

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

A RALLY BIG SHOW

Election '76 was a much bigger show than the pollsters figured. Produced by the forefathers of democracy, it was cast by the Republicans, Democrats, a few lesser known parties, and Independents. It starred President Gerald Ford and Governor Jimmy Carter. Featured in off-stage major roles were millions of all types of Americans behind voting booth curtains in the wings of every city in the nation. Like rare wine this comedy-drama got better and more dramatic as it built to Act I's ultimate climax.

Though not exactly an overwhelming smash, it has been booked for four years and the Electoral College pros have given Jimmy Carter a run of the play contract. Pres. Ford will be phased out with the year, and several new characters will be added. Some persons we have admired and respected through the political years will be retired to the wings. Others are even now being "screen" tested for important roles before the political footlights.

Supposedly set for also starred billing are Coretta King; Congressman Andy Young, who has been quietly re-elected from Ga.; FCComish Ben Hooks, who just might become chairperson of that body; Ben Brown, the Ga. legislator who's a long time Carter character; p.r. exec. Ofield Dukes, based on his Sen. Humphrey connection and publishers like Garth Reeves (The Miami Times) who committed early to the Prez-elect. With the new palace guards mostly from the south, the northern politicians may yet regret Gen. Sherman's march to the sea. Congressman Charlie Rnagel, who was early committed, should do better than most, including the astute Basil Paterson who cochairs the Dem. party. All in all this show has had an interesting bow. Only the onslaught of time will tell if it's good enough for four more (years) curtain calls.

CHATTER BOX: Hollywood and the Mrs. are putting the rush on O.J. Simpson to end his football career before his juice runs out...An Arbitron Survey in 15 major markets have found that black women have more eyes for tv than any other American...Jesse Owens, "Long John" Woodruff are to be honored by the Internat'l Black Sports Hall of Fame...Linda Hopkins was

honored, "Woman of the Year," by the Catholic Actors Guild. She's something else again in the title role of the hit B'way musical "Me & Bessie"...Harry Belafonte is in Paris for three recitals at the Theatre DesChamps Elyees... Producer of a revised "Cabin in the Sky" is trying to get Melba Moore to take a role. I understand Della Reese has already signed for a stage version of the once controversial flick... The Aladdin Theatre for the Performing Arts would love to top it's marquee with Gladys Knight and the Pips....Roberta Flack had two sellout concerts in Hong Kong.

My how times and tastes change: "Good Times," #17; "Sanford & Son," #19; and "The Jeffersons," #35 are now part of teevee's top 40 instead of top 10. Of course if you think that's bad, "Tony Orlando & Dawn" are out of it and may soon get the black-out treatment. We've already told you that's what happened to "Cos" whose sit. has left the tube.

However, Bill Cosby could care less since he's the greatest teevee commerial yet since you name it. He's spokesman for General Foods, Ford, and Del Monte. In fact, Cos is so good, he's been selected as "audio-Visual Media Educator of the Year" and will be so honored by the Audio Association in early '77...Smokey Robinson and the Tower of Power have cancelled the contemplated engagement at the Mill Run Theatre where Sammy Davis, Jr. will be opening soon... Hooray for the League of N.Y. Theatres & Producers, Inc. Ken Harper, black producer of "The Wiz" has just been elected a board member.

There will be Moore talent. Melba that is, at the Met. The special concert will be presented by Danny O'Donovan and "Big Blue Marble" for which Melba is spokesperson...Natalie Cole will hit the B'way scene Thanksgiving time for a swing at the Winter Garden Theatre...The Harlem School of the Arts has been earmarked for completion Jan. '77. It has a \$3 million construction tab and is said will include every artistic facility...Dizzie Gillespie and Machito have teamed to put some had Afro-Cuban jazz moods on wax...Time-Life teevee plans to put on eye-level a 6-part BBC series "The Fight Against Slavery." So far it has been sold via the syn-

dication network in 37 major markets...That "nothing" picture, according to the critics, "Car Wash" is coining dough according to the trades. "Wash" is #4 on the top 50 list... Columbia has slotted Lloyd Haynes in the role of Muslim leader Herbert Muhammad in "The Greatest." That's the Muhammad Ali biopic... You only see Brock Peters for a short but effective second in "Two Minute Warning."

