

Andrew Young's new book describes "Easy Burden" of civil rights era

By Max Millard
Special to Sentinel-Voice

This past summer, when the world's attention was focused on Atlanta for the summer Olympics, the spotlight also returned to the city's former Mayor Andrew Young, who served as co-chair of the Atlanta Committee for the Games. But for those who wonder what else Young has been doing since his exit from elective politics, following his defeat in the Democratic primary for Georgia governor in 1990, the answer comes in his new book, "An Easy Burden: The Civil Rights Movement and the Transformation of America" (HarperCollins, 531 pages, November 1996, \$27.50).

Young's memoir concentrates on his early career, ending in 1972, when he, and Barbara Jordan of Texas, were simultaneously elected the first black members of Congress in the South in this century. Young went on to many further triumphs — he was twice re-elected to Congress, named ambassador to the United Nations (1977-79),



ANDREW YOUNG

and serving two highly successful terms as mayor of Atlanta (1981-89). But with his gift for language, his colorful use of anecdotes, and his personal viewpoint of American history from one of its major players, Young needed a volume of this length to do justice to the civil rights era alone.

Two-thirds of the book deals with the years 1961-68, when he worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) as an organizer and strategist. Young was no convert, but a

scholar of nonviolent resistance in his own right, who discovered the writings of Mahatma Gandhi while a seminary student, and realized, "This can work here." Years before he met King, he had already embraced nonviolence as his guiding philosophy.

Their crossing of paths, as young, socially activist black ministers in Georgia, was inevitable, and before the age of 30, Young had become one of the most trusted and influential members of King's inner circle, where he remained until King's assassination.

Young, who grew up in a middle-class, fervently Christian family in New Orleans, drew the title of the book from Luke 12:48: "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required." He interpreted this as "a burden of responsibility, but an easy burden."

After becoming an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, Young got his first full-time job as a pastor in rural Georgia. The rule for survival, (See Young, Page 10)



Tony Toni Toné — (left to right) Timothy Christian Riley, D'wayne Wiggins and Raphael Saadiq

The masters of new soul, Tony Toni Toné

By Avonie Brown
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Once again the boys from Oakland, Tony Toni Tone, represent in fine form and deliver another soulful revival on their latest release, "House of Music," (Mercury Records). Raphael Saadiq, brother Dwayne Wiggins and cousin Timothy Christian Riley, have returned with fresh new funkified rhythms that already have fans anxiously awaiting their concert tour scheduled for 1997. In an interview Dwayne Wiggins

shared some insights about the group's musical inspirations and what defines its sound.

The fierce jams and fluid harmonies on "House of Music" are not contrived, they flow with such ease that it becomes quite clear that they are innately who and what Tony Toni Tone is all about. Dwayne explains that all that we hear comes quite naturally to them. "Just growing up in Oakland has had a heavy influence on us all. Growing up in church, growing up around old soul and coming from a big family, have all been major influences on our whole vibe," he said.

And when the world overwhelms, she encourages us all to read. "Read copiously. Read everyone from Homer and Shakespeare to Chinua Achebe and Toni Morrison. Read," she insists.

And of the future she says, "Courage—that's what we need. And insouciance—a wonderful word. Combine it with courage, and there's a remedy of hope. We are heading toward new and exciting confrontations...I don't mean external confrontations. We have to confront ourselves. Do we like what we see in the mirror? And, according to our light, according to our understanding, according to our courage, we will have to say yes or nay—and rise!"

trip off of any of that," said Dwayne.

"It's not like we try to be that way, we just do it. When we go in to work on a song we sit down at the piano, or with a guitar or a bass. A lot of other people go in and they have samplers and synthesizers, we use that too, but it's not the core of our sound," he explains. "I think that's what makes our music blend with what's jumping off today, because of lot of hip hop right now is using the samples from old school groups and we're just playing it, not sampling."

The collection of songs on "House of Music" is a real eclectic mix. There are "straight dance funk" tracks sprinkled with some hip-hop flavor, ballads that take you back to the classical jams of Al Green and other up-tempo dance tracks that are laced with jazz rifts, blues odes and hard-edged rock. If you aren't up shaking and grooving, check your pulse.

Dwayne explains that choosing the final cuts on the CD was probably the most difficult part, besides trying to coordinate three busy schedules. "That's why it's titled "House of Music," he said. "House of Music was a spot you could go into and you could listen to all types of music all day. You could sit there listening to 45s,

alternative and retro, "But I don't (See Soul, Page 10)

Maya Angelou: The phenomenal woman rises again

By Avonie Brown
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Maya Angelou introduced me to the lyrical quality of language, its natural rhythm, its musicality and the beauty of a phrase well turned. The rhythmic cadence of her resounding voice, makes the spoken word pulsate. To hear her read her work, indeed to hear her speak, is to be wrapped in a cocoon as her booming voice fills a room.

At first, her powerful mastery of words intimidated me when, as an undergraduate student, I fancied myself a writer. I was in awe of her strength. After reading "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," "Gather Together in My Name," "The Heart of a Woman," and "All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes," I was momentarily silenced by the fullness of her life, believing that the petty juvenile dramas of my own life provided no literary inspiration.

However, what I eventually learned was that the power of her literary voice had less to do with her actual experiences than it had to do with the lessons she learned and then shared with us. It became clear that the human potential is a wide open space waiting to draw us in.

Random House has reissued two of Maya's best-selling books, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" and "And Still I Rise," a collection of poetry. With newly



MAYA ANGELOU

designed hardcover jackets, the pair is sure to be a treasured addition to your reading list. Here's a perfect opportunity for old fans to get reacquainted with the enduring quality of her writing, while new fans can experience the eloquence of her prose. Maya's talents and commitments seem limitless. She is a dancer, poet (some consider her the poet laureate of the world), playwright, actress, activist, professor, composer and so much more.

New fans are probably most familiar with her poetic prowess. Her poem "Still I Rise," is the focal point of a powerful advertising campaign in support of the United College Fund. The whole country was also transfixed by her poem "On the Pulse of Morning," written at the request of President Clinton for his inauguration in January 1993. She became the first poet since 1961 to participate in a presidential inauguration. In

1994 the poem also won a Grammy for Best Spoken Word or Non-Musical Album.

But firsts are nothing new for this phenomenal woman. When the film "Georgia Georgia" premiered on March 10, 1972 in New York City, she became the first black woman to have an original script produced. Not only did she write the screenplay, she also wrote the musical score for the film.

In 1996 her musical talent continued to soar with the release of "Been Found," (Hopsack & Silk) a collaboration with legendary artists Nicholas Ashford and Valerie Simpson. This convergence of creative talent was spontaneous as the threesome had no intention of performing together or producing a CD. The musical message unfolded quite naturally after a Thanksgiving dinner as Maya and her guests gathered around the piano. The trio soon discovered a uniquely wonderful blend of music and poetry, now featured on seven of the 11 tracks on the CD.

Maya has said that she is "inspired by the poetry of human beings." She sees hope for our future in the face of young black, Latino, Asian and poor white children who, she says, despite everything, remain optimistic. Because of her active support of children she was recently named the National Ambassador for the U.S. Committee for UNICEF.



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