

ENTERTAINMENT

# Black promoters say industry stifling them

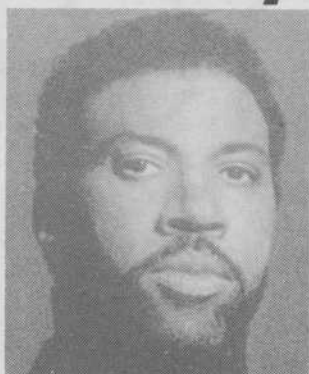
NEW YORK (AP)—Five black concert promoters allege in a \$700 million lawsuit that 11 major talent agencies and 29 promoters are conspiring to prevent them from promoting white performers and top-selling black acts.

The lawsuit, filed late last Thursday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, made both civil rights and antitrust claims against some of the biggest names in the business, including the William Morris Agency and Creative Artists Agency.

William Morris spokesman Don DeMesquita said the agency had no comment. A message left with CAA was not immediately returned.

The lawsuit said the plaintiffs — Leonard Rowe, Bernard Bailey, Jesse Roseman, Fred Jones Jr. and Lee King — are excluded from promoting major acts once they reach star status.

"The entrenched racism and exclusionary practices in the concert promotion



LIONEL RICHIE

industry ... are a repulsive vestige of another era," the lawsuit said.

The conspiracy "virtually eliminates competition among promoters which would lower prices and benefit artists and the public," it said.

The promoters, whose clients include Puff Daddy and Wu Tang Clan, said in the lawsuit that the unfairness affects the black business community since black-owned caterers, transportation and security companies are not hired.

It estimated that white concert promoters earn about \$200 million a year from



PRINCE

concerts of white and top black artists.

The lawsuit also contended that white promoters pressure booking agents to join in the conspiracy against black promoters.

As examples of how they were cheated, the black promoters said in the lawsuit that they once had promoted and nurtured the black music group, The Commodores, but were closed out of the promotion of the group's lead singer, Lionel Richie, when he began performing solo.

They said the same thing happened in the late 1970s when they promoted concerts



SEAN COMBS

by the Artist formerly known as Prince when he was the headlining act for another singer, Rick James. Once Prince became a celebrity, white promoters exclusively handled his concerts, according to the lawsuit.

The black promoters said in the lawsuit that they tried to raise the issue repeatedly with the defendants but were either refused a conversation or were ridiculed by defendants "laughing in plaintiffs' faces at the very suggestion of contracting with black promoters to promote concerts to be performed by white and major black artists."

# Ray Charles revisits roots to country music

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP) — Was Ray Charles out to change the world when he first breached the white bastion of country music 36 years ago? Was he making a political statement? Was he trying to help end discrimination?

"Oh no!" Charles, now 68, shouts during a telephone interview. "My God! What? Oh no! I don't think like that. My mind never goes there. I think only music, my friend. And I'm not being ridiculous, I'm being honest with you."

Still, intentionally or not, Charles showed the world something that was far from obvious in 1962: that music is colorblind. And measured against that triumph, his own blindness seems almost an afterthought.

Now music lovers have a chance to reflect on Charles' achievement through "The Complete Country and Western Recordings 1959-1986," a four-CD boxed set from Rhino Records that documents how the celebrated singer put his inimitable stamp on 92 country songs.

It begins with "Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music," a landmark recording that helped country music gain a national audience.

When Charles recorded an album of country music songs in 1962, he introduced vast numbers of blacks to country-western, and many whites to rhythm 'n' blues. Almost everybody loved his "Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music."

At the time, the 31-year-old Charles had been known primarily as a rhythm 'n' blues star with a largely black following.

He had risen to stardom after a string of hits, including *(See Charles, Page 11)*

# Denzel Washington's diverse roles adding to cinema legend

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*  
To watch Denzel Washington in action is to witness a true professional at work on his craft. During the course of his film career, Washington has consistently delivered an engaging array of performances that reflect the multi-layered aspects of black male life.

With a filmography that has virtually re-defined the role of leading black men in cinema, the actor has carved out a permanent niche for himself in the spotlight.

As Anthony Hubbard in his latest film, "The Siege" (from 20th Century Fox), Washington plays a FBI agent on the hunt for terrorism. Set in America's favorite city to destroy (New York), The Siege follows Hubbard on an urgent mission to solve a series of terrorist attacks that threaten to paralyze the nation with fear.

Adding to his dilemma is a wave of mass vigilantism directed towards Americans of Arab descent.

Although on the surface The Siege could be seen as simply another Hollywood razzle-dazzle blockbuster about terrorism, it actually delves deeper into the subject matter as it examines our attitudes and responses

towards cultures different from our own.

Starring with an A-list cast that includes Annette Bening, ("The American President"); Bruce Willis, ("Armageddon"); and character actor Tony Shalhoub (from the TV show "Wings"), Washington calls the film's juxtaposition of moral issue a key attraction to taking on this film.

"Let's face it, the issue of terrorism is certainly at the forefront of this nation's security concerns. However, what's interesting about my part is Hubbard's commitment to protecting all of his constituents, from external forces as well as each other. We, as Americans, historically have been quick to point the finger at one another instead of recognizing that we're all in this together", he said.



DENZEL WASHINGTON

"At its core what this film is trying to address is the need for the people on this planet to be more accepting of our differences and learning to work together. Now I know that sounds cliché, but it's true that as we head into a new millenium, people must work on ways to get along. Now I'm not saying that you have to like your neighbor, but do need to have greater respect for each other."

Although Washington, who will next star in the thriller "The Bone Collector," didn't become an actor to be on any soapbox, he does enjoy the opportunity that his work brings in addressing topical issues.

"I like to mix it up a little," he said. "Sometimes I do look for roles that can make a statement, but I like to have fun too. As an actor I'm paid to entertain, but if in the process I can give film audiences something to think about then that's good too."

**In other entertainment news...**

Throughout the '90s no

subject has been a greater source of conversation than the state of our relationships, particularly in the black community, where sadly they appear to be at an all time low. Well all's not lost.

"In the Garden of Our Dreams," (recently published by Kodansha International) Harold and Shirlee Haizlip share with readers a portrait of their nearly forty-year marriage. Told in alternating voices, the book is an intimate chronicle of the life that they've spent together, covering the good, the bad and everything in between. In the Garden of Our Dreams

speaks volumes about the power of the "endurance of commitment" we all seek in our lives. Consider it a must have.

It was a standing room only affair when Absolut Vodka unveiled it's traveling art exhibition, "Absolut Expressions" recently at the highly popular Georgia's restaurant. Connoisseurs of good taste (which included celebrities like Dorian Gregory, LisaRaye, Shemar Moore and Theresa Randal) had a great time mingled while enjoying the colorful celebration of African-American culture.

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FRI. & SAT.	NOV. 27th & 28th	John Earl's Boogie Man Band	9pm-12:40am
LATE NIGHT BLUES	FRIDAY & SATURDAY	John Ferris Blues Band	1am-4:40am
SUNDAY	NOV. 29th	Charlie Tuna's Good Cookin' Band	10pm-2am
MONDAY	NOV. 30th	Al Ek & The All-Star Jammin' Session	10pm-2am
TUESDAY	Dec. 1st	Jimmy Mack Blues Attack	10pm-2am
WEDNESDAY	Dec. 2nd	The Ruffnecks	10pm-2am

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