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MARKS, David

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 DAVID MARKS, who composed the music and wrote the lyrics of South Africa's latest hit song "Master Jack," has just seen sales of the recording in this country rise above 25,000. A few weeks ago this 24-year-old young man was earning R210 a month working underground in the St. Helena mines at Welkom. Today he expects to make R100,000 in royalties from his song "Master Jack." H. 22/3

The song, recorded by Four Jacks and a Jill, has been released throughout the world by RCA Victor. This is one of the rare occasions on which an indigenous South African song, written, recorded and produced by South Africans, will be internationally released.

Publishing rights have been sold to Frank Sinatra, Tom Jones and Dean Martin, and Trini Lopez has already recorded his version. David was born at Cape Town and started work in a Welkom mine about four years ago. About two years later he heard a performance by Des Lindberg, a well-known South African folk singer, and he "fell in love with music."

He could neither play an instrument nor could he write music, but David was determined to learn. He taught himself to play during lunch breaks, 6,000 feet underground.

In a little more than two years he wrote 40 songs, which included a Nick Taylor favourite, "Shiny, Shiny Fairy Gold," and "Mountains of Men," which has been recorded seven times by five different people, and is now the theme song of an American television show.

Of "Master Jack," he says, "The song was inspired by several things.

"It suggests that people should see for themselves instead of just believing what they're told."

It is not the money that interests David so much. It is being able to hear his songs sung.

Top marks

THERE'S no stopping 24-year-old song writer David Marks.

His South African chart-topper, Master Jack, has gone over big in the United States, and his latest disc, Mr. Nico — by Four Jacks and a Jill — is said by his American publishers' to be even better.

The sad story of Mr. Nico, the Greek who had to shut up his little shop "to make way for concrete and steel," has just been released in the Republic.

Now David has written a song inspired by Phillip de Bruyn's controversial play, Give Me Besides My Daily Bread.

"The title is a song in itself," he told me this week. "When I read the play I thought it was fantastic. Just way out. So true."

The play will open at Durban's Lyric Theatre tomorrow. It is centred around the flight of some South African political refugees. One is an African, Samuel, who decides to return to South Africa.

In the words of the song he says:

My friends I'll go back
 with you,
 But there's one thing I ask
 That handouts at the kitchen door
 Be something of the past.
 So give me besides my daily bread.

A chance to have my say,
 A life to live my way.
 David hopes to get the German folk singer, Corne-

lia Moller, to record the song.

FOLK SINGER: David Marks (Astra)***

SOUTH AFRICA'S most successful composer of folk songs, Dave Marks, appears in a new role at the Astra Hotel, Durban, where he entertains his many followers by singing his own songs.

We don't often get the chance of hearing how the composer would deliver the material he's written himself and this makes an evening with Mr. Marks an interesting experience.

All the well-known favourites are rolled out — Master Jack, Mr. Nick, Mountains of Men.

I.M.
 RATINGS: Excellent****; Very good****; Good***; Average**; Poor.

Where's he?

SIR,—Can someone tell me how to contact Dave Marks, the composer of "Master Jack."

I tried to get in touch with him because I am interested in folk singing.

KATHLEEN PETERS.
 Durban.