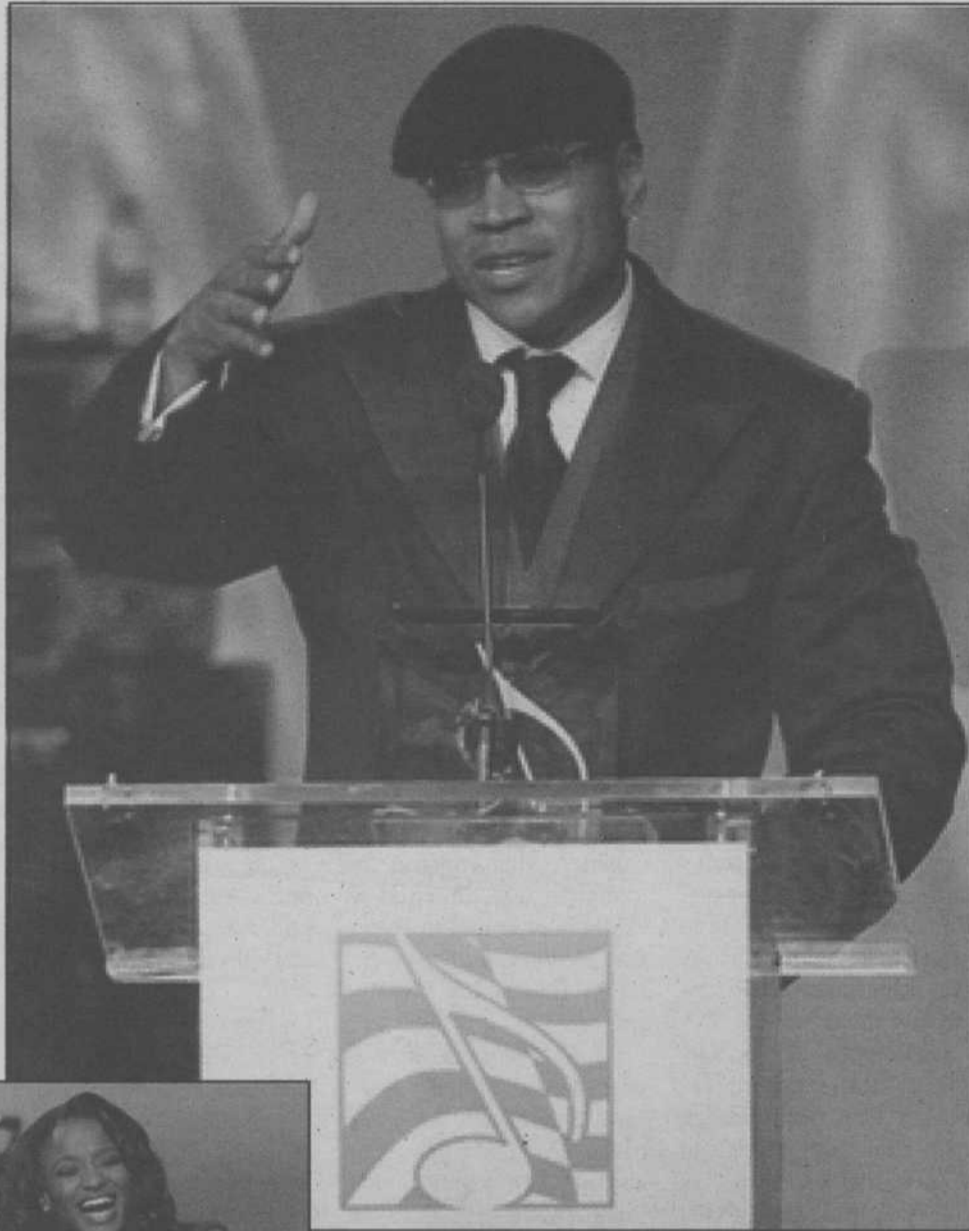


Hip-hop rules ASCAP honors

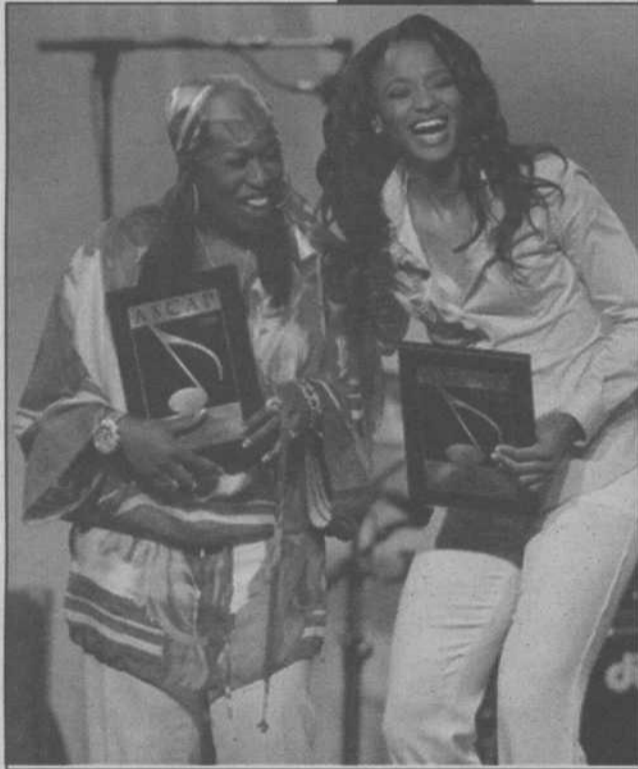
LOS ANGELES- Rapper 50 Cent and producer-writer-executive Jermaine Dupri split songwriter of the year honors at ASCAP's Rhythm & Soul Music Awards, presented last week at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

Named songwriter of the year at the performing rights organization's Pop Music Awards last month, 50 Cent was honored for his contribution to five of the year's most-performed songs — "Candy Shop," "Disco Inferno," "Hate It Or Love It," "How We Do" and "Just a Lil' Bit." "Candy Shop" also took the award for ringtone of the year.

Dupri, president of urban music at Virgin Records America, was a key player in the success of Mariah Carey's 2005 smash "The Emancipation of Mimi." ASCAP recognized him for his writing work on "Let Me Hold You," "Like You," "My Boo," "Shake It Off" and "We Belong Together."



(Above) Musician LL Cool J accepts the Golden Note award at the ASCAP Rhythm and Soul Music Awards last week in Beverly Hills, Calif. (Left) Musicians Missy Elliot, left, and Ciara laugh while accepting their awards during the ASCAP Rhythm and Soul Music Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif.



EMI Music Publishing was feted as publisher of the year. The perennial powerhouse published 17 of the year's most performed urban hits.

Mario's "Let Me Love You," penned by Kameron "Kam" Houff and Scott Storch, was honored as top R&B/hip-hop song. Amerie and Stanley E. Waldon's "1 Thing," from the Will Smith

feature "Hitch," was cited as top soundtrack song of the year.

Sean Paul was tagged reggae artist of the year for the third consecutive year.

ASCAP bestowed its Golden Note Award on LL Cool J for his contributions to hip-hop. R&B luminary Bill Withers received the ASCAP Rhythm & Soul Heritage Award.

Jury in Michael Jackson lawsuit hears messages

Jurors in a lawsuit against Michael Jackson on Wednesday heard increasingly frantic phone messages that the singer left for a business associate, demanding action on projects including a collaboration with actor Marlon Brando and the release of a charity recording.

Tapes of the messages left on F. Marc Schaffel's answering machine were played to show that he had a close relationship with Jackson and that he was entrusted with handling millions of dollars for the singer.

Schaffel claims the pop star owes him \$3.8 million in royalties, expenses and other debts.

In one of the first phone messages, from 2001, Jackson said, "Marc, it's Michael. ... Marc, please never let me down. I like you. I love you. ... I really want us to be friends and conquer the business world together. Please be my loyal, loyal friend. I love you."

