

arts

Charles to sing on campus

By PAT GRANDJEAN
Collegian Arts Writer

The only genius in the business.
— Frank Sinatra on Ray Charles.
Einstein — he was a genius. Not me.
— Ray Charles on himself.

Ray Charles will celebrate his 40th anniversary in the music business next year. Despite his modesty, he is credited by many for the invention of "soul music" — that improvisational blend of gospel music intensity, country and blues-style narrative and jazz arrangement that first turned up in "Mess Around" (1953) and sold a million records for the scandalous "What'd I Say" in 1959. Local audiences will most likely hear these and many other classics in a University Concert Committee-sponsored concert event (featuring the Raelettes, Charles' longtime backup singers) at 8 p.m. on Nov. 20 in Eisenhower Auditorium.

Charles enjoyed his greatest popularity in the 1950s and '60s, but his reputation among his peers and followers has barely diminished since that time. His cover of "Yesterday" in the late 1960s was a major thrill for composer Paul McCartney, who had spent his own early career with the Beatles singing Charles songs like "What'd I Say" and "Got a Woman" to the bar files in Hamburg, Germany. Bruce Springsteen had a tribute of his own to give upon witnessing Charles' arrival at the "We Are the World" recording sessions at the beginning of this year. "I don't believe it. That's like the Statue of Liberty walking in."

His career history reads like a 40's movie script. He began playing piano before the age of 5. Though an untreated case of glaucoma left him blind the following year, Charles went on to study music composition in Braille and had learned to play alto saxophone, clarinet, trumpet and organ by the time he was 15. Beginning his professional career at the age of



At 8 p.m. on Nov. 20 Ray Charles will bring his trendsetting music and the Raelettes, his backup singers, to Eisenhower Auditorium.

16, he hit a few roadblocks: He spent the first few years as a Seattle lounge singer and soon began a 20 year heroin addiction (which ended with a well-publicized bust and sanatorium stay in 1965).

Subsequent work as pianist and arranger in New Orleans for blues artist Guitler Slim had a major impact on Charles' development of his own band and his characteristic, earthy singing style. The mixture of his inventive musical mixture with his raw, exuberant vocals made "I've Got a Woman" his first big hit on the R & B charts in 1955. It wasn't until the next year that he hit his stride with "Hallelujah I Love Her So," the ultimate marriage of gospel and gutter. "What'd I Say," which sounds like an actual church service at its climax, brought him to the attention of a White audience and earned him a major contract with ABC Records. On this label, he had number one pop hits with "Honey, Carmichael's "Georgia on My Mind" and "Hit the

road, Jack." He also cut 1962's landmark *Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music* album, which spawned pop/country classics "I Can't Stop Loving You," "You Don't Know Me" and "Take These Chains From My Heart." Since that time he has worked mainly in the pop/country idiom, most of his song arrangements built around angelic choirs and strings.

Recent events suggest that Charles still retains much of his power as a singer. It's his vocals and presence that catapulted the recording of "We Are the World" out of the realm of stiff school recital and into the realm of emotional, shared artistic experience. Though he's had his share of critical detractors of late, he hasn't let them affect his approach to his art. "Every experience I've had — good and bad — has taught me something," he once said. "... All of it was like going to school — and I've tried to be a good student. I don't regret a damn thing."

University Readers:

Show has problems but gets crowd involved

By MARIA SAWKA
Collegian Arts Writer

You've got to pay your dues, if you want to sing the blues. — Dr. Smith, professor of bluesology.

In the University Readers' Birth of the Blues last Saturday night, a Dr. Smith gave a formal presentation on the blues.

concert review

Meanwhile the other performers presented a musical history of the blues in their unique style. Carrying their scripts around the empty stage, they spoke and sang lyrics from classic blues tunes. In the script Dr. Smith, played by Neil Leftwich (senior — psychology), tries his best to explain the blues in scholarly fashion. Leftwich was much too un-stuffed as the stuffed shirt. He was helped out in his explanations by Alcide Clayton (junior — division of undergraduate studies) as the character "Slow Drag" — a man who not only knows the blues but lives them. Clayton tried to be cool and hip, but he kept stumbling over his lines despite the fact he had the script right in front of him.

