

arts



Collegian Photo by Michael Houts

The legendary jazz and blues artist, Ray Charles, gave a rousing performance last night in Eisenhower auditorium. "Busted," "Don't Change on Me" and a rockin' version of "Some Enchanted Evening" highlighted his show. The Raeliettes joined him in singing "I Want You Love," a hit from the '70s.

Charles' concert reveals his genius

By NATALIE NICHOLS
Collegian Arts Writer

It is a rare thing for an artist to perform so well that he receives a standing ovation. Ray Charles took this a step further by getting one before he even began playing. The audience of mostly older people, with some students and even a few children, stood on its feet Wednesday night in Eisenhower Auditorium to pay tribute to a great musician.

Mary Wong opened the show, and provided a rather strange contrast with the music that followed. The trio called itself a "transvestite, schizophrenic comedy team," because it has a Chinese female name and the members are all black men. Their half-hour performance included several funny skits, including one about a Chinese-run "authentic Italian pizza parlor," a bit about "old geezers" as an endangered species and a scene from "every karate movie ever made," complete with poorly dubbed dialogue.

Many of Mary Wong's short skits satirized black stereotypes and games children play, a la Eddie Murphy. "Their humor was more enjoyable than Murphy's," however, as it left out the offensive language he uses. The audience laughed heartily at the performers' jokes and acrobatics.

A short intermission seemed to last forever as the audience anticipated Ray Charles' appearance.

Finally, the Ray Charles Orchestra struck up several jazzy instrumentals, complete with trumpet, saxophone and trombone solos, which set the mood for Charles' performance. The saxophone players were especially talented, wailing out tunes with a flair.

The lights dimmed as the fourth swinging melody ended with a wave of the conductor's hand. In the darkness, an announcer's voice introduced "the legendary Ray Charles." A spotlight shone on the famous figure as he entered, looking spry in a grey and white striped tuxedo jacket and black bow tie and sporting his trademark dark glasses.

A big smile split Charles' face as he sat down at the piano. He launched right into two upbeat jazz songs, one of them "Busted," a ruelist song about hard times with no money.

He then performed a soul-rendering version of his number one hit, "Georgia," a slow, sweet, sad song about the girl who's always on his mind. He seemed to feel every note, every syllable as he sang this beautiful song.

In a different vein, "I've Got News For You" drew a few chuckles from the audience as Charles sang about a girl who appeared shy, but "I took you to my club and the whole band knew your name!" He punctuated his demands for her to shape up with growls and bounding feet.

Charles bobbed his head and gave the audience his characteristic Cheshire Cat grin throughout the entire show. His body dipped and swayed on the piano seat as every part of him kept time with the music.

He joked with the audience a little during an interlude and then sang a rockin' version of "Some Enchanted Evening," rolling his r's Caruso-style. "That's three weeks of work right there, I'll tell you," he laughed.

The crowd applauded enthusiastically after each song. "Thank you, fans, I like you," said Charles.

He introduced the Raeliettes, his female backup singers, four of them dressed in loud pink floral print dresses and one in red. They opened their performance with "I Want You Love," a popular disco song from the 1970's band Chic.

The song seemed really out of place among Charles' jazz and blues tunes, but he enjoyed playing it, to the extent that he even jumped up and down at the end.

The Raeliettes sang with Charles for the rest of his performance, and although they did not hurt the show, they did not add much either. One of them had an incredible voice, but the others were not so distinctive. Nonetheless, this was a minor drawback in an otherwise excellent show.

He invited the audience to participate in a "shout-along," saying, "I guarantee you'll have a lot of fun with this 'cause you can ventilate yourself, know what I mean?" He chuckled. The audience wholeheartedly followed him in wailing and "whoa-ing."

Charles laughed and hugged himself in almost childish delight, waved to the audience and grinned appreciatively. The announcer once again proclaimed him a legend in soul and jazz as he was led off the stage to thundering applause.

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Zoller exhibit features realists

By VICTORIA JAFFE
Collegian Arts Writer

FIGURATIONS showcases three realistic artists. Robert P. Kinsell, Langdon Quin and Caren Canier each demonstrate a different medium of expression in Zoller's Gallery A.

