

Anthology remembers James Brown's finer days

By PAT GRANDJEAN
Collegian Arts Writer

JAMES BROWN: The *Federal Years*, volumes 1 and 2
I carry around a couple of dusty television images from my childhood. One is a snippet of James Brown performing on the *Smothers Brothers* variety show in the late 1960s. He's doing a duet with some one (who I can't even begin to remember), and they've been repeating the same refrain over and over for long minutes, something like "if you don't work, you can't eat." After awhile, the station cuts away from commercials. When they come back, they're still at it, and they've got the audience singing along. As for James, he's so lost in it there's no chance it'll ever end. At that time, I imagine they'll go on singing that same refrain for years.

I also carry a picture of James performing in a recorded concert on WNEV-TV in the very early '70s. He's in the thick of a song, pumping away like the ex-prizefighter he is, and he's working his audience like a congregation of the faithful in a church service. They're screaming, exhorting and undulating along with him, but he barely notices, engrossed as he is in the story he has to tell. He's sweating it out so much that one fears, his being in his late '20s, that he's about to keel over. But there's no chance, really—he's *Soul Brother #1* and he knows it, and these are his people. Watching these scenes was pretty heady for me. As young as I was, I suppose I equated them with a personal definition of Black Power. There was no reason to believe that Brown, then at the height of his popularity, wouldn't keep the grip he'd developed over the mass consciousness. I mean, he was formidable. After a shaky start in the late '50s and early '60s, he had worked his way up as an artist notch by notch, so that by the late '60s, not only was he the premier rhythm and

blues singer, but easily the most powerful black entertainer in the country. In 1969, *Look* magazine ran a photo of him on a February cover alongside Edmund Muskie, over the caption "He is the most important black man in America."
At the time, the question seemed reasonable. Brown was not only an entertainer but a ranking black capitalist. He was making \$4.5 million a year, some estimated, and he employed 85 people to run a variety of interests in his production company, his real estate investments, his radio stations. (Of the approximately 528 "soul music stations" in the United States at that time, 5 were black-owned, and 2 of those were Brown's.) His annual payroll was estimated at \$1 million.

Brown played to a black audience, and his main concern was their empowerment. If white audiences appreciated him, all well and good. But he didn't lose sleep over it. And while he never had a #1 record on the pop charts, he did have a string of 10 top 10 hits from 1965 to 1970, of which " Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" and "I Got You (I Feel Good)" are perhaps the best known.

Meanwhile, he made like a musical Jesse Jackson, promoting responsibility, hope and the work ethic. He wrote songs for his black audiences like "America Is My Home" and "Don't Be a Drop-Out." He and his bands (early on The Famous Flames, later the JB's) gave 250 to 300 performances a year, all over the country, charging a ceiling of \$5 a ticket for adults, one for those 12 and under. His band usually sounded tight as a drum, as well they should: the boss leaved stiff tunes for mistakes or laziness. And Brown himself reported that he sweated off seven pounds a performance (compared to Springsteen's current maximum of four).

White audiences took notice in more ways than one. He was the first black performer to bring his show to Vietnam, and after the assassination of Martin Luther

King, he was called upon to appear before black television audiences in Washington and Boston to soothe tempers and cool out potential riot responses. Black militant leaders accused him of "Tommying," due to his investment in, and cooperation with, the White establishment, but he had a rationale: "I once stashed shoes in front of radio station WRDW in Augusta, Ga. Now I own that station. That's Black Power." He thought members of his primary audience capable of no less.

Given this history, it's perplexing that Brown, who still performs and records on a solid schedule, is so little known or regarded in 1984. His fall from grace has been a cumulative process. Brown was never a favorite with critics who have little affection for or understanding of rhythm and blues (being ultimately viewed as repetitive and archaic in comparison with the progressive spirit of Stevie Wonder and Sly Stone in the 1970s), and what little interest the white audience showed him fell off in the face of new trends of the '70s even their enthusiasm began to wane. Although he isn't destitute, it seems the larger memory is being kept alive through the exploitation of strangers (he was used figuratively as well as literally—in the movie *The Blues Brothers*, and currently can be seen selling McDonald's hamburgers). Most unfortunately, his record catalogue of the '50s and '60s fell into disrepair, so that by 1981 through '82, it was almost impossible to acquire any of the classic tracks he had produced for the Federal and King record labels.

