

## ENTERTAINMENT

## Rap producer steps into limelight

NEW YORK (AP) — With the growing number of hip-hop producers becoming platinum-selling artists, it's hard to believe Jermaine Dupri never wanted to get behind the mike himself.

After all, Dupri is a superstar among today's celebrity producers, and like Sean "Puffy" Combs and Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott, his celebrity status contributes more to record sales than the artists he produces.

It's hard to find a Dupri-produced track that doesn't feature his Southern drawl or a video that doesn't display his flashy, diamond-studded image.

Yet as the 26-year-old rises on the charts with the release of his first album, "Life in 1472," Dupri said it was with reluctance that he stepped fully into the limelight this year.

"I didn't want to do it, because I like being a producer—just being behind the scenes and watching the artists that I make become big," Dupri said in a recent interview.



JERMAINE DUPRI

But his growing popularity as a hit producer had fans — and, more important, music industry insiders—cajoling him to do otherwise.

"I just said, 'I'll just try it, just to see what's going to happen.' I ain't got nothing to lose."

Dupri has come a long way from the eager kid who got his start as a hip-hop dancer opening for acts like Whodini and Grandmaster Flash. In only a few years, he became one of the music industry's most sought-after producers.

Since the early 1990s, he has created hits for artists like Mariah Carey, Usher and

others, becoming so successful that he was given his own label, So So Def Records, by Columbia Records. He also discovered and produced acts like Kris Kross, Da Brat and Xscape.

He has produced some of this year's biggest singers, including Carey, Monica and Usher's platinum album, "My Way." Last year, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers named Dupri as Rhythm & Soul Music's "Songwriter of the Year."

Dupri's past work has ranged from fluffy pop (Carey's sweet and sentimental "Always Be My Baby") to funky soul (he produced and rapped on the sizzling remix of Dru Hill's "In My Bed," one of 1997's best sellers).

But "Life in 1472" shows an edgy side of Dupri. Primarily a rap album, it often plays like a raunchy, misogynist bragging fest, and thoroughly deserves its parental warning label.

"It's definitely different than any of my artists. I guess it's me," he says. "I think it's

going to be a shocker for a lot of people, 'cause it ain't as clean as a lot of people probably think that it should have been or that it probably would be, because I've been making big records like pop records, or whatever."

Dupri's clout in the industry is evident on "Life in 1472," which features a who's who of the rap world, including Mase, Jay-Z, Snoop Dogg, DMX and Da Brat. Carey also makes an appearance. On some songs, his guest stars are the main attraction, relegating Dupri to a secondary role.

"Usually a person would have been buggin' out about that, but I didn't care because I wanted the record to feel like everybody has that equal amount of input," he says.

Mase has become more than just a rapping duet partner for Dupri. Earlier this year, Dupri signed a deal with the platinum rapper, the brightest star on Combs' Bad Boy Entertainment label, giving him a record company of his own. Mase, who will remain an artist on Bad Boy, (See Dupri, Page 11)

## About some of the legendary ladies in sho biz

By Lanier

Special to Sentinel-Voice

RoseAnne Barr had Millie Jackson jet out to Tinseltown the week of January 4th, to guest star on her show for the second time around. If you recall, RoseAnne had Ms. "J" flown into Utah last year to tape a series of hilarious intros that were to be used in various show segments to introduce guests on subsequent airings of the "The RoseAnne Show" before the show was scheduled to hit national airwaves. This time around, the two talked and RoseAnne confessed that when she heard and saw Millie Jackson perform in her own inimitable sassy raunchy style way back in the 60's and 70's, it was Millie's unabashed style that inspired her to become the type of performer she so successfully became.

During the course of the interview she also gave Millie credit for influencing the style of a number of other outspoken female entertainers and recording artists including Bette Midler and Lil Kim. Then she had Millie sing her latest house rocking recording of "You Ain't Killing Me The Way I Wanna Die". The segment

of "The RoseAnne Show" with Millie Jackson as a guest performer was scheduled for immediate airing after it was taped and will be seen in various cities across the country on various days and times. So stay tuned into the "RoseAnne Show" to catch RoseAnne Barr and Millie Jackson together!!

We had a chance to chat briefly with actress/comedienne LaWanda Page shortly after the new year got underway. Perhaps our recent conversation with Ms. Page can help put to rest the rampant rumors and street corner conversations that've been circulating around for more than a year claiming that LaWanda Page had died.

