

ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment Briefs

BILLIE HOLIDAY FOCUS OF ARTS CENTER MUSICAL

"The Life Story of Billie Holiday," a documusical based on Holiday's autobiography and performed by Jennie Mistie's Platinum Plus Revue, will be presented at the West Las Vegas Arts Center, located at 947 West Lake Mead Boulevard, on Saturday, June 12, at 3 p.m. Admission is free, but restricted to those age 17 and older. Billie Holiday revolutionized music with her intense, deeply personalized interpretations and experimentation with beat and melody. She began performing in the early 1930s and experienced considerable success into the '40s, but her emotional life was in turmoil. She passed away at the young age of 44 in 1959. Ironically, she has had perhaps more influence since her death, and the majority of her recorded music has been reissued. The program is presented by the Cultural Affairs Division of the city of Las Vegas Department of Leisure Services.

GOSPEL SINGER CROUCH GETS STAR ON HOLLYWOOD WALK

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Grammy-winning gospel singer Andrae Crouch has claimed a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, calling the tribute "another open door to tell people about Jesus." As the star was unveiled Friday, Crouch's gospel choir sang to a crowd of about 400, which included Marilyn McCoo, Billy Davis Jr., state Sen. Richard Alarcon and Jean-Luc Sibiude, consul general of France. Crouch, 61, joins fellow gospel artists Mahalia Jackson and the Rev. James Cleveland on the Walk of Fame. His was the 2,256th star awarded on the celebrity sidewalk. Crouch plans to release "Mighty Wind," an album featuring guest appearances by Marvin Winans and Fred Hammond, later this year. He has won six Grammys for gospel performances and one for a pop-contemporary gospel album.

REV. SHARPTON JOINING CNBC AS COMMENTATOR

NEW YORK (AP) - Rev. Al Sharpton is joining CNBC as a political commentator for its coverage of the upcoming Democratic and Republican National Conventions, the network announced last week. The outspoken civil rights leader and former candidate for the 2004 presidential nomination will share his views on "Capital Report," "Dennis Miller" and the new "McEnroe" (scheduled to premiere in July), among other CNBC shows. "Having run for the Democratic nomination, Rev. Sharpton brings to our viewers an insider's perspective on presidential politics," said Cheryl Gould, supervisor of CNBC's political coverage. Sharpton, a 49-year-old New York native, was ordained as a minister when he was 10, and has long reigned as a social activist and media personality. In December, he was guest host of "Saturday Night Live."

JANET JACKSON ADMITS TO ACTIVE SEXUAL MIND

NEW YORK (AP) - Long before she exposed her right breast to the world during the Super Bowl halftime show, Janet Jackson says she had thoughts about sex. "As I've gotten older, I've come to realize that I had a very active sexual mind at a very young age. I hope that doesn't sound bad," Jackson tells Blender magazine for its June/July issue. "My first crush was on Barry Manilow. He performed on television, and I remember taping it. When no one was around, I used to kiss the screen." Jackson also recalls having a "major crush" on Teddy Pendergrass when she was 12. "I thought he was singing to me," says the singer, now 38. "When you're a kid, you have little fantasies, but I saw myself being with him as an adult, not as a kid." Now, Jackson says she expresses more grown-up urges through one of her alter egos, named Strawberry: "She's the most sexual of them all, the wildest." The other character living inside her is Damita Jo, which is her middle name and the title of her latest album. Damita Jo, she says, is "a lot harsher, and quick to put you in your place."

Rashad wins historic award at Tony's

NEW YORK (AP) - By winning the Tony for best actress in a play, Phylicia Rashad completed a journey started by Claudia McNeil more than four decades ago in the first production of "A Raisin in the Sun."

On Sunday, Rashad became the first Black actress to win a Tony for a dramatic leading role.

She took home Broadway's highest honor for her portrayal of Lena Younger, the tough-minded matriarch of Lorraine Hansberry's landmark drama.

"Often I've wondered what does it take for this to happen. And now I know. It takes effort and grace, tremendous self-effort and amazing grace," said Rashad.

"And in my life that grace has taken numerous forms. The first was the family into which I was born, parents who loved and wanted me, and a mother who fought fearlessly, courageously, consistently so that her children above all else could realize their full potential as human beings."

Rashad appears in a revival of the play that also stars hip-hop mogul Sean "P. Diddy" Combs in his Broadway debut, and Sanaa Lathan



Actress Phylicia Rashad accepts the 2004 Tony Award on Sunday for best leading actress in a play for 'A Raisin in the Sun' at The American Theater Wing's 58th Annual Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall in New York City.

and Audra McDonald—who won her fourth Tony in 10 years Sunday for her featured performance as the hardworking wife of Combs' character.

In 1960, McNeil, who originated the role of Lena, was the first Black woman

nominated for a Tony in a dramatic leading role. She lost to Anne Bancroft in "The Miracle Worker."

Three years later, McNeil received her second nomination, this time for "Tiger Tiger Burning Bright," but Uta Hagen took the prize for

"Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

Over the years, such actresses as Bea Richards, Diana Sands, Anna Deavere Smith, Mary Alice and Leslie Uggams were nominated in the leading actress-in-a-play category.

None won, although Uggams did triumph in 1968 for her role in the musical "Hallelujah, Baby!" (a tie with Patricia Routledge for "Darling of the Day") and Mary Alice won the featured-actress play prize in 1987 for "Fences."

Numerous Black actresses have won in the lead and featured musical categories, including Virginia Capers, who portrayed Lena in "Raisin," a musical version of "A Raisin in the Sun."

Three Black actors have received the top acting prize. James Earl Jones has taken the Tony twice - in 1969 for "The Great White Hope" and again in 1987 for August Wilson's "Fences."

South African actors John Kani and Winston Ntshona jointly won in 1975 for their work in "Sizwe Bansi is Dead" and "The Island."

A composed Rashad concluded her acceptance speech by saying: "I thank God for everything, every single thing ... and for this."

P. Diddy

(Continued from Page 7) womenswear nominee Ralph Rucci.

"I've admired his clothes for so long, and I started to buy some. Then he asked me to be his date. I'm honored to be his date," said Stewart, wearing a White satin jacket and Black cigarette pants.

Susan Sarandon wore a full-length magenta gown with a lace overlay to present Donna Karan with her lifetime achievement award. "Donna's clothes don't wear you, they embrace you," Sarandon said.

Actress Bernadette Peters also wore one of Karan's designs, a Black off-the-shoulder cocktail dress. "After 19 years, I knew this was a good dress," she said.

Other winners included hat designer Eugenia Kim, Wall Street Journal fashion reporter Teri Agins, Miuccia Prada and photographer Irving Penn.

Tom Ford, the former Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent designer, received a special tribute from the CFDA board of directors for the sizzle, sex

appeal, hard work, business sense and imagination he brought to the runway.

Ford said he'd been lucky

enough in his 20-year career to receive a few awards but this was the first time he'd taken the time to savor one.

However, he did use the word "temporary" at least once when referring to his retirement.

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