Now that Atlantic City has been voted dice privileges Las Vegas has suddenly become interested in black tourism...Jim Cuffee is sitting in the catbird seat now that gambling has finally come. He owns a motel almost across the street from the planned opening spot, and a lot of other earth in the once playground of America...The Treiners have been signed to was a contract by Contempo Recores of London that will insure their talent on a couple of albums per for the next 3-years. Lloyd Jones, the NBW veep personnel is sunning himself in Spain on biz and much pleasure. A girl walked by him the other beach time who should have been sited as a moving violation...Greek letter sororities and fraternities on the 30 campuses of the state universities have had a 23 year ban against them lifted. The move was made after the organization had assured the board of trustees that "exclusivity and discrimination" is no longer the policy of the national.

Ray Charles "AMAZING"

"He has been a dominating figure on the popular music scene...he has written his mark on the popular culture of his time." Frank Sinatra calls him "the only genius in our business." Yet, says the Reader's Digest, the most amazing thing about singer-pianist Ray Charles is how he got to be where he is.

Charles was born in the Depression South; his father worked for the railroad and his mother was a domestic. By the times he was seven, Ray had lost his sight. But his mother, a strong and understanding woman, saw to it that despite blindness her boy was self-sufficient.

"She made me understand that if I thought about something enough, I could figure out a way to do it myself. She used to tell me, 'Some day I'm not going to be around to help you. You'll have to help yourself,'" Charles says. At the same time he discovered music; a neighbor had a piano and began teaching the youngster chords, and he was deeply influenced by church music.

Following the death of his mother, and his father shortly afterward, Ray Charles began working with bands around Jacksonville, Orlando and Tampa. At 18, he decided to make a career of his music; he boarded a bus, with \$600 savings, and five days later landed in Seattle -- his destination selected by a pin on a map. Within three days he was working regularly.

Since then he has sold some 200 million records. He's won ten Grammys, five consecutive awards as top male vocalist from Down Beat, and a bronze medallion from the government of France. According to the article, leading jazz critic Whitney Balliett says of him, "He is, in his naked, powerful manner, in a class with Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong. He is revered by every class, color and creed, perhaps because he touches his listeners' emotions with his voice."

Although Ray Charles now grosses some \$2

million a year through his various interests, it hasn't been easy -- he had to lick a severe problem with drug addiction along the way. An outstanding success in a fiercely competitive world, Charles says he still operated under one of his mother's rules: "When you meet a new person, give him a clean sheet and let him mark it up himself."

JAZZ ENSEMBLE RELEASES ALBUM

The 22-piece Howard University Jazz Ensemble has released its first album. The album contains an assortment of ballads and rock-jazz renditions, including compositions by Stevie Wonder, Oliver Nelson and Ray Brown.

Last March, the band won a musical contest sponsored by Friendship Ambassadors, Inc., of New York, which launched them on a two-week concert tour in Romania. During the tour, the band performed in opera houses and educational institutions before jazz enthusiasts from every stratum of society. The album contains many of the numbers performed in Romania.

Fred Irby, III, who plays trumpet, directs the band and is director of the jazz and brass ensemble in the Howard University College of Fine Arts. Irby was listed in the 1976 edition of the International Who's Who in Music.

Irby formed the band in the fall of 1974 as part of the newly instituted stage band at the University.

In 1975, the band was recognized in the Washington, D.C. area, participating in a workshop with trumpeter Clark Terry at the Smithsonian Institution and a concert with saxophonist Sonny Rollins.

The album was produced by the College of Fine Arts, the Department of Music, and the Student Government Association of the College of Fine Arts.

Join Ray Willis and Maria Donoso for a look at what minorities are doing in Southern Nevada. Along with special local and nationally known guests, they make this an interesting and informative half-hour

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