

FOCUS



Steve Martin and Queen Latifah star in "Bringing Down the House."

'Bringing Down the House' Brings Down the Comedy Bar

(AP)—Queen Latifah oozes charisma and talent and absolutely deserves her supporting-actress Oscar nomination for playing prison matron Mama Morton in the musical "Chicago."

Which makes "Bringing Down the House" all the more baffling. Latifah not only co-stars in the movie, she's an executive producer and contributed music for the soundtrack.

What was it about this movie that compelled her to get involved so intimately?

It couldn't be the script from first-time screenwriter Jason Filardi. It's chock full of outdated racial stereotypes. All the white people are uptight, racist WASPs, all the black people are ghetto fabulous, and none of them resembles a human being.

It starts out amusingly enough, albeit in a "You've Got Mail" sort of way. Tax attorney Peter Sanderson (Steve Martin) is nervously preparing for his first date with Charlene Morton (Latifah), with whom he's conducted a giddy online affair.

This opening section is the only part that depicts reality in any form, as Peter and Charlene carefully choose their words to make themselves sound desirable. He describes himself as having "light hair," when it's actually gray. She writes about exercising for an hour, then working in the yard - which is what she does at the Los Angeles County Jail, where she's doing time for robbery.

But then Charlene busts out and shows up at Peter's house in all her bootylicious glory and insinuates herself in hopes of getting him to exonerate her.

Despite his initial disdain, Peter forms a friendship with this woman, chiefly because she functions as a Magical Black Person - a cinematic character, like Will Smith in "The Legend of Bagger Vance" and Don Cheadle in "The Family Man," who swoops down, solves everyone's problems and provides clarity.

Book Mixes Humor With Controversy

'Black Life' looks at the lighter side of African Americans

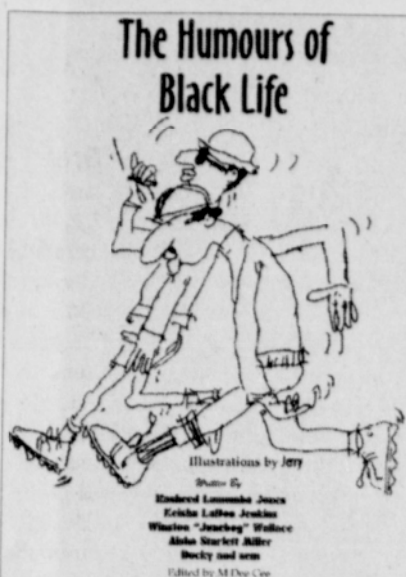
A new book, *The Humours of Black Life*, forewarns those with thin skin, 'black or white,' not to turn its pages

The book humorously exposes the underbelly of African-American history, culture and lifestyle from slavery to hip-hop. Using irony, sarcasm and witty banter in short narrative expose, streetwise editorials, offbeat poetry and tongue-in-cheek anecdotes, it's sure to offend more than a few sensibilities.

Written under a number of author pseudonyms, the book reveals some of the most intimate details of black life in embarrassingly frank detail.

"Examining stereotypes humorously takes away a great deal of their power to demean," said M Dee Cee, the book's editor. "The book is a very potent ego-builder."

At 360 pages, the book does an interesting job of revisiting history to uncover the ironies it sees everywhere in black life. President George Washington's Last Will and Testament, for example, is hilariously



The Humours of Black Life is available at Barnes and Nobles and on Amazon.com

translated for its hidden meaning such as the fact that Washington freed his slaves after his death, but only after his fields have been harvested one last time.

The book is full of original caricature drawings depicting five black personality profiles - Treadmillers, Saints, Revolutionaries, B-Boys and Girls, and Buppies as well as numerous other caricatures under such headings as "The Sociology Hall of Fame," "All in the Family" and "Roots".

Beneath its sarcasm and humor, "The Humours of Black Life" makes a very positive statement about being black in America and is a must read for anyone who wants to look at the lighter side of black life. The book is available online at Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble.

Rapper Faces Obscenity Charge

Naked performance riles South Carolina prosecutor

(AP)—Former 2 Live Crew rapper Luther Campbell faces a felony charge after police said he led a sexually charged performance at a Dorchester County nightclub in South Carolina.

An arrest warrant was issued Wednesday for the 42-year-old Florida-based rapper on a charge of presenting or participating in an obscene performance.

The October show reportedly featured naked people on stage at the End Zone nightclub. "That might go over in South Beach or wherever he's from, but it's not going to fly in Dorchester County," prosecutor Walter Bailey said.

Police began their investigation the day after Campbell's show, when a 23-year-old woman reported she was dragged onto the stage, stripped naked and sexually assaulted.

After reviewing videotapes of the performance, police determined the woman had been a willing participant and charged her with filing a false police report.

Campbell's spokeswoman, Rebekah Funk, said the rapper had no immediate comment on the charge.



Best known for his explicit rap lyrics, former 2 Live Crew member Luther Campbell faces charges for a sexually charged performance.

Dance to France

continued from Metro

In addition to the performances, the kids will have a chance to sightsee and take in all that is French.

"There are a couple girls in the company that speak French," Gonzales said. "We'll also have a couple interpreters there, thank goodness."

Meanwhile, this gaggle of talented artists are training harder, focusing longer and maybe having a little more fun as the anticipation tickles their sense of adventure.

"I'm ecstatic," said dancer Ty Cheng, a Sunset senior. "I've never been out of the country."