The *Federal Years*, a two-disc compilation of 30 recordings of Brown and the Famous Flames, is part of an attempt to rectify this situation. The recordings date back to the period 1956 to 1962, when Brown attained a certain peak of

popularity on radio and concert performances throughout the South and also began to achieve nationwide popularity. While it certainly makes no attempt to be comprehensive (e.g., it includes the hit "Try Me," but not the equally popular predecessor "Please, Please, Please") the anthology does a fine job of representing Brown's early work. In particular, it highlights his relationship to rhythm and blues, and the relationship of current black music and performance to his contributions.

Unlike, say, Ray Charles, who began early in his career to adulterate his brand of R & B with Tin Pan Alley sweetening such as violins and female choruses, Brown was a purist and remained so over the years.

His songs were a statement of faith in the roots of R & B, and in the words writer of Robert Palmer, he "pulled R & B back into the orbit of the black churches."
All of these songs rely on the same basic stylistic devices: evangelistic vocalizations, call-and-response singing between Brown and the Flames, tricky bass-rhythm guitar-drum patterns, and sudden bursts of horn or keyboards for punctuation. (In these songs, lyrical content takes a back seat to raw emotion and expression. While other R & B writers might have been more clever and expressive lyricists, Brown seems to find greater challenge in making the most basic statements speak volumes.) Brown never follows the instrumentation here, as

usually happens in rock-and-roll songs; he takes the lead, and the instrumentation follows him.
Current black popular music, however, it may have changed its trappings over time, still runs on the foundations that Brown helped lay for it. There's a little bit of Brown in all of his peers and successors, whether they be individuals as diverse as Sam Cooke, Otis Redding, Jimi Hendrix, Sly Stone, Michael Jackson or Prince. In these raw and powerful songs one can hear the thread that binds them all.

I suppose I have a particular fondness for this compilation for an intensely personal reason: hearing these recordings now gives me the same feeling I had when I was a kid and saw James Brown on television.



James Brown
AP Laserphoto

Steamy 'Bolero' features Bo Derek

By YARDENA ARAR
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When is an X-rated film not an X-rated film? When it's not rated at all, as is the case with "Bolero," an erotic adventure from Bo and John Derek that opens Friday in 1,022 U.S. and Canadian theaters.

Canon, which is also distributing "Bolero" through its newly formed Cannon Releasing Corp., already has begun a massive print and broadcast advertising campaign for the \$7 million, 110-minute film.

"Bolero" was written and directed by Derek, and produced by Ms. Derek, who stars as an adventure-seeking 1920s heiress.

The film originally was to have been distributed by MGM-UA, which had a distribution deal with Cannon until a few months ago. But even before that arrangement ended, MGM-UA had said it would not release the film because of its expected X-rating.

Newsprint ads billing the film as "An Adventure in Ecstasy" show Ms. Derek in a lady Godiva-esque pose on a horse, tresses tumbling and breasts bared.

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advertising X-rated films," said Micky Hyman, Cannon's chief operating officer. "We wanted to ensure the public has opportunity to see the movie, enjoy it and make their own decisions on it."
"The film is a love story, and there's lovemaking in the film," he added. "But we don't think it's a dirty movie or a pornographic movie."

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Where the rating might ordinarily appear, the ads bear the small boxed warning that "Due to the adult nature of this motion picture, no one under 17 will be admitted to the same restricted that applies to films rated X by the MPAA."

"We didn't want to mislead the public," Hyman said. "There is erotic love-making in the film. We're not trying to hide that."

Among the publications that have run the ads are the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times*.

New York Times spokesman Leonard Harris said the newspaper places severe size and content restrictions on advertising for most X-rated films. When a film is unrated, the newspaper's Advertising Acceptability Department reviews the ad to make sure it contains nothing objectionable.

However, Harris said large-format ads for an unrated film will be dropped if the newspaper's film critics determine the film to be purely pornographic.

"If we discover we have made a mistake in judgment we will apologize to our readers and drop the ad," he said.

Hyman acknowledged that the publicity surrounding the film hasn't hurt its commercial prospects, but also predicted at least partial critical success.

"I'm predicting that at least one critic in the U.S. will say this is the movie of the year," he said, adding quickly: "I'm not saying which one."

