

Charles lives up to expectation

By Anne Y. Meyers
special writer

By the 1950s he was called a genius, and Friday night at Meadow Brook Music Festival, Ray Charles demonstrated why. Charles topped and rocked, whispered and screamed, and laughed and moaned, charming the near-capacity crowd and proving why there is only one inimitable Ray Charles.

The Ray Charles Orchestra opened with two instrumental selections, allowing several of the 17 band members time in the spotlight. This brought wandering members of the audience back to their seats just in time for Charles' entrance. As the orchestra finished its second song, a booming voice blared over the public address system, "Meadow Brook Music Festival proudly presents the Legendary Genius of Soul, Mr. Ray Charles."

There was thunderous applause as Charles was led to the piano. The expression on his face showed his enthusiasm as he rushed into his first number. His whole body was carried by the music as his head bounced, his hands danced across the keyboards and his feet flailed in all directions. Charles is, of course, a musical genius. His real genius is the sheer musical quality of his voice. A song is a song, but he can make an ordinary song extraordinary.

A PERFECT example of this ability was Charles' rendition of "Oh What a Beautiful Morning." "I've seen several productions of 'Oklahoma' and have never been swept away by this song. But, infusing gospel fervor, jazzy blues and a dash of blues, he

review

turned a back-shelf show tune into a show-stopper.

The singer/composer/pianist fired through the first half of the show. He joked with the band one moment and then shouted commands the next. "Turn up the piano mike." "Don't start so fast." "More bottom." He never missed a beat, though, in a bluesy "Georgia on My Mind" and a jazzy "Some Enchanted Evening."

"Thank you, ladies and gentlemen," Charles said mid-show. "I want to introduce a little femininity into our scenery — the Raelettes, if you please."

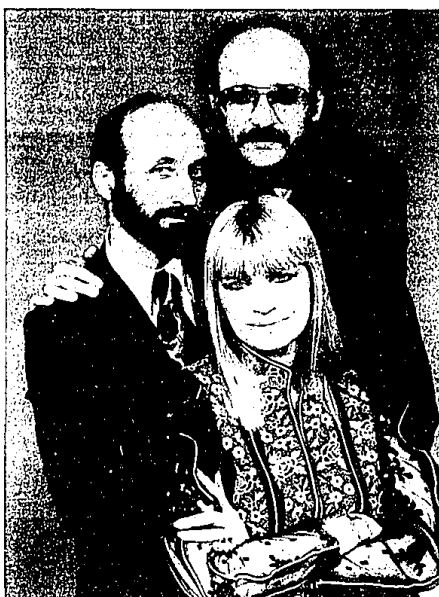
The addition of the four singing Raelettes allowed Charles room to moan and sigh, filling in spaces of the song while the women carried the lyrics. This section of the show included "I Can't Stop Loving You," "Born to Love Me" and "3/4 Time."

At the end of the show, Charles indulged himself in a musical exchange with the audience. "Help me out and repeat after me," Charles requested. "Ooooooohh," Charles sang. "Oooooohh," the audience responded.

"SING IT so loud they can hear you all the way to Detroit," Charles said. The audience exchanged a series of sounds with Charles. He smiled in appreciation and exited as the blaring voice said, "You have just been entertained by the Legendary Genius of Soul, Mr. Ray Charles."

Very entertained, I might add.

outdoor concerts



Paul Stookey (left), who is originally from Birmingham; Mary Travers, and Peter Yarrow of the Peter, Paul and Mary trio appear at 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 10, at Meadow Brook Music Festival.

MEADOW BROOK MUSIC FESTIVAL
Baldwin Pavilion, Oakland University campus near Rochester.
Pavilion \$18.50-\$23 and lawn \$10-\$14, depending on concert. Ticket information at 377-2010.

Andy Williams and the Osmond Brothers
8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 9
Peter, Paul and Mary
8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 10

PINE KNOB MUSIC THEATRE
Outdoor amphitheater at Pine Knob in Clarkston. Pavilion and lawn seats available. Tickets at box office and all Ticket World outlets. Pine Knob Hotline 647-7790.

Barry Manilow
8:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 8-10

Jeffrey Osborne with special guest Whitney Houston
8 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 11

Lee Greenwood/Gary Morris
8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 13

Power Station
7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 14

PJAZZ
Pool Terrace, Hotel Pontchartrain, Detroit. Monday and Wednesday concerts begin at 8 or 8:30 p.m. Friday concerts begin at 6 p.m. General admission tickets are \$5-\$10 and reserved seating tickets \$9-\$13, depending on the concert. For ticket information call 955-0200, ext. 3768 or 3968.

Norma Jean Bell and the All Stars
Monday, Aug. 12

Trinidad Tripoli Steel Band
Wednesday, Aug. 14

SUMMER NIGHTS
Outdoor Courtyard, Troy Hilton Inn. Troy. Doors open 5 p.m. Cocktail concert runs 5:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Cover charge \$5 after 7:30 p.m. More information at 553-9000.

Trinidad Tripoli Steel Band
Guest soloist Othello
Friday, Aug. 9

Parton joining Kenny Rogers

Dolly Parton has resolved a schedule conflict and will appear with Kenny Rogers and Mac Davis at 7 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 18, at the Pontiac Silverdome.

Rogers and Parton were originally scheduled to appear at the Silverdome last March, but the collapse of the airport's roof forced postponement of the concert.

Tickets at \$18.50 and \$16.50 are on sale at all Ticket World and AAA outlets and the Pontiac Silverdome box office. Tickets for the original Rogers/Parton show will be honored at the Aug. 18 concert.

New nightclub Chives opens

Pam Martin and Fitzma entertain at Chives, a new nightclub, which opened recently at the Hillcrest Banquet Center, 50 S. Groesbeck Highway, in Mt. Clemens.

Banquet Center owners Simon and Raymond Thomas also own the Premier Center in Sterling Heights. For dinner reservations, call 773-2340.

table talk

Sushi featured

Kyoto Japanese Steakhouse will open Benisushi, its second sushi bar in the nation and the first in Detroit, on Wednesday at 1985 W. Big Beaver Road in Troy. The grand opening will be highlighted by a traditional Shinto ceremony performed by the Rev. Kawahata of San Francisco, who will bless the new sushi bar and restaurant at 5:30 p.m. The opening celebration, with Japanese music and dancers, runs 5-9 p.m. Sushi ranges from octopus, sea urchin and squid to sushi assembled with cooked fish, sometimes shrimp, crab or lobster.

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Winner's circle

The Lark in West Bloomfield was the winner in two categories in a recent contest to select favorite Detroit-area restaurants, in a readers' poll conducted by Metropolitan Detroit magazine. The Lark was honored as best continental restaurant and best overall restaurant. The Kingsley Inn of Bloomfield Hills was named as the best restaurant for brunch.

ON THE TOWN

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