

Foxx, Kanye West, T.I win big at BET Awards

LOS ANGELES - Mary J. Blige, Kanye West, Jamie Foxx and Chris Brown were all double winners at Tuesday's BET Awards.

Blige won female R&B artist. And in a tie, she, West and Foxx shared the prize for video of the year. Blige won

for "Be Without You," which features Terrence Howard, who was named best actor.

West and Foxx won the video honor for "Gold Digger," which was also chosen as best collaboration. The megahit also won a Grammy this year.

"Love to all Black people," a jubilant Foxx told the Shrine Auditorium crowd.

"Y'all are stepping up Black music," said West, who's a top producer. "This is the best music right here, and we've got to keep on giving

it to them like that."

Brown took home viewer's choice, for his "Excuse Me Miss," and best new artist.

Chaka Khan, who was recognized for lifetime achievement, accepted the honor in star-studded style.

"I am so honored to be honored by my people. This means everything to me," she said as Stevie Wonder, Prince, India.Arie and Yolanda Adams joined her on stage for a five-song celebration.

The 53-year-old singer was among a dozen performers, including Blige, Foxx, Brown, Beyonce, Busta Rhymes, gospel duo Mary Mary and rapper T.I.

T.I. won the male hip-hop artist trophy and dedicated it to everyone "who been told they can't do it."

Prince, who closed the show with his song "3121," won for male R&B artist.

"This was unexpected; I appreciate it nonetheless,"

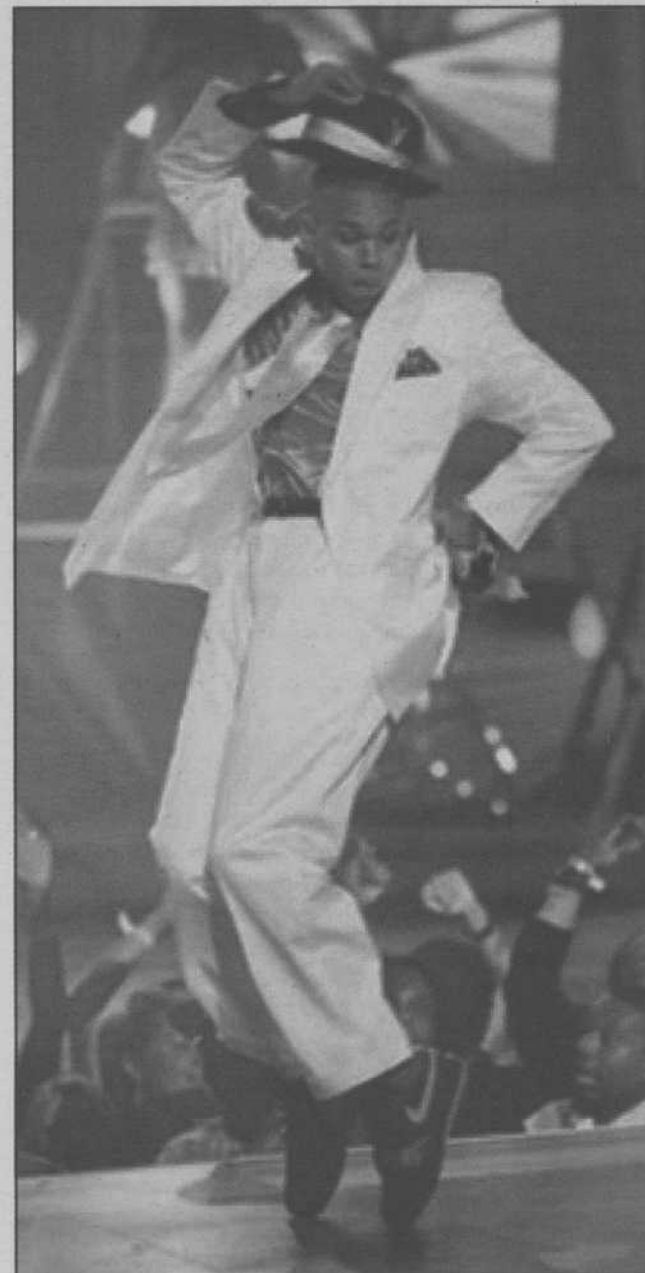
the Atlanta rapper said.

The night's most touching moments came when Mary M&ary dedicated the song "Yesterday" to survivors of Hurricane Katrina and when Harry Belafonte, 79, accepted a humanitarian award.

