



Stevie Wonder performs at a tribute to Ray Charles. (AP photo)

## Ray Charles Remembered at Concert

(AP) — An eclectic lineup of musicians honored Ray Charles in a tribute concert, praising the late singer's rich life and his ability to transcend race and musical genres.

"Make no mistake about it, there will be no pity party," said music producer Quincy Jones, who met Charles when the two were teens.

Jones told the packed audience at the Beverly Hills Hotel that Charles "lived more lives than any 900 of you. In his last days, he told me, 'Man, I've already lived it all.'"

Performers at the Sept. 29 gala included Stevie Wonder, country singer Travis Tritt, former Doobie Brother Michael McDonald, and R&B artists James Ingram and Patti Austin. They sang Charles' hits, such as "Georgia On My Mind," "What I'd Say" and "Hit the Road Jack."

Bill Cosby was host of the event, which raised money for the \$15 million Morehouse College Center for the Arts in Atlanta. Charles gave the black liberal arts college \$2 million to help fund the complex, which

will contain a performance space in his name.

Cosby shared some of his favorite memories of the singer, who had been blind since age 7. He recalled how during a jazz festival at the Hollywood Bowl, Charles appeared on stage with a band of all white musicians.

"I said to Ray, 'Your band is all white.' He said, 'That's funny. They don't sound white.'"

Charles was 73 when he died of acute liver disease June 10.

## Latifah Adds Jazz to Repertoire

(AP)—Queen Latifah is getting a little jazzier. Five albums and 15 years after her hard-hitting hip-hop debut "All Hail the Queen," Queen Latifah has released the jazz-obsessed "The Dana Owens Album."

"This is definitely not a one-shot deal," the singer, whose real name is Dana Owens, told The Denver



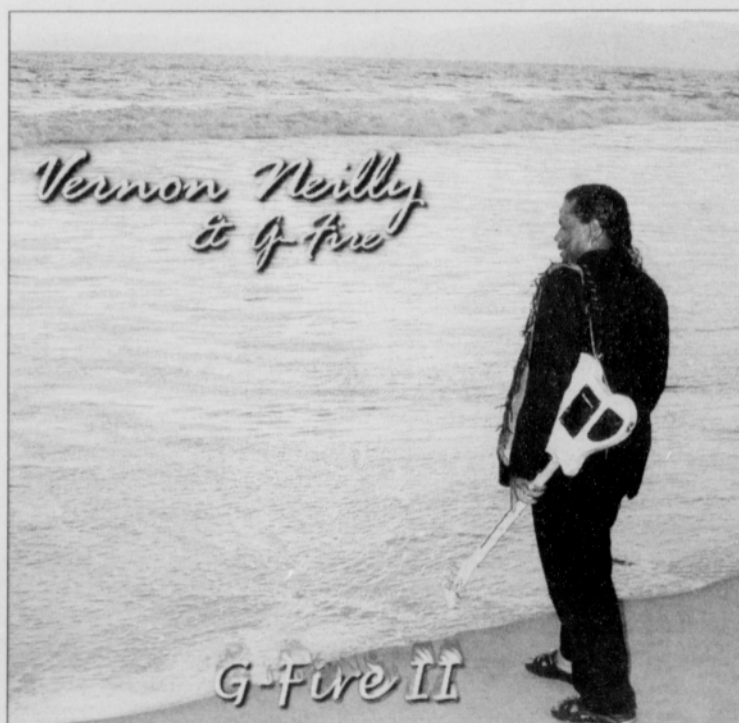
Queen Latifah

Post. "Hopefully, with the success of it, I'll be in it till I'm dead. I've always looked at singing as something I can do forever. I don't know if I can rap forever. I don't know that I can stay as hot as the hottest girl in the game."

It was her experience in the 1998 feature film "Living Out Loud," co-starring

alongside Holly Hunter and Danny DeVito, that led to her new album. She played nightclub singer Liz Bailey and sang a couple of jazz standards.

The new album, where she tackles songs by Al Green and The Mamas & the Papas, is something of a departure for an artist whose last record was "Order in the Court," one of 1998's better efforts at combining R&B and hip-hop.



## Guitars Galore on G-Fire Album


Award-winning guitarists and smooth jazz artists Mark Whitfield and Vernon Neilly have joined forces for the much-anticipated G-Fire II CD release.

Both artists have journeyman status in the music industry and have worked with some of the most notable artists in modern times such as Dizzy Gillespie, Herb Hancock, Joe Williams, Charles "Merry Christmas Baby" Brown, Teena Marie, The Drifters and many more.

Whitfield has been touted many times as one of the premier jazz guitarists in the world and has received several Radio and Records and Gavin awards for his radio charting success.

Neilly is the recipient of last year's "Smoothie Award" for being one of the most played new artists in commercial smooth jazz radio.

G-Fire II is available from Boosweet Records at [www.boosweet.com](http://www.boosweet.com) or by calling 310-613-3535.





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
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