

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

R&B Singer Remembered

Seductive voice had magnetism

(AP) -- R&B singer Teddy Pendergrass, who was one of the most electric and successful figures in music until a car crash 28 years ago left him in a wheelchair, is being remembered after his death last week of colon cancer. He was 59.

Before the crash, Pendergrass established a new era of R&B with an explosive, raw voice that symbolized masculinity, passion and the joys and sorrow of romance in songs such as "Close the Door," "It Don't Hurt Now," "Love T.K.O." and other hits that have since become classics.

He was an international superstar and sex symbol. His career was at its apex — and still climbing.

Friend and longtime collaborator Kenny Gamble, of the renowned production duo Gamble & Huff, teamed with Pendergrass on his biggest hits and recalled how the singer was even working on a movie.

"He had about 10 platinum albums in a row, so he was a very, very successful recording artist and as a performing artist," Gamble said. "He had a tremendous career ahead of him, and the accident sort of got in the way of many of those plans."

Pendergrass, who was born in Philadelphia in 1950, suffered a spi-



Teddy Pendergrass, the velvet-voiced soul legend whose romantic ballads lit up the 1970s and 1980s.

nal cord injury in a 1982 car accident that left him paralyzed from the waist down — still able to sing but without his signature power. The image of the strong, virile lover was replaced with one that drew sympathy.

But instead of becoming bitter or depressed, Pendergrass created a new identity — that as a role model, Gamble said.

"He never showed me that he was angry at all about his accident," Gamble said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "In fact, he was very courageous."

Pendergrass left a remarkable imprint on the music world as he ushered in a new era in R&B with his fiery, sensual and forceful brand of soul and his ladies' man image, burnished by his strikingly handsome looks.

Gamble said Pendergrass was one of a kind as an artist and boasted a powerful voice and "a great magnetism."

"He was a great baritone singer, and he had a real smooth sound, but he had a real rough sound, too, when he wanted to exert power in his voice," Gamble said.

From R&B Hits to Housewives Fame

Kandi Burruss soaks it up

(AP) Kandi Burruss is soaking up every moment of her second claim to fame, knowing how fast the limelight can fade away.

"I'm so appreciative of everything I have now," said Burruss, a member of the defunct 1990s R&B group Xscape, which had hits like "Understanding" and "Who Can I Run To."

"When you have success right off the rip, you take it for granted sometimes. I did. I told myself I will never take it for granted again."

After Xscape broke up, Burruss co-wrote TLC's hit "No Scrubs." She has also written music for Mariah Carey, Destiny's Child and Alicia Keys. But her singing career took a back seat to songwriting, and her celebrity diminished.

Thanks to her success on "The Real Housewives of Atlanta" on



Kandi Burruss

Bravo, she's back in the spotlight, and is trying to remain there.

During a recent interview at her clothing boutique Tags in Atlanta, the 33-year-old Burruss talked about

how the reality show has rejuvenated her music and acting career, and how the recent slaying of her ex-fiance, Ashley "A.J." Jewell, still brings her to tears.

The Associated Press: How has the "Housewives" show helped jump start your career?

Burruss: It gave me a platform to show what I can do. A lot of people knew me from Xscape, but didn't know what I've been doing behind the scenes. It let people know I wanted to act. When people saw "(The Vagina) Monologues" (she performed it on the show), they were like, "Dang, she can act too." So, that was also a good look.

AP: Now, you're looking to release an album this year. What will be the album title?

Burruss: At first, I was going to call it "B.L.O.G." because I was inspired by some of the things I read on the blogs. Now I'm feeling like I should call it "Fly Above." I'm overcoming stress and drama.

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