

Ray Parker: A Driving Dynamo Of Soul, Rhythm & Blues and Pure Emotion

A Review By
Shelia Bumpass
and
Melissa James

GREENSBORO — Ray Parker, Jr. 'kills himself' 19 hours a day because he loves his music.

Working with popular recording stars, such as Stevie Wonder, Barry White, the Rolling Stones, Boz Scaggs, and Parker's own group, Raydio, the tall, handsome, hard driving artist is successful today and still climbing.

The success was pleasantly apparent a couple of weeks ago when Parker, along with Rick James and Dazz, held forth in grand fashion in the Greensboro Coliseum.

The show was a sellout, and Parker, togged in brown shirt, white shoes and a pair of finely creased, dazzling white pants, his trademark for his current highly successful album, gave the crowd all they came for and more.

With the consummate skill that comes with some 15 years

of musical experience, Parker, who at 28 says he's getting younger every year, performed beautifully.

At one point, while singing one of his current hits, "A Woman Needs Love Like You Do," Parker knelt near the edge of the stage and skillfully slipped an envelope from the hands of one of the crowd of practically swooning women who screamed wildly during the whole show. Moving smoothly in front of the flashing lights, Parker slid ex-

pertly through several songs off his latest album, as well as some of his previous hits with the group, Raydio.

The lights dimmed suggestively as Parker shifted to "Let Me Go," another hit cut off his album and the women screamed a decibel higher as the talented vocalist's soulfully mellow voice caressed each note.

The screaming crowd jumped to its feet when, to close his act, Parker went back to "The Other Woman," drawing out the melody and bathing the people in the sexy suggestiveness of the lyrics.

Parker, in this one of a series of shows during his first road tour in four years, practically had the crowd of screaming fans eating out of his hands. Now that's success. But it didn't come easy.

It's the result of unerring dedication and hard work that began when the Detroit native was 13 and elected a band class for gym because he thought he was awkward.

"I actually thought I was too tall for my age," he said, "and so I wanted to make up for that by playing the coolest instrument around."

According to Parker, the coolest instrument at the time was the guitar, but he didn't start out in the band with the guitar; he started with the clarinet. It wasn't long before the talented youngster, who is probably a musical prodigy if the truth were known, switched to the guitar. And now he plays more than a dozen instruments.

In Detroit, Parker played electric guitar for several local bands before signing up with Motown in 1969, when that recording company was just hitting its peak. Three years later, Parker was playing with the Stevie Wonder band and the talented guitarist credits that experience with sparking a cord of inspiration that has held him in good stead over the years.

"It was mostly Stevie's creativity and versatility," he said, "that inspired me."

In 1977, after forming his own group, Raydio, and joining the Arista label, Parker released his first album, followed by a string of 12 hit singles and four gold albums before leaving the group this year to go it alone.

And if his first solo album — "The Other Woman" — is any indication, this producer, songwriter, arranger, musician and vocalist faces a bright future. The title song off that album, for example, hit the top five on both the R&B (rhythm and blues) and Pop charts.

Getting maximum use of his wide-ranging talent, Parker

not only wrote all the songs on the album, but he also played the guitar, the synthesizer, the bass, the drums and the piano. He also handled engineering, mixing and other production duties for the album.

Because Parker works so hard for so long, there are those close to him who believe that the young man is driven by some dark force.

With a bright smile, Parker says: "I am driven by the desire to be happy, and the fear of being poor."

Parker says that young people who want to be successful must also be driven. "They have to kill themselves," he said with a smile. "No, not really, but they do have to believe in themselves and what they are doing. They have to stay away from drugs and go to church every Sunday."

One of Parker's favorite subjects is the black woman, whom he feels has gotten a raw deal from society.

"The mass media have perpetuated the status and social divisions of inequality between the black man of success and the black woman," Parker said. "Black women may never get a shot at it (luxuries of a wealthy black family environment). But I intend to marry a black woman," he continues, leaning forward to emphasize his point, "unless, of course, I slip and fall in love."

That last part was a line from one of his recent hits, and Parker delivered it with a big smile, and a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

But then that's Parker, a little shy, he says about himself, but also hardworking, dedicated, and just a little mischievous.

