

## Local Girl Lands Role In The Ziegfeld Follies

In case you haven't bought the November issue of Ebony I have news for you. This story, with pictures of Ketty Lester (Ravoyda Frierson) appears on pages 68, 70, and 72.

True to the tradition established by the late Flo Ziegfeld, the current edition of the Ziegfeld Follies features luscious showgirls, and dancers in gay, extravagant production numbers.

The cast also includes several little-known but talented entertainers. One of the brightest of these starlets is Ketty Lester, a 23-year-old singer of risque songs that swing. The first Negro to land a featured spot in a Broadway production of the Follies since Joseph Baker's performance in the 1935 show, Ketty may emerge as one of the real discoveries of the 1957-58 season.

The Arkansas-born singer is featured in two production numbers in which her singing is stylishly-enhanced by the movements of a group of pretty showgirls. When she is singing "It's Silk, Feel It," in one of the routines, she gyrates across the stage while near-nude showgirls undulate in rhythm with her. "Bop-A-Bye Lullaby," a number Ketty sings in bop jargon to a baby in a cradle, is one of the top songs in the show, which is now touring the country preparatory to a January opening on Broadway.

Three years ago, the Follies starlet was about as far away from Broadway as a girl can get. She had completed two years at San Francisco City College and was well on her way to a nursing career. But anatomy classes convinced her that her place was not in a hospital. "I found the corpses revolting," she says. Ketty, a serious, conservative girl who had sung in church choirs, switched to music, spent 14 months at the Purple Onion in San Francisco and a year at the Purple Onion in Hollywood.

Mervyn Nelson, director of the Follies, heard her at New York's Village Vanguard and was thrilled. He promptly tagged her for stardom. "That Ketty," he says, "is truly marvelous. She's going to be a real big star one day."