

ENTERTAINMENT



STAPLE ART

Rock n' Roll Hall of Famer Mavis Staples of the Staple Singers will perform 8 p.m., Saturday at the Clark County Government Center Amphitheater, 500 Grand Central Parkway. Tickets are \$8 in advance, \$10 at the gate and children under 12 are free. Those interested can call 455-8200

Gospel festival to fund college scholarships

John T. Stephens III  
Sentinel-Voice

Three of the nation's most influential and recognized African-American organizations have pulled their resources together to help young Blacks who cannot afford to go to college.

The United Negro College Fund, Congress of National Black Churches and National Urban League plan to host the first Gospel Festival College on Black Entertainment Television on from 7 to 11 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 26.

Hosts for the gala are gospel singers Shirley Caesar and Edwin Hawkins, television host Bobby Jones and singer-actor Lou Rawls. Slated for performances are Kirk Franklin and Nu Nation, Take Six, Yolanda Adams, Peabo Bryson, Denice Williams, Regina Belle, Fred Hammond and Radical for Christ.

"Efforts such as this historical collaboration are the keys to ensuring that our youth are prepared financially and spiritually to meet the academic challenges that will prepare them for success in the new millennium," said Hugh B. Price, President

and CEO of the National Urban League. "The ties that bind gospel music, education, and our community are historic and enduring," said Sullivan Robinson, executive director of the Congress of National Black Churches. "All three are rooted in the black church."

The Congress of National Black Churches represents more than 65,000 churches nationwide with a congregation of more than 20 million. Its purpose is to promote charity and fellowship among denominations to strengthen their outreach into the community.

Founded in 1910, the National Urban League is a non-profit community based, 115 affiliate in 34 states operation which has been the premier voice on education for kindergarten through 12th-grade African-Americans.

The United Negro College Fund is a consortium of 39 private historically Black colleges and universities that administer 450 educational programs that help college students with higher education and career opportunities. More than 300,000 men and women have graduated from its academic institutions.

Jones

(Continued from Page 1) time.

As for the highlights, on opening night of the three night taping, Bobby Jones and New Life performed a rendition of "What the World Needs Now is Love" in which New Life's newest member "Lydia," a native of Detroit who is well known in the gospel music industry and on stage for her exalting vocals, took center stage and delivered. As the song ended and the group exited stage right, Dr. Jones passed the microphone to the incomparable, song stylist extraordinaire, Miss Nancy Wilson. The smooth, mellow, silky sounds of her voice held us in the palm of her hand. He then brought Lydia back to the stage with a microphone of her own. Absolutely awesome and totally moving would be the best description for what took place. There was not a closed heart in the room of 600-700 people.

And then on closing night as Dr. Jones made his way through the audience during the taping, he paused a moment to testify of God's goodness relative to the healing that was taking place for gospel great Vanessa Bell Armstrong. Vanessa had shown up on Sunday with an involuntary facial disfiguration. Bobby called upon Shirley Caesar, renown singer and pastor of Mt. Calvary Word of Faith Pentecostal Church in Raleigh, NC., to pray for Vanessa's total recovery. As Evangelist Caesar prayed, everyone stood with Holy hands lifted to the heavens above and Vanessa. Our hearts and minds were then further moved by the anointed spirit of Yolanda Adams via the gift of spoken word, followed by Vicki Winans,



Nancy Wilson and Shirley Murdock. In the words of Dr. Bobby Jones, "it was an experience I thought I would never see in a lifetime!"

The Diamond Festival provided very informative, 2 part, day-long sessions on both Monday and Tuesday, complete with mid day luncheons that were both enlightening and entertaining. The luncheons were less formal by way of mood, yet upscale in decor. The primary focus of the festival is to provide a platform for TV programmers, producers, and talent. Major recognition was given to the major television networks who have recently launched, along with those scheduled to launch, with the purpose of offering wholesome, Christian entertainment to the world. Upcoming films, talk shows, and video shows were also showcased in the same arena.

"Thanks to Dr. Jones, visitors get a chance to see another side of Vegas along with the fact that there are people here who actually do worship the Lord Jesus Christ, not just the ching-ching of the slots," replies Del Campbell, host of several gospel music segments aired on KCEP, Power 88. "With a population of over one million, 4 stations present Christian programming in Las Vegas, two offer Christian Contemporary Music, one of which is talk."

Del's prayer is that the influx of people and the growth of the city will break the barriers that separate Christian Contemporary from Gospel Music, which Campbell links to an old fashioned Southern style of racism in many cases.

All in all, The Bobby Jones Gospel Explosion is the perfect place to expose and discover unsigned and



Sentinel-Voice photos by John Broussard

(Above left) Gospel guru Bobby Jones and Albertina Walker share a duet. (Below left) Songstress Shirley Caesar blesses the crowd with her vocals. (Above) Participants revel in the good spirits.

unknown talent. In fact, many artists worldwide credit Bobby Jones with being the vehicle that delivered them to the doorsteps of stardom in the gospel music genre. As for the Diamond Festival, at the very least, it offers a wide

array of industry knowledge, awareness and networking.

Leaving Las Vegas to take the sweet sounds of gospel music to both Japan and Africa, The Bobby Jones Gospel Explosion is set to return to Las Vegas just in

time to kick off the glorious holiday season. So mark your calendars for the 2nd week of December 1999, should you desire to partake in the appreciation of gospel music's best and praise the Lord.

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