

Soul Sounds in the Mass Marketplace

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grows, Delsner finds the latitude to book Soul stars from both the present and the past, "I'm for the nostalgia bit a lot. It took me three years to get Little Richard, and four years to get Chuck Berry. I think we are opening the eyes and ears of the younger audience (black and white) to the 'roots.' I like to mix some of the old-timers with new stars." Delsner, a jazz fan, likes all forms of good music, but is sad to see so much attention given to groups who just play LOUD. "A lot of kids come for electronic violence. It gets them excited but it doesn't mean it's great music."

There are added refinements to the festival each year. The sound system in 1969—which has always been loud—now ranks with the best systems, and can be quite clearly heard on Central Park West! Almost every concert is sold out (5,000 seats each concert), and the audience which cannot purchase a seat (\$1.50 orchestra; \$1 bleachers) seats itself on the surrounding grounds. At the B. B. King/Led Zeppelin concert (July 21), a rough estimate of 15,000 must have heard each concert. At the end of B. B. King's set on the second show, Delsner lamented to WNEW-FM's Scott Muni, "Why doesn't somebody film this for television?"

Television

This year has seen a sudden upsurge in the presentation of Soul artists on television. In certain respects it has still been limited in that the increased exposure has centered on the "talk" shows, but there will be some Specials devoted exclusively to Soul music. Dionne Warwick will have her own special on CBS (September 17). Also, the Johnson's (hair) products Special will feature: Wilson Pickett, Della Reese, Jerry Butler, Redd Fox.

Exposure for Soul artists has largely been through the efforts of the "talk" shows such as Mike Douglas, Joey Bishop, Merv Griffin, the recently scratched Donald O'Connor, and of course, Johnny Carson's Tonight Show. It almost seems to be a policy of Carson's when he has an out-of-town engagement, to select substitute hosts from the top Soul comedians: e.g., Flip Wilson, Bill Cosby, who in turn present many of their favorite artists from the Soul and Jazz worlds. On a recent and most memorable show, Flip Wilson featured Wilson Pickett, Joe Tex and Jimi Hendrix!

Summer, 1969, saw the debut of two prime time "talk" shows that have national coverage. Metro Media presented the David Frost Show (Billy Taylor is the orchestra leader) and featured Nina Simone, James Brown, Red Foxx among other Soul artists.

ABC presented Dick Cavett whose policy was not only to expose the artists but to treat them as personalities and interview them as well. Among the Soul artists Cavett had as guests were: B. B. King, Sam and Dave, the Edwin Hawkins Singers, Smokey Robinson, Edwin Starr, Jimi Hendrix and Dionne and Dee Dee Warwick. When presenting the Edwin Hawkins Singers Cavett allowed ample time for them to build their musical climaxes so that their hit "Oh Happy Day" would have its proper impact.

One of the major problems in presenting Soul music on television is that it is not easily understood HOW to present it. There is so much flash and excitement in Soul music which seems to elude standard television techniques. Merv Griffin realizing this, hired Paradigm Films to go on location in Providence, R. I., to film Aretha Franklin before a Soul audience, and as a result captured the excitement for his audience.

Soul music has always required big bands (at least seven and usually a minimum of 10 to 15 musicians are involved) which has been a prohibitive cost factor in presenting Soul music on TV. Aretha Franklin's few televised "guest" appearances have never captured the "real" Aretha as she has been forced to sing with the studio orchestra which simply reads the charts but provides none of the essential drive she needs in her music.

Atlantic's Jerry Wexler, when approached by some television producers from a major network regarding a special on Aretha, voiced the major criticism for presenting musical artists on TV: If it were up to him, he (Jerry) wouldn't allow any of the Atlantic artists to do television appearances unless Atlantic's engineers could control the sound.

The problem of bad sound exists in television because an artist cannot bring in his own sound people, and must work with union studio personnel, most of whom have never even seen a Soul artist in "live" performance and have no conception of the proper balance for the sound. Let us hope that someone somewhere is working on this problem!

