

Charles Hyatt, actor, playwright

Actor, writer, comedian, director and radio and television broadcaster — he is a multi-talented Jamaican.

Charles Hyatt was born in Kingston, February 14, 1931 and educated at St. Aloysius Boys' School and St. Simons College.

Charles entered the theatrical field at the age of 15 and has grown in stature since then, in nearly all the areas of his profession. On radio he has had many leading and supporting roles in plays. He has also had his own radio series *Here Comes Charlie* which ran from 1960 to 1964 — in this he played the parts of the entire family.

In 1961 he was awarded a travel scholarship which took

him to England where he joined the Windsor Repertory Company and soon established himself as one of the foremost black actors both on radio and television. He has also done many stage plays and films throughout the United Kingdom, but has kept in constant touch with Jamaica by frequent visits to the island.

Charles excelled in television when, in 1963, he played his first leading role in *Return To Look Behind* an episode in ABC's *Jezebel Ex-UK*. Other television productions in which he was involved include *A Day of the Fox* with Sammy Davis, Jr., *The Blood Knot* in which he co-starred with the South

African playwright, Athol Fugard, in BBC Television 625 Theatre; *The Appointment* for Granada 68 series; *Wind Versus Polygamy* a BBC Television 625 production; *Jackanory* in which he told anancy stories; *Beautiful Caribbean*; *Love Thy Neighbour* for ABC television — to name but a few.

In 1972 he produced and directed *Rass* written by Robert Lamb for the Dark and Light Theatre, London.

Television is not the only sphere in which Charles' acting abilities are known; his involvement in the world of acting has extended to films such as a *Highwind* in Jamaica filmed in Jamaica

on the northcoast starring Anthony Quinn and James Coburn; *The Comedians* with Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor; a full length film of *Love Thy Neighbour* which was released in Jamaica last year; he completed *The Marijuana Affair*, which was shot locally, in which he played the part of "preacher" and which had its premier here last November.

The theatre was not excluded. His stage performances in England include *The Blacks* by Jean Genet at Oxford Play House; *Black MacBeth* at the Round House in London; *The Electronic Nigger* by Ed Bullin for the Interaction Theatrescope, London; the pantomimes *The Wizard of Oz* at the Phoenix Theatre, Leicester and *Hamlet*.

Charles has for many years kept Jamaican audiences laughing with his female impersonations in nine consecutive LTM pantomimes and his cabaret audiences roaring with his inimitable witticisms. He has produced two LPs and a single, and those of us who have been lucky to own his records have been able to enjoy his mirth outside the theatre and night clubs.

Charles returned to Jamaica in February 1974 to take up permanent residence

with his family and has since then re-created his radio family whose life style can be enjoyed in his daily programme on JBC radio *Here Comes Charlie*. He is also, of course, a very popular face and voice in many television commercials.

He has, since his return to Jamaica, made many television and radio appearances in plays. In 1975 he appeared in the long-running two header *Two Is A Crowd at the Way Out Theatre* of the Pegasus Hotel in which, together with Janet Bartley, he played over 40 characters in songs and sketches.

Charlie's versatility also includes the production side of theatre and evidence of this aspect of his talent could be seen in such productions as *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* and *Sex* both produced locally by him in recent months.

He has also recently played the part of *Joe* in *Gloria Lannaman's Stanley, Fay, Pularchie and P* — so memorable was his characterisation in this part that one critic wrote:

"It is for the broad comedy rather than the pathos that this play will be remembered — Charles Hyatt's version of the country man seeking a wife has that touch of genius

that he brings out with faultless technique — Stanley And Fay should be a theatrical high spot of the Carifesta and those who have already enjoyed it should see it again, if only to see Hyatt at his very best."

Of course Charlie's full-time occupation (and pre-occupation) is his dedication to radio; not only with such programmes as *Here Comes Charlie* and *Down Your Way*, but as the person responsible for JBC's radio drama. Charles has the responsibility of bringing the regular theatre to the radio audience and to this end has created the JBC radio repertory from among members of the regular staff.

Since its formation, the repertory has staged, under Hyatt's direction, such memorable radio theatrical experiences as *Curly Locks* and *The Seven Dee-Jays*, *Jesus (First Dem Kii) Son-Son*, both written by Charles himself, and *The Horrowing of Benjy* by Roderick Walcott, among others.

Be sure to see Charles in this season's LTM National Pantomime musical *Brashana O!* which opens at the Ward Theatre on Boxing Day. He will alternate with Ranny Williams in the role of "Mr. Barker."