Kinsell's paintings are the most emotional and touching pieces in the exhibit. His oil/primered paper of *The Red Overcoat* shows a woman clad in her red coat, walking down the street. The color is "alive" in the parked blue car she passes; even the windowsill on a background building has a close-up of Quin's *Seated Figure*, a living color and texture. *Morse Ave. Beach* is a depiction of a sunny vacation spot inhabited by characters to whom everybody can relate. A balding man with a protruding tummy and little striped bikini smoking his cigarette, is a sight most beachgoers have experienced and reacted to. Another person in that painting is a woman, with her back to us, casually adjusting the bottom of her swimsuit as she gazes into the ocean.

Return from the Beach and *The Breakwater at Diversey Harbor*, Kinsell's other seashore creations, have the reality and familiarity of family snapshots, yet the beautiful objects that only fine paintings can encompass. His oil/Masonite Panel, *Tag*, illustrates two older boys playing tag, what appears to be a steel bridge. Kinsell has captured playful, childlike abandon in the midst of an overworking city environment.

I would almost swear that Kinsell went to my hometown city and beach to find the characters and predicaments that he paints. He employs the interesting technique of never letting us see anybody's face; most portraits are of a person's back. His work brings the audience close to his people and their situations and provokes questions about their lifestyles and personalities.

Langdon Quin uses pencil and charcoal on paper to bring several sketches of figures to life. They are realistic sketches, but seem to serve as studies in figure-drawing, rather than completely finished projects.

Figure, Half Length, done in pencil, is a close-up of Quin's *Seated Figure*, the living color and texture. *Morse Ave. Beach* is a depiction of a sunny vacation spot inhabited by characters to whom everybody can relate. A balding man with a protruding tummy and little striped bikini smoking his cigarette, is a sight most beachgoers have experienced and reacted to. Another person in that painting is a woman, with her back to us, casually adjusting the bottom of her swimsuit as she gazes into the ocean.

The third artist's work in this exhibit is a sharp contrast to Quin's sketches. Caren Canier uses bold colors and clearly defined geometric shapes to create her realistic oil and acrylic paintings. In *Canier's View of Olga's House* series, she presents four pictures with the same background—rolling hills, mountains and grass—yet places different objects in the foreground of each. Canier also uses different colors to indicate various seasons of the year at Olga's house.

Her most engaging portraits include *Afternoon Bath* and *Game of Checkers*. *Afternoon Bath* reveals Canier's personality as a man sits in his bathtub while his two cats frolic by the tubside.

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French sees the theater as a communal activity

By MICHAEL ROSS DOMINICIS
Collegian Arts Writer

As the trumpet sound, the couriers file into position and the palace comes alive. The fanfare peaks and the king and queen of Denmark appear high on a platform amid the warm and hearty reception and acknowledge the faithful court in the University Resident Theatre Company's production of *Hamlet*.

Offstage the "queen" is much more prone to simplicity in her life and work. Sitting in her office, she has been transformed into actress Peg French, who plays the part of Gertrude in the URTC's production of *Hamlet*.

An initial interest in acting led French to several roles in high school and college productions. French then took a 20-year sabbatical from the theater in order to raise her family, but when her children had grown, she again returned to the stage. Boal Barn was French's initiation into State College theater, and from there she went on to earn a graduate degree in acting from the University and has since become a member of Actors' Equity Association. Her roles have included *Coldie in Fiddler on the Roof* with the Marriott-Lincolnshire Resort Theater in Chicago; *Amanda in The Glass Menagerie* with the Camden Shakespeare Company; and Mrs. Antrobus in *The Skin of Our Teeth* with the URTC.

French said that though many people dislike her character, she finds Queen Gertrude a favorable part.

"I do like Gertrude. I don't think she's evil. Some people think that Gertrude was in on the killing of her first husband, but I don't believe that, and I think the script justifies that," she said.

