

# Multitalented Hill delivers command performance

Catisha Marsh  
Sentinel-Voice

Quintuple platinum album seller, five-time Grammy Award winner, Billboard's R&B Album of the Year winner, the NAACP President Awardee and recipient of a 1999 ESSENCE Award, Lauryn Hill was totally off the meter at the MGM Grand Garden Arena Saturday.

Or for those of you who aren't familiar with that lingo, Hill "rocked the house."

And for those who still don't understand, Hill delivered a thoroughly engaging, enjoyable, and dynamic performance, unparalleled by any hip hop artist or act to date.

It was even better than the Roots show at the Hard Rock, and I like the Roots—a lot.

But wait! As if anticipating that she and the Roots would run neck in neck as the greatest live hip hop acts of all time, Lauryn canceled out the need for comparison. She just had the Roots open her show.

Promptly at 8 p.m., five members of the latter group walked out on stage playing cowbells after the opening intro from their album, *Things Fall Apart*, boomed out over the mega sound system.

They transitioned right into "The Next Movement", one of my favorite cuts from the latest cd and moved from one dope beat to the next, adding interesting new twists and distinctive sounds to familiar songs. The Roots have an uncanny ability to sound fresh and look as if they're performing for the first time, even though they've been on tour for seven years or so.

Of course, the group's showstopper is Scratch, the Human Turntable.

"I'm from the old school," said concertgoer Lucius Allen



LAURYN HILL

who came from Gary, Indiana with wife Angela. "They're young hip hop guys, so I wasn't expecting for them to put me in the groove, but they did. I expected them to curse and swear and bring me down, but I could've brought my son to this."

After a 40-minute intermission, the main attraction was ready.

They played the intro to the *Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*—the one where the teacher is taking attendance, gets to Hill's name and has to repeat it because she's skipped school. When the curtains came up, you saw a huge backdrop that reminded you of Egyptian papyrus with a map of Africa in the center and all-seeing eyes forming a runner across the top of it.

Then, a slew of 16 musicians bumrushed the instruments that had been carefully placed all over the stage.

The audience roared.

She started with the "Ex Factor" with a new arrangement. She then moved into "Superstar," as she walked about the stage in some outrageously funky snakeskin boots, a blue denim

shirt and white jeans that belled out right below the calves. Levi's sponsored the tour, thus, the denim, I supposed, but somehow, Hill looked and sounded so great that she didn't need a sequined ball gown to bring down the house.

Next Hill took us back to the songs that made her a household name, "Ooh La La La," the duet she did with Nas, "If I Ruled The World," and "Ready or Not," from her days with the Fugees. She sang "Every Ghetto, Every City," "Final Hour," and "Lost Ones," where the bass thumped in my throat and chest. She then thanked the audience, the Roots, and God and used the opportunity to sing a spiritual. She delivered a powerful message that resonated with the fans.

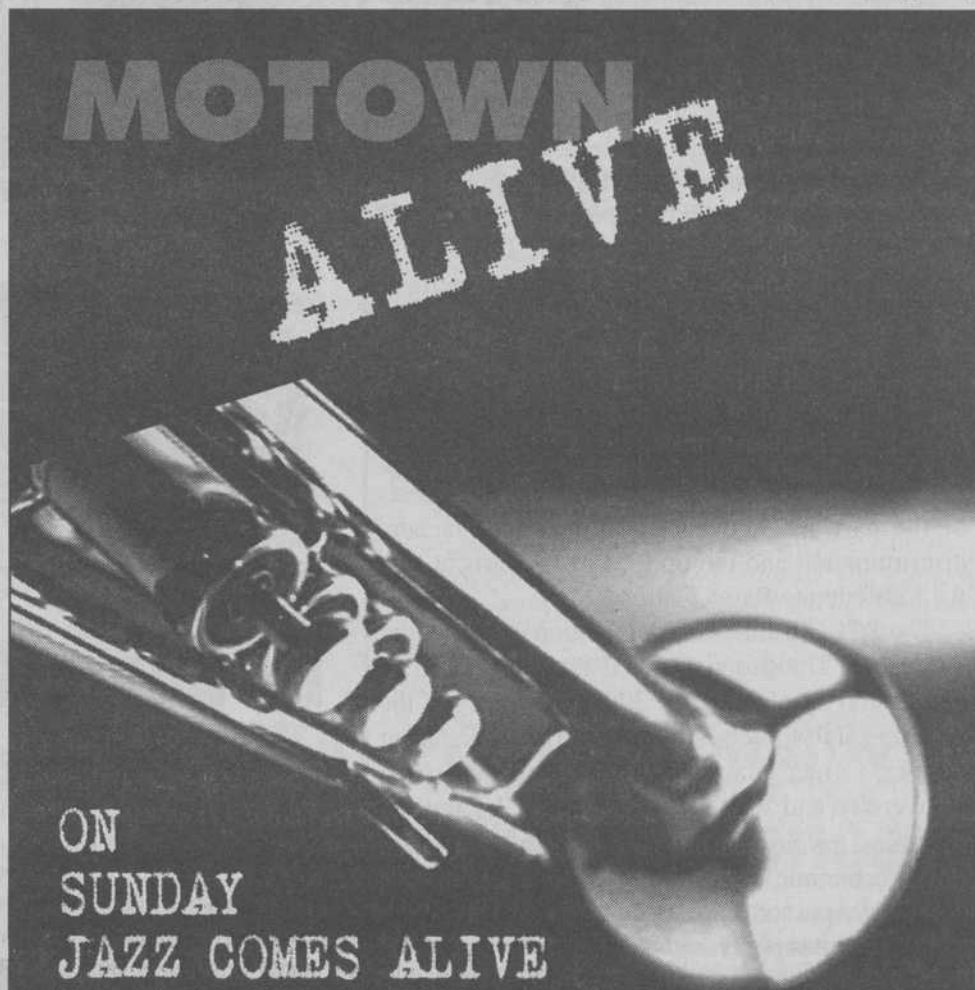
"You've got to do what pleases God, not man," she said. The crowd agreed judging by the roar that drowned out the trailing end of her commentary. She introduced the musicians and deejays.

Hill's showstopper had to be the battle between her band and her deejays. Hill sided with the band and started the

face off with the Jackson 5's "I Want You Back," but changing the words to "dis" the two deejays. One deejay responded by playing the beat from "You Wanna Be Startin' Something" and then freaked off by mixing in "When

Doves Cry." Hill and the band answered with a rendition of Stevie Wonder's "Master Blaster" The other deejay responded to that with the beat from "Uptown Baby," mixed into "Hollywood Swinging," and

then that funky, bottom-out bass headbanger from Dr. Dre. Hill wouldn't be put off, though. She came back with "You Going Down" using the melody from the Rose Royce hit "I'm Going Down." Then (See Hill, Page 16)



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## Singing duo still going strong after 30 years

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr. say they're still going strong after 30 years of marriage.

The couple, who met as members of The Fifth Dimension in 1967 and later won a Grammy as a duo for "You Don't Have To Be A Star," celebrates their anniversary on July 26.

"I credit our friendship. We went into this marriage like everyone else—we loved each other, we were friends, we fought and we had emotional problems," Davis said Wednesday.

"But our commitment to each other was so strong that we just didn't want to do it without each other. Plus, we have the Lord in our lives, and that's an important part of our relationship."

Ms. McCoo said starting off as friends was



Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr.

a big part of their success. "You can't spend this many years with another person if you don't like them," she said.