

M.C. Hammer: Tough Singer, Even Tougher Boss

Cooper Features

Rap star M.C. Hammer, in the midst of a two-year, 66-city world tour, makes no apologies about well, putting the hammer down on his staff and entourage.

He has become one of the richest black entertainers in America, but he also become one of the toughest bosses, sometimes unmercifully driving his staff of 70 dancers, musicians and aides.

Music critics consider him to be one of the toughest rock and roll bosses since James Brown was in his heyday and he forced

his staffers to ride buses and stay in discount hotels while James flew on a private jet and lounged in the most luxurious hotels. There have been other tough rock and roll bosses, like Diana Ross, Michael Jackson and Ike Turner, but none may be tougher than the Hammer.

Hammer's staff travels first-class — the group jets around the country in a chartered 747 airliner but M.C. admits to running a tight ship.

On both the Oprah Winfrey Show and in an interview with Rolling Stone magazine,

Hammer admitted that he conducts bed checks of all his young staffers every night they are on the road. Almost all members of the entourage must return directly to their hotel rooms after each show and must remain there for the rest of the evening or they will be slapped with a \$100 fine. In addition Hammer is said to have given out fines for missing dance steps on stage and failing to have luggage ready on travel days. And Hammer is said to pay his employees only \$100 a week for travel expenses such

as meals, laundry and incidentals. On his recent tour, Michael Jackson is said to have paid \$200 a week in per diems.

Hammer says he is tough because he has to be, that it is the only way he can keep control of a huge traveling party that includes 15 dancers, a dozen background singers, eight security men, seven musicians, three valets and two DJs.

"We have a clean organization, very disciplined," he said. "We try to keep our organization disciplined because we have goals, and in

order to achieve those goals we must be disciplined. We don't put curfews on you to control your life just curfews to help save your life. Everybody is not 25 or 30 years old here. We've got 18-year-olds, 19-year-olds who we feel very responsible for."

There isn't any question that the Hammer's formula is working. His "Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em" album was recorded for less than \$10,000, but it has sold more than 1 million copies, making it the biggest-selling rap album of the time, easily surpassing the Beastie Boys, "License to Ill" by more than 1 million copies.

Pepsi-Cola Signs M.C. Hammer For World Concert Tour & Commercials

NEW YORK — M.C. Hammer, the triple platinum pop performer, whose current album, "Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em," is the best selling album of the year, has been signed by Pepsi-Cola Company to a worldwide concert tour sponsorship and to do radio and television commercials.

The 27-year-performer, as renowned for his rap music as his high-energy dance routines, appears in Pepsi-Cola television and radio commercials currently in national and local markets.

The M.C. Hammer Tour is carrying the talented young singer throughout the U.S. this year. Starting in early 1991, the tour will move on to Europe, Asia and to Australia.

"Pepsi-Cola Company has an established tradition of signing multi-talented performers who are a step ahead of the times," said John Moorhead, Vice President, Marketing Services, Pepsi-Cola Co. "we're pleased that M.C. Hammer is continuing that legacy with us."

Flamboyant and fleet-footed, Hammer's live stage production has been hailed by critics as one of the most exciting and energetic performances on the pop scene today.

A one-time ball boy for the Oakland "A's", Hammer was discovered, when he was 11, by former team owner Charles Finley while doing James Brown-type splits on the stadium parking lot.

Today, Hammer heads up "The Hammer Posse," a 30-member troupe that includes a

live band, 10 backup singers and 15 dancers, who have been reported to practice six hours a day and run three miles before each rehearsal.

The King of Pop, aka, Stanley Kirk Burrell, also serves as a role model and spokesperson in Pepsi-Cola's 1990-91 national School Assembly Program. This is a multimedia presentation that annually reaches an estimated three million youths with an anti-drug and stay-in-school message.

"In addition to being an exciting performer, M.C. Hammer speaks a message worth promoting: that our society needs to focus its energies on nurturing and educating our children," Moorehead said.

The M.C. Hammer deal marks Pepsi-Cola's second major sponsorship coup this year with a red-hot rap performer. In April, Madison Avenue embraced rap music when Pepsi premiered a national commercial promoting its "Cool Cans" that featured rap lyrics written exclusively for the Company by Grammy Award-winner Young M.C..



When female elephants fight, it is said, they usually try to bite off each other's tail.



M.C. HAMMER