

# Artists turn out for King Memorial fundraiser

NEW YORK (AP) - Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds has won Grammys and worked with megastars like Eric Clapton, Madonna and Mariah Carey, but the singer-songwriter still remembers a time when he was blocked by racial barriers.

"When I was a child, there was an amusement park that I couldn't go to — they would open up only one day a year so Blacks could go," the 49-year-old recalls.

So when organizers asked him to participate in "The Dream" concert to raise money for a national memorial for Martin Luther King Jr. in Washington, D.C., Edmonds was quick to say yes.

"I don't think you have a right to say no," said Edmonds. "It's a major event

and something that I wouldn't want to miss."

A host of other performers have the same sentiment.

Usher, Aretha Franklin, Garth Brooks, Stevie Wonder, Carlos Santana, John Legend and Ludacris are among those that were scheduled for the Radio City Music Hall concert.

So far, about \$82 million has been raised for the memorial on the National Mall, where monuments to George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and the troops who died in the Vietnam War stand today. A sculptor has already been selected for the three-story King structure.

Organizers are hoping the concert will help get them closer to their \$100 million goal.

Tickets for the event range

from \$150 to \$1,000.

Russell Simmons was approached about the King monument project by designer Tommy Hilfiger years ago, but admits he wasn't interested.

"I had no interest in building a shrine," he said, adding that he was more interested in his other charities, specifically for underprivileged children.

But one night as he was talking to friends about how the United States could better promote peace and understanding, a friend told him: "That's why you have to help us with the Martin Luther King Memorial."

Now, Simmons, like Hilfiger, is a co-chair of the event, and one of the projects most vocal supporters. The rap mogul says it's crucial to

have King's image at the National Mall, where he gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963 during the March on Washington.

"The idea that King is next to those presidents and those war memorials is so important," he said.

"Martin Luther King excludes the kind of consciousness that we need in our country today, and kids need an image like his on the mall today, besides the presidents and memorials about the wars."

Simmons also called folks like Ludacris, Robin Thicke, and Usher to participate in the concert when organizers

fretted there weren't enough young performers on the bill. Wyclef Jean was one of the people Simmons called. The singer and producer feels that Martin Luther King Jr. Day is not enough of a tribute to the civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner.

A memorial, Jean says, "carries out the legacy. It's the same way, you have a monument of Abraham Lincoln, and that takes you to a place and a time and a history that will never be forgotten. We have to do whatever it takes to make sure the legacy of Martin Luther King is never forgotten."

It has been almost 40

years since King was assassinated. Some worry that people are already forgetting about aspects of his legacy, which was broader than his fight for equal rights for Blacks.

"It goes beyond color lines," Edmonds stresses. "It helped advance the causes of Black Americans but women as well and any minority... he helped all of us. To have that memorialized in Washington, D.C., it's the right place, it's the perfect place to do it."

The King memorial is expected to be erected by 2009, situated between the memorials for Presidents Lincoln and Jefferson.

## d'Zert Club

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ceived donations from BMDC members from across the country.

That's what Ujima and Ujamaa are all about.

Over the past 10 years, the d'Zert Club has taken a total of 3,000 people to Africa. The African Genesis Institute has 1,600 alumni with 97.2 percent of their student graduates being college bound.

The d'Zert Club and the African Genesis Corrective History Educational Program are living testimonies to how true knowledge of one's history can be a deterrent to low self-esteem, negative thinking and under achievement.

The Salahuddins and others believe that knowledge of self and one's history is an anti-violence measure that is intentionally overlooked when seeking solutions for the violence that pervades Black communities nationwide.

The d'Zert Club and its programs operate in Philadelphia, Atlanta, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit, Harlem, Newark and Washington, D.C. Students from each of these programs will take this year's trip to

Egypt and Ghana as part of the African Genesis Institute.

The annual trip to Africa is absolutely free to the students and serves as the graduation reward for those completing the program.

A proud Dr. Ed Robinson smiles as he talks about the d'Zert Club and all it has done over the past decade.

"Some of my fondest memories along this 80-plus-year path I have traveled are the faces of the children as they walked the streets of Ghana and gazed at the pyramids in Egypt.

They enjoyed experiences they could have never even imagined if it were not for the work of the d'Zert Club and those who support its mission." He went on to say, "I am so thankful to have been blessed to see the d'Zert Club come to fruition and now to participate in its 10th Anniversary."

Said Salahuddin, "Our motto is, It is better to build a child than repair an adult... We plan to continue that mission and expand it to 20 more cities during the next 10 years."

For more information on how you can get involved with the d'Zert Club or enroll in the African Genesis Institute call, (888) 257-5991 or go to [www.dzertclub.com](http://www.dzertclub.com).

## T.I. nabs 9 BET hip-hop nods

ATLANTA (AP) - T.I. has wrapped up another slew of BET Hip-Hop Awards nominations. The Atlanta-based rapper received nine nominations for the second annual awards show, which will air on Oct. 17. Last year, the self-proclaimed "King of the South" garnered eight nominations, and won three awards.

Lil' Wayne is second in total nominations this year, with seven. Kanye West drew six, Common earned five, Jay-Z grabbed four, and Ludacris and 50 Cent got three each.

"We are so glad to be back in Atlanta again

for this year's version of what, in its debut, became the single hottest show in hip hop," said Stephen Hill, executive vice president of entertainment, music and talent at BET.

The network will also honor legendary hip-hop artist KRS-One with the "I Am Hip-Hop" icon award.

KRS-One is known for his politically and socially conscious raps.

Nelly, Lil' Wayne, Kanye West and Common are expected to perform, while the show will be hosted by comedian Katt Williams for the second time.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Marty Frierson

### COOOOL

Adrian Burst is feeling it during the 2nd Annual CultureFest. Burst puts heart and soul into playing his soprano saxophone, as a large crowd gathered downtown to enjoy the live performance and food.



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