

LEONIE FORBES, in private life Mrs. Keith Amiel, is one of Jamaica's most talented young actresses. The local producers are very glad to have her back in Jamaica. So far we have seen her on JBC-TV in **Seance** produced by Lloyd Reckard.

Leonie has been in England for the past five years and has only just returned. The Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation was happy to have Leonie back. She is now employed to the station as Produce-Presenter for radio and television.

Leonie, who is a go-getter, is to a great extent responsible for her present achievement. Her first exposure to radio was at the University of the West Indies where she was a secretary in the Radio Education Unit, a section of the Extra-Mural Department. However, she was not content with only making her contributions from behind the scenes. She later joined the JBC as a duty announcer. She found working in radio rewarding but since she is primarily a performer she craved the opportunity of getting some training in a dramatic school. This came about through her own efforts when she solicited and obtained a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

In April 1961, she left for London. The experience that she gained there was new, exciting, and varied.

The instructors at the Academy were quick in recognising Leonie's dramatic talent. Even before she had completed her course, she was allowed the special concession of being permitted to accept radio and television parts. This permission had dual benefits. She gained experience by these performances and also made some much-needed money.

If you should ask Leonie how she succeeded in making a living as an actress in London, she will answer very frankly, that it is thirty per cent talent and seventy per cent luck. "Should you happen to have a high quota of luck and more than average talent, success is sure to follow."

The number of parts available to a West Indian actress in London are very limited. The English audience has not yet realized that the West Indians are people with problems common to everyone. More often than not the West Indian is characterized as robbers and other such roles which make them the bad men rather than the good. Leonie can remember only one part in which she was cast in **Z Car** for television, in which her colour was not the determining factor.

For radio parts, Leonie, who is a marvellous mimic, was able to take roles that portrayed voices that were English, southern Caribbean, Jamaican. As she tells it, her most exciting radio characterization was that of a fourteen-year-old coloured cockney girl. Since the English have grown to accept coloured

nurses, Leonie found herself being cast as a nurse in the television programmes **Hugh and I**, a rather hilarious comedy. Also she was cast as a nurse in a BBC school series and in **Desperate People**.

However much Leonie enjoyed her radio and TV parts, her forte is the stage. She speaks with pleasure of her first theatrical debut in a West End production. This was **Double Entry** directed by Lloyd Reckard.

Leonie Forbes, with her easy unassuming manner, speaks of experiences gained in London. She knew the loneliness of a single person in a big city. She became familiar with the hazards of living on an income which was good but sporadic. "Yet if you are sensible you can manage", she said.

"I was very lucky", Leonie always emphasizes. She has had parts in documentaries and in feature films. Leonie did add, however, that if the film were to be released in South Africa, the scenes in which the coloured actor or actress appeared would be drastically cut.

Despite a tight schedule while in London, Leonie made the time to do some work at the West Indian student centre. There was a dance group in existence, but it was not very active. Along with Keith Amiel, the group was reorganized, and whipped into shape so that it could go on tours around the British Isles.

Leonie also found time to travel. She took advantage while in this cultural centre to go to the theatre as often as possible.

Although the limelight is on Leonie, time might be taken out to mention her husband, Keith, who is known to the Jamaican theatre-goers. Their children, Karen, 1½ years old and Rodney Moyo, 2½ months, were both born in England.

With the coming of her first baby, Leonie discovered that working and raising a family could be quite complex in England. Let again she was fortunate.

"I somehow always managed to find someone to baby-sit for me. Paying a baby-sitter, though, was frightfully expensive."

Leonie Forbes Amiel is an excellent mother. She has managed to combine working, acting and being a housewife. She is very happy with her two lovely children and there is no problem of having to choose between her career and her family.



LEONIE FORBES