

Latifah: The 'Joyful Noise'

By Kam Williams
Special To *The Skanner News*

Born Dana Elaine Owens in Newark, NJ, on March 18, 1970, Queen Latifah is an award-winning actress, rapper, singer, author and entrepreneur. She landed an Oscar nomination in 2003 for Best Supporting Actress, as well as Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Award nominations for her performance as Mama Morton in "Chicago."

In 2008, Latifah received rave reviews and won a Golden Globe, SAG and an NAACP Image Award for her powerful por-

trayal of a mother who overcomes an addiction to crack and becomes a positive role model and AIDS activist in the black community in HBO's "Life Support." In addition to her film and television accolades, she earned a Grammy Award for Best Solo Rap Performance in 1994, and was nominated for Best Female Rap Solo Performance for "Go Head" in 2004. Latifah made her screen debut in Spike Lee's 1991 film "Jungle Fever," and her other film credits include "The Bone Collector," "The Last Holiday," "The Secret

Life of Bees" and "Just Wright." Here, she talks about her latest movie, "Joyful Noise," a musical comedy co-starring Dolly Parton.

Kam Williams: Hi Queen, thanks for the interview. Queen Latifah: Hey, Kam, no problem.

KW: What interested you in Joyful Noise?
QL: I felt that its timely, uplifting story was perfect for me, given what's going on in the world right now. And I already loved the studio, Alcon Entertainment. They've made a lot of nice movies in the past ["The Blind Side," "Dolphin Tale," etc.], and they really do a great job of marketing their films. And I liked the idea of working with Dolly Parton and Keke [Palmer].

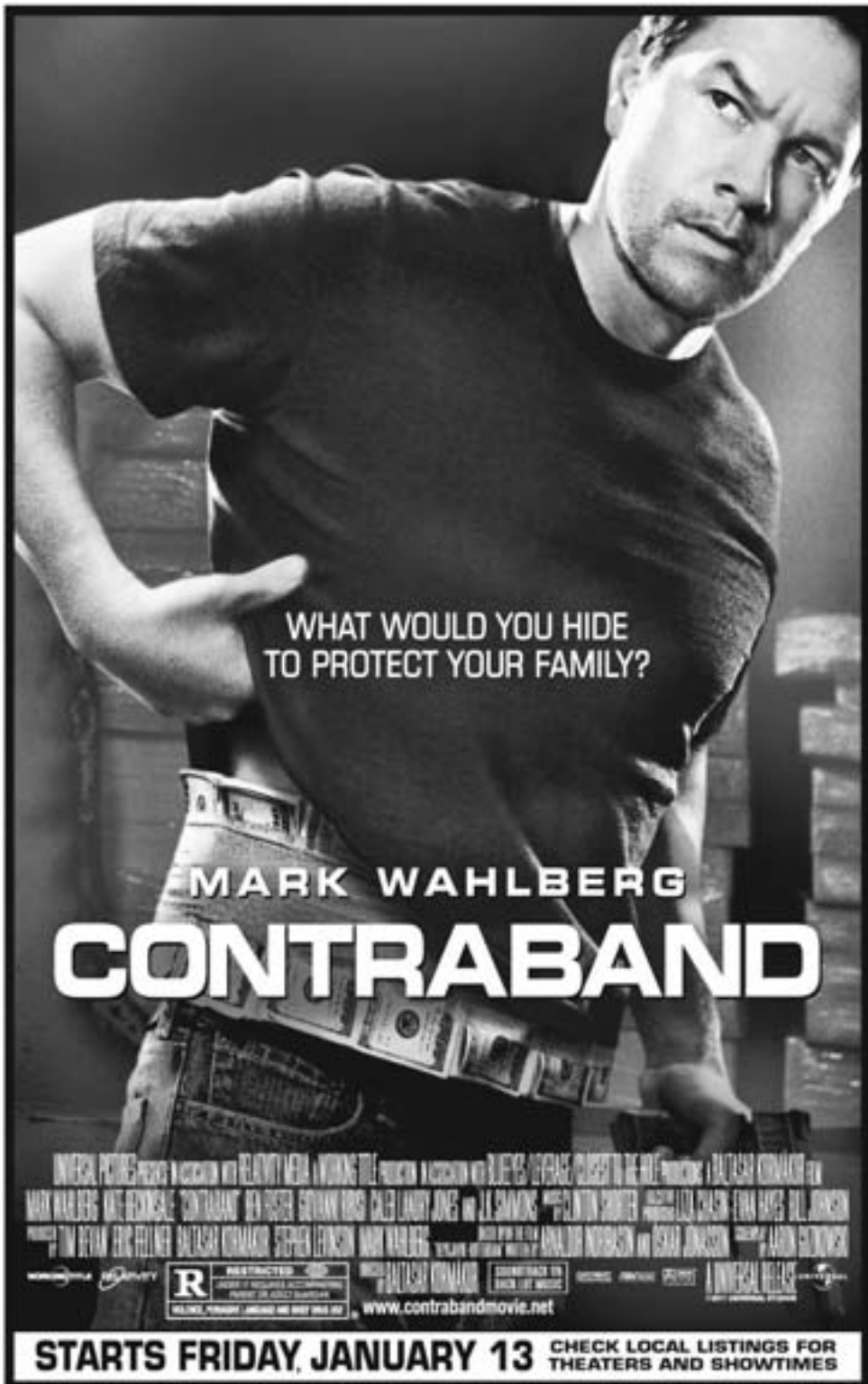
KW: Larry Greenberg asks: What was it like working with Todd Graff? It seems like he knows a lot about both music and comedy. ?

QL: He really does. It was great working with him because he's very thorough. I believe he had an excellent grasp of every aspect of the film from the music to the staging. He knew exactly how he wanted it presented, which made the process a lot easier. And he likes to rehearse, which I do, too. So often, you don't get that opportunity. You only go over everything once and, the next thing you know, you're on set. Todd had a vision of what he wanted to do and, because he also wrote the screenplay, it was easy for him to

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