

"THIS STAGE IS GREAT. NOW LET'S FILL THE HOUSE. I'M READY!"



"MY GRANDSON LIKES ME IN 'BUGALOS'"



"I'LL KEEP RETURNING TO 'NAM'"

## That 'Dolly' looks familiar

By JEAN SANDERS

Oh boyyyyy!

Imagine who's joining Long Beach Civic Light Opera to play the lead in "Hello, Dolly!"

Marjorie Yvonne O'Reed!

Never heard of her, hm? Okay, skip the name on the birth certificate and put it this way:

MARTHA RAYE . . .

She of the cavernous mouth, when it's open, which is much of the time. She of the sad faced clown's turn down mouth when it's closed, which is some of the time.

She of many marriages, of innumerable trips to entertain US troops of three wars; of movie, radio, television, stage and nightclub fame.

PRACTICALLY everyone knows who Martha Raye is, from pre-schoolers who chortle at her long nosed witch's antics on TV's "Bugalons" to their grandparents who saw her in "Rhythm on the Range" with Bing Crosby and Bob Burns in 1936.

She's been grabbing headlines for at least 35 years. But don't let that span dismay you. She's in great form, undefa-

ugable as ever, funny, even pretty when she's wishful.

It's the first time Civic Light Opera has engaged the services of a name star, plus such respected professionals as Jack Ritschel as Horace Vandergeider and Jim Sanderson as Cornelius Hackl.

Martha's no stranger to the role, though. In a long succession of Dollys,

them in the jungles and rice paddies with a condensed version of the stage production.

She's put on shows and just gabbed with the servicemen in Vietnam nine times. A 10th trip is coming up the first week in December.

Good grief, this woman never stops. She says she won't quit going to Vietnam, either, "until it all ends."

She visited Jordan High School this week to see the auditorium where she'll be performing Oct. 29-31, Nov. 3-7 and Nov. 12-14. It looked fine to her. Also to Nick Condos, her business manager who also was her fourth husband and father of her only child, Melodye Raye Condos Lancaster.



she played the matchmaker for six months in 1967, right after Ginger Rogers and just before Betty Grable.

SHE LEFT the show to return overseas to entertain the servicemen. It's a fair assumption that, aside from Bob Hope, Martha Raye has entertained troops in Vietnam more often than any other performer.

"Dolly" went with her on some of the visits. With a troupe of 20 she wowed

SHE'S SMALL — 5'2½" —, slightly graying, and without a theater audience is soft spoken, almost subdued. Not once during her short visit did a bellow blast from the famous mouth.

But then she had other things on her mind. After sizing up the theater, talking over the music, meeting CLO show biz co-workers, and the press, she said, urgently, "I've gotta get back and put a pot roast on in Laguna."

In addition to all the other things she is, Martha's domestic too.