



## Ray Charles: Man and Music

*By Michael Lydon*

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## **Ray Charles: Man and Music By Michael Lydon Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### Amazon.com Review

In 1954, Atlantic Records honchos Ahmet Ertegun and Jerry Wexler visited an Atlanta club where one of their artists was gigging. Ray Charles and his band blew into a new song when the men entered. It was "I Got a Woman," the tune that marked the blind Albany, Georgia-born singer-pianist's evolution from an able imitator of Nat "King" Cole and Charles Brown into an artist who would transform American music. In *Ray Charles: Man and Music*, veteran music journalist Michael Lydon imbues the familiar story with fresh detail upon fresh detail. Charles's early years spent scuffling on the chitlin circuit, his embrace of everything from pop chestnuts and country hits to hip jazz as an audaciously eclectic record maker, and the many hours given over to womanizing and a heroin addiction at the height of his stardom are given a cinematic immediacy here. More than most artists, Charles followed his instincts to huge artistic rewards and the love of many listeners who recognized their own voices in his sound. Lydon captures as much of the offstage man as is likely to ever make it to the page--the man who himself once insisted, "My life was what it was. Whatever it became, I made it so." --*Rickey Wright*

### From Publishers Weekly

The singer, pianist and composer Ray Charles is such a fixture on the American music scene that a fan once told a reporter "I can't even remember when there wasn't a Ray Charles." His sensual growl responding to the Raelets sultry church choir, his nostalgic crooning of "Georgia on My Mind," his memorable performances of "America the Beautiful" at both Republican and Democratic presidential inaugurations, all have made him a star of almost unparalleled magnitude and longevity. Lydon (*Boogie Lightning*) is informative and engaging when discussing Charles's prolific output?his 1963 album *Ingredients in a Recipe of Soul* is described as "musical meat-and-potatoes blended in a stew of blues-jazz-C&W-R&B-and-pop"?and the discography he includes is a useful guide to a career spanning 50 years. His examination of Charles's life is just as enlightening. A driven businessman, according to Lydon, Charles is also cruel and insensitive to those close to him, never faithful to any woman ("a venerable joke declares, to be a Raelet, a lady must let Ray") and a tyrant to musicians in his band, paying them little and fining them \$50 for being late to rehearsal. Lydon depicts him as stubborn and controlling, as when he netted an unheard-of contract with ABC Records in 1959 that allowed him to own his master tapes, making him the exemplary "artist as a businessman-producer." The singer's independence and resistance to musical trends didn't always pay off: they caused his recording career to nosedive two decades ago. However, at almost 70, he's still touring and still a star, and fans of Brother Ray?and of soul music more generally?will appreciate this comprehensive portrait. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

### From Library Journal

Lydon is not just a founding editor of *Rolling Stone* but a professional musician, making him a fitting author of the biography of the great Charles. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Paul Skeens:**

Here thing why this Ray Charles: Man and Music are different and trusted to be yours. First of all examining

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