"Bolero" has not yet been reviewed because Cannon decided not to hold press screenings.

"We decided there's been so much written and said about the film that everyone should get to see it at once," Hyman said.

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Billboard lists chart-toppers

By The Associated Press

The following are Billboard's hot record hits for the week ending September 8 as they appear in next week's issue of *Billboard* magazine. Copyright 1984, Billboard Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

HOT SINGLES:
1. "What's Love Got to Do With It" Tina Turner (Capitol)-Gold (More than one million units sold.)

2. "I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)" Whitney Houston (A&M)-Gold (More than one million units sold.)

3. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" Nirvana (Geffen)-Gold (More than one million units sold.)

4. "The Winner" Scandal featuring Patty Smyth (Columbia) (More than one million units sold.)

5. "Sunglasses at Night" Corey Hart (EMI-America) (More than one million units sold.)

6. "When Doves Cry" Prince (Warner Bros.)-Platinum (More than two million units sold.)

7. "Lights Out" Peter Wolf (EMI-America) (More than one million units sold.)

8. "The Glamorous Life" Sheila E. (Warner Bros.) (More than one million units sold.)

9. "I'll Ever You're In My Arms Again" Peabo Bryson (Elektra) (More than one million units sold.)

10. "Rock Me Tonight" Billy Squier (Capitol) (More than one million units sold.)

11. "Midnight Madness" Night Ranger (Camel-MCA)-Platinum (More than one million units sold.)

12. "Madonna" Madonna (Sire)-Platinum (More than one million units sold.)

13. "Breaking Hearts" Elton John (Geffen) (More than one million units sold.)

14. "1984" Van Halen (Warner Bros.)-Platinum (More than one million units sold.)

15. "Stay Hungry" Twisted Sister (Atlantic) (More than one million units sold.)

16. "I'll Ever You're In My Arms Again" Peabo Bryson (Elektra) (More than one million units sold.)

17. "Rebel Yell" Billy Idol (Chrysalis)-Platinum (More than one million units sold.)

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19. "Madonna" Madonna (Sire)-Platinum (More than one million units sold.)

20. "Breaking Hearts" Elton John (Geffen) (More than one million units sold.)

21. "All of You" Julio Iglesias & Diana Ross (Columbia) (More than one million units sold.)

22. "Dynamite" Jermaine Jackson (Arista) (More than one million units sold.)

23. "TOP LP'S" Prince & The New Power Generation (Paisley Park)-Platinum (More than one million units sold.)

24. "Born in the U.S.A." Bruce Springsteen (Columbia)-Platinum (More than one million units sold.)

25. "The Winner" Scandal featuring Patty Smyth (Columbia) (More than one million units sold.)

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'The Last Laugh' combines art and humor

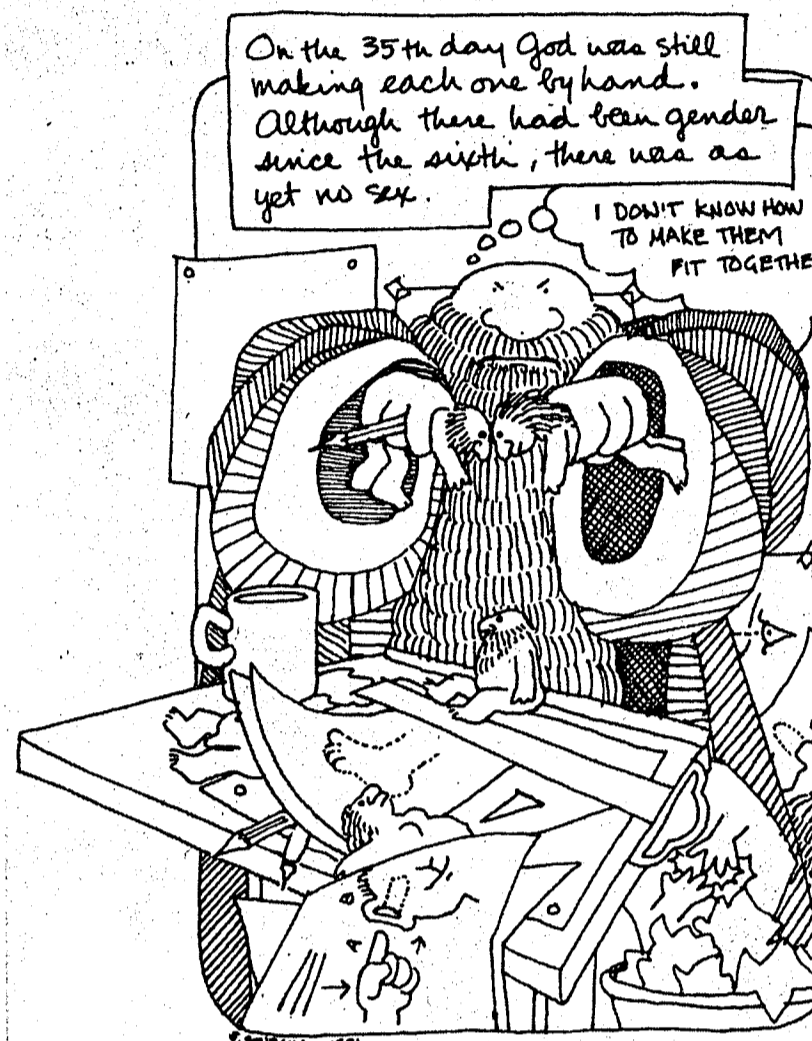
By ELIZABETH FRANK
Collegian Arts Writer

