

A pre-Grammy stir: Eminem to team with Elton John on stage for duet

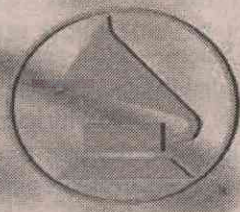
Erin Cunningham
Reporter

There is a new twist to the Grammy performance scheduled by accused homophobe Eminem. He will share the stage with, openly gay Elton John, during his performance of "Stan."

Following Eminem's four Grammy nominations, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation voiced their contempt for the situation. Before the announcement that John would be joining Eminem on stage, GLAAD argued that Eminem should not be permitted to perform at all.

The rapper's "The Marshall Mathers LP" includes lyrics that graphically depict violence against women and gays, and it has sparked controversy regarding his divisive

Grammy nominations and protested performance. Scott Seomin, entertainment media director for GLAAD, said, "[Eminem's] lyrics are the most homophobic and hate-



The Grammy logo

ful GLAAD has seen in the past 15 years." The organization does not feel Eminem should have another widely publicized platform for his hateful lyrics to be spread.

GLAAD has yet to determine whether or not it will protest the Grammy Awards ceremony Febru-

ary 21 at Los Angeles' Staples Center.

However, the involvement of Elton John in the performance may complicate GLAAD's argument against the rapper. Last April the group honored John with its Vito Russo Entertainer Award, acknowledging he "furthered the visibility and understanding of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community."

There have been several examples of proactive approaches to the controversy. The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) and GLAAD will co-host a civic discussion the day before the Grammy Awards to discuss the nominations of controversial artists whose words have been called excessive, homophobic and misogynistic.

2gether member dies at age of 16

Teresa Bateman
Reporter

Michael Cuccione of the hit MTV series "2gether" died Jan. 13 in his hometown of Vancouver, British Columbia, he died after his lungs collapsed due to complications from chemotherapy and radiation therapy just eight days after his 16th birthday.

Cuccione was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, a disease that affects the lymph nodes, when he was 9 years old. He had been fighting the cancer off and on for seven years. However, after extensive chemotherapy, radiation and a bone marrow transplant, the cancer was dormant for five years. The disease left Cuccione unable to properly move air through his lungs.

A car crash in December put Cuccione in the hospital. Unable to

fight the effects of the accident, he contracted pneumonia. Cuccione spent the rest of his stay on a respirator before succumbing to respiratory failure.

According to Cuccione's uncle, Michael Cuccione, his death was unexpected. "His lungs just gave out," he said. "We weren't really expecting it."

Cuccione played Jason "QT" McKnight on MTV's boy band series "2gether." MTV's producers dreamed up an idea for a movie that would spoof boy bands, the movie was entitled "2gether." All parts were cast except the part of McKnight, a heartthrob with a fictional terminal illness named "biliary thrombosis". Cuccione was hired for the role of McKnight.

The success of the movie and its soundtrack contributed to "2gether" the movie becoming "2gether" the television series. The band also opened seven concerts

for Britney Spears.

When Cuccione was first diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, he had a dream to meet David Hasselhoff, star of the beach drama "Baywatch." When the two met the crew of "Baywatch" asked Cuccione to do a guest appearance. He turned that experience into an acting career. Hasselhoff delivered the eulogy and a song dedicated to Cuccione at his funeral.

Before his work as an actor, Cuccione established a charitable cancer research foundation called the "Michael Cuccione Foundation for Cancer Research." He also recorded a five song CD entitled "Make a Difference," and co-authored a book with his grandmother that addressed the issues of living with cancer. His efforts helped raise close to \$500,000 (CDN), which was donated to the B.C. Children's Hospital.

Industry NEWS

"Hannibal" opened this past week with the fourth biggest debut in history, bringing in \$58 million.

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" also made history this past weekend at the box office, becoming the highest grossing foreign-language film ever at \$60 million.

A federal appeals court ruled Monday that the song-swapping program Napster must stop trading copyrighted material.

Actress Liv Ullmann will head the jury at this year's Cannes Film Festival, replacing Jodie Foster.

Eminem will perform at the Grammy Awards alongside openly gay singer Elton John.

Drew Barrymore will receive a new award named after her famous acting family. The new award, titled the Barrymore Award, will be presented yearly to an entertainer who "has had a profound impact on the artistry of hair and makeup in the entertainment industry."

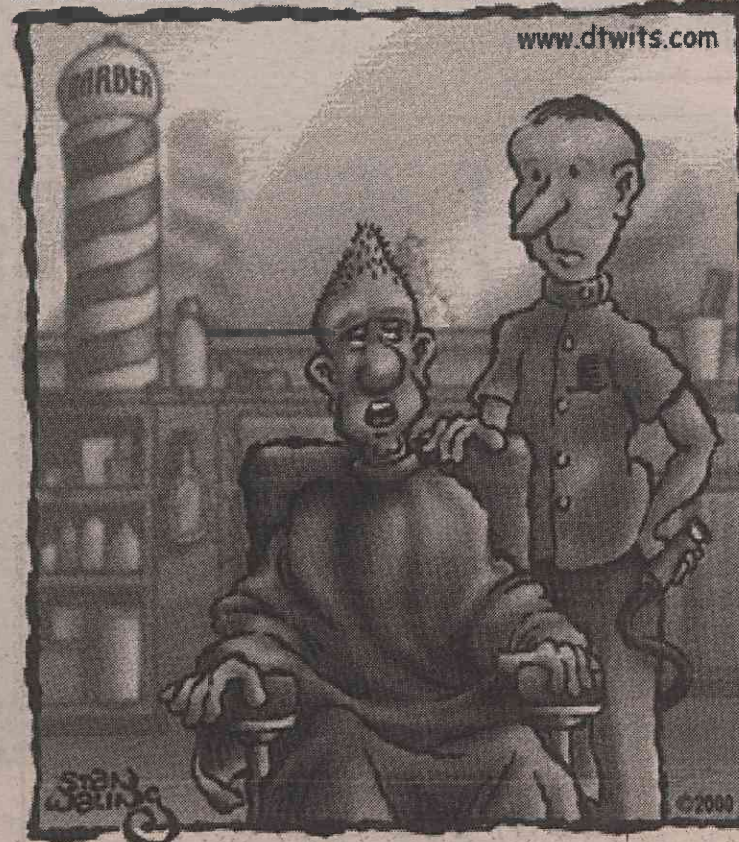
Prince is launching a new Website, www.NPGMusicClub.com, where visitors can register for \$7.77 a month to receive music.

As the possibility of an actors' strike grows closer, foreign-born stars may have a loophole, actors who are not U.S. citizens could work on movies shot and financed outside the country during the strike without reprimand, according to the Screen Actors Guild.

(Industry News is a compilation of stories from E! Entertainment, Billboard.com, Entertainment Weekly and E!Online.com)

DITHERED TWITS by Stan Waling

www.dtwits.com



"I want a flat top."

Last week in the article '21 Stew plans another show' the A&E Section incorrectly stated the band members and their positions. Randy Miyaoka is a vocalist and plays the bass guitar and Nate Walker plays brass.