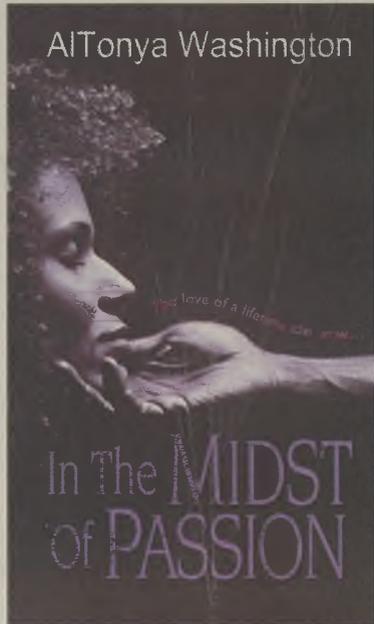
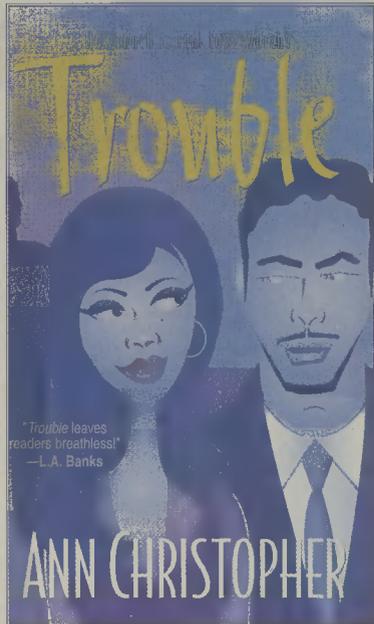


D Section

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Novels like Al'Tonya Washington's 'In The Midst of Passion' and Ann Christopher's 'Trouble' are making black-oriented romances part of a growing publishing industry.



Arie hits stride with Motown

India Arie Testimony: Vol. 1, Life & Relationships India Arie and others, producers Motown/Universal Records



India Arie must have struggled to get this record to see daylight. It doesn't sound like anything on the radio (thank you, Jesus) and she's on Motown 'Nuff said.

But I'm glad the sister is persistent. This is what we should be hearing on radio. Though not a great singer, Arie is one of those rare talents that sings music that fits her voice so well that it's as stylish as it is affective. She also is a writer who can convey hurt, betrayal, anger and unbridled love without hammering you into submission. She's straightforward and simple, yet doesn't go for the obvious. She will make you think as you listen.

She will also make you appreciate this work very much. 'The Heart Of The Matter' is a brilliant performance, not just vocally, but lyrically. This is really a bittersweet song without being vengeful. There is hurt and pain, but she's taking her lumps and moving on while growing in the process. For those who couldn't get enough of 'Video' from her first release, 'There's Hope' is its musical twin. Lyrically it's more about being upbeat than defiant. 'I Am Not My Hair' is certainly defiant. Arie and Akon team up for one of the best political statements in a while. Not very radio-friendly because folks want to hear music that makes a booty shake rather than stir the conscience.

There are a few times when Arie may have reached too far. 'Summer' teams her with Rasca! Flatts and Victor Wooten. Wooten's a funky bass player and Rasca! Flatts is one of the hottest country groups on the planet. It's a great collaboration, but I wonder if any of their true fans will be accepting. That aside, Arie has hit her stride at the right time. She's gone from a girlish curiosity to a profound woman. It suits her well.

Passion's in fashion

Black-oriented romance builds growing publishing niche

By Cheris F. Hodges

The African American romance industry is booming.

Harlequin, which has long been the standard in romance fiction, launched its African American line, Kimani Press in June. The publishing giant purchased BET Books in November.

"This acquisition supports a key strategic initiative for Harlequin of offering greater breadth in publishing niches that can create future growth for the overall Harlequin franchise," said Donna Hayes, Harlequin's publisher and CEO.

Romance novels account for 54.5 percent of all paperbacks sold, according to the Romance Writers of America's web site.

In the early 1990s, the boom in African America romances took off when Terry McMillian's "Waiting To Exhale" exploded in 1992.

Then the Arabesque line was launched in 1994 by Kensington Publications. A year later, Genesis Press, one of the few African American-owned romance publishers, was launched.

Fast-forward 10 years and African American romance is the fastest growing market of fiction.

"One great thing about the market today is that there are a few major publishers, including Kensington and Harlequin, both of whom I am fortunate to write for, that have imprints with books by and about African American women," said romance author Ann Christopher.

"There are more opportunities for today's black romance author."

Christopher's first novel, "Trouble," was released by Kensington this month.

"Trouble" is the story of defense attorney Mike Baldwin, who falls for his brother's date, Dara Williams—a law student who ends up interning at his firm. They try to deny their attraction to each other, but nature takes its course with a lot of twists and turns too.