"This award doesn't just touch vanity," Belafonte said. "It is a validation of what I stand for, what Paul Robeson stood for. It's a validation of what W.E.B. Dubois stood for, what Malcolm X and Dr. (See BET, Page 9)



Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Chaka Khan, right, performs with superstar artist Prince at the 2006 BET Awards at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles on Tuesday.



Teen sensation Chris Brown channels Michael Jackson.

Jay-Z will tour around world

NEW YORK (AP) - As a white-tuxed Jay-Z stood on stage at Radio City Music Hall, celebrating the 10th anniversary of his debut album "Reasonable Doubt" and planning a world tour, it seemed as if a wide chasm separated the hungry rapper who made that dazzling debut and the mogul on the mic.

The Jay-Z of ten years ago was virtually unknown — the hottest Brooklyn rapper back then was The Notorious B.I.G., and Jay-Z wasn't even signed to a major label when his first record came out.

Now, Jay-Z — also known as Shawn Carter, the president of Def Jam Records — is one of the most successful, respected figures in rap history.

But lest anyone think the rap icon is getting comfortable as a nostalgia act, Jay-Z quickly corrected them on stage Sunday night. Launching into a blistering, mostly unprintable freestyle, he affirmed that even semi-retired, Jay-Z is still the most captivating figure in rap today.

"I am the nicest!" Jay-Z declared, as the sold-out crowd inside the legendary venue stood on their feet, demanding more.

Fans will soon get it. In an interview with The Associated Press on Friday between rehearsals for Sunday night's

commemorative show, Jay-Z announced that he would be going on tour this fall in a jaunt around the globe — Seoul, Beirut, Dubai, Johannesburg and Sydney, to name a few stops.

"There's a lot of places I haven't been," explained Jay-Z. "They've heard my music but they've never really seen me perform live. ...This really makes me wanna go out and perform. I'm looking forward to going overseas."

While fans stateside won't likely see another Jay-Z performance for a while, they may get a chance to hear some new music in the future. Though Jay-Z vowed 2003's "The Black Album" would be his goodbye to the recorded rap game, his recent concert appearances (he staged a major show last year and has made cameos with performers like The Roots) and his guest appearances on tracks like girlfriend Beyonce's new song have industry insiders rumbling that a new Hova album may be on the horizon.

Jay-Z won't rule out cutting short his so-called "retirement."

"I go back and forth with it" he told AP. "I believe the industry as a whole needs certain events to happen to sustain it and keep it alive. You need (Dr.) Dre albums, you need Eminem albums

you need 50 (Cent) albums, you need big artists, you need major events that happen. ...So when I look at it in those terms, I believe that an album is needed."

But he added that he viewed his role as president of Def Jam as equally important — not only to help change the system, but to give rappers something more to aspire to after their hits wane: "You have a three-year run and then no one ever hears about you. ...But now there's something attainable."

Not that Jay-Z ever needed to worry about falling into the "Where Are They Now" category. As his concert proved, Jay-Z has become not only one of hip-hop's, but pop music's ever-green performers, still managing to look and sound fresh ten years down the road.

And few rappers would be able to pull off rhyming about hustling crack on the corners of Brooklyn while standing behind a full orchestra, a band and DJ while dressed in cocktail party attire. But somehow, Jay-Z pulled it off.

Longtime sidekick Memphis Bleek was on hand for "Coming of Age," while Foxy Brown sashayed on stage for the song that made her a star, "Ain't No ..."

The two biggest cameos featured on "Reasonable Doubt" back then weren't

around for the anniversary party: a video montage of the slain Notorious B.I.G. played on the video screen as Jay-Z rapped both his and Biggie's versions on "Brooklyn's Finest."

And while Mary J. Blige provided the hook on "Can't Knock The Hustle" back then, her gritty performance was replaced Sunday night by the honey vocals of his boo, Beyonce.

But while "Reasonable Doubt" may be one of Jay-Z's greatest albums — he called it not only his favorite but "my baby" — it wasn't his most commercially successful. So as an added bonus and perhaps to placate the fans who arrived late on the Jay-Z Express, he returned after a brief intermission to run through some of his more famous hits — "Big Pimpin'," "What More Can I Say," "Give It To Me" — at times teasing the crowd with a snippet of a hit, as if he had so many there was barely time to perform them all.

But he also threw in some obscure, gritty Hova songs, if only to prove that the essence of the grimy Brooklyn hustler still remains.

"I never lost sense of who I was — not for a day, not before I had a record deal, and certainly not after," he told AP. "I believe that's why I'm sitting right here with you today — it didn't change it one bit."

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