

Horse-Drawn Hearse Carries Body Of Aaliyah As Thousands Say Good Bye At Her Funeral

By Nicole Bode, Lola Ogunnaiké and Emily Gest

New York Daily News

It was a funeral fit for a princess. Grappling with the knowledge they'd never see or hear 22-year-old Aaliyah sing in person again, thousands of heartbroken family members, friends and fans wept at her funeral Friday.

The Brooklyn-born R&B star and actress died weeks ago with eight others in a plane crash in the Bahamas.

"This wasn't supposed to happen. She was supposed to be here," sobbed fan Shermaine Johnson, 19, of Brooklyn.

A glass-paneled hearse drawn by two horses carried Aaliyah's body the four blocks from the Frank E. Campbell Funeral Home on the upper East Side to services at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola on Park Ave.

The hearse was festooned with dozens of roses — especially pink, her favorite color.

The grief-stricken family — her parents, Diane and Michael Haughton, and her brother, Rashad — walked somberly behind the hearse and clutched each other for support.

They were followed by four dozen other mourners, including Aaliyah's boyfriend, Roc-a-Fella Records honcho Damon Dash, and her "Romeo Must Die" co-star Delroy Lindo. Many other famous faces joined the 1,200 invited guests who crowded the church, while

more than 1,000 fans stood outside.

Ten pallbearers carried the 800-pound silver-plated coffin into the church, where it was flanked by two oversized pictures. One was of the singer and the other was of her beloved grandmother who died of breast cancer.

"You are the sun that inspired me and the moon that got me through my nights — love, Aaliyah," read the quote with her grandmother's photo.

A special VIP section was established for the dozens of music world royalty who attended, including rappers Sean (P. Diddy) Combs, Missy Elliott, Jay-Z and Lil' Kim.



Nearby were actor Jet Li and Gladys Knight, who was married to Aaliyah's uncle, Barry Hankerson.

Rashad Haughton delivered a 15-minute eulogy that brought hundreds of mourners — including boxer Mike Tyson and singer Busta Rhymes — to tears. Rashad described his younger sister as a force who gave him strength. "Aaliyah, you left, but I'll see you always next to me and I can see you smiling through the sunshine," he said. "When our life is over, our book is done. I hope God keeps me strong until I see her again."

Rashad read the names of the eight

other crash victims and asked mourners to pray for them as well.

As the church choir sang "Ave Maria," the mourners sat in silence as the hour-long Catholic funeral Mass ended.

Diane Haughton stood, placed her left hand on her daughter's coffin and walked alongside it until she reached the church doors. As she and other mourners left, they sang one of Aaliyah's songs, "One in a Million." On the church steps, Diane Haughton stood a few feet from her daughter's coffin and, with tears in her eyes, released a single white dove into the

sky. In total, 22 doves were released, to symbolize each year of Aaliyah's life.

As rain began to fall late Friday afternoon, 100 mourners followed Aaliyah's hearse to Ferncliff Cemetery and Mausoleum in Hartsdale, Westchester County, where they spent 30 minutes saying a final goodbye.

After Knight sang "You Touched My Life," mourners, including Tyson, filed past the coffin to touch it one last time. Then it was slipped into a crypt, covered with cream-colored Italian marble. An inscription will be added later.

Will Hollywood Say 'Hasta la vista' To Movie Violence?

By Jack Mathews

New York Daily News

Just when it seemed that Hollywood movies could not be more meaningless, they got more meaningless.

Last week's total eclipse of the culture obliterated any thoughts about nearly everything else, and far, far down on the list of things we weren't thinking about were the movies.

For a day, most of the studios weren't thinking about them, either. They shut down on both coasts on Tuesday, and some were still shuttered Wednesday and Thursday.

Nobody knew how far this black spectacle would reach. Nobody knew which targets might be next. And we were all overwhelmed, emotionally frozen in place.

Sept. 11, 2001, was almost literally the day the Earth stood still.

Is it too soon to talk about the potential impact of the massacre on the culture, on entertainment? Certainly, its immediate impact was more profound than any event in U.S. history. It shut down almost every venue with a box office, from Broadway to the megaplex to the sports arena.

There was little stomach to entertain, or to be entertained.

Some business went on regardless. Two major-studio movies — Paramount's inner-city, Little League baseball drama "Hardball" and Columbia's psychological thriller "The Glass House" — opened last Friday as scheduled. But little notice was taken, especially in New York, where critics screenings had been canceled.

Putting the best possible spin on his bad timing, "Hardball" director Brian Robbins told Variety, "It's hard to say, 'Go see a movie,' but it sort of feels like if you are going to want some entertainment, ("Hardball" is) a movie to see."

Somehow, "escapist" entertainment seems like the last thing we want or need right now, and maybe for a very long time. The drama produced by the would-be martyrs who attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon is still in its hideous first act, in which thousands of individual human tragedies — every one of them more important than any movie ever made — have been introduced. It's essential that we absorb and weigh every horrible detail, as they are revealed, to try to understand and be able to explain the event in ways that don't rob our children of their innocence.

As far removed from this reality as movies are, there are profound lessons in it for the people who determine what relevance their products will have in our lives. Among the accepted tenets of Hollywood is that in times of trouble, people want escapism. That explains why all those Astaire-Rogers and "Thin Man" films were made during the Depression and the MGM musicals in the war years.

But those were times of common sacrifice, when everybody was under the same yoke and pulling in a clear direction.

The escapist myth was refuted by the sociopolitical revolution of the '60s and '70s, when Hollywood chose to be on the cultural front line, almost out of a sense of survival.



Leon Bates, an internationally renowned pianist, will perform November 4, 2001 in Seabrook Auditorium. Bates has emerged as one of America's leading pianist. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Alice Tully Hall, Philadelphia Academy of Music, and The Hollywood Bowl.