

Entertainment Briefs

SINGER ETTA JAMES GETS WALK OF FAME STAR

LOS ANGELES (AP) - R&B singer Etta James had no reason to sing the blues Friday as Hollywood honored her with a star on the Walk of Fame. James, 65, is perhaps best known for her 1960 version of "At Last" and is considered an influence on such singers as Diana Ross, Janis Joplin and Bonnie Raitt. This year she was among the recipients of lifetime achievement awards from the Grammy organization, and won an award for best jazz vocal performance in 1995 for the song "Mystery Lady," from a tribute album to the late Billie Holiday. Nicknamed "Matriarch of the Blues," her other hit songs include "All I Could Do Was Cry," "My Dearest Darling," "Trust in Me" and "Tell Mama." Born Jamesetta Hawkins, the singer was discovered in 1954 by bandleader Johnny Otis in San Francisco, who helped her become a teen singing star. Her song "Roll With Me Henry" from that year raised eyebrows with its saucy, sexy lyrics. Her star was the 2,223 on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

PIANIST BOBBY SHORT HOSPITALIZED IN LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES - Bobby Short checked himself into a hospital and canceled a pair of concerts after a weak spell during a Beverly Hills shopping trip, his publicist said Friday. The 78-year-old pianist was in fair condition at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, publicist Virginia Wicks said. "He's going through an awful lot of tests," Wicks said. "Some of them are very difficult. But he's holding up just fine. I believe they think he'll be there for another three or four days. Then he'll get back to New York." The singer-pianist has been performing at New York's chic Cafe Carlyle for over 35 years, specializing in the sophisticated songs of Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Duke Ellington, George Gershwin, Noel Coward, Jimmy McHugh, Nacio Herb Brown and others. He's never missed a gig, but had to cancel a pair of concerts Thursday and Friday at the private California Club in Los Angeles and the Cerritos Center in neighboring Orange County. Short was leaving the Louis Vuitton store on North Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills on Thursday when "he began to feel extremely weak," Wicks said. He was steadied by a friend, she said, but never lost consciousness. After arriving at his hotel, a physician advised him to go to the hospital. Short was awake and alert at the hospital, but "very upset" he had to cancel the concerts, the first he's missed since he began his show business career at age 12.

REID: BLACK AMERICANS MUST CHANGE TELEVISED PERCEPTIONS

BALTIMORE (AP) - Black Americans should take control of their image in the media, actor Tim Reid says. Reid, 58, best known for his TV roles on "WKRP in Cincinnati," "Simon & Simon" and "Frank's Place," has since created studios in Virginia that produce movies, documentaries and television shows with more richly drawn black characters. "I'm not sure black folks fully understand the power that media has in our life," Reid said Wednesday at Morgan State University. "We are becoming who they portray us as being. We've allowed ourselves to become a collection of negative statistics. Simon says dress like a gangster, and we do." Reid gave the keynote address at the historically black university's first Communication Day. "I'm amazed by what I see on television or in the movies," he said. "I'm saying, either I overslept or someone stole my culture."

TONI BRAXTON TO JOIN CAST OF 'AIDA' BROADWAY MUSICAL

NEW YORK (AP) - Toni Braxton is graduating from Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" to "Aida." The sultry-voiced singer will join the cast of "Aida," the long-running, Disney-produced Broadway musical June 30 for a limited four-month engagement. Braxton, whose hits include "Breathe Again," "Un-Break My Heart" and "He Wasn't Man Enough," previously starred as Belle in the Broadway edition of "Beauty and the Beast" in 1998. "Aida," which has a score by Elton John and Tim Rice, opened at Broadway's Palace Theatre in March 2000. Set in ancient Egypt, it tells the love story of the Nubian princess Aida, sold into slavery, and her love for a handsome soldier, Radames.

ENTERTAINMENT

Run-DMC tops VHI's greatest hip-hop acts

NEW YORK (AP) - The pioneering rap group Run-DMC tops VHI's list of the 50 greatest hip-hop acts, which includes Tupac Shakur, Nelly, Sean "P. Diddy" Combs and MC Hammer. Run-DMC's Darryl McDaniels told The Associated Press he's humbled by the music channel's choice. The complete list was revealed Friday during a "50 Greatest Hip-Hop Artists" special. "What Run-DMC always wanted to do," McDaniels said last week, "was represent hip-hop the way it should be represented."

Rounding out the top 10 is Public Enemy, Shakur, the Notorious B.I.G., LL Cool J, Eminem, Dr. Dre, Grandmaster Flash, Salt-N-Pepa and Jay-Z.

McDaniels said if he were compiling the list, Public Enemy would be No. 1 because the politically charged group "said something with (rap). A lot of these cats now coming into the business, they are about show business."

He said he also would have put fellow old-school rappers Slick Rick and Doug E. Fresh near the top; they didn't make



The late DJ Jam Master Jay, left, with his fellow pioneering rap group members Darryl McDaniels, center, and Joseph "Run" Simmons in this file photo. Run-DMC received the honor as the greatest hip-hop act of the top 50 groups by VHI.

the list at all.

Run-DMC - McDaniels, Joseph "Run" Simmons and DJ Jam Master Jay, or Jason Mizell - helped take rap mainstream with multiplatinum records and hits including "It's Tricky," and "Walk This

Way" with Aerosmith in the 1980s.

Mizell, 36, was shot to death in his Queens, N.Y., recording studio in October. His killing remains unsolved. McDaniels said: "We'll try to, in the remembrance of

Jam Master Jay and everybody before us... keep it real."

Other acts who made the list include The Roots, Lil' Kim, the Beastie Boys, Ja Rule, Afrika Bambaataa, De La Soul, Missy Elliott and Queen Latifah.

Vandross recovering from stroke in New York

NEW YORK (AP) - Well-wishers were hoping for a speedy recovery for Grammy-winning singer Luther Vandross, who suffered a stroke earlier this week. A spokeswoman declined to discuss the extent of his illness.

Vandross, who turns 52 on Sunday, was resting comfortably in a New York hospital after suffering the stroke Wednesday at his Manhattan home, said Lois Najarian, a spokeswoman at his record label, J Records.

Najarian declined to discuss whether the R&B singer's motor skills had been impaired or the extent of the stroke. She also declined to name the hospital where Vandross was being treated.

A statement from his man-



Luther Vandross accepts his award for favorite soul or R&B male artist at the 29th American Music Awards in Los Angeles, Jan. 9, 2002.

agement said family and friends were hopeful for a speedy recovery. A source close to the singer described the stroke as serious, but said Vandross was conscious.

Najarian said the singer

had been in good health and recently completed work on a new album.

Vandross, who has suffered from hypertension and diabetes, has long battled weight problems. At one

point, he weighed more than 330 pounds.

"Rumors about my health always surface," he told The Associated Press in 2001, "because people see the weight fluctuations."

Vandross said in the interview that since he had lost weight through diet and exercise. However, he recently gained weight again.

Vandross, whose deep silky voice has anchored romantic hits such as "Here and Now," "A House Is Not a Home" and "Any Love," has sold about 20 million albums in the United States.

Vandross won four Grammy Awards in the 1990s. His new album, "Dance With My Father," was scheduled for a June 10 release.

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