

# Black colleges sing their way to Vegas

By Damon Hodge  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) which produce a harvest of noted athletes, thinkers and leaders, rarely get a chance to reveal the musical talent confined within their walls.

A one-of-a-kind musical event beginning March 24 will try to change that.

Bob Bailey knows HBCUs possess skill that spans the musical spectrum. While at historically black Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga., he sang in the glee club and as part of a quartet that put spirits in the hearts and feet of many. Now, Bailey says, it's time for Las Vegas, and the rest of the nation, to witness the vocal artistry HBCUs have to offer.

Bailey is advisory committee chairman of the first "Vocal Extravaganza in Black." The three-day event, March 24-26, will bring students from more than 20 HBCUs to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to compete for \$25,000 in prizes.

Choirs and soloists will compete in three musical styles: traditional (gospel, spiritual, folk), classical (opera, operetta, oratorio) and contemporary (jazz, theatrical, blues).

Nichole Davis, who served as a liaison between the schools and event headquarters, said the three-genre musical format makes the event unique and credits it with helping attract some the nation's best collegiate choirs.

"It amazes me how many people love this idea," she said. "It has caught on like fire. The schools love it," she said.

Tickets range from \$10 to \$25 for the event which begins at 10 a.m., March 24 with a choral competition in the UNLV Moyer Student Union. A free 4:30 p.m., concert at the Fremont Street Experience, and a 7 p.m., gospel fest at Second Baptist Church, 500 West Madison Avenue, conclude the day's activities.

Eliminations begin March 24, making it the only day to see all the performers. Thus, Bailey urges people to buy their tickets now.

A \$200 package, good for admission to all activities, is also available. Included in the package are show and reception tickets, a T-shirt, poster, gift bag, program and other items.

The choral competition resumes at 10 a.m., March 25 at Artemus Ham Concert Hall, followed by the semi-finals at 7 p.m., which pit the top 10 finishers in each style against one other.

March 26, the event's final

day, features a reception at 6 p.m., and grand finale at 7:30 p.m. Stage legend Joe Williams and singers from each school, will team up on "Achieve Your Dreams," written for the event by international composer J. William Pate.

Davis said legendary jazz singer Ruth Brown and Virgin Records recording artists After 7 also will be on hand.

The idea for the event sprung out of Bailey's desire to create an ongoing fundraiser for KCEP radio station. KCEP is funded by the Economic Opportunity Board. Bailey's EOB-ties span 25 years, back to 1972, when he began working with the EOB's School of Radio and Television.

In addition, Bailey wanted to give HBCU talent a forum to display their skills while helping Las Vegas cement itself as a city supportive of culturally diverse entertainment. With, "Vocal Extravaganza in Black," he's taken aim at all his goals.

Bailey said working with credible people helped birth his idea into reality. He cited the work of event chair Marilyn Gubler, producer John Anderson and associate producer Kathy Kidd.

Davis said the event's format alone sparked interest.

Bailey agreed. "(Our) winners will be versatile as (individual) winners and as choirs," he said. "That's what makes our festival unique."

Kidd said listening to Bailey's vision for the event and hearing the music sold her on the idea. She has worked on

several first-time events, including the Ultimate Fighting Championship, as well as productions for Showtime and Pay-Per-View.

Unfortunately, Bailey won't be able to root his alma mater to victory. The Morehouse choir will tour March 17-23 and can't extend their tour any longer, Davis said. Finances and time conflicts limited turnout, but several schools already have expressed interest in competing next year, Davis said.

Confirmed universities include: Alabama State, Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Florida A & M, Kentucky State, South Carolina State, Texas Southern, Virginia Union, Fayetteville State (N.C.), Jackson State (Miss.), Langston (Okla.), Lincoln (Mo.), Morgan State (Md.), Prairie View A & M (Texas), Southern (La.), St. Augustine (N.C.), Talladega (Ala.) and Tuskegee (Ala.)

The winning choir will receive \$10,000 and the second-place choir, \$5,000. Soloist winners, competing in alto, basso, soprano and tenor categories, will win \$1,500 apiece. The remaining \$4,000, Bailey said, will help purchase awards, plaques and cover any loose ends. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, the event's title sponsor, Las Vegas Events, EOB and several local business, provided funding and other support, Davis said.