During the show, which was also performed on Friday and Sunday, Dr. Smith and Slow Drag talked about the blues — the ideas, the style and the emotions. Each fact they discussed was highlighted by a musical performance, spoken or sung by the four featured Readers (Ken Bolding, Jean Zeppi, Eric Homan and Suzanne Wolfe). The "proper" Dr. Smith turned cool in the second act and began to sing a real feel for the blues. Smith



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learned that the blues is a way of talking about life and a way to make it through life's hard times. He also learned to like Slow Drag's booze. At certain moments in the show, Leftwich would grab Clayton's task and pretend to drink from it, but it was painfully obvious that he was faking it. The least he could have done was attempt to make it realistic. Finally, after draining Slow Drag's bottle dry, Dr. Smith "does the blues" for the first time by performing. Throughout, Dr. Smith's presentation was constantly interrupted by Slow Drag, who would insert his own ideas on the subject. Each idea they talked about was followed by a musical performance. The format worked well up to the second act

when the performance began to move more quickly and the ideas got jumbled up.

Backing up the Readers musically were Arthur Goldstein on piano, J. Jerome Zollen on acoustic and steel guitar and Richard Sleight on harmonica and guitar. The best moments were when this trio played alone, without the benefit of the Readers.

The two-hour performance gave the history and a lot of examples of the blues. The Readers tried to bring the audience into the performance as much as possible by making eye contact and speaking directly to the viewers and it worked. The audience snapped their fingers, clapped their hands and stomped their feet.

Kane Gang leads Top 20

The following records make up WPSU's Top 20 for the week ending Nov. 6. Tonight at 8 p.m., 91.1 FM will present the Top 20 Countdown.

1. "Gun Law" — Kane Gang
2. "24th P III" — 28th Day
3. "Cruiser Creek" — The Fall
4. "Don't Run Wild!" — Del Fuegos
5. "Faron" — PreFab Sprout
6. "Can't Get Enough of You, Baby" — Color Field
7. "Hate Paper Doll" — Husker Du
8. "Return to the Haunted House" — Fleshtones
9. "I'll Be Around" — What Is This
10. "Strength" — Alarm
11. "Piece of Your Love" — The Untouchables
12. "Drinking and Driving" — Black Flag
13. "Hell's Home" — Cabaret Voltaire
14. "How to be a Zillionaire" — ABC
15. "Forget the Swan" — Dino-saur
16. "The Baby Screams" — The Cure
17. "Grimly Fiendish" — The Damned
18. "99 Red Balloons" — Seven Seconds
19. "Big Man" — Electric Peace
20. "Underground" — Kafir



The Del Fuegos

Princess tops this week's Jam 10 list

The following records compose WPSU's Jam top 10. The list is compiled by call-in votes and requests taken all week.

1. "Say I'm Your Number One!" — Princess
2. "You Ain't Fresh" — Boogie Boys
3. "Alice, I Want You For Me!" — Full Force
4. "Krush Groovin'" — Krush Groove All-Stars
5. "Object Of My Desire" — Starpoint
6. "Love Bizarre" — Sheila E.
7. "I'm Leaving Baby" — Confusion
8. "You Are My Lady" — Freddie Jackson
9. "The Show" — Doug E. Fresh
10. "Never Look To Love" — Cameo

Vienna Orchestra visits campus

At 8 p.m. this Sunday in Eisenhower Auditorium, the Artists Series, Center for the Performing Arts will present one of Europe's most distinguished performing groups — the Vienna Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Wolfgang Sawallisch. The group will perform works by Mozart, Brahms and Strauss.

The Vienna Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1900 by conductor Ferdinand Löwe. Since 1918 the group has performed in the Vienna Konzerthaus under a number of different directors. One of the most distinguished facts about this group is that over 900 musical works have received

their Vienna or world premiere with them. Among these pieces are Schubert's *Gurrelieder* and Ravel's *Concerto for the Left Hand*.

Sawallisch, one of the world's leading conductors, made his Vienna debut with this orchestra and went on to become its principal conductor. He has also been the principal conductor of the Hamburg Philharmonic and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and is the honorary conductor of Tokyo's NKH and Rome's Santa Cecilia Symphonies. He is presently the Music Director of the Bavarian State Opera in Munich and regularly conducts operas and orchestras all over the world.

Both the orchestra and the conductor have an affinity for the music they are playing," said Richard Martin, manager of programming for the Artists Series. "It promises to be a very satisfying concert."

— Jennifer Edwards

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- NOVEMBER 13 Don Kennedy, Prof. of Labor Studies at PSU "My Trip into the World of Japanese Labor Relations" 7:30 pm in 307 Boucke
- NOVEMBER 20 Brahm Dabscheck, Prof. of Industrial Relations at The University of New South Wales, Australia "Recent Corporatist Developments in Australian Industrial Relations" 7:30 pm in 307 Boucke
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