

# Entertainment

## Singer Band Leader Billy Eckstine Died at Age 78



Billy Eckstine

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Singer-bandleader Billy Eckstine, whose warm baritone graced a string of '40s and '50s hits such as "Fools Rush In" and "Everything I Have Is Yours," died Monday, a spokeswoman said. He was 78.

Eckstine died at Montefiore Hospital in Pittsburgh. He had suffered a stroke last year.

Known as "Mr. B.," Eckstine sang romantic ballads in a strong, vibrant baritone, with impeccable diction. He was America's most popular vocalist in 1949 and '50.

and the first black singer to make the cover of Life magazine and to become a national sex symbol.

His hit records between 1945 and 1951 also included "A Cottage for Sale," "Prisoner of Love," "I Surrender, Dear," "Everything I Have Is Yours," "Blue Moon," "My Foolish Heart," "Caravan," "Body and Soul" and "I Apologize." His last big hit was "Passing Strangers," a duet with Sarah Vaughan.

In his band at one time or another were Dizzy Gillespie, Fats

Navarro, Miles Davis, Gene Ammons, Dexter Gordon, Charlie Parker, Sonny Stitt, Art Blakey, Lucky Thompson and Vaughan. Unlike the kind of accompaniment most swing bands had provided singers, the Eckstine band played powerful, thick chords and rhythmically complex figures behind Eckstine and Vaughan.

William Clarence Eckstine was born July 8, 1914, in Pittsburgh. He grew up in Washington, D.C., and attended Howard University. He

won an amateur show by imitating Cab Calloway, singing a nursery rhyme lyric with interpolated scatting. Eckstine taught himself to play trumpet and valve trombone. He recorded as vocalist on two blues hits, "Jelly, Jelly" and "Stormy Monday."

In 1943, spent a year as a solo nightclub act before founding his own big band, which featured the

then-emerging bebop style.

The band was active only three years, 1944 to 1947, because of economic difficulties but had pivotal influence on bebop. He took up singing of the love songs that pushed him to wider stardom.

"They weren't ready for black singers singing love songs," he said in a 1984 interview. "It sounds ridiculous, but it's true."

## Brown Releases New Album

Mr. Dynamite, "The Hardest Working Man In Show Business", Soul Brother Number One, "The Godfather Of Soul" or "The Minister of the New, New Super Heavy Funk". Whichever nickname you prefer, the influence undeniably remains the same James Brown has surpassed the status of living legend.

The Godfather of Soul is the legend that provides the inspiration for many of the musical influences of today. Through his roots lie in gospel, Brown's work, most often described as funk/R&B/soul, remains at the forefront of every musical genre: pop, rap, urban, and dance. His style has come to symbolize a precursor for all that has followed, with proof of the James Brown influence witnessed in acts ranging from Prince to The Rolling Stones, The Beatles to Ice Cube. No form of music has escaped the influence of the Godfather.

With a lifetime goal aimed at creating a universal, feel-good sense of mutual love, Brown's history has come to define all styles of music

and his words have ignited a multitude of steps towards social reform. His distinctive vocal quality, legendary dance moves and message centered lyrics have had an altering effect on our entire culture for over three decades. Brown has successfully crossed the boundaries of race, age, gender and musical styling and has come to symbolize universal acceptance. As his new Scotti Brothers album defines, he is the Universal James.

On his 79th record, the Godfather of Soul brings his message to greater mass appeal than ever before. Universal James is a musical collaboration with some of Brown's favorite and most respected producers: Robert Clivilles and David Cole (C&C Music Factory) and Jazzie B (Soul II Soul).

From the opening song, the C&C produced "Can't Get Any Harder," James Brown brings the funk into the '90s with a slamming, dance/rap extraordinaire. When the Leaders of the New School and Duran Ramos of Trilogy tear

through the tracks with their uplifting raps, the tone is set for the rest of the album. Throughout the following six Jazzie B-produced tracks and three James Brown-produced songs, the groove builds on.

A mesh of classic James Brown funk and '90s-flavored soul, the Jazzie B produced cuts broaden the universality of the James Brown message while it keeps feet tapping and body shaking. On tracks like "Just Do It," "Mine All Mine" and "Show Me," the Jazzie B groove is a soaring compliment to the distinctive Godfather funk, and the smooth feel brings forward the positive in James Brown's universal message.

Mr. Dynamite returns to his roots on tracks like "Make it Funky" and "Everybody's Got A Thang." These James Brown produced cuts are straight forward funk classics - primed for the funk powered, groove-centered musical climate of the '90s.

Each of the ten songs that comprise Universal James stand true to the James Brown legacy they are all



James Brown

timeless classics ready to excite the longtime fan and convert the new listener. With Universal James, the Godfather has again reached into the future of music by combining his enduring message of unity with his soulful devotion of the past.



## Boys Choir of Harlem

From Broadway to Epcot Center. After celebrating its 25th year with a recent run on Broadway, the Boys Choir of Harlem stopped by the American Adventure pavilion at Epcot Center on Saturday to perform for Walt Disney World guests. Directed and founded by Dr. Walter J. Turnbull, the choir also seized the moment for a rap session with Mickey Mouse.

## Arts Council Has Ticket Program

The Arts Council is happy to be able to continue its ticket program into the spring and summer. This program provides tickets to performing arts events and art activities for low income families, children, senior adults and the mentally and physically challenged.

Donated by local arts organizations, tickets will be dispensed through the council to designated community agencies for distribution. Our goal is to provide access to arts events for people that would not be able to attend due to economical or physical disadvantages.

Through this program, local agencies have been provided tickets to events including: Preservation Hail Jazz Band; A Christmas Carol; the Charlie Byrd Concert; the Winston-Salem Symphony Concert featuring Maya Angelou; the Children's Theatre presentation of "The Emperor's Nightingale;" and the Lollipop Concerts by the Piedmont Triad Symphony.

Upcoming events in the program include "1776," the Secret Garden, Carlos Rodriguez and the

Symphony Chorale, KISMET and Music Art Sunset.

For more information concerning the Arts Council's Ticket Program, call 722-2585.

Taking place in July and August, Cartwheels is a unique program that brings visual arts to the neighborhoods of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. The program enables children 12 and under to learn about the visual arts through hands-on experience and introduces

to area residents throughout the summer. These concerts provide an opportunity for families to attend "performing arts happenings" in their own neighborhoods and serves as an avenue for local performers to showcase their talent.

Aside from some technical details and manpower needs, both these events are terrific "free" activities for children and families that you can present to your community

## ARTS REACH

By REGGIE JOHNSON

the children to a variety of artistic disciplines.

Also taking place in July and August - "Evenings in the Neighborhoods," brings jazz, bluegrass, country, gospel, R&B and beach

at little or no cost to your organization.

Take advantage of the program and call the Arts Council if you are interested in co-sponsoring an event.



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Call Diggs Gallery for more information

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