With the growing interest in Soul music, independent Soul music shows have begun to appear on TV. In the New York City area, NET affiliate WNDT presented a show simply entitled "Soul," underwritten by the Ford Foundation. It was an ambitious under-

taking to present Soul artists "live" with the Ruben Phillips Orchestra (from the Apollo Theatre), but the budgetary considerations restricted the latitude a show with this format could use. They did, however, present such stars as The Impressions, Wilson Pickett and Marion Williams. Unfortunately, there is some doubt as to whether this show will return in the fall.

ABC has a Public Service series in New York called "Like It Is" (produced by Charles Hobson). The format covers a broad spectrum of topics, but music is a vital part of the programming, from Soul (Don Covay) to Jazz (Herbie Hancock) to Gospel ("live" taping at Brooklyn's Washington Temple).

Television is getting hipper about top-selling Soul artists. When Marvin Gaye's "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" was topping the charts, he appeared on "Hollywood Palace," "The Joey Bishop Show" and "The Tonight Show" all within a two-week period. Recent specials spotlighting The Supremes and The Temptations as well as The Temptations' own special, and Diana Ross hosting guests Ethel Waters and Stevie Wonder on "Hollywood Palace" are a step forward but simply not enough.

In 1968 Metro Media did a rather controversial special—the psychedelic lighting effects were not in all in keeping with the show—on James Brown which was videotaped "live" at the Apollo Theatre. In 1969 they presented a long overdue Special on the Memphis Sound called "Gettin' It All Together," starring Atlantic's Sam and Dave; Stax artists: Booker T. and The MGs and Carla Thomas. All these artists have been top-selling Soul stars for the last several years, but have not had exposure on television to the mass market. Although the program included a tribute to the late and great Otis Redding, Redding himself never got past doing TV shows lip-synching to his records (Dick Clark's American Bandstand; Lloyd Thaxton, etc.) which were the only avenues open to him at that time.

Metro Media was also a pioneer in presenting Tony Lawrence's Harlem Cultural Festival in 1968. In 1969 Mr. Lawrence's Harlem Cultural Festival took on added impact, when CBS gave it network time, as a Special (featuring the Fifth Dimension, Edwin Hawkins Singers et. al.), on July 28 at 10 p.m. The Maxwell House Coffee Division of General Foods undertook sponsoring the entire cost of the festival (six shows, running over \$100,000) as well as sponsoring the CBS Special. Tony Lawrence has also lined up major market television syndication for the other programs from the festival, beginning with the Gospel Show (Staple Singers) and Motown Sound (David Ruffin; Gladys Knight) in August. "We are already planning the Harlem Cultural Festival for next year," Lawrence exclaims, "and we expect it to be even greater!" Certainly, the presentation of Soul music "live" before the audiences in Harlem is one of the best ways for it to be exposed on television.

CBS is offering a fall series hosted by Leslie Uggams, and if their first show booking of Sly and The Family Stone is an indication of things to come, it should really be a most interesting series! The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour, who Miss Uggams replaces, began the exploitation of the "hard" Soul artists in 1969, presenting Ike and Tina Turner.

The time certainly seems right for a show which would feature Soul music regularly. There are, of course, many ways in which this could be done. To capitalize on the large interest in Blues by the white audience, a show could incorporate a format of a big Blues Special, possibly hosted by a white blues artist (to attract the mass audience) such as, Stevie Winwood, Clapton, Johnny Winter, Janis Joplin, Paul Butterfield, and have a strongly integrated list of guests artists; e.g., Taj Mahal, B. B. King, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, Magic Sam.

This type of program could alternate on a biweekly basis with a show which would be devoted to rock and Soul music. Here, a host or co-host idea could work, selecting stars from each idiom. Top Soul artists who have established reputations such as Jerry Butler, Curtis Mayfield, David Ruffin, Sam and Dave, Sly and the Family Stone, Wilson Pickett, Joe Simon would be excellent choices from their field. It would not have to be limited to the same host(s) for the entire series, but could be worked in such a way that the host(s) would get exposure—but not overexpose himself to the point of jeopardizing his own personal appearance career.