This notwithstanding, Parker's main focus is his music, a style he calls, "Ray Parker, Jr.'s music," a combination of soul, rock and roll and "pure emotion."

They got a shot of it in Greensboro, and from all indications, it will be around for quite a while.

Sunday

August 22, 1982

	WFMY CH. 2 Cable 11	WPTF CH. 28 Cable 3	WTVD CH. 11 Cable 6	WUNC CH. 4 Cable 9	WTTG CH. 5 Cable 10	WRAL CH. 5 Cable 12	WTBS CH. 17 Cable 13	WGHP CH. 8
7:00	Kenneth Copeland	Jerry Falwell	Mighty Mouse Heckle Jeckle Blackstar		Jimmy Swaggart	World Tomorrow Spiritual Awakening	James Robison It Is Written	Dr. D. James Kennedy
7:15								
7:30	Rex Humbard Oral Roberts	Kenneth Copeland	Gospel Jubilee		Frederick K. Price	Robert Schuller He Is Risen	Three Stooges & Friends	Gospel Expo Show My People
7:45								
8:00	Sunday Morning	Jim Bakker	Sunday Morning		Dr. Jerry Falwell	Oral Roberts Rex Humbard	Lost In Space	Jimmy Swaggart
8:15								
8:30		Jerry Falwell			Flintstone	Day Of Discovery Healthbeat	Lighter Side Of News Theatre	Robert Schuller
8:45	Day Of Discovery		David Horowitz		Matinee: "Blondie's"			
9:00	Champion Fishing Face The Nation	Jimmy Swaggart	Face The Nation		Secret	First Presbyterian Church		TV8 Report This Week With David
9:15								
9:30	Movie: "Ma & Pa Kettle"	Herald Of Truth NFL	Matinee: "Cockeyed Cowboys Of Calico County"		Theatre II: "Stop! Look! & Laugh!"	Pro & Con		Brinkley Pink Panther
9:45	At The Fair	N.Y. Jets vs. Houston		Firing Line		This Week With David		
10:00	Movie: "Great Catherine"		ATP Tennis	Crisis To Crisis	Theatre III: "King Rat"	Brinkley Roy Clark	Rat Patrol This Week In Baseball	Battleship Galactica
10:15								
10:30						Southern Sportsman	Atlanta Braves	Showcase: "Stingray"
10:45								
11:00	Movie: "Mayday"	Sportsworld		Oil Painting Moneymaker		Cinema 5: "Dark Victory"		
11:15								
11:30	At 40000		Warwick Hills Open Golf	Lap Quilting Victory Garden	Movie: "The Organization"			"GIT!"
11:45								
12:00		Women's Golf		World At War			News Undersea World Of	Sportsbeat
12:15								
12:30	News 2 CBS News	Pink Panther Muppet Show	CBS News Reel Perspectives	N.C. People Stateline	Playhouse 5: "Hard Country"	News 5 ABC News	Jacques Cousteau Nice People	News ABC News
12:45								
1:00	60 Minutes	Born To The Wind	60 Minutes	Classic Country		Code Red	Wrestling	Code Red
1:15								
1:30	Archie Bunkers One Day At A Time	Chips	Archie Bunkers One Day At A Time	Nova	Lawrence Welk	ABC Movie: "Airport '77"		ABC Movie: "Airport '77"
1:45								
2:00	Alice Jeffersons	Magic With The Stars	Alice Jeffersons	Masterpiece Theatre	Merv Griffin Die		This Week In Review	
2:15								
2:30	Trapper John		Trapper John	Rubenstein			TBS News	
2:45								
3:00	News CBS News Rock & Roll	Carol Burnett Jim Bakker	News CBS News Mary Tyler Moore	Twilight Zone Twilight Zone	Weekend Sports Movie: "Bad Company"	News 5 ABC News: "Summer Of '42"	Jerry Falwell	News ABC News Woods Workshop
3:15								
3:30	The First 25 Years	Insight	Rockford Files				Open Up	Healthbeat
3:45								Entertain This Week

When your tires get worn down to 2/32 of an inch, you're 44 times more likely to have a flat or blowout during highway driving than before.

Kyanize
D. PAINT
For All Your Painting Needs
In the Imperial Bldg
Morns St., Durham, N.C.
Phone 688-2338