"Humor is serious, artists use it to point out issues that we can't really talk about."
—Berry Matthews, assistant professor of ceramics

sity. "I wanted a topic that would be good subject," she said. accessible to everybody, not just people in the process of doing research in art, and I thought humor was a about humor she learned from a

"The Last Laugh," a traveling art exhibit celebrating American humor is currently being shown in Zoller Gallery from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. on weekends through Sept. 9.
The show, which features artists from Ohio and is representative of all the art forms in the original show, is brought here by the Statewide Arts Services Program of the Ohio Foundation on the Arts, according to the exhibition catalog.

Artists from other states are also represented including work by Chicago artists Jim Nutt and Karl Wirsing from the Poylis Kind Gallery who banded together to form "The Hairy Who."
Berry Matthews, assistant professor of ceramics, said the Penn State Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts gave the School of Visual Arts the financial support to bring the program "Should I Laugh?" here.
In conjunction with the exhibit there is a guest lecture series that is part of the program.
Duane Michals, a well-known photographer from New York will give the first lecture at 8 p.m. Sept. 27 in 112 Kern. On Sept. 28 Michals will meet informally with students in the photography department.
Clayton Bailey, a ceramics teacher and sculptor from California whose latest works are robots made out of discarded objects, will speak on Oct. 11 in 112 Kern at 8 p.m. He will meet with students in the ceramics department for an informal discussion Oct. 12.
Lanny Sommes, who designed all the Arts Festival posters and is a graphic designer and University professor, will present a lecture in 112 Kern Nov. 1 at 8 p.m.
Anyone interested in the informal discussions is welcome to attend. More information about them can be obtained from the photography department and the ceramics department at the School of Visual Arts at 865-0444.



In the beginning... Well, this isn't the usual way to tell the story. But it is awfully catchy. This is one of the enjoyable works that are on exhibit in Zoller Gallery. Titled "The Last Laugh," this traveling show is a humorous way of looking at

friend in Ohio about "The Last Laugh" exhibit and decided to bring it here.
"A lot of artists don't think it's art because it's funny. I wanted to ask the question, 'can we laugh at art, or must we be serious?'" Matthews explained.

"Humor is serious, artists use it to point out issues that we can't really talk about."
Udo Claasen's mezzotints (mezzotint is a printmaking process) are in the landscape tradition and have exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe. Four of the mezzotints have poems to go with them and are a complete portfolio. Noel's figurative landscapes include lithographs, paintings and drawings. He previously has exhibited in Germany and New York City.



The paintings on display are part of a collection featuring Ohio artists. If you need a good laugh after a hard day of classes, stop by the Zoller Gallery and soak up the humor.

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Tuesday, Sept. 4, 1984, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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20/20 210 W. College Avenue 237-3449	128 S. Allen Street 237-7715
kronch! 216 E. College Avenue 234-4481	244 E. Calder way 238-7502
MY HERO 315 S. Allen Street 238-4370	116 S. Pugh Street 237-2726
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