

ENTERTAINMENT

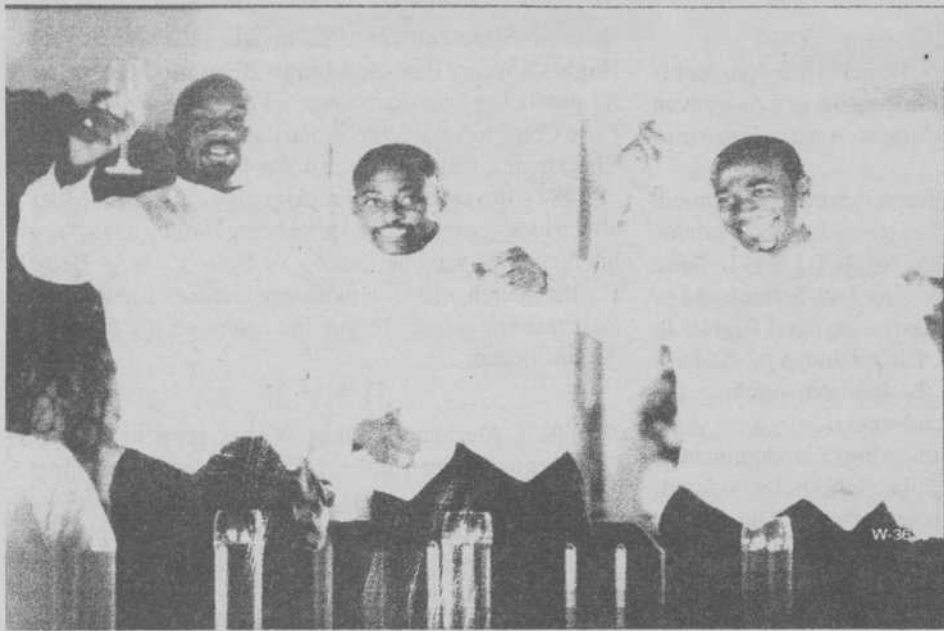


Photo special to Sentinel-Voice by Nicola Goode

(Left to right) Richard T. Jones, Omar Epps and Taye Diggs star in "The Wood."

'The Wood' flawed, but enjoyable

Tammy D. McMahan
Special to Sentinel-Voice

What would you call a movie that's a heaping cup of *Trippin'*, a pinch of *Love Jones* and a dash of *Boyz in the Hood*?

I would call it *The Wood*. This tale of friendship's bond is formulaic, but, on occasion, actors Omar Epps and Sean Nelson, who, respectively, portray the character Mike in his late 20's and in his teenage years, rise above the by-the-numbers story and give substantial performances.

The Wood begins on the wedding day of Roland (Taye Diggs). However, the groom has a bad case of cold feet and he's nowhere to be found.



RICK FAMUYIWA

As a result, his friends Mike (Omar Epps) and Slim (Richard T. Jones) are forced to go looking for him. They discover him, in a drunken stupor, at the home of his old girlfriend Tanya (Tamala

Jones).

As Mike and Slim attempt to sober Roland up and summon his marital courage, the three reminisce about their longstanding friendship that began in Inglewood, affectionately called "The Wood."

The standout performances in this film belong to Omar Epps and Sean Nelson. Both actors seem so comfortable in their roles as Mike it's as if they lived the character's life.

Epps beautifully blended wisdom, compassion, wit and mischief to create a character who is a good guy, but certainly not bland. Sean (See Wood, Page 9)

Hill's tour arrives at MGM

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Grammy award winning artist Lauryn Hill is bringing her 1999 tour to Las Vegas, Saturday, July 24 at 8 p.m. at the MGM Grand Hotel/Casino. Playing to sold-out audiences throughout North America and Europe this year, Hill is touring with a full band, a DJ, and the critically acclaimed alternative hip-hop group The Roots.

Robert Hilburn of the *Los Angeles Times* said, "If 1998 was the year of Hill on record, this may be remembered as the year of Hill on stage. Hill didn't just live up to the enormous expectation level surrounding her these days; she far exceeded it, in what may be the most accomplished tour ever by a hip-hop artist. Though there were some moments in the show that were beautifully tender, the general tone was as intense and funk-driven as anything we've seen in pop since the glory days of



LAURYN HILL

Prince."

Delighting critics across the globe, "Hill killed them softly, funkily and every other way imaginable with her songs...Her studio wizardry has brought her much-deserved acclaim. Onstage, she's starting to work on mass affection," said Steve Jones in the February 22 issue of the *USA Today*.

Hill's tour comes at the end of a successful and productive year, when her quintuple platinum selling album, *The Miseducation of*

Lauryn Hill, made hip-hop history. Her solo debut album received 10 Grammy Award nominations and won in half the categories she was nominated for. This accomplishment garnered more Grammys for Lauryn than any other female artist in a single Grammy voting period, breaking the record for most female Grammy wins set by Carole King in 1971.

Tickets went on sale at the MGM Grand Garden box office, priced at \$71, \$51 and \$36. Also available at all Ticketmaster locations (Tower Records, Smith's Food & Drug Centers, Robinsons-May stores and select Warehouse locations), a portion of the proceeds from ticket sales will be donated on behalf of Ms. Hill to The Refugee Camp Youth Project. Tickets may be charged by phone by calling 474-4000 or online by logging onto www.ticketmaster.com.

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