The new series based on the Billboard charts will expose many fine Soul artists whose records reach the charts to the mass audience who have never had the opportunity to see these artists perform. When Mike Douglas invited James Brown as his co-host for a week, CBS broke precedent and bought advertising on Soul Radio! They (CBS) also bought advertising time for their presentation of the Harlem Cultural Festival.

This year saw country music come into its own on television with two shows: Johnny Cash and "Hee Haw." Isn't Soul music long overdue for its own spot?

SOUL TRENDS- THE WIDENING OF ITS AUDIENCE INTO POP

By IRA TRACHTER

The qualities peculiar to the music called Soul are not necessarily inherent in the music itself. Young-Holt Unlimited's "Soulful Strut" bears little resemblance, musically or stylistically, to James Brown's "Say It Loud I'm Black and I'm Proud," yet both were best-selling soul sides. Soul has been almost exclusively the music black artists perform for a black audience.

In the past, an r and b hit was covered by a popular white performer who usually walked away with the hit version. Today, things are not only changing in job opportunities, housing and equal rights, but they are also changing, probably more rapidly, in the record industry. No artist, black or white, would dare cover an Aretha Franklin or a Temptations single because he, she or they would most certainly come out with the very short end of the stick.

And a careful study of Billboard's r and b Singles Chart since August 1968 reveals an interesting fact: virtually every single making the top 20 of the R&B Chart was a Hot 100 Singles Chart entry also, and a good many of these went to position 50 or better.

Since the top 50 singles on the Hot 100 are positioned solely on the basis of national retail sales reports, it is more than likely that blacks were not the only consumers of this product.

Getting back to "Soulful Strut," it fared as well on the Hot 100 Chart as it did on the r and b chart, reaching no. three on both. Furthermore, the substantial top 40 airplay support on this single and others furnishes evidence of Soul's general acceptance by top 40 stations which broadcast to a wider audience than r and b stations.

Few top 40 stations failed to program Marvin Gaye's million selling "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," and James Brown's "Mother Popcorn," an instant Soul smash, was later programmed by many important top 40 stations, giving it greater exposure than it would have gotten via r and b alone. It is also doubtful that an r and b station is any longer limited to an exclusively black audience. If whites listen to an r and b station and like some the records they hear, the hit potential of these records becomes greater.

Larger record manufacturers emphasizing soul product, such as Atlantic-Atco, Tamla-Motown, and Stax-Volt, with their effective and sophisticated facilities of promotion, have had great success exposing their product to a wider audience, establishing pop hits by such artists as Archie Bell and the Drells, Clarence Carter, Tyrone Davis, Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, Sam and Dave (for Atlantic-Atco), Marvin Gaye, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, Diana Ross and the Supremes, David Ruffin, Edwin Starr, the Temptations, Jr. Walker and the All-Stars, Stevie Wonder (for Tamla-Motown), and the Emotions, Booker T and the MG's, Johnny Taylor, and Carla Thomas (for Stax-Volt).

Other labels also have developed pop hits from soul-oriented material; since January 1969 singles by these artists have gone as high as the top 20 on the Hot 100 Chart, achieving the bona fide status of pop hit: Sonny Charles and the Checkmates Ltd. (A&M), Young-Holt Unlimited (Brunswick), Edwin Hawkins Singers (Pavilion), Sly and the Family Stone (Epic), James Brown (King), Jerry Butler (Mercury), Winstons (Metromedia), Friends of Distinction (RCA), Dionne Warwick (Scepter), Fifth Dimension (Soul City), Joe Simon (Sound Stage 7), Isley Brothers (T-Neck), and Watts 103rd Street Band (Warner Bros.-7 Arts). The list of those artists reaching the top 50 is almost endless.

Further evidence of Soul's growing ability to widen its audience base is the increasing number of singles deemed suitable for easy-listening airplay, attracting another audience entirely. Since the beginning of the year, singles by Dionne Warwick, Stevie Wonder, Young-Holt Unlimited, Booker T and the MG's, Fifth Dimen-

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