

# LaBelle enjoying interest from modern-day artists

DENVER (AP) — Singer Patti LaBelle said she takes it as a compliment when younger musicians like Nelly and Kelly Rowland take on her music.

"Whenever they do my songs, I know I'm in the land of the living," she said outside Michael Jordan's party this weekend before Denver's NBA All-Star game.

Jordan, who threw the party to launch the Air Jordan XX, planted a kiss on the rhythm 'n' blues diva on the red carpet. Fans cheered LaBelle, whose latest hip-hop collaboration resulted in a video with Outkast.

Before the party, LaBelle, who lost three sisters to cancer before they were 44, received an award from the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. She has worked with a number of charitable organizations on issues like cancer, AIDS, diabetes and Alzheimer's.

"Thank God people are listening," LaBelle said.



Legendary R&B songstress Patti LaBelle (R) is getting a kick out of all the young artists remaking her classic titles.

# Publisher sues P. Diddy over memoir advance

NEW YORK (AP) — Random House Inc. is suing Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, alleging that the hip-hop mogul never paid back a \$300,000 advance for a memoir he never completed.

In papers filed Monday at the state Supreme Court in Manhattan, the publisher alleged that Combs and his corporation, Bad Boy, have "simply kept the money they never rightfully earned." Random House is seeking the advance's return, plus interest.

"Random House has seldom resorted to a legal course of action with its prospective authors who don't write the books we have contracted for, but Mr. Sean Combs has left us no choice," the publisher said in a statement Tuesday.

"He signed an agreement with our Ballantine imprint in 1998 to write his autobiography, which he agreed to complete and deliver to us in 1999. We now have waited for over



Sean "P. Diddy" Combs

five years and have received neither the manuscript nor the return of the money we advanced Mr. Combs."

Combs' publicist, Rob Shuter, said Tuesday that there was a "disagreement with Random House that we hoped would be resolved without litigation. We anticipate that this will be resolved quickly."

According to the court papers, Combs signed with Random House in 1998 and then arranged on his own to collaborate with Mikal Gilmore, a contributing editor to Rolling Stone and au-

thor of the acclaimed "Shot in the Heart." A manuscript was to be completed by Dec. 15, 1999, but the deadline passed and, in early 2000, Random House notified Combs that he was in breach of contract and that the publisher wanted the money back.

"Year after year," the papers allege, the publisher sent follow-up letters.

In 2001, Combs sued Gilmore for allegedly ditching him after accepting \$325,000 to work on the book. The case was suspended later that year after Gilmore filed for bankruptcy and then was dismissed in 2004.

Combs is not the first musician who failed to meet the deadline for delivery of his life's story. Years ago, Mick Jagger received a seven-figure advance to write his memoirs.

He eventually returned the money, saying he couldn't remember anything of significance.

# TLC returns to Atlanta to find new voice for group

ATLANTA (AP) — TLC group members Tionne "T-Boz" Watkins and Rozonda "Chilli" Thomas are returning to the city where they got their start to find a new voice to sing with.

Auditions have been held across the country for UPN's new reality show, "R U The Girl with T-Boz & Chilli," but Atlanta's stop Saturday was the first the singers were to attend in person.

In 2002, the group was devastated by member Lisa "Left-Eye" Lopes' death in a car crash. Since then, the four-time

Grammy winning group whose hits include "Waterfalls," "Creep" and "No Scrubs," has not released new material.

Watkins and Thomas say they're not trying to replace Lopes.

"Nothing has changed. We're not replacing Lisa," Thomas told The Associated Press last year. "We're not looking for a new member." The person chosen through the show will perform with the duo during a one-time concert and for a recorded song on their greatest hits project.

No air date has been set for the show.

# Oscars

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enjoyed far more impressive outings, for instance, "Dirty Pretty Things" and "Mystic River," respectively. So, for my money, Virginia Madsen ("Sideways") was the only stand-out among this pathetic crop of picks, a travesty in a year with so many overlooked, more deserving performances.

**Snubbed:** Catherine Zeta-Jones ("The Terminal"), Sandra Oh ("Sideways"), Regina King ("Ray") and Irma P. Hall ("The Ladykillers")

**Best Original Screenplay**  
"Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" will win; "Vera Drake" deserves to win.

**Snubbed:** "Spanglish"  
**Best Adapted Screenplay**  
"Sideways" will win; "Finding Neverland" deserves to win.

**Snubbed:** "Woman, Thou Art Loosed"  
**Best Animated Feature**  
"The Incredibles" will win and deserves to do so.

**Snubbed:** None

In sum, I expect "The Aviator" to take home around seven or eight Oscars, proving that a good marketing campaign is far more important than a good movie when it comes to the Academy Awards. It'll be a long evening for Clint and the "Million Dollar Baby" contingent, with everybody getting edged out repeatedly except for Morgan Freeman. Though far more substantial and satisfying flicks than "The Aviator," "Ray," "Finding Neverland," and "Sideways" will each be lucky to land more than one award.

The tie-breaking question in most pools is: "How many minutes will the Academy Awards run over?" Given that host Chris Rock has already put his foot in his mouth with his comments about gays, the producers will be keeping him on a short leash, especially after the paranoia generated by Janet Jackson's wardrobe malfunction. With Chris afraid to improvise, the event will end two minutes early!



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