

SHOWTIME Singing entrepreneur

By Raeford Daniel

THE songwriter, like the proverbial prophet, is seldom recognised in his own country. Dave Marks, who penned that fabled monument to the men who mined for gold, *Mountains of Men*, and the biggest ever South African international hit, *Master Jack*, is remembered chiefly today as an entrepreneur — he is a founder and executive of that illustrious “alternate” recording company, Third Ear Music, and his enterprise in bringing to this country such artists as Crosby, Stills and Nash is soon to be followed by another coup, a tour of the legendary Richie Havens.

Dave has just released an anthology album of some of his finest works, covering the long dark years of the apartheid era, *The Hidden Years*. It was slowly reviewed in

these pages by Frith Harris in her CD Sounds column. Involved in the project was a film on the jazz greats of Alexandra, directed by Ann Williams, to be screened in the United States as part of the Reach and Teach fund raising project, which is under the patronage of the Rev Beyers Naude.

Reasons

Moreover Dave has just had the rare experience of being feted as an artist at the most recent Woodstock festival. Indeed it might be claimed with a deal of accuracy that Dave's presence there was one of the main reasons why the Festival was able to go ahead.

For the very existence

of the historic festival is under threat. The farm, site of the original concert 25 years ago, has been bought by one Alan Gerry, who wants to turn it into a sort of Disneyland complex with retrospectives held every few years for which the public will be required to pay.

This has caused an outcry, the people insisting that Woodstock belongs to the nation.

Visitors arriving for the festival were turned away in their thousands by guards. A country attorney sympathetic to the Woodstock cause, Ira Cohen, was arrested and handcuffed for an alleged traffic violation.

The festival was diverted to a nearby farm bought

by Woodstock stalwart Tom Howard. But much necessary equipment, such as half of an elaborate sound system designed by the great Bill Hanley, did not arrive. Reports that the festival had been cancelled had prevented the equipment being dispatched.

Persuaded

But Dave, having weathered many obstructions at the hands of officialdom at the local Free People's Concerts, persuaded Hanley to allow SABC sound engineer Evert Demunnik to improvise a system, “sticking things together with wire and masking tape”.

Getting no change from a hostile county sheriff, Dave asked if intervention from highplaces might help. He was told to go ahead.

The result of these de-



DAVE MARKS ... In action at Woodstock

liberations was that the South African delegate to the United Nations, Sheila Sesulu, was approached. Her representations were seen as being largely instrumental in bringing about the festival “happening”.

As one of the marvel-

ling crowd commented: “You can't stop a miracle.”

● American balladeer Richie Havens, reputed to be the third Woodstock great after Jimi Hendrix and Crosby, Stills and Nash, kicks off his South African tour with a concert

at the Nico Theatre in Cape Town on Thursday and Saturday, October 2 and 4, and moves to Johannesburg's Civic Theatre on October 8 and 9. The tour ends with a show at the new ICC Theatre in Durban on October 10.