

ENTERTAINMENT

Music vets 'troop' back through R & B's doors

By John Stephens III
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Back after a long hiatus, members of TROOP say they're primed for a successful return to the saturated world of R & B.

"We're happy to be back," vocalist Jon Jon said. "The time is right to get back in the studio and get to work."

The five original members of Total Respect Of Other People attributed their long hiatus to soul-searching and finding a voice and place in the business.

"We began writing more of our own songs and producing our own music," said producer/arranger/writer and lead singer Lil' Steve, who along with Al, Rodney B and Reginald churned out hits like "All I Do is Think of You," "That's my

Attitude," "My Heart," "Mamacita" and "Whatever it Takes."

The Pasadena, Calif., natives described their sound, then as now, as "sensual, spiritual and Afrocentric." And their fourth album, "Mayday," promises more of the same.

Maturity and experience in the business, group members say, separates the new album, set for release June 16, from the older projects. Their first album, "Troop," sold more than 450,000 units; their sophomore release "Attitude" pushed more than 950,000 units and their third offering, "Deepa," just above 220,000 units.

The single "The Way I Parlay" was inspired by the group's desire to remind fans that they haven't gone

anywhere.

"It takes a lot of planning, money and resources to make it in this business," Lil' Steve said. "You have to have a desire to win."

The group draws on a wide reservoir of musical influences including pop icon Michael Jackson, the soulful Stevie Wonder, balladeer Whitney Houston, the Motown sound and country stars Dolly Parton and the late Reba McEntire.

After all, "music is universal," said Al, a writer and lead vocalist.

"I'm proud that Troop is out there bringing entertainment," Rodney B boasted. Added Jon Jon: "We're bringing the heat."

For more information on Troop, check out their web site at www.trooprecords.com.



TROOP

Armstrong, Winfrey among Time's 20th century entertainers

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK — Louis Armstrong and Oprah Winfrey joined Pablo Picasso, the late Frank Sinatra, Jim Henson and a host of others recognized by *Time* magazine for their contributions to 20th century culture.

The magazine's criterion in making these choices was not so much greatness as influence.

Trumpeter Louis Armstrong is cited for his dazzling virtuosity which, coupled with an innovative singing style, made him the source of an original American sound.

Oprah Winfrey's compassionate, intimate style changed the television talk-show format, the magazine said.

Picasso was both a master and a protean monster, with a hand in every art movement. Sinatra, who died recently, was a singer for the century who defined American pop with guts and by loving, brawling and acting his way through life.

Henson created the Muppets, talking puppets who have had a profound influence on children with such characters as Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy.

Soul singer Aretha Franklin was also recognized.

Artist Al Hirschfeld created the magazine's June 8 cover, which features caricatures of some of the 20 personalities, including comedian Lucille Ball, filmmaker Steven Spielberg and songwriter Bob Dylan.

Actor Marlon Brando and dancer Martha Graham, poet T.S. Elliot, The Beatles, designer Coco Chanel, actor Charlie Chaplin, the architect Le Corbusier, the musical team of Rodgers & Hammerstein and the composer Igor Stravinsky are other honorees.

Time's "People of the Century" is a two-year project with CBS News featuring television broadcasts and magazine issues celebrating the lives and legacies of 100 people.

CBS airs a program on the

personalities on Thursday.

The choices were made in consultation with public figures, academicians, journalists, political analysts and other experts.

Also, *Time* picked 10 top nonfiction books that have changed minds and lives in the past century.

The list includes Alex Haley's "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," Anne Frank's "The Diary of a Young Girl," and Dr. Benjamin Spock's "The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care."



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