

'ABC STAGE 67' TONIGHT

Negro Humor Is Shown In 'A Time for Laughter'

At the beginning of "A Time For Laughter," Harry Belafonte's production for "ABC STAGE 67" Thursday, on Channel 11, host Sidney Poitier says, "There are few things that express the mood of the Negro better than his humor. Unlike his music — jazz — which has been able to break out and move societies of the world, Negro humor has stayed home."

Paul Jones is on vacation.

"A Time For Laughter" is an attempt to bring that humor into homes where it has never been seen or heard; to introduce audiences to such classic comedians as Moms Mabley and Pigmeat Markham, to the kind of comedy this show calls "Ghetto Talk," to the black birth of what became white minstrel shows ("That's how 'darkies' was born," Poitier comments ironically), to the outspoken wit and satire of the socio-political commentators of the generation following after Mabley and Markham.

Producer Belafonte is also performer Belafonte in "A Time For Laughter," displaying his respect for a vaudeville tradition that greatly ante-dates him

in a time-honored sketch which teams him with Pigmeat Markham and guest star Diahann Carroll.

Godfrey Cambridge, actor-turned-comedian, also turns writer in the production. He is featured with Moms Mabley and Broadway star Diana Sands in a sketch he wrote, satirizing suburban social climbers of all colors.

George Kirby, whose skills at mimicry have made him a popular guest on television variety shows, plays a cast of seven in a ghetto barber shop, using the sharp edge of wit to outline seven very different

types (in two colors).

The ghetto talk moves into two other areas. In a pool hall we find Redd Foxx, long-time favorite on the circuit of night clubs and theaters which play primarily to Negro audiences (and lately a guest on afternoon game shows) utilizing his zest for the language and rhythms of the "fast-talking hippie."

In a funeral parlor, young comedian Richard Pryor unsolemnly intones a satirical service that — like much of humor's spectrum — would be equally at home in any color scheme.