

FREDA PAYNE'S SONG CAUSES PAIN

To her friends, family and those fans who are enamored by her striking brown figure, Freda Payne may be known as Freda, but to the U. S. Army Base in Vietnam, all Freda is is a Pain.

As she knows how to utilize her physique, Freda is a good singer and knows how to put across a song. And her latest one, "Bring The Boys Home," which has commanded a spot on the JET Soul Brother Top 20 chart for over 10 weeks, stirred a different chord in U. S. Army commanders who took offense to the lyrics of the jumpy and swingy arrangement.

The lyrics urge those who make war to "turn the ships around; everybody lay your weapons down," and it talks about lovers all alone and mothers crying, and then it goes on to offer some even more pertinent suggestions on how to end the shooting part of the war at least.

Miss Payne belts out tune while donating talents to the Sickle Cell Anemia telethon in New York. Like most entertainers, she often donates her services for the benefit of Black-related causes.



But the Army, which is supposed to be committed to a withdrawal of troops in Vietnam, didn't care to hear such sentiments expressed lyrically, so they went ahead and banned the song from the Armed Forces Network in Southeast Asia.

However, the censorship failed to discourage Blacks in the U. S. from picking up on the record or sending it to their friends who are overseas. And in spite of, or maybe because of the Army's negative reaction, Miss Payne finds herself very much in demand and the song has found a sort of acceptance with non-Black audiences.

"When I heard the song was banned in Saigon," she told JET, "I was offended at first. It was as if they were calling me a traitor, or disloyal, or something. And that really made me feel bad. I wanted to go off and picket or demonstrate at the Pentagon, or maybe the White House, since they claim they

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are doing what the song is all about, bringing the boys home. I thought it was unfair.

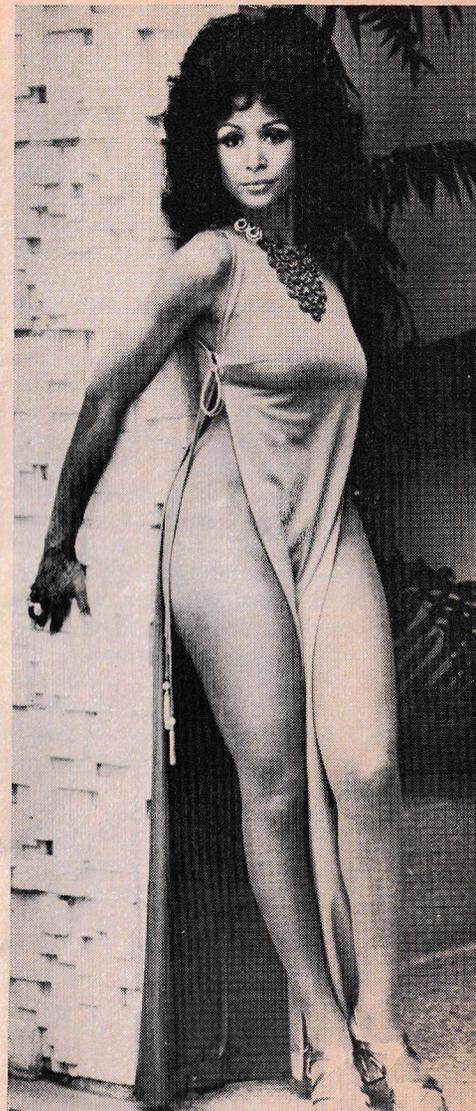
"The Army said the song could give aid and comfort to the enemy," she continued. "Well, it could be applied to the men on the other side, too. And it could be applied to any war, not just this one, though this is the most visible one right now, I must admit."

Perhaps it's ironic that on Miss Payne's second hit with a pop record, the first was "Band of Gold," that she should run into this kind of static. Her musical style was usually more sophisticated, running the gamut of show tunes and romantic songs.

Freda, who admits to being in her early 20s, was born in Detroit, Mich., and, as a child, was encouraged by her parents to study the piano and later, singing. As a teenager, she easily won any contest she entered, and when she was 18, she moved to New York to start serious musical study.

In the cultural capital of the country, Freda took dancing and vocal lessons. At one point, she considered a career as a dancer, and she still enjoys ballet and modern dance. Eventually, she met composer-arranger Quincy Jones and toured extensively with him and his band. Other engagements led to a European tour in 1965, where she spent several months performing throughout Germany, France, Norway, Sweden, Britain and Spain.

Returning to New York, Freda



Freda Payne shows shapely figure while relaxing outside apartment. The unmarried songstress says she has not yet found that special man of her life, but is constantly looking.

became Leslie Uggam's understudy in the Broadway musical, "Hallelujah, Baby," where she had many opportunities to display her dramatic as well as vocal talents in the lead role.