Tickets can be bought at any Dillard's outlet, at KCEP, 330 West Washington, or by calling the UNLV box office at 895-3801.

# Ebony Fashion Fair to support KCEP

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The Flamingo Hilton will host the 39th Ebony Fashion Fair "The Great Fashion Mix" March 30 with fashions chosen from leading designers such as Christian Dior, Yves St. Laurent, Fabrice, Bill Blass and Rufus Barkely.

The fashion fair touring staff, which is comprised of 11 female models and two male models will, model a "mix" of old and new, of prints and panne velvet, of antique lace and transparent chiffon.

From day to evening wear, mixing is the trend this season. Daytime wool suits will be shown in mixtures of brilliant plaids or animal inspired motifs. Transparent lace was strategically inset into the bodice, sleeves or the thigh area of suits, giving daytime wear a mix of sensuality and exquisite tailoring.

Hats with a mixture of oversized plumage, are an accessory "must" for daytime.

Satin prints and velvet cut-out on chiffon, mixtures of beaded lace and richly dyed silks are the cocktail look in slip dresses and pantsuits. Despite the fashion mixes seen this season, black continues its popularity in after five attire.

No particular style or look dominates this seasons.

The Ebony Fashion Fair is a traveling fashion production coordinated by Ebony Magazine and directed by Mrs. Eunice W. Johnson, wife of publisher John. H. Johnson.

Originally presented in a few select cities, Ebony Fashion Fair was created to feature black models in top designer fashions. The show's elegance caught the interest of the fashion conscious public and its highly favorable reception prompted additional sponsor requests.

The Ebony Fashion Fair is sponsored in Las Vegas by Gamma Phi Delta Sorority

Alpha Rho Chapter and proceeds from the event will benefit KCEP radio programming.

For information about the show call Verlia Davis at 642-0492 or Ida Gaines at 362-8940. For ticket information call Teola Williams at 648-7918.



The Flamingo Hilton's runway will be full of models showcasing the latest designer evening wear at this years Ebony Fashion Fair on Easter Sunday, March 30.

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## DON'T MISS THE BLACK MUSIC EVENT OF 1997

### VOCAL EXTRAVAGANZA



LAS VEGAS 1997

On March 24, 25, and 26, 1997, join the innovative Choirs and Individual Vocalists from the most talented musical programs in the nation from over 20 Historically Black Colleges and Universities as they compete for prizes with all the excitement the "Entertainment Capital of the World" - Las Vegas - can provide.

Hear these nationally known choirs perform the best in traditional, classical and contemporary Black music and see the 150 voice choir accompany the legendary Joe Williams and Ruth Brown as they perform our theme "Achieve Your Dreams" written by noted songwriter J. William Pate.

## See A VOCAL EXTRAVAGANZA "in Black"

concerts at the Second Baptist Church, Fremont Street and Artemus Ham Hall at UNLV.

For ticket information visit the Artemus Ham Hall Box Office, Dillard's locations or telephone: (702) 895-3801

For more information on the event call: (702) 384-5200

### SEE YOU AT ARTEMUS HAM HALL!



Cultural & Community Affairs Division  
City of Las Vegas Department  
of Parks & Leisure Activities,  
West Las Vegas Arts Center  
presents the film



# Sankofa

Sankofa, an Akan word meaning "one must return to the past in order to move forward," is the story about the transformation of Mona, a self-possessed African-American woman sent on a spiritual journey in time to experience the pain of slavery and the discovery of her African identity. Following the viewing of the film will be a discussion by Dr. Al Guerrier.

**FREE**

Saturday  
March 15, 1997  
1:00 p.m.

West Las Vegas Library Theatre  
951 W. Lake Mead Blvd.

Please call 229-4800 to reserve a seat.

This program, part of the series Humanities and Language Through the Black Experience, is made possible, in part, by a grant to the Cultural & Community Affairs Division City of Las Vegas Department of Parks & Leisure Activities from the Nevada Humanities Committee, the state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities Committee, and the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District.