After her husband mysteriously dies, Gertrude marries her late husband's brother and then attempts to convince her son Hamlet to return to the kingdom to live. Yet, Hamlet is told by his father's ghost that he was murdered by his succeeding brother and demands revenge. The action becomes intense as Hamlet plots to kill the new king who in turn is trying to murder him. Gertrude gets caught in between the rage of the two men, which results in tragedy for everyone concerned.

"Gertrude knew in her heart of hearts all the time that she shouldn't have married that soon or that man," French said. "She knew she should have mourned longer, but her need was so great at the time that she didn't think of the repercussions. Gertrude is very pragmatic," French added. "She never dwells on the past; she just deals with the moment."

One of the strongest scenes in the play is when the queen tries to discipline her son, who has just offended her new husband. Instead, Hamlet takes control of the situation with violent tantrums and harsh words for his mother.

While the scene is one of French's favorites, she admits that it could have been dangerous if not for the faithful court in the University Resident Theatre Company's production of *Hamlet*.

"The fight choreographer showed us how to do it so that it looks like he (Chris Howe) is throwing me, but I'm actually throwing myself. He gives me the momentum, then I throw myself back as if he threw me," French said. "Even when he shakes me, he only grabs my arms, and then I throw my head forward and backward so it looks like he's shaking me, but I'm doing it. Otherwise there would be real danger to the actor," she added.

French said that one of her concerns onstage, beyond that of her artistic, are technical mistakes, which can sometimes disrupt the actors and their rapport with the audience.

"I hate it when technical things go wrong because it destroys the moment and there's nothing that you can do as an actor. You just have to work and work to get the audience back into the world of the play and hope they'll come with the Marriott-Lincolnshire Resort Theater in Chicago; *Amanda in The Glass Menagerie* with the Camden Shakespeare Company; and Mrs. Antrobus in *The Skin of Our Teeth* with the URTC.

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spotlight Golton uses her dulcimer to find the excitement in music

By SARAMMA METHRATTA
Collegian Arts Writer

"I first heard the dulcimer on the radio at one in the morning," folk singer Esther Golton said. "It was right before I went on a trip to Israel to visit my relatives. Kevin Roth, who's pretty well-known among dulcimerists, was playing, and the sound he created was just so delicate and sweet — I was hooked."

Golton is a 19-year-old agronomy major with an interesting hobby: playing the dulcimer. She said she and her sister, who also plays piano, flute and the Appalachian Mountain dulcimer, have been using the instrument in their recordings.

Golton is drawn to the simplicity in folk music. "Folk is all about communicating," she said, "and I've always wanted to share music with people — to say, 'I love this, and I want you to love it, too.' If I did go into music, it would be folk because that's the most sincere, least competitive field."

Golton said she was introduced to her uncle, who introduced her to music. Her uncle is famed violinist Shmuel Ashkenazi, who came from Israel to attend Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music. "He was offered the concert master's seat in the Philadelphia Orchestra, and he turned it down," she said. "The sort of discouragement I got from pursuing music was, 'You have to be a prodigy, you have to be a virtuoso.'"

Golton's current passion is songwriting. "When I was younger, I'd listen to top 40 music on the radio and vow never to write love songs. Now the most important thing for me is to be original." The ideal song, she said, would combine poetry and music that complements each other. "I want that rare thing that happens today, especially in pop music. Determined to avoid the "soupy, generic" sound of top 40 music, Golton tries to vary the tone and subject matter of her songs. "Pat Baxter's Song" is a response to the white South African woman who spoke against divestment earlier this year in the IRB Fishbowl. The song's refrain: "You're full of bullshit." Golton strums the dulcimer with a pick to give the song a rhythmic, driving sound. "I was so mad after hearing Pat Baxter speak," she said, "that I came home and wrote the words in five minutes. It took me 10 more minutes to do the music."

"Andrew," a song inspired by a handicapped friend, proved more difficult to write. "It only has four chords in it," she said, "and when I was trying to write it, I couldn't get



Esther Golton

those chords out of my head." The result was a song that centers around one basic line: "I'm 23, I've got my life ahead of me. Can't you see that I'm still smiling." Said Golton, "The simplicity of the music allows the emotions of the words to penetrate."

