

ENTERTAINMENT

COMBS TO RECEIVE BONUS, LIKELY MORE THAN \$50 MILLION

NEW YORK — Being a bad boy is doing Sean "Puffy" Combs nothing but good. The hip-hop producer and entertainer is due to receive a bonus of between \$40 million and \$45 million from media giant BMG, the parent company of his label Bad Boy Entertainment, *Newsweek* reports in its Aug. 17 issue. Another payment of between \$10 million and \$20 million will come later, industry sources told the magazine. Bad Boy Entertainment has sold more than \$100 million worth of music by Combs and artists such as the late Notorious B.I.G. and Total since he started the label five years ago. Combs hopes this is just the beginning of a long career in music, movies and publishing. "I'm trying to go where no young black man has gone before," he told the magazine. "And I pray to God that people are affected in a positive way by the things I do." He will soon star opposite Al Pacino in Oliver Stone's movie about pro football, "Any Given Sunday." Meanwhile, the *Daily News* reported Sunday that Combs has signed a deal with Ballantine Publishing for his autobiography, scheduled to hit bookshelves in the fall of 1999.



COMBS

GOSPEL SINGER STARTS FUND FOR BURNED CHURCHES

NEW YORK — Kirk Franklin sings to get people into church. Now he's going to help build them. The gospel artist and his record companies pledged \$250,000 Wednesday to a fund set up by the National Council of the Churches of Christ to help rebuild black churches in the South burned in a rash of arson fires. The money comes from anticipated sales of his new single, "Lean on Me," which features guest vocals from R. Kelly, Mary J. Blige, Crystal Lewis and Bono from U2. The newly written song — not the Bill Withers classic of the same name — encourages people to show their love for God by helping the needy on earth, Franklin said. Franklin, whose 1997 album "God's Property" was the biggest-selling gospel album in history, said his goal was to do more than just build churches. "What's even more important to me is that we start getting people going to the new churches," he said.



FRANKLIN

HENDRIX GUITAR NETS TOPS PRICE AT AUCTION

LONDON — A rare Gibson Sunburst guitar that rocker Jimi Hendrix used on the single "All Along the Watchtower" sold for \$32,600, topping the bidding at a musical auction. Hendrix's guitar had been expected to fetch double that price at Wednesday's sale, at which one of Eric Clapton's guitars went for \$8,000. Acetates of Elvis Presley's first recording sessions in 1954 achieved record prices. Presley's "That's All Right (Mama)" fetched \$27,000. Former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell's platform boots sold for three times the expected amount, bringing in \$1,800.

BERRY SAYS THREE DIVAS WORKED WELL TOGETHER

NEW YORK — Even though Halle Berry, Vivica A. Fox and Lela Rochon battle it out on screen in the soon-to-be released "Why Do Fools Fall in Love," there was no such competition on the set. "We got along wonderfully, and I think that's what makes me so proud about the project," Berry said at the movie's premiere Saturday night at the Urban World film festival. "So many people in the beginning said, 'Oh, you're going to have three divas, and they're going to be cutting each other's throats,'" she said. "We really loved each other and we supported one another and it makes me really proud we were able to come together in that way." "Why Do Fools Fall in Love" tells the story of three women who all claim to be the widow of 1950s singer Frankie Lyman, played by Larenz Tate. It opens at the end of the month.



BERRY

Russell receives awards, continues hard work

By Deborah Kohen
Sentinel-Voice

It's been a summer of bounty for activist-actress Kim Russell.

Russell was named recipient of the Nevada chapter of the National Organization for Women's Equality Now Award and the Nevada Arts Council's 1998 Artist's Fellowship Award for performing arts.

"I'm in awe of both organizations and honored by what they've given me," Russell said. "I'm flattered."

The equality award is given to citizens who champion the rights of women and children

and provide mentorship and support to future political activists. A member of NOW and of the Nevada Federation of Business and Professional Women, Russell is presently volunteer campaign manager for Louise Banks, a candidate for state assembly.

The arts council awards six \$5,000 fellowships a year to outstanding visual, literary and performing artists. Russell won for a one-woman show she wrote and has performed. "Sojourner Truth: I Sell the Shadow," recalls the life of the famous 19th century anti-slavery feminist.

She previously received a



KIM RUSSELL

Jackpot Grant and an artist's residency from the arts council. She also lectures at Our Lady of Las Vegas Catholic Church

and teaches adult acting classes at the West Las Vegas Arts Center.

Her theatrical career began in high school in Norton, Mass., with a lead role in the play "Camelot," followed by a summer theater program in upstate New York. In college, she studied stage light and sound design, graduating in the mid-70's from Chapman College in Orange, Calif., with a bachelor's in communications and theater. She later received a diploma from the KIIS Broadcasting School in Hollywood.

As a child, Russell attended (See Russell, Page 14)

Johnson's show latest late-night casualty

Special to Sentinel-Voice

LOS ANGELES — The late-night TV wars have claimed another victim.

After less than two months on the air, Earvin "Magic" Johnson's talk show was canceled last Thursday by Twentieth Television, which produced and distributed the show, because of low ratings.

"I've learned a lot from this experience," Johnson, a former Los Angeles Lakers star turned businessman, said in a statement. "We were improving with each day, but this is television and shows are canceled all the time for one reason or another."

The final original episode of "The Magic Hour" aired last Thursday night, with reruns expected to fill the time slot for the next four weeks.

Rick Jacobson, president of



MAGIC JOHNSON

Twentieth Television, canceled the hour-long talk show after consulting with station managers across the country.

The show had been enjoying its best ratings since its June 8 debut after comedian Tommy Davidson became Johnson's sidekick on July 20.

"The Magic Hour" became the third talk show in the past

year to be canceled after going up against network stalwarts "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno" on NBC and "Late Show with David Letterman" on CBS.

Both "The Keenen Ivory Wayans Show" and "Vibe," which made their premieres against each other last August, were pulled earlier this year. Together with "The Magic Hour," all three were trying to woo the young urban audience that Arsenio Hall had cultivated for more than five years, until his show's 1994 cancellation.

Producers of "The Magic Hour" had hoped to rely on Johnson's star power to attract viewers, but the show was hit hard with problems ranging from the host's obvious on-camera nervousness to a lack of chemistry with his original sidekick, comedian Craig

Shoemaker, who was fired after publicly criticizing the show.

Critics had pummeled the show ever since its debut. An Associated Press television critic described the show as "an irony-free zone and, so far, bereft of cutting-edge comedy."

On the final show Thursday night, Johnson was up front about getting the axe.

"And you know what they say, it's not over until the fat lady sings," he said. "Well, she's gonna have to sing tonight because this is it. 'The Magic Hour' is over?"

With that, a woman in a horned helmet began singing as confetti streamed onto the studio audience.

Johnson picked up a red-white-and-blue basketball and shot at a basket yards away.

He missed.

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