

Focus

Tap Dancing Great Dead at 57



Bernadette Peters (right) and Gregory Hines perform during the 2002 Tony Awards in New York. Hines, the tap-dancing actor who started on Broadway and in movies including White Nights and Running Scared, died Saturday. He was 57. (AP photo)



(AP) — As soon as he could walk and talk, Gregory Hines said, he knew he could dance.

His dazzling feet kicked off a career that stretched from gigs in New York clubs when he was five to Tony Award glory on Broadway and Hollywood stardom.

Hines, considered the greatest tap dancer of his generation, died of cancer Saturday in Los Angeles at age 57.

"I don't remember not dancing," Hines said in a 2001 interview with The Associated Press. "When I realized I was alive and these were my parents, and I could walk and talk, I could dance."

With his elegant tap style that evoked Fred Astaire and Sammy Davis Jr., Hines became internationally known at a young age as part of a jazz tap duo with his brother,

Maurice. Hines and his brother performed together in the musical revue "Eubie!" in 1978, in Broadway's "Sophisticated Ladies" and on film in 1984's "The Cotton Club."

His role in "The Cotton Club" led **He was the last of a kind of immaculate performer - a singer, dancer, actor and a personality.**

— George C. Wolfe, director

to more offers from Hollywood. He starred with Mikhail Baryshnikov in 1985's Cold War-era dancers' story "White Nights" and with Billy Crystal in 1986's "Running Scared" and

he appeared with Whitney Houston and Angela Bassett in 1995's "Waiting to Exhale," among other movies.

He won a 1992 Tony Award for the musical "Jelly's Last Jam."

"He was the last of a kind of immaculate performer - a singer, dancer, actor and a personality," said George C. Wolfe, who directed "Jelly."

"His dancing came from something very real," said Bernadette Peters, who appeared with Hines as co-hosts of the 2002 Tony Awards show. "It came out of his instincts, his impulses and his amazing creativity. His whole heart and soul went into everything he did."

Gregory Oliver Hines was born on Feb. 14, 1946, in New York City. He has said his mother urged him and his older brother toward tap dancing because she wanted them

to have a way out of the ghetto.

When he was a toddler, his brother was already taking tap lessons and would come home and teach him steps. They began performing together when Gregory Hines was 5, and they performed at the Apollo Theater in Harlem for two weeks when he was 6. In 1954, they were cast in the Broadway musical "The Girl in Pink Tights," starring French ballerina Jeanmaire.

On television, he had his own series in 1997 called "The Gregory Hines Show," as well as a recurring role on "Will and Grace." He was nominated for an Emmy for his lead role in the miniseries "Bojangles" and appeared in the spring television series "Lost at Home."

'Suge' Knight Called Gang Target

Police warn rap artist to be cautious

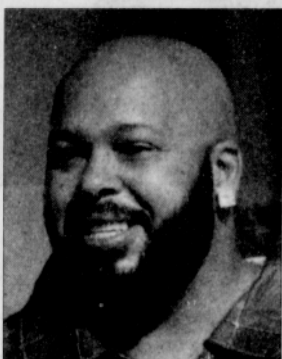
(AP) — Rap mogul Marion "Suge" Knight may be the ultimate target of a series of deadly gang shootings, according to a published report.

Four of the eight people killed in slayings that stretch back to 1997 were close associates of Knight, the Los Angeles Times reported. Investigators have warned Knight to be cautious.

"Word on the street is there's a hit out on Suge Knight," said Det. Michael Caouette of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Knight, who has been jailed since June 27, was given 10 months in prison after a parole board found that he struck a Hollywood nightclub valet.

Police and gang members told the newspaper that Knight became enveloped in infighting between rival gang factions in the 1990s. The rap impresario sparked further bad blood by firing a bodyguard



Black men get murdered every day in the ghetto. I'm not nervous. I got no reason to be scared.

— Rap artist Marion "Suge" Knight

who allegedly ordered several gang killings.

That bodyguard vowed revenge and joined with a drug dealer and fellow gang member also angry with Knight in an effort to pick off those close to Knight one by one, according to the Times.

The 37-year-old Knight, who helped popularize the rap of Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg and the late Tupac Shakur through the Death Row record label, told the newspaper he's not worried.

"It's not just my friends getting killed," Knight said. "Black men get murdered every day in the ghetto. I'm not nervous. I got no reason to be scared."

Among those killed were Knight's best friend and the creator of the Death Row electric chair logo.

In 1996, Knight violated probation and was imprisoned for five years after being caught on videotape, along with Shakur and others, beating a gang rival in the lobby of a Las Vegas hotel.

Shakur was shot and killed three hours later as he was riding in a BMW with Knight, who was wounded in the attack.

Knight was paroled from prison in 2001, but served 61 days behind bars earlier this year for associating with a known gang member in violation of his parole.

Rap Artist Has Something to Prove



Sarai is a new rap artist from New York. (AP photo)

have had almost zero impact on the genre in its 30-year history.

But now a new face, Sarai, might be someone new - a Feminem - to go where none have gone before.

Her debut album, "The Original," was just released by Epic Records. The first single, the party song "Ladies," has been getting airplay on hip-hop stations and MTV.

One of Sarai's producers is Scott Storch, a founding member of the hip-hop band The Roots who's worked with artists ranging from Eminem to Christina Aguilera.

Storch says when he first heard Sarai, "she was doing something different, sort of hip-hop with a white female, and actually bringing it off like a real sister."

Until the superstar producer Dr. Dre ushered Eminem into the rap game in 1999, white people had a checkered history in rap. Unless they completely dissed their white heritage - like the late 1980s group 3rd Bass - or delivered comedy - like the early Beastie Boys - they were usually dismissed.

And who could forget street poseur Vanilla Ice of "Ice Ice Baby" fame, who will go down in history as the Pat Boone of rap?

Princess Superstar, a sexually frank white rapper sometimes called the white Lil' Kim, can attest to that.

"We've got a lot of racial issues here, and sometimes it plays itself out in the music game," says the rapper, who puts out her music on her own label.

What is Jazz?...

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- attributed to Fats Waller

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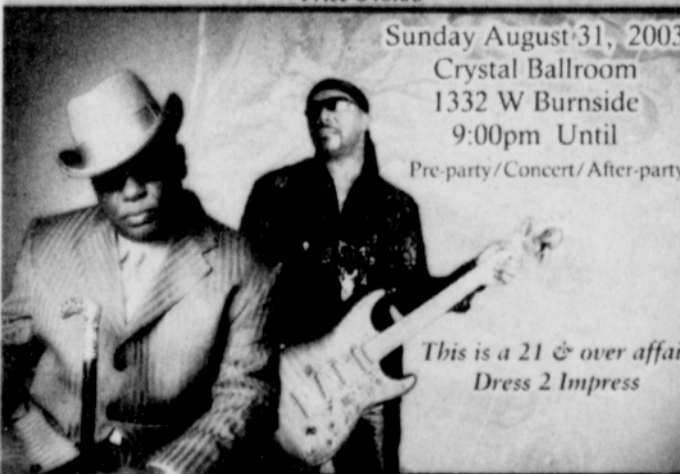
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