

Jones talks China, human rights

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's been more than a year since Quincy Jones was tapped to serve as a culture and art consultant for the 2008 summer Olympic games in Beijing. But instead of artistic planning, he's been focused on human rights.

"I don't pretend to be a politician," the music impresario and longtime humanitarian said. "I'm just a musician who cares."

Jones, 75, has met with the Chinese ambassador to the United Nations and was scheduled to address a group of Chinese-American business and cultural leaders in Los Angeles recently to discuss his position on China's role in the Darfur crisis.

China has faced protests from various human-rights groups for its mistreatment of Tibetans and for providing weapons and economic support to Sudan's war-torn Darfur region. Steven Spielberg, who was also named as an Olympic culture and art consultant, abandoned the role in February in protest of China's role in the Darfur conflict. World leaders have also threatened to boycott the Olympics' opening ceremonies because of China's human-rights violations.

But Jones remains committed.



"It's not my intention to withdraw from the Olympics. I care too much about Darfur and China, and if I can stay in the game with others like us, I feel we can make a difference."

— Quincy Jones

"It's not my intention to withdraw from the Olympics," he was to say in his speech. "I care too much about Darfur and China, and if I can stay in the game with others like us, I feel we can make a difference."

Jones hopes to have a role in assembling an ad-hoc committee to "go to Khartoum to sit down and try to get something done," he said.

"The whole world has got to start taking responsibility for each other. With communication, you can no longer afford the luxury of thinking of national kinds of issues. Everything that's done anywhere is a world issue, and together there's lots of things we can do that nobody can do alone."

China can become "a hero in the eyes of the world" by sending United Nations African peace enforcers to the

Darfur region, stopping arms imports to the area and calling on Khartoum to force the Janjaweed militia to cease its attacks on civilians, Jones said.

But the problems in the area aren't solely China's responsibility.

"Not one country is perfect enough to throw stones at anybody," he said. "None. Especially not us."

Jones said he is less focused on China's role in Tibetan violence because it "is a difficult one to solve in three months. There's so much history behind it. But Sudan is happening every day. We're talking about babies dying in Darfur, so that one has got me personally."

He expects to see a tangible change before the Aug. 8 opening ceremonies.

"What I hope will happen is that we can at least alleviate some of the complexities

involved in one of the two big dilemmas," he said.

Jones has no hard feelings against Spielberg for dropping out of his Olympic role, he said: "That's his God-given right," Jones said.

China is bold for inserting itself into the public eye, Jones said.

"China's leadership took on the challenge of the Beijing Olympics knowing that the spotlight and focus would be on them, warts and all," he said. "Because the spotlight is on them, they now have the chance to show leadership and wisdom to change the world for the better."

Apart from Jones' humanitarian efforts and his work on the Olympics opening and closing ceremonies, he is preparing to score nine films and produce three albums, including those by Snoop Dogg, Stevie Wonder and Joe Pesci. And he shows no signs of slowing down.

"This part is the most rewarding part of my life now," he said. "Just being involved in different ways to help kids and help people get out of whatever it is, because I come from that."

Music festival defends Jay-Z

LONDON (AP) — Organizers of one of Britain's best-known music festivals are defending their decision to book Jay-Z as their headline act after Oasis songwriter Noel Gallagher blamed the rapper for disappointing ticket sales.

The outdoor Glastonbury fest is a cornerstone of Britain's music calendar. But it has yet to sell out this year, in contrast to past years when tickets were snapped up within hours.

Gallagher, whose band headlined the festival in 1995 and 2004, said rap was to blame.

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it," Gallagher said in an interview, an audio of which was posted to the British Broadcasting Corp.'s website Monday. "If you break it, people ain't gonna go. I'm sorry, but Jay-Z? No chance."

He explained that the inclusion of a hip-hop act went against the festival's tradition of guitar music, adding: "I'm not having hip-hop at Glastonbury. No way. No. It's wrong."

Glastonbury Festival co-organizer Emily Eavis said the 38-year-old festival had a long history of attracting rap acts, including Cypress Hill and the Roots.

She said the media stir over Gallagher's comments revealed an "innate conservatism" in some parts of British society.

"There is also an interesting undercurrent in the suggestion that a Black, U.S. hip-hop artist shouldn't be playing in front of what many perceive to be a White, middle-class audience. I'm not sure what to call it, at least not in public, but this is something that causes me some disquiet," she said in an article published Tuesday in *The Independent* newspaper. Eavis said she thought Jay-Z was "absolutely the right act" for the festival.

Cosby infuses rap on album

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bill Cosby's path has taken him from pudding pops to hip hop.

The 70-year-old has recorded a hip-hop album set for release next month. "Cosby Narratives Vol. 1: State of Emergency" blends the comedian's concepts and stories with a hip-hop, pop and jazz soundtrack.

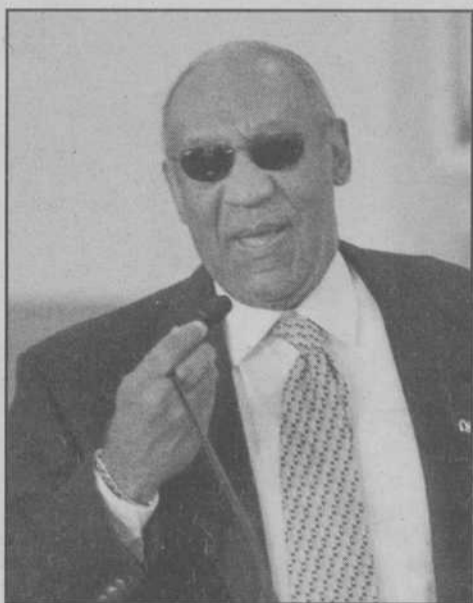
"I do not rap on any of these things," Cosby said on Monday. "I wouldn't know how to fix my mouth to say some of the words."

Cosby said the hip-hop music he hears is profane and degrading. His album is "the opposite of what I think is the profanity for no particular reason, the misogyny for no particular reason," he said. "It really looks at the frustration and the anger that a young man may have."

The album, assembled by Cosby's long-time musical collaborator Bill "Spaceman" Patterson, contains rhymes provided by guest rappers. The subject matter? "The value of an education. The value of respecting one's self and ... giving [listeners] a chance to raise their self-esteem and confidence," Cosby said.

Patterson said he was surprised when Cosby first inquired about making a rap record — until the comedian revealed he wouldn't be the one doing the rapping.

"People started speculating, is he going to rap about Jell-O Pudding Pops or what?" Patterson said. "But he's always been in-



BILL COSBY

involved in music, and he was there for the first generation of spoken word. ... He has always understood rap's potential, but he was appalled by the foul language and the misogyny — the way people used a medium that could be used to elevate people, to open their eyes and provoke thought."

Cosby made the album as a companion to his 2007 best-selling book, "Come on, People: On the Path from Victims to Victors." And though he doesn't expect the CD to be a huge hit, it won't be his last hip-hop venture.

"We can do even better," he said. "The next one will be even more cheerleading."

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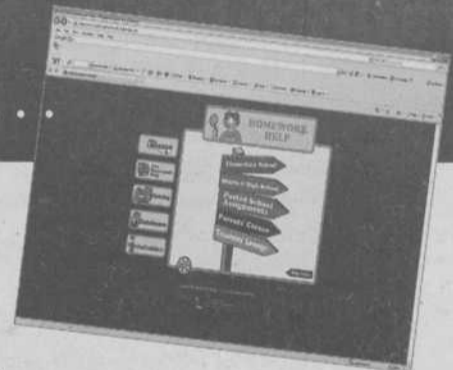
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