

Ahmet Ertegun

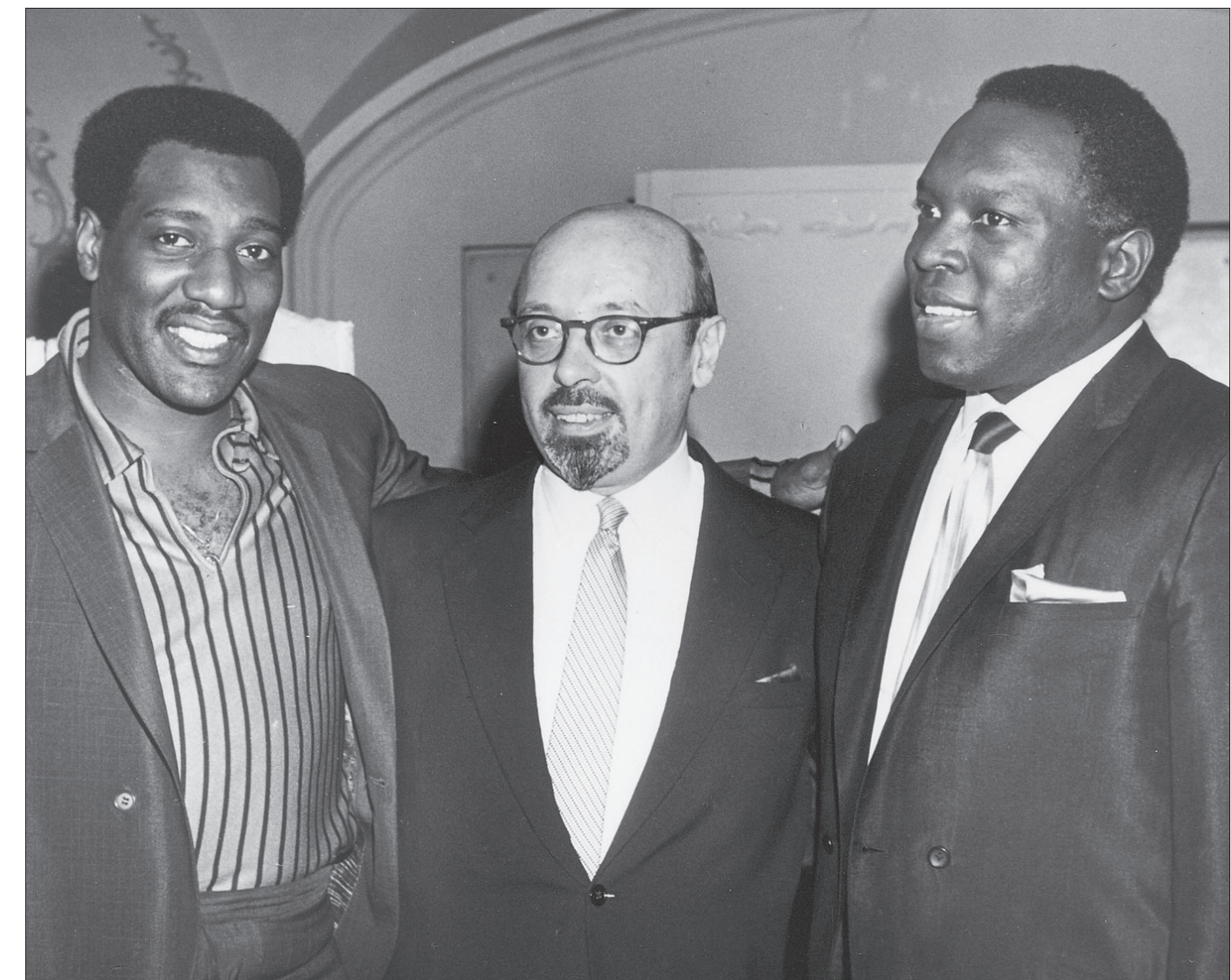
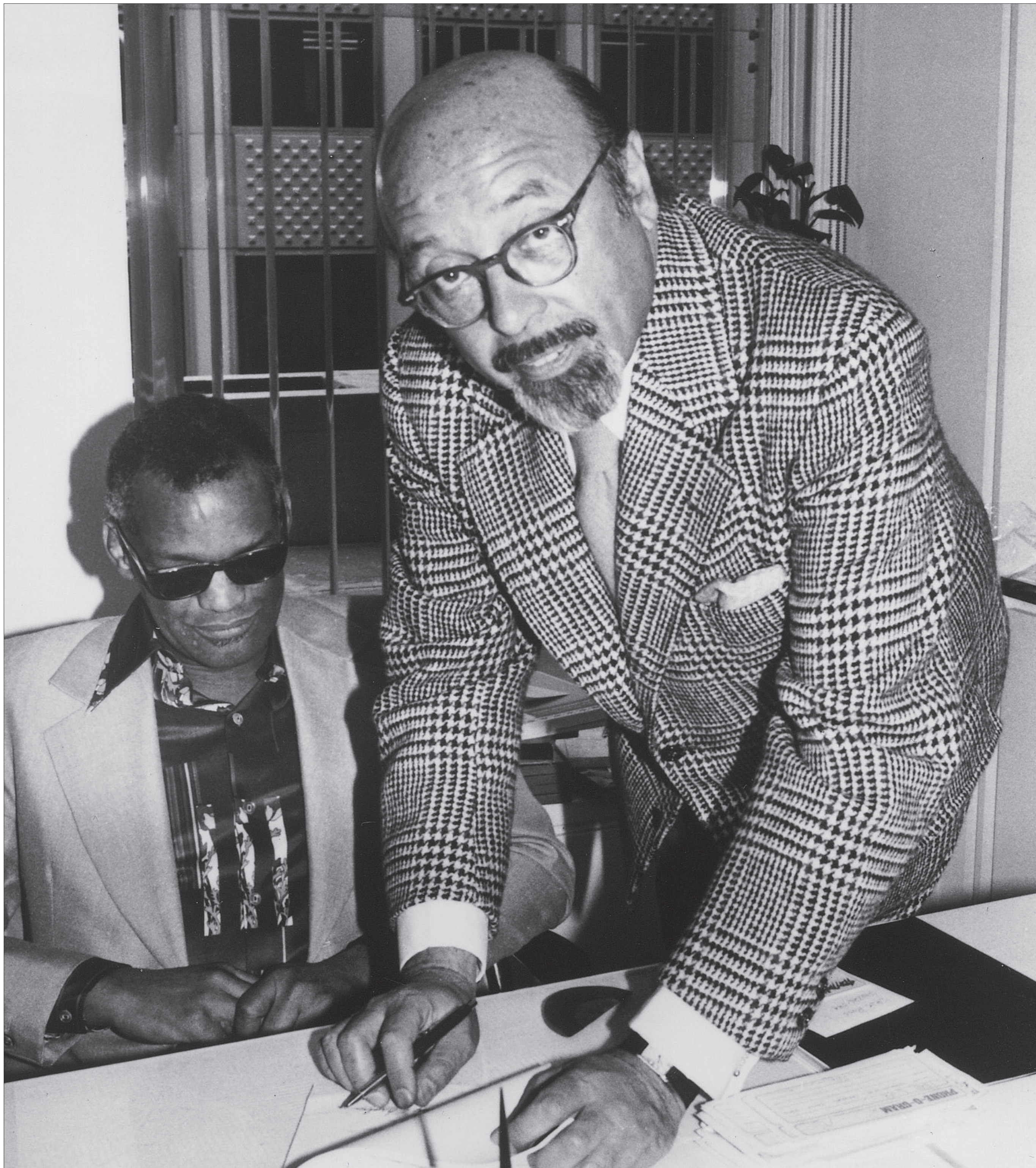
Istanbul, Turkey, July 31, 1923 – December 14, 2006

As co-founder of Atlantic Records, Ahmet Ertegun – a Turkish-American who was the son of the Republic of Turkey’s first ambassador to the U.S. – dedicated much of his career to promoting African American musicians and their work while also fighting for racial equality.

Avid acolytes of Washington, D.C.’s jazz scene during the ‘30s and ‘40s and keenly aware of the injustices of racial segregation, Ahmet and his brother Nesuhi organized the first integrated jazz concert in D.C. at the Jewish Community Center. They continued to hold integrated concerts at the Turkish Ambassador’s residence in D.C., pushing back at the conventions of segregation and welcoming African Americans through the front door.

As both a writer and producer of music at the helm of Atlantic Records, Ertegun helped develop the careers of some of the U.S.’ most celebrated African American musicians, including Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, and Otis Redding.

Speaking to Slate Magazine about how he would like his legacy to be defined, Ertegun said, “I’d be happy if people said that I did a little bit to raise the dignity and recognition of the greatness of African American music.”



Left: “Ray Charles and Ahmet Ertegun”, Top right: “Otis Redding, Ahmet Ertegun, and King Curtis”, Bottom right: “Aretha Franklin and Ahmet Ertegun”