnest-looking brown dog thoughtfully nibbling at the ankle beads of the rear dancer belonging to one of the teams while they were making their entrance. Despite all the dancer's efforts, he could not throw the dog off his trail until a sudden wrench tore the anklet adrift, whereupon the dog returned to the stand with an air of triumph and a mouth full of beads.

A BIG TREAT
FOR THE WHOLE
FAMILY!

18. 12. 42.

GIGANTIC INGOMA DANCE

(ZULU DANCING)
TEAMS COMPRISE

1. MKETSHEZI ZULU
2. KYANJANA NZUZA
3. SIKWILI GANYAZA
4. MANEGUDU ZUNGU
5. GINGER BEER MSANE
6. NOMASEKENI LUTULI

DON'T MISS THIS
GREAT PERFORMANCE
SUNDAY
NEXT

Gates Open at
2.30 p.m.

KINGSMEAD
GROUND

ADMISSION:
STANDS 2/-

To any other part of Ground
1/-

TOTAL PROCEEDS WITHOUT
DEDUCTION TO S.A. GIFTS
AND COMFORTS FUND

DURBAN ZULU TO BROADCAST TO BRITAIN

From Our Own Correspondent
M. 14/11/42 LONDON, April 13.

Twenty-eight-year-old Zulu singer, Victor Mcunu, from Durban, will broadcast on the Third Programme of the B.B.C. on April 21.

The broadcast will last 20 minutes and Mcunu will illustrate by his songs the folklore and customs of his people.

He has been here just over a year and by day works in the dispatching section of a large chemist in the West End. At night he attends lessons in singing and the piano and hopes in time to take a musical diploma.

Victor Mcunu broadcast several times for the South African Broadcasting Corporation and he is hoping that the B.B.C. will engage him again as the fee from them helps to pay for his musical studies. He has no idea when he will be returning home, but said he would not go before he has obtained his diploma here.

New whelp Book 40

MS 1000-1000 SHS