

Nothing hair-raising in film about Black salon

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

Since the success of "Barbershop," Hollywood has been having a love affair with trash-talking Black folks having their hair done. Besides the brothers in "Barbershop 2," we've also seen sisters dishing the dirt in "Beauty Shop" and "Hair Show."

If you're in need of proof that the genre has been milked dry, may I suggest "The Salon," a derivative flick reminiscent of all of the above.

The film opens, interestingly enough, with an explanation of the ghetto-grooming ground rules: "Hair is a form of expression in the Black community. It doesn't even have to be your own... Horse hair, camel hair, raccoon hair, whatever. Girlfriend, if you bought it, it's

yours."

Next, we're introduced to shop owner Jenny (Vivica A. Fox), and the colorful collection of familiar stereotypes hanging at her hood-based establishment.

There's larger than life Lashaunna (Kym Whitley), a motor-mouthed mama who has nothing nice to say about anybody.

And then there's D.D. (De'Angelo Wilson), a flamboyant gay, whose presence in the picture is justified by his willingness to be the butt of mean spirited, homophobic threats and teasing. Ricky (Dondre Whitfield) is a player who sleeps with his clients and boasts that he'll never get caught. Every character is readily-recognizable and one-dimensional.

The basic idea here is that, like a barbershop, a salon is a place where folks feel free

to let their hair down, literally and figuratively. Tragically, this translates into people referring to Blacks by the n-word, homosexuals by the f-word, and making offensive comments about Asians mixing their l's and r's, and so forth.

The film bottoms-out when D.D. offers these encouraging words to an aspiring prostitute: "If you're going to be a ho, be an ambitious ho. Work uptown." What unfortunate timing, given the whole Don Imus controversy.

Despite a talented cast which includes Terrence Howard and Garret Morris, life's simply too short for slur-ploitation with such lamentably low standards.

Poor (0 star). Rated PG-13 for profanity, sexuality, crude humor, mature themes, ethnic and homophobic slurs.

Black Disney cartoon may help raise youth self-worth

By Aria White
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Disney has announced that it will be releasing a new animated movie, featuring a Black Disney Princess in 2009. The film, tentatively named, "The Frog Princess," is expected to raise the self-esteem of some Black females.

This will be the first Black Disney Princess in the Walt Disney Corporation's history. It will be hand-drawn and will feature songs composed by Randy Newman. The main character of the film will live in the French Quarter of New Orleans; it will take place in the 1920s. The plot of the movie has not been officially released but the story will be based on the fairy tale, "The Frog Prince."

"I am excited that there will now be a Black Disney princess. I know I liked Ariel the most because of my red hair, and it will probably make thousands of little girls with dark skin happier because there is now a Disney princess that looks like them," said Sarah Reynolds, a 20-year-old self-proclaimed Disney enthusiast.

"The Frog Princess" will be the first hand-drawn animated feature from Disney since its 2004 animated feature, "Home on the Range."

Reynolds says she is happy that the movie will be hand-drawn.

"While Pixar and other computer animation is impressive, I like the good old hand-drawn Disney movies. I guess I like it the most because it's what I grew up with," Reynolds said.

Animated musicals were Disney's specialty in the '80s and '90s with movies such as "Aladdin," "The Little Mermaid" and "The Lion King." "The Frog Princess" will be similar in style. Ron Clements and John Musker will direct the film. Musker and Clements directed "Aladdin" and "The Little Mermaid." Viewers who once watched the Disney animated movies as kids are now anticipating the release of the new movie that brings fond memories back.

"I'm sure that the songs will live up to the '80s and '90s. But at the same time, I expect them to contain a sound that may not have been heard before in the previous movies," said Charlotte Tubman of Baltimore, Md.

Tubman says she still watches Disney movies,

even though she is no longer a kid. She says they still have the same effect on her.

Parents are also thrilled about the new movie that will bring more cultural diversity to kid's films.

Stephanie Podzimek, a 24-year-old mother who works at the YMCA with children says she plans to show her daughter Disney movies.

