

Grammy Award Winner On The Move

By Ronel Brewer

Arts and Entertainment Editor

Beginning Feb. 18. in Detroit, Mich., Lauryn Hill embarked on an intimate first ever tour as a solo act. Having racked up 10 Grammy nominations, including Best New Artist and Album of the year (for the Miseducation of Lauryn Hill) Ruffhouse/Columbia recording artist Lauryn Hill is touring with a full band, a DJ, and a series of surprises for her fans.

Ms. Hill's tour will come at the end of a stellar year.

Her solo debut album has been certified triple platinum. Rolling Stone picked it as best album. She also scored best female Artist and best R&B artist. Entertainment Weekly named her "Entertainer of the Year" while USA today picked her as R&B album of the year.

Among her many accomplishments: she recently stormed through the industry, walking off with the Billboard Music award for album of the year, she was recently nominated in multiple categories for the prestigious 30th NAACP Image Awards: Outstanding Music Video ("A rose is Still a Rose" directed by Lauryn Hill). Yes that's right, directed. Rapper, writer, singer, director; Lauryn is on top of the world.

It hasn't always been this way for her. She recalls, "The anxiety of this project was the fear that we (the listening audience) would have been so used to fast food [music] that if you gave them something that came from the soul and heart, they would want McDonalds, basically." Looking at album sales, most of the record buyers are turning from the aural Big Macs to the new taste of Lauryn Hill.

Lauryn Green (now known as Lauryn Hill) was a fledgling actress in the early 90's. At age 15 she was making cameo appearances on the soap "As the World Turns." She revealed all her talents in one blow as she was the main attraction in Whoopi Goldberg's "nonsense" sequel Sister Act II. Then

in 1993 "The Fugees" released their first album "Blunted on Reality", which featured misogynistic, gangsta-style rap. Although the album received a mere nod in review, the critics praised Lauryn's honey alto voice and suggested she go solo.

She didn't. Instead, they ditched their producer and released their second album "The Score" which went multi platinum. Obviously the critics didn't see the point. The album went on to sell over 17 million units, making it the biggest selling rap album of all time. Prakazrel "Pras" Michel, Wyclef "Clef" Jean and Lauryn Hill make up the Fugees. Notice the choice in words, "MAKE UP." The Fugees have not broken up. They just took some time to explore their solo projects.

"The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" is a deeply personal album, spanning a spectrum of issues. From affairs of the heart to socio-political issues, the lyrics are set against a sonic backdrop displaying the extraordinary talent of this young native of South Orange N.J. Don't take the title of the album too literally, says Hill. This bright eyed 24-year-old completed her freshman year at Columbia University. She explains, "The concept of 'miseducation' is not really miseducation at all. To me it's more or less switching terminology... it's really about the things that you've learned outside of school, outside of what society deems appropriate and mandatory. I have a lot of respect for academia...but there was a lot that I had to learn - life lessons - that wasn't part of any scholastic curriculum. It's really a passage into adulthood when we leave that place of idealism and naivete'."

After "The Score," she has been "*Killing Us Softly with Her Voice*." With her solo debut, Lauryn has let loose all that she has to offer. Mom, lover, rapper, singer, writer, actress and social activist. Hill is the poster girl for a new brigade of I'll-have-it-all soul sisters.

ECSU General Manager Honored In Atlanta

By Michael Fournier

Staff Writer

On Saturday, March 6, Ms. Edith Thorpe, General Manager of Elizabeth City State University's radio station, WRVS, was one of the honorees when the Million Dollar Black College Radio and Music Conference held its annual conference in College Park, Ga.

Ms. Thorpe was one of ten honorees, all of whom were selected by an informal consensus poll because of their

reputable services and achievements in the radio and music industries.

JR Dino, Conference Director and founder of the Million Dollar Record Pool, notified Ms. Thorpe of her nomination.

Other honorees included Randall Dunn, Promotions Director of LaFace Records; Sylvia Rhone, chief executive officer of Elektra Records and Jermaine Dupri, the CEO of So So Def Record-

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Photo by Eric Johnson
Courtesy of Columbia Records

Lauryn Hill

Three Who Paved The Way: James Bland, Duke Ellington and Leontyne Price

By Maria C. Phelps
Correspondent

(This special piece by Ms. Phelps pays tribute to three influential African-American musicians)

What is black music?

Is it R&B, Hip-Hop, Jazz or the heart-warming music called the blues?

Is it "The Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin's voice or Miles Davis's trumpet or B.B. King's guitar or D'angelo or the late Biggie Smalls?

From generation to generation what we call black music has served as a link to both the spiritual and secular venues of African-Americans. Black music has provided a vehicle for our sorrows and our joy. It has entertained us as well.

Our music has and continues to serve as a chief form of entertainment and relaxation for African-Americans and the world. Early notable contributors include James Bland, Duke Ellington and Leontyne Price.

James Bland was a composer of Southern songs, and began his career singing and playing for parties and weddings. At fourteen, Bland was hired to sing at a hotel in Washington D.C. Eventually he ended up at Howard University because his father didn't want him in the music business. Little did his father know what his son was going to do or become. While at Howard, Bland immediately started organizing glee clubs and minstrel groups. Bland became very successful in 1878 when he published *CARRY ME BACK TO OLD VIRGINNY* while working with George Primrose. Virginia is possibly the only state in America

whose official song was written by an African-American. Whenever citizens of the Old Dominion rise to sing *CARRY ME BACK TO OLD VIRGINNY*, they are also paying respect to James Bland, an African-American pioneer.

Duke Ellington, also known as **THE MAESTRO**, was another African-American musician who paved the way for many other musicians. Whenever jazz or classical music is mentioned, the name Duke Ellington comes to mind. Ellington was born Edward Kennedy Ellington on April 29, 1899, in Washington, D.C. Ellington rightfully established his nickname "Duke" by wearing flashy clothes and because he was always "duked out." Like other artists, he entered the music scene at an early age. At 24 he hit Broadway with his own band, the Washingtonians, and at 28 he was booked in Harlem's Cotton Club. Ellington was involved in several performances at Carnegie Hall, Chicago's Opera House and San Francisco's Philharmonic Hall. On his 70th birthday Ellington was a guest of President Richard M. Nixon at the White House. In his later years Ellington produced many "jazz masses" which were performed in some of the leading churches in America.

Prima Donna is the term which aptly applies to diva Leontyne Price, a long time operatic performer. Whenever Leontyne Price performs, at New York's Metropolitan Opera or elsewhere, the event is regarded as major news. Rarely does she let her audience down because of the care and precision she puts into preparing for each performance.