Take it from me now, the former network sitcom star who coined the phrase, "watch it sucker" while giving Fred Sanford 'the blues' in her role as his sister-in-law 'Aunt Esther' on nationally syndicated "Redd Foxx Show" that's now in reruns on Black Entertainment Television (BET), is very much alive and kicking here in Tinseltown!!

On the other side of the coin and during her absence

from celebrity gatherings, events, celebrity guest appearances, etc., LaWanda had to have one of her shapely legs amputated below the knee. She then spent close to a year recuperating from the operation in the Screen Actors Retirement facilities.

Now about the current commercial featuring LaWanda Page pitching 'chittlins' that one sees on Black Entertainment Television (BET). This hilarious television commercial was made after her leg surgery (with the magic of cameras) close to a year ago in Detroit.

We're happy to report she's home now with a nurse attending to her. And the way we see it, a bunch of cards and flowers from 'Aunt Esther' fans around the country would certainly help cheer up a lady who brought so much laughter into our lives while she was on "The Redd Foxx Show". Send all cards and flowers to LaWanda Page, 1056 West 84th Street, Los Angeles, California 90044.

JoMarie Payton, best know to TV audiences as Harriette Winslow on the popular sitcom "Family

Matters," recently inked a record deal with Chartmaker Jazz, a division of Chartmaker Music Group. Her debut jazz CD for the label titled, "Southern Shadows," is scheduled for release later this month.

Payton, a former nightclub and stage performer, recorded a collection of popular standards and several original titles including, "This Masquerade," "Teach Me Tonight," "I'm Glad There Is You" and "What A Difference A Day Makes," a signature song by the late Dinah Washington that now has Payton's signature stamp. Her new CD features contemporary jazz great Gerald Albright and pianist-arranger Billy Mitchell, who also served as producer of the project.

Payton, who was raised in Opa-locka, Florida, arrived in Los Angeles in the mid-1970's with the national touring company of the musical comedy, "Purlie." Although "Purlie" was scheduled to begin an overseas tour to Paris, Payton decided to stay in Los Angeles to pursue a career in television.

(See Ladies, Page 11)

## Annual cultural arts festival around the corner

Catisha Marsh  
Sentinel-Voice

The Walker African-American Museum and Research Center is hosting its 6th Annual African-American Cultural Arts Festival Feb. 6-7, at Doolittle Community Center, 1950 N. J Street. The festival will run from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

Sponsored in part by Nevada Bell, the festival will feature food, arts and crafts, gifts, entertainment, and more. In addition to local government agencies will also be on hand providing services.

The annual festival, held outdoors for the last three years, is meant to highlight the diversity of African-American culture. Museum president Gwen Walker is encouraging Las Vegas to come out.

"People say to themselves, 'It's on the Westside. I don't want to be around all those black folks,'" she said. "But they've got to realize that the event is so enriching. We've never had any problems either."

The festival serves a two-fold purpose—bring Las Vegans together to celebrate black history and to raise funds for a museum Walker wants to build to house her extensive collection of dolls, along with books and black memorabilia, and which would serve as a community resource. She needs \$1 million to build a permanent facility. Many of the items earmarked for the museum are stored in Walker's home.

"We need more room," Walker said. "We also want to have an extensive geneological research site in house, so we don't have to go to other groups' libraries to discover our own history." In April, Walker said the museum will launch a web site.

"We're struggling. We're small," she said of the amount of money raised. "But we just may see some profit this year."

Besides the festival, the museum publishes the Black Pioneer Booklet which highlights the contributions of Nevadans of African descent. Honorees receive gifts at the festival.

Those interested in more information on vending can call 647-2242 or 399-2226. Those interested in performing can call 593-8998 or 642-8748.

4th Annual  
Black History Scholarship Fundraiser  
Wine Tasting, Spirits & JazzSaturday, January 30, 1999  
7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.Student Lounge at the  
CCSN Cheyenne Campus  
3200 East Cheyenne Avenue

## SILENT AUCTION

Featuring art by Charles Bibbs  
and contemporary jazz group  
"Color Coated Brown"

## Evening Attire

\$20.00 per person advance purchase  
\$25.00 at the doorTickets can be purchased at the Horn Theatre  
Box Office or by calling 651-4440 or 651-5074Sponsored by: Starbucks • Pahump Valley Vineyards  
Southern Wine & Spirits of Nevada • Coors of Las Vegas  
Brothers Brewing Company • Trinity Black Art Gallery  
MUST BE 21 YEARS OLD TO ATTEND!