

FOCUS

Breaking Ground with 'Idlewild'

Rappers take on Hollywood

(AP) -- OutKast has long been considered a groundbreaking force, their funkadelic sound, rapid-fire rhyming and decidedly Southern flair breath excitement into a repetitious music world and make them one of the most popular acts in the world.

So Andre "3000" Benjamin and Antwan "Big Boi" Patton should have had little difficulty segueing into the world of film, especially considering the success of rappers in Hollywood.

Right? That's what Big Boi and Andre thought. But Hollywood's initial response was lukewarm, and it would be almost a decade before they finally got an OutKast film — "Idlewild" — now showing on movie screens.

"Being young and naive, we didn't know what it took to make a movie," admits Big Boi.

Maybe it's because they weren't gangsta rappers looking to play a version of themselves in a gritty shoot-em-up. Or because the kind of film they were looking to make — a musical — went out of style decades ago.

Or maybe producers worried the eclectic vibe that made OutKast so popular in the music world — Andre's wig-wearing, out-there persona and Big Boi's cool, laid-back style — wouldn't translate on film.

Few acts are as hot as OutKast.



OutKast members Antwan 'Big Boi' Patton (left) and Andre '3000' Benjamin.

Their last album, 2003's double-disc "Speakerboxxx/The Love Below," sold more than 10 million copies in the United States, won them an album of the year Grammy and mountains of critical praise.

And, perhaps more importantly,

it finally launched their joint movie career with "Idlewild," a 1930s Prohibition-era musical.

The ambitious, high-stepping musical/romance/drama not only features the scatting of old-time jazz but today's rap.

On N. MISSISSIPPI AV Avenue Nashville Songwriter in Concert



David Olney

Nashville songwriter David Olney will perform Friday, Sept. 8 at 7 p.m. at Mississippi Studios, 3939 N. Mississippi Ave.

Olney has many fans in Nashville who have recorded his vivid, dramatic songs, including Emmy Lou Harris, Linda Ronstadt, Del McCoury and others.

His former band David Olney and the X-Rays opened for the likes of Elvis Costello and were featured on Austin City Limits.

"This man just might be the greatest singer-songwriter alive in Nashville today. Few can touch his raw emotive power," said Music Row's Robert K. Oermann.

The upcoming performance will be a non-smoking, 21 and over show with beer and wine available on premises. Fortickets, call 503-288-3895.

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'Survivor' TV by Race Enrages

(AP) -- As CBS prepares to launch a new season of the hit reality show "Survivor," this time featuring teams divided by race, New York City officials are enraged, saying it promotes divisiveness and are calling for the network to reconsider.

"The idea of having a battle of the races is preposterous," City Councilman John Liu said Thursday. "How could anybody be so desperate for ratings?"

For the first portion of the

13th season of "Survivor," which premieres Sept. 14, the contestants competing for the \$1 million prize while stranded on the Cook Islands in the South Pacific will be divided into four teams - blacks, Asians, Latinos and whites.

Liu, who is Asian-American, said he was launching a campaign urging CBS to pull the show because it could encourage racial division and promote negative typecasts.

CD Release Party



Brian Ward

A release party for Brian Ward's new CD "Wonderbread" which features an eclectic mix of funk, jazz, Latin and R&B originals, will be held Saturday, Sept. 9 from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. at Halibut's II, 2525 N.E. Alberta St.

Keyboardist Brian Ward will be joined by Al Criado (Lou Rawls) on bass and Reinhardt Melz (Curtis Salgado) on drums.

Ward's music is described as real, straight from the heart and soul of a man who loves playing music.



Al Sharpton

No 'Coolness' in 'Gangsterism'

(AP) -- Many black youths fall under a spell of "gangster mentality," preventing them from becoming leaders and making a positive impact in politics, the Rev. Al Sharpton said.

The civil rights activist faulted Hollywood and the record industry for making "gangsterism" seem cool and acceptable.

"We have got to get out of this gangster mentality, acting as if gangsterism and blackness are synonymous," Sharpton told the

annual conference of the National Association of Black Journalists.

"I think we've allowed a whole generation of young people to feel that if they're focused, they're not black enough. If they speak well and act well, they're acting white, and there's nothing more racist than that."

The key to leadership is taking the initiative to change things, said Sharpton. He said his National Action Network is just one group willing to help young black

leaders get into politics.

"Nobody broke in my house in Brooklyn and dragged me out the projects and made me a leader. I wanted to do that. Clearly, we would work with young people who want to do the work," he said.

Sharpton, who competed in several Democratic primaries during a 2004 presidential bid, said he might run again in 2008 but will decide after this November's elections.

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