

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Brandy

BY TONYA PENDLETON

Her irrepressible good humor, perkiness, and penchant for shopping make her a typical 15-year-old. But that's where comparisons cease. Brandy Norwood has already had a leading role in a television series (the now defunct Thea) and is releasing her debut self-titled album on Atlantic Records.

Her hair is curved into a braided bob, and she's wearing the adolescent uniform of casual jeans and funky shoes. Brandy's spirited personality is felt all over her record company offices as she bounds around, her energy distilled only when she has to sit down for this interview. She smiles easily, and has the self-possession and confidence older women take years to acquire.

Though her mature voice and range suggest a developing diva, Brandy's early successes have not eroded her solid upbringing. She was born in McComb, Mississippi, but was raised in the Los Angeles suburb of Carson, where she led a fairly quiet life. But her musical talents were evident even as a young child.

Her father is a choir director, and a gospel singer. Brandy's entire family is active in the church. She credits them with supporting her career, and helping her keep a level head. In fact it was her father who first inspired Brandy to sing. "I watched my father in church," says Brandy. I found out I had talent, and I watched Whitney Houston a lot. From there, I said if God has blessed me with this voice I should just go and pursue my dream." At 11, Brandy was performing in talents shows and at community and charity events when she met a producer who took her around to the record labels.

At 14, she got a deal with Atlantic Records. She also had a talent agent, who sent her to the acting auditions that resulted in her role on Thea. The stereotypical image of a pressured and relentlessly pushed child star don't apply here. Brandy's parents are actively involved in her career (her parents manage her) but



Brandy Norwood

it's clear that if she wanted an entertainment career. "I wasn't aware of all the responsibilities" she says, "but I knew what I wanted to be. It's not a problem. People ask me if I'm missing out on my childhood. This is my childhood. This is something that I want to do. And if I don't want to do it anymore, I can say 'Mom, I want to stop this right now.' But I'm definitely going to the prom! So I'm not missing out on anything."

Brandy plans to go to college, though she will probably take a year off of school and work with a tutor while her career is developing. Her family has adjusted easily to the changes her increased recognition have wrought, since Brandy's younger brother, Willie Norwood Jr. is also an actor, last seen on the Sinbad show. Her song, "Best Friend" is dedicated to him. But Brandy doesn't see herself (or her brother) falling into the pitfalls that have derailed other child stars.

"I really don't look at the negative side. Even though I should pay attention to it, I really don't let that

bother me because I know I have the right people on my side, I have my mom and dad and people that are really behind me. I let them worry about [the negatives.] All I worry about is doing my interviews and my performances."

Brandy has already appeared on television shows like Rhythm and Jam, The People's Choice Awards, and Showtime at the Apollo. In performance and on record, hearing her voice for the first time will surprise people who expect a teenybopper album. Brandy and her producers made sure the lyrics were age-appropriate, but the production was far more mature. "I had input on how I was going to sing the vocals," Brandy says "And what kind of power I was going to use to sing it, and I co-wrote the interlude called 'I Dedicate.' I wrote some of the melody on 'Give Me You,' and I helped a lot on 'Sunny Day.' I want to write more on the second album and learn how to do the percussion and drums and everything."

'After Dark' Features Elliot

Contemporary jazz artist Richard Elliot has released "After Dark," his eighth solo album and third for Blue Note/Capitol Records.

The collection contains a blend of sultry jazz, R & B grooves and melodic ballads. Of the four songs in the collection, the tenor saxophonist penned or co-penned 11 compositions and produced nine tracks.

His first foray into dance music, Elliot collaborated with dance music producer Todd Terry on two tracks including "So Special," which has been served to clubs and record pools. The one-time member of the Yellowjackets and Tower of Power salutes the later group on "Boys from the Bay,"

which also features a performance by the legendary horn section.

Other highlights include a Jeffrey Osborne vocal piece ("If Tomorrow Never Comes") and a version of the Simon & Garfunkel classic, "Bridge Over Troubled Water."

Routinely reaching the

upper echelon of Billboard magazine's Contemporary Jazz chart, Elliot's 1993 "Soul Embrace," album landed on top at number one. A frequent flyer, Elliot plays over 100 concerts each year and tour dates to support the new album will be announced shortly.

Advertise In
The
Portland
Observer

Call 503-288-0033

Sweepstakes for Scholarships

Doing the "write" thing could win some lucky students thousands of dollars for a college education.



A special sweepstakes could win a lucky student \$25,000 towards a college education.

A company that's been a boon to education for 25 years by selling quality writing instruments and art materials is celebrating its silver anniversary with a special sweepstakes emphasizing the value and importance of education. The Instant-Win Savings Bond Sweepstakes sponsored by Pentel of America will award \$50,000 in U.S. EE Savings Bonds for college education. Peel-back stickers inside of four back-to-school multi-pak products could be worth one of more than 100 bonds including the \$25,000 Grand Prize (value at maturity).