Golton's favorite piece remains "Shades on Broken Glass" because "it's the one that combines music and poetry best." Golton wrote the song about a woman who feels like a freak and an outcast, in the same way as her friend's poem. "As I was writing, I was thinking about perfection and levels of emotional pain for different people. The song doesn't go over well with audiences because it's subtle and depressing." Yet it offers a vision of hope.

"The woman dances on broken glass and cuts her feet, but the glass itself continues to shimmer like beautiful jewels."

If there is a theme in her music, Golton said, it is the ideal of growth — "either people growing themselves or me helping them grow through commentary."

Who helped her grow musically? "Janis Ian, who wrote 'At 17,' was a major influence — especially the songs she wrote when she was 16 and 17. They gave such a poignant rendering of who I was like to be 17. Janis introduced me to music with meaning."

Arlo Guthrie was another influence. "He's not the most poetic person, but he has so much love to give, and he combines humor with message — something I try to do."

Despite her love for music, Golton said she wouldn't completely devote her future to it. "The ideal life, she said, would combine music with agronomy. "I'd like to live on a farm and still perform music informally."

Hector in Paris brings style to the Scorpion

By PAT GRANDJEAN
Collegian Arts Writer

Music for the moon's new wave clubs after colonization — the soundtrack to a danceable LSD trip — little symphonies to orchestrate daily obsessions: all these ideas and more can be used to describe the music of Hector in Paris, a synthesizer-based band that will appear at the Scorpion tomorrow evening.

No description is as apt, however, as that provided by keyboardist Ron Solo, who suggests that the quartet's original songs constitute "elevator music for the 1990s. I can see our music being played on elevators 20 years from now," Solo said.

"We have a lot of songs with litting horn and keyboard parts. I can see them being recorded by genre string sections and studio musicians and released on a Ray Conniff album one day."

Perhaps, for now, the ensemble's own performance of its material is a good deal grittier than music for the 1990s. Hector in Paris' personnel combines song titles like "Silent Screams," "Pavement Naver Cracks," "I Am Terrified" and "Digital Bit" with arrangements that incorporate equal doses of '60s pop, avant-garde jazz, rhythm and blues and David Bowie/Talking Heads.

"Picnic On The Edge," the A-side of a single released in July, is highlighted by a skittery instrumental line, creaky horn sounds and a lead vocal that sounds like it was phoned in. Dark washes of synthesizer make the mood of "Picnic" a hip side, "Silent Radio," much more ominous and edgy. Both tracks hook the listener's ear — and feet — thanks to a relentless, rubbery bass line.

Hector in Paris music does indeed play in Pittsburgh, despite that city's reputation as a blue collar, R & B stronghold. The group's main venue in their home town is Graffiti, a new-wave club that guitarist Phil Harris described as "the best place for us to play. It's a new club about a year old, and we attract our biggest crowd there, people who won't come to see us at other clubs."

Their "crowd" tends to include a wide range of humanity. Solo noted that "our audience consists of hardcore fans, people involved in the intense arts scene here, architects and lawyers. We've even been hired to play weddings, for some reason." They've also shared bills with other popular Pittsburgh bands, including the Cyntics, Kids After Dark and The Spuds (Special People Under Doctor's Supervision).

Each band member exhibits an individual sense of style. From Alexander's cool androgyny to saxophonist Jim Laugelli's bluesman-cum-M.B.A. look, Harris believes that Hector's visual appearance has helped its outreach. "We're not standard in our looks, but we're not threatening either. We put people at ease, but give them something to look at rather than tee-shirts and jeans." Solo added, "We provide an alternative to the stream of pandex and suits that look the same."

The members of Hector in Paris want to maintain a similar balance of invention and accessibility in their music. Harris sees the best way to relate to a listener is radio talk shows. "I find it exciting when you hear people get heated over an issue and yell at each other over the air. It's the ultimate audience participation, with all the barriers melted away. That's the best part of music, when it comes down to a writer successfully sharing a mood, because sometimes your most personal ideas are totally meaningless to another person. This band's danceable beat is the unifying element that opens people's minds to our ideas."

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