Christopher has a book scheduled for release by Harlequin in February as well.

Al'Tonya Washington, who lives in Charlotte, started her writing career because she didn't see any books in the market she could identify with.

Washington's first novel, "Remember," Please see AFRICAN/2D



Washington

'Quilts and Prints of Gee's Bend' blankets the senses

By Sandy Seawright FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

"The Quilts and Prints of Gee's Bend" Jerald Melberg Gallery 625 South Sharon Amity Road Often when we approach art in a gallery or a museum it feels like we are to stand back and be cautious, be reverent.

Not so at "The Quilts and Prints of Gee's Bend" at Jerald Melberg Gallery. This exhibit feels like the viewer is being comforted and we experience the spirit of human



PHOTOS/JERALD MELBERG GALLERY "American House Top"

connection. Gee's Bend in a small, rural community is southwest Alabama. These quilting skills have been passed down through several generations.

At Melberg, the quilts and etchings have been created by Mary Lee Randolph and her daughter-in-law Louisiana Randolph. These quilts have been praised for their beauty, bold geometry and sophisticated use of color.

The quilts have a subtlety that makes them very approachable. "Bars Variation" by Amelia Bennett created in a variety of lighter

blue hues of wide stripes of cloth reminds me of a mini-

painting by Agnes Martin.

These quilts have such a sophisticated use of color that we wonder about their influences: is it only older Gee's Bend quilts? Or is it African textiles? Or nature? Or all of the



above? In Annie Mae Young's quilt

"Blocks" created in 2003, 72 inches by 88 inches, she uses a minimum amount of the color marigold, which serves sort of as punctuation marks. "Housetop Center Medalion" from the

1970s, is 91 inches by 79 inches features white surface Please see GEE'S/2D

Auditions for 'A Chorus Line' at Theatre Charlotte

SPECIAL TO THE POST

Theatre Charlotte will host open auditions for its season opener, the musical "A Chorus Line."

The Tony- and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical is

directed and choreographed by Eddie Mabry.

Roles are available for 10 men, nine women, and 10 extras 16 to 40 years old. Auditions are at 7 p.m., July 23-24 at Theatre Charlotte, 501 Queens Road.

All hopefuls should have a Broadway-style song prepared. A jazz combination will be taught, so come dressed to dance. Readings will be done at callbacks. If you have a picture and résumé, bring them, but are

not necessary.

The play runs September 14-17, 21-24, 28-October 1. John Stafford is the musical director for the production.

In "A Chorus Line," 16 hopeful dancers compete for eight spots in a new Broadway

musical.

During the audition, the dancers bare their souls, endure physical and emotional injuries, and deal with rejection.

Court: Removing film sex, profanity, violates copyrights

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — Sanitizing movies on DVD or VHS tape violates federal copyright laws, and several companies that scrub films must turn over their inventory to Hollywood studios, an appeals judge ruled.

Editing movies to delete objectionable language, sex and violence is an "illegitimate business" that hurts Hollywood studios and directors who own the movie rights, said U.S. District Judge Richard P. Matsch in a decision released last week in Denver.

"Their (studios and direc-



PHOTOS/THE STOCK MARKET

tors) objective ... is to stop the infringement because of its irreparable injury to the creative artistic expression in the copyrighted movies," the judge wrote. "There is a public interest in providing such protection."

Matsch ordered the companies named in the suit, including CleanFlicks, Play It Clean Video and CleanFlicks, to stop "producing, manufacturing, creating" and renting edited movies. The businesses also must turn over their inventory to the movie studios within five days of the ruling.

"We're disappointed," CleanFlicks chief executive Ray Lines said. "This is a typical

case of David vs. Goliath, but in this case, Hollywood rewrote the ending. We're going to continue to fight."

CleanFlicks produces and distributes sanitized copies of Hollywood films on DVD by burning edited versions of movies onto blank discs. The scrubbed films are sold over the Internet and to video stores.

As many as 90 video stores nationwide—about half of them in Utah—purchase movies from CleanFlicks, Lines said. It is unclear how the ruling may affect those stores.

The controversy began in 1998 when the owners of

Sunrise Family Video began deleting scenes from "Titanic" that showed a naked Kate Winslet.

The scrubbing caused an uproar in Hollywood, resulting in several lawsuits and countersuits.

Directors can feel vindicated by the ruling, said Michael Apted, president of the Director's Guild of America.

"Audiences can now be assured that the films they buy or rent are the vision of the filmmakers who made them and not the arbitrary choices of a third-party editor," he said.



Ratings

Table with 2 columns: Rating (Classic, Excellent, Good, Fair, Why?, No stars - A mess) and Star count (5 stars, 4 stars, 3 stars, 2 stars, 1 star, 0 stars)