Despite her consistent success and numerous engagements, however, Freda did not feel she was fully utilizing her abilities. She signed recording contracts with ABC-Paramount, Impulse, and MGM, but it wasn't until she hooked up with Invictus records that things started to click, mainly cash registers.

"It was really a matter of economics," she recalls. "The question was whether I wanted to be Freda Payne, a nice torch singer who sings nice sweet songs for \$700 to \$1,500 a week, and it took me eight years before night club owners thought I deserved that amount, or the question was do I try for the big time, try to be Freda Payne, the star who can command \$10,000 a week or even a night depending on the type of concert."

To the purists, who prefer Freda Payne, the jazz singer, the singer of sophisticated songs, the switch to pop music seems something of a compromise. But Freda retorts: "I have a good body, a good voice; I can dance, I can act. Why should I be the maid when I can be the lady of the house?"

But Miss Payne refuses to become disappointed when her audiences groan that they want to hear the old songs. If that's what they want, that's what they get.

Although she has been squired around by some of the most hand-

some men in the public eye, like actor Omar Sharif, Miss Payne is the first to agree with another good song that says that a good man is hard to find. "The reason I went on with the singing is because I thought I could become independently wealthy and if I were independent, I could attract a better man."

So far, it hasn't worked that way. The competition is keen. "Men are either married or they're too full of themselves to be faithful to one woman. The married ones seem to have more sensitivity.

"Sometimes a man can be just as much of a bitch as a woman," she goes on. "They can be so jealous. I've had my throat 'cut' by as many men as women. Now if I find a single drop of jealousy, I cut them right out of my life."

Right now, Freda swears that there's no one in her life and she wants it known that the together brothers should not be daunted, but should keep trying.

Freda Payne, Record Firm In Counter Law Suits

Glamorous Detroit singer Freda Payne and her recording firm, Invictus Records, and its Talent management agency, Creative Attractions, are at legal swords' points. In Detroit, Invictus Records-Creative Attractions, owned by Holland-Dozier-Holland, filed suit in Wayne County Circuit Court reportedly seeking injunctive relief and a temporary restraining order against Miss Payne to prevent performances, commercial

use of her name, or the entering into any management contracts by her. It also reportedly seeks damages for breach of contract.

Miss Payne's legal representative, Burt Pines, acknowledged that she filed an action earlier in Los Angeles Superior Court against Invictus and Creative Attractions. Her complaint seeks declaratory relief to free her of contractual obligations with the defendants, and seeks damages for alleged breaches of contracts including failure of CA and Invictus to pay money due totaling \$30,000 and \$100,000 respectively, for damages for inducement of breach of agreements with Capitol Records and Rogers, Cowan & Brenner, public relations agency, amounting to \$30,000 and \$20,000 respectively and \$100,000 each in punitive damages against the defendants.

Mercury Label Inks Grambling Band

Grambling College's 135-member, colorful and high-stepping band has been signed to a lucrative contract by Mercury Record Co., it was announced in Chicago. The signing was arranged through Black Associate Sports, Inc. of Los Angeles. According to Logan Westbrook, Mercury's Black rhythm and blues promotion director, the band will cut its first album featuring popular and dance tunes. The record company is already directing recording dates in the band's hometown, Grambling, La.

Muscovites Love Duke, Set Additional Concerts

Can American bandleader Duke Ellington find true love and happiness in Moscow? Thousands of Moscow residents, some of them pressing fanatically against barricades outside the Estrada Theater and begging first-nighters to sell their tickets for as high as \$50 each (nobody was selling), attest he can. The jazz happy Russians inside the theater cheered, clapped, stomped and whistled as the urbane Ellington made his Moscow debut. And the demand for him has been so great that Soviet concert authorities made last-minute arrangements for Ellington to give two extra concerts at Moscow's biggest gymnasium, the 10,400-seat Luzhnik Sports Palace. Tickets for the extra concert went on sale and were sold out immediately. American jazz is "a decadent bourgeois music" as has been claimed in some recent years by dour-faced commissars? Forget it, Jim. Nobody loves American jazz music like the garden-variety Russian and they went wild when Duke played *Take The A Train*, *Mood Indigo*, *Hello Dolly*, and kissed the hand of the Soviet-supplied mistress of ceremonies a blond, buxom lady named Marina, who shimmered in a silver gown. The courtly and gallant Ellington kissed her hand, gave her a long sultry look and said, "Prekrasnahhh" (beautiful). The Russians cheered loudly. They love Duke madly and the feeling is reciprocated.