The four multi-paks to look for at local stores are The Smart Set, The Student Pak, The Twist Pak and The Study Pak. Each set features several different Pentel products packaged together to meet the specific studying needs of students. Included are automatic pencils, Superball roller pens and an eraser. One set even includes a nine-function calculator.

The company, which will also offer consumers the chance to mail away for a free computer software catalog featuring discounted educational software, may help many youngsters get off to the "write" start in life.

The Musical Theatre Company
presents A Special Holiday Production
Victor Herbert's magical operetta

Babes in Toyland

Join us for the beginning of a wonderful holiday tradition!
Make your reservations NOW!

November 18 through December 18, 1994
November 18, 19, 25, 26, December 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17 - 8pm
November 20, 27, December 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18 - 2pm

Eastside Performance Center
531 SE 14th and Stark

Tickets \$15, \$17, \$19 - Children 12 and under, \$6
Call (503) 280-6592

TARGET

Also at all Fastixx outlets, (503) 224-8499
Subject to service charge

Call (503) 288-0033 or Fax (503) 288-0015 to place a
Career or Classified ad in The Portland Observer.



The first automobile show was held in New York City in 1900.

Disney Presents Latin Musical

Walt Disney Records has gathered together many of today's top Latin singing stars in Navidad en las Americas, the first-ever Latin music compilation recording.

The album features Spanish and English language performances of traditional Latin and American Christmas songs and musical styles ranging from mariachi to salsa and pop.

The production coincides with Buena Vista International's Navidad en las Americas Christmas music television special scheduled for domestic and international broadcast during the holiday season. Walt Disney Records will done a portion of the proceeds from the album to Reading Is Fundamental in the United States and Casa de Tina (Tina's

House) in Mexico.

Navidad en las Americas features star performances by 12 of the top Latin American musical talents today: Veronica Castro, Chayanne, Celia Cruz, Placido Domingo, Luis Enrique, Jose Feliciano, Pedro Fernandez, Juan Gabriel, Ricky Martin, Tito Puente, Lucha Villa and Xuxa. Navidad en las Americas is executive produced by There Goes The Neighborhood Productions. Headed by Dan Guerrero, Michael Dagnery and Lisa Orozco Rosales, There Goes The Neighborhood is one of the leading producers creating new product for the exploding domestic and international Latino market.

"As producers, we always look for unique and challenging

projects. As Latinos, our aim is to promote our culture," states Dan Guerrero.

Luis Enrique remarked of his song selection, "I wanted to sing my favorite Christmas song 'Blanca Navidad,' but I wanted my fans to instantly recognize that it was me, so we created a neat arrangement using my trademark mixture of pop and salsa."

FINANCIAL SERVICE AND LOAN \$ - FINANCIAL - HELP?

The A.F.M. Co. can arrange financing for most client in need of home equity, business, personal and also debt consolidation.

1-800-348-5565

CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
LI-CM COMMUNITY CENTER
4219 N.E. MLK Jr. BLVD.
281-7036

PRESCHOOL
Ages 2 & 1/2 - 5 years old
*Half Day *Full Day

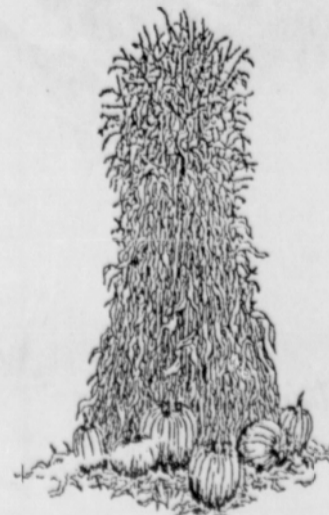
BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL
Ages 4 - 12 years old
*Homework Assistance * Math * Scouting

*6:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

*Assistance Payments Accepted *Sponsored by Lutheran Inner-City Ministries



The windiest city in the US is Great Falls, Montana, where the average wind speed is 13.1 mph. Chicago, the notorious "windy city," actually ranks only 16th among the windiest cities in the US.



Linda Raymond



reads from her new novel

Rocking the Babies

7:30 pm, Monday, November 28

Powell's City of Books

1005 West Burnside Street

Raymond's story involves the relationship between two grandmothers who have volunteered to provide "TLC in the ICU" — in the neonatal intensive care unit of an Ohio hospital, they hold and rock the babies too small or damaged to survive without love and attention. Essential to Raymond's story is the African American oral tradition, which brings the two women together as they unscroll their private histories, a wealth of knowledge that becomes a priceless gift for the young mothers on the ward.

