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*Guardia*

POPULAR SONG FESTIVAL

By Lionel Martin

Cuba was the jumpint host to a 15 day long Festival of Popular Songs in the first half of December. A 50-man orchestra backstopped the singers in a special amphitheater built in the old drive-in movie at the famous beach resort of Varadero. 1968

Cuba, known for its rhythm and its artists was an ideal locale for this First International Festival of Popular Songs. Cuban stars like Bola de Nieve, Rosita Fernés, were joined by talent from Eastern and Western Europe as well as Latin America.

Jenny Luna of Italy, Emilhence of Monaco, Luis Guillermae of Portugal were extremely i popular with the audience and with the nation-wide TV viewers.

Margareta Pislaru, a kind of Rumanian Debbie Reynolds who sings dances and acts was also a hit. Margareta has made three full-length pictures including a joint Soviet-Rumanian production.

The deep-voiced Russian singer Julie Chogel sang in Russian, French, Italian and one in impeccable English from Porgy and Bess. Jordanka Christova of Bulgaria, a dark-eyed beauty, sang songs in French and Italian.

One of the most talked about performances was by the Novi Quartet of Poland (Novi means "new" but the letters stand for "New Original Vocal Instruments"). These cats (three boys and a girl) of the Beatle variety sing ultramodern stuff with



that should make their old teachers grimace in pain.

Another Polish favorite was smooth songster Jerzy Polonski who was called back to the stage eleven times after singing "What does the wind say?" with music from Swan Lake.

Les Carlton from the Barbados who had lived in Europe for more than ten years interpreted a whole series of American songs.

The Cubans plan to make the Festival of Song a periodic event. In the future they hope to attract singers from the United States. All in all, this is the type of event that is a reflection of the swinging nature of the Cuban Revolution.