Cheng credits Gonzales for bringing out the best in all his dancers and never accepting second best in the pursuit of the perfect dance.

"Kids our age are capable of doing this. Steve gives us the chance to really go for it," Cheng said. "He prepares you to be a professional."

Cheng, who started dancing just two years ago is curious about performing in other countries and is looking forward to this unique opportunity.

Senior Ashley Caldwell is one

of five students from Jefferson that will go abroad. She is in her third year in the program.

"I'm excited for everyone," she said. "It's a unique opportunity to do something really different."

Many of the Jefferson dancers would someday like to dance professionally. And most find inspiration in Gonzales' real world experience. He still dances during his summers with Momix, an internationally renowned modern dance company.

"He still knows what its like to be out there in the professional world," said senior dancer Chris Patterson, who finds Gonzales' story a constant source of amazement.

"He's been dancing longer than I've been alive and he dances 20 times better than I do," Patterson said. "He started when he was 16. If I work hard like he did, I can do this."

In the meantime, Gonzales is adding an extra hour or two here and there to a practice schedule already topping 30 hours a week. But the kids don't seem to mind. Expectations are running high as they have less than a week to wait before departure.

"I'm counting down," said Patterson.

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- Review the conceptual designs developed by a citizen-based committee and learn about the reuse efforts for property located at 3368 NE Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd.
- Learn about the City's "Brownfields Showcase Program" to address contaminated properties.
- Review application drafts, provide direction and assist in finalizing the grant applications to U.S. EPA.

Wednesday, March 12 • 3:30 – 5:00 PM
at Bureau of Housing & Community Dev, 421 SW Sixth Ave., Suite 1100, Portland AND
Thursday, March 13 • 6:30 – 8:00 PM
at OAME Cascade Plaza, 4134 N. Vancouver Ave., Portland

This planning process is being led by the Bureau of Housing and Community Development, the Portland Development Commission, and the Portland Brownfields Showcase Program.

For general Brownfields Showcase information, contact Clark Henry at (503) 823-7053. For information about the NE MLK Jr., Blvd. project, call Christine Hermann at (503) 823-3239. To review the draft application, go to www.pdc.us



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The Mixtape Series Live

Come to the Ash Street Saloon, 225 SW Ash St., on Wednesday, March 12 at 8 p.m. for The Mixtape Series Live Vol. II featuring Onry Ozzborn and Anaxogorus of Oldominion, My G, otherwise known as Sinistapushaman, Mic Crenshaw of Hungry Mob, Keary Kase and DJ's Wicked and Evil One with special guest Mystic. Admission is \$8 for those 21 and older.

Go to Paris without leaving Portland

Until March 23, the Portland Art Museum will feature 'Paris to Portland: Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masters in Portland Collections.' The show includes 165 works drawn from private collections in the Portland area and has work by Cezanne, Renoir, Monet, Gauguin, Picasso and prints by Toulouse-Lautrec, amongst others.

Reparations Thursdays

David Park's new band, The Reparations, will play every Thursday at 9 p.m. with DJ Chill and special guest performers and DJs at The Red Sea, 318 S.W. Third Ave. Admission for those 21 and older is \$5.

PCC Kit Kat Klub Cabaret

The Portland Community College Theater Arts department presents the fabulous musical, the Kit Kat Klub, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 13 through Saturday, March 15. The show features an emcee that leads the audience through a wild and decadent journey into Berlin's Kit Kat Klub in 1929. The play follows the character of Cliff Bradshaw as he meets Sally Bowles and the girls of the Kit Kat Klub. The production contains mature subject matter that may not be suitable for younger audience members. Tickets are \$8 for general admission and \$5 for students and seniors. The play will be performed at the Performing Arts Center at the Sylvania Campus, 12000 S.W. 49th Ave. For tickets or information, call 503-977-4949.

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

The Faces of Art and Psychology

'Faces' by Gary Mac Smith will be showing through March 28 at Portland State University's Littman Gallery. Smith is a Portland Psychiatrist specializing in individual psychotherapy.

Margaret Cho 'Revolution Tour'

With the same unbridled, no holds-barred humor that has made her famous, Margaret Cho will tackle the axis of evil, her travels through Thailand's red light district, the explosion of child birth, bartering sex for household chores, revolutionizing your self-esteem, the joy of bodily functions, her loosed ex-boyfriend, and of course, her world-famous mother and much more that cannot be printed. Cho will perform in Portland on Thursday, March 13 at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

Portland Symphonic Girlchoir

The Portland Symphonic Girlchoir, a 170-member choir for girls ages six through 18, will host its annual Informance/Teacher Appreciation Concert, on Monday, March 17 at 7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, located at Southwest 18th and Jefferson. Admission to the event will be a free-will donation to the Goose Hollow Family Shelter. For more information, call 503-226-6162.

Back to the Doo Wop days

High school friends from Detroit's North End, Levi Stubbs, Renaldo "Obie" Benson, Abdul "Duke" Fakir and Lawrence Payton began marveling their audiences with an infectious blend of pure vocal power and sweet harmonies in 1954. Once they signed with Motown Records in the 60s as the Four Tops, the group churned out hit after hit eventually ending with an induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. With 43 years of playing history, the group will play at Chinook Winds Casino on Friday, March 21 and Saturday, March 22 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25 to \$40 depending on seat location. For more information or to buy tickets, call 1-888-624-6228, or Faxitax at 1-800-992-8499.