

Cosby Seeking New Solidarity with Blacks He Once Alienated

By Maryclaire Dale
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — After two years of silence amid an onslaught of sexual assault allegations, comedian Bill Cosby is sending carefully targeted messages about racial bias across the media landscape ahead of his June 5 trial in suburban Philadelphia.

Cosby, 79, spoke to a black news outlet last month for a story that meandered from his self-described blindness to the racist history of the United States to his dream of returning to the stage.

His daughters sent audio statements to select radio stations last week in which Ensa Cosby said her father had been “lynched” in the media.

The messaging continued this week in the Pittsburgh courtroom where jury selection was conducted.

After prosecutors struck two Black women from the panel, defense lawyer Brian McMonagle attacked what he called the other side’s “systemic exclusion of African Americans.”

“Ensa Cosby said her father had been ‘lynched’ in the media

Two Black people were among the 12 people chosen for the jury, and two more were among the six people chosen as alternates.

They will be sequestered 300 miles from home in suburban Philadelphia for the trial. Cosby’s lawyers had asked for an outside jury because the case was a 2015 campaign issue in Montgomery County, where Cosby is accused of drugging and molesting a Temple University employee in 2004.

Lawyers on both sides said late Wednesday they were satisfied with the jury’s makeup, given that it exceeds the 13 percent black population in Allegheny County, where the jurors were chosen.

“The Cosby team (now) cares about how the public and maybe even how the Black community feels about this whole situation, which is striking given his diatribes against the most vulnerable people in that community. But we’ve seen stranger things in these big trials,” said James Braxton Peterson, director of Africana Studies at Lehigh University. “It’s ironic how he makes that pivot, given that he’s demonized poor Black people in the past.”

Cosby broke barriers as the first Black actor to star in a network show, “I Spy,” in the 1960s and created the top-ranked “Cosby Show” two decades later. But he has since alienated young Blacks with his criticism of their clothes, music and lifestyle. And young-



Bill Cosby and his attorney leave Allegheny County Courthouse after the third day of jury selection in his sexual assault trial in Pittsburgh on May 24.

er Black comedians who once paid tribute to him have instead taken to calling him out onstage.

Hannibal Burress inspired more accusers to come forward when he called Cosby a rapist in his act in 2014, while Dave Chappelle has talked poignantly about losing faith in his childhood idol.

On his Facebook page, Cosby posted a photo this month of a bold, new portrait of a younger “Dr. Cosby” as the artist delivered it to his New York home. Cosby calls the portrait, “Restoration of Legacy.”

And in a longer SiriusXM interview last week, he reiterated his desire to clear his name, resume his career and restore his legacy.

“I want to get back to the laughter and the enjoyment of things that I’ve written and things that I perform on stage,” Cosby said.

“I still feel that I have an awful lot to offer.”

Loyola Law School professor Laurie Levenson wonders if Cosby is trying to signal to Blacks on the jury with his recent comments, by sending the message “that you have a mission on this jury, to make sure he’s not treated as a Black man who’s come on aggressively to White women.”



ALBINA JAZZ FESTIVAL FUNDRAISER:

The legendary
LLOYD ALLEN SR. AND BAND

FRIDAY, JUNE 2ND, 7-10PM

STINGRAY CAFÉ

240 NORTH BROADWAY, PORTLAND, OR 97232
(ACROSS FROM THE MODA CENTER)

DOORS OPEN: 6:30PM | SHOW STARTS: 7PM | COVER: \$10

FULL BAR AND FRESH BEER, WINE

Please come join us for a great evening of electric home-grown jazz blues!

PRESENTED BY ALBINAJAZZFESTIVAL.COM AND PORTLAND PIONEERS OF COLOR WALKING TOURS (ON FACEBOOK) ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

SPONSORS: KBOO

Nefertite Nguvu: The “In the Morning” Interview

With Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

Nefertite is a graduate of New York’s School of Visual Arts, where she obtained a B.F.A in Film. Her thesis project at SVA won the award for outstanding screenplay. Nefertite has written, produced and directed two short films: a uniquely stylized black and white romance entitled “I Want You,” and “The End of Winter,” an emotional meditation on loss, both of which screened at numerous film festivals.

Amongst other web-based programming, Nefertite also directed a ten-part web series featuring Queen Latifah for Cover Girl and Flavor Unit Entertainment entitled ‘U.N.I.T.Y. Re-ignited’, ‘Love Star’ a mini music documentary, as well as an eight-part web series entitled “Black America Again,” featuring Academy Award-winner Common for Universal Music and Freedom Road Productions.

As a writer/director/producer, Nefertite made her feature film debut with “In The Morning,” a film about love and its inevitable change/decline charting the emotional anatomy of several relationships over the course of one day. “In The Morning” delves into the emotional landscape of contemporary Black life in a way rarely seen in modern cinema.

The picture debuted at the Urban World Film Festival in New York



Nefertite Nguvu

City and won the Audience Award for Best Feature Film. After a string of successful film festival screenings across the country and in Paris, Rome and Johannesburg, the film also won the award for Best International Film at the Terra Di Siena Film Festival in Italy, Best Narrative Feature at the BlackStar Film Festival in Philadelphia, and Best Feature Film and Best Overall at the Bronzelens Film Festival in Atlanta. The film is now available worldwide via Video on Demand.

“In the Morning” will be showing in Philadelphia on Friday, May 26th at 7 pm at the Leonard Pearlstein Gallery, located at 3401 Filbert Street. Follow-

See NGUVU on page 11

Portland Center Stage at

THE ARMORY