"I think they are smart, funny movies that teach life lessons and always have a "moral to the story," Podzimek said.

Podzimek says she loves Disney movies because of the music and the fact that the stories never get old. "Every 9-year-old at the YMCA still knows every word to 'The Little Mermaid' even though it was released when I was 9," Podzimek said.

"I think there are far worse things that children can be watching than Disney movies," said Reynolds. "They worked for me, and I will show them to my children."

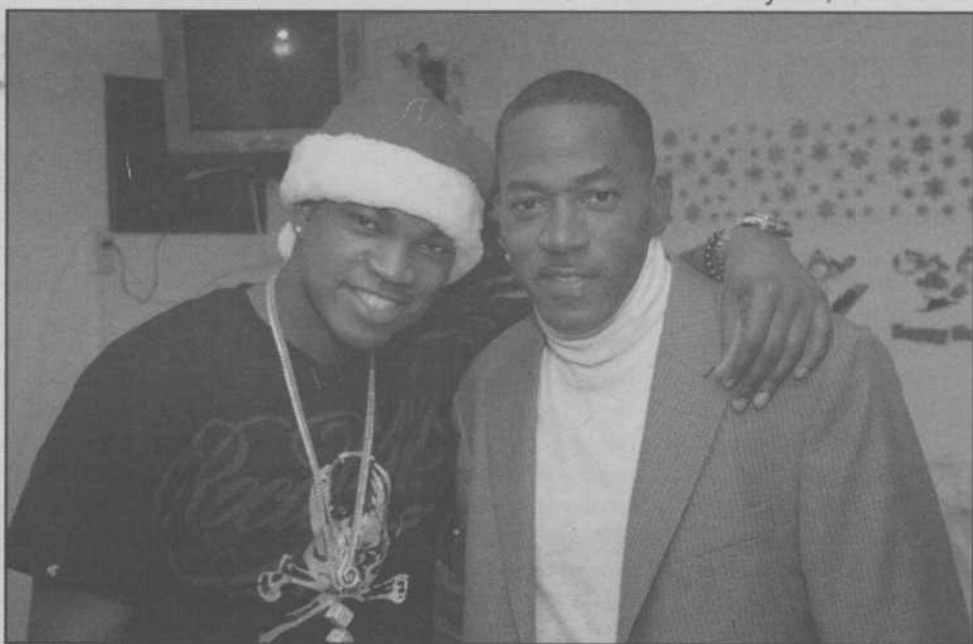
Spelman

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For two days, they participated in a town hall meeting aired on the "Oprah" show, discussing the responsibility rap music has had in the negative portrayal of Black women.

Benjamin Chavis, executive director of the Hip Hop Summit Action Network, was a guest on the show for the second day of the meeting, and invited the Spelman students to participate in further discussions on this issue.

Nisa Islam Muhammad writes for The Final Call.



Sentinel-Voice file photo by Ramon Savoy

Ne-Yo, left, a graduate of Rancho High School, is a much sought-after singer and writer, shown with Clark County Commissioner Lawrence Weekly during a holiday giveaway.

Ne-Yo does double duty as praised singer, writer

NEW YORK (AP) - As he sits in the back of an SUV ferrying him from one recording studio to the next, Ne-Yo reflects on the current state of R&B — and determines that the genre is suffering from serious malaise.

"People just forgot what it was supposed to be, what it was supposed to feel like, the essence of what it is," he

said forcefully. "It's a vibe, it's a feeling — it's supposed to make you feel something, as opposed to, 'Let me go eeh-eeh, eeh-eeh, eeh and put a beat behind it and see if people will dance to it.' Come on man. There's more to it than that."

Given that the singer is just 26, has only one album to his credit, and just released

that last year, his pronouncements about what R&B should be may come across as a bit presumptuous.

But when you consider that that one album, "In My Own Words," became a platinum success with huge hits like "So Sick," and that he's written or co-written two of the bigger hits of last year, (See Ne-Yo, Page 12)

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