

Bush fetes Black musicians

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bush honored the nation's Black musicians on Monday at a White House "Black Music Month" ceremony that featured performances from blues master B.B. King, singer Patti Austin and trumpeter Irvin Mayfield.

"During this month, we recognize the great contributions that Black music has made to our nation," Bush said. "We express our gratitude to the artists whose works have inspired our nation and have brought such beauty into the world."

"Some of the finest performances by Black musicians have been heard right here in the White House. And we're going to continue that tradition," Bush said before the three musicians performed selections.

Bush, in turn, was given a guitar by the performers.



Blues great B.B. King performs for President Bush during a celebration of Black Music Month in the East Room of the White House in Washington on Monday. Bush honored Black musicians.



Mary J. Blige, the queen of hip-hop soul, performs during the BET Awards on Tuesday in Los Angeles. Blige won awards for video of the year and best female R&B artist.

BET

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King stood for."

Damon Wayans hosted Black Entertainment Television's performance-packed awards program, which recognizes the best in hip-hop, R&B, gospel and music videos, as well as athletes and actors.

NBA star LeBron James and tennis star Venus Williams were named best athletes. "Hustle & Flow" star Taraji P. Henson won best actress, and the best group was Black Eyed Peas.

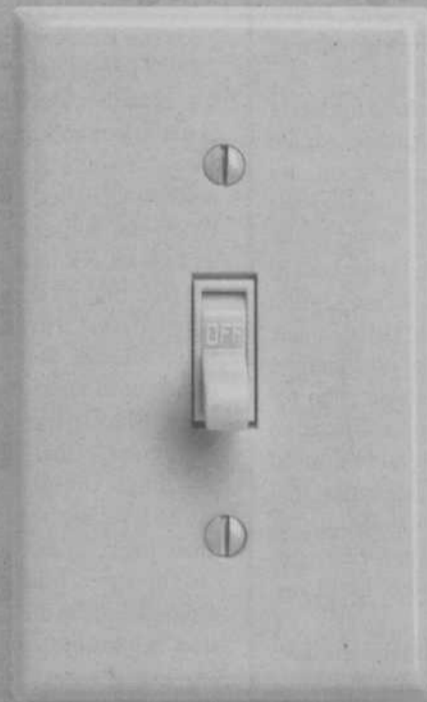
Missy Elliott, who recently signed on to star in the big-screen version of her life story, won for female hip-hop artist, and Kirk Franklin for gospel artist.

"So many people owe BET a lot," Franklin said before the show. "Every African-American who's in music, television or film, BET has got us into this. And there's a lot of us."

BET Award winners were decided by a panel of executives from entertainment companies, record labels and the media, except the award for Viewers' Choice, which fans voted for online. Not all award presentations were shown during the telecast.



Actor, performer and activist Harry Belafonte poses with his Humanitarian award at the 2006 BET Awards in LA.



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