Schaffel testified that he had been working on a number of projects for Jackson and had even arranged a \$10 million line of credit for him from a financial institution. Schaffel said Jackson had many demands, including searching out a home in Beverly Hills that could be a hideaway from his Neverland ranch.

In June 2001 Jackson left several messages dealing with what he called "the Marlon Brando deal." The tapes shed more light on the pop star's friendship with Brando, who died in 2004.

Schaffel said Jackson had an idea to do a video in which Brando would interview him and he would interview Brando at the actor's island in Tahiti. Later, Jackson wanted to make an acting DVD with Brando. The project fizzled because of the enormous cost, Schaffel said.

There were several messages from Jackson saying Brando wanted to know what was going on with the project. "Marlon Brando has been pushing. He's a wonderful man. He's a god. He wants a lot of money. He wants to get things done right now," Jackson said in one message.

Jackson's other concern was a record he had made called "What More Can I Give," which was to be a charity project for victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. The record was never released because of complications involving Jackson's relationship with Sony.

Schaffel said the record cost millions and involved huge amounts of travel to record more than 30 major artists singing various verses.

By 2003, when it had not been released, Jackson called Schaffel with more urgent messages saying he had a plan for the recording to be a charity project tied to the Iraq war.

"It should be for America in Iraq," Jackson said in one message. "... It's a perfect cause. It means more now than any other causes."

Jackson, who had been living in Bahrain but last month announced he was moving to Europe, will not testify in person. In a videotaped deposition shown to jurors, the singer said he thought Schaffel had been paid because the business associate always seemed happy.

Pride

(Continued from Page 7) to his signing on RCA Records.

Pride's first hit was "The Snakes Crawl at Night" in 1966. He never looked back. Over the next 18 years he hit the top of the country charts 36 times with classics like "All I Have to Offer You (Is Me)," "Every Heart Should Have One," "Kiss An Angel Good Morning," "Is Anybody Goin' To San Antone?" "I'm So Afraid of Losing You Again," "Mississippi Cotton Picking Delta Town," "Someone Loves You Honey," "When I Stop Leav-

ing I'll be Gone," "Burgers and Fries," and "You're So Good When You're Bad." He also produced 68 albums.

Pride joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1993, was honored with the Pioneer Award by the Academy of Country Music in 1994, presented with the Trumpet Award in 1996, received his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1999 and was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2000. Those are on top of his other musical accolades too numerous to count.

But Pride notes that he's

never been on the cover of, for example, *Ebony* magazine. "And I've seen some people on the cover that couldn't carry my briefcase, in terms of success," he said directly. He used to be hurt when Black media virtually ignored him, but not anymore. "I just go on and say that I'm going to do my job and let things carry themselves."

Pride's younger brother Stephen, a rising country music artist himself, looks at the distancing of country music from the Black community in a philosophical manner. Stephen, 21 years

Pride's junior, was inspired by his big brother to go country, in spite of the knowledge that rhythm and blues was strongest with African-Americans.

"To go outside of that [country music] just really wasn't the norm," said Stephen, who just returned from performing for five weeks in New Zealand. "I think if someone would have probably introduced it in a different period of time, it would have been a change."

"Country is a derivative of our blues music, but it wasn't embraced because it was

changed in the sense of what the White American establishment considered country music. It wasn't received in our manner. It just wasn't understood."

Both Prides hope to see a time when the racial vestiges behind country music are forgotten and African-Americans give it a chance.

"I think there's a possibility, in time," the elder Pride said. "When a lot of feelings that have been in our culture dissipate, it may happen."

Stephen feels it's already happening in an underground nature.

"Don't get yourself wrong. There's a lot of us (Blacks) that like country music. They don't really come out," Stephen said. "It's just like there's a lot of White folks that love our music, but they're closet about it."

Pride's explicit views are expressed in a 1994 autobiography. He further stated a movie on his life will be coming out in the near future, which will tell about the joys and pains of a great American singer.

Gordon Jackson writes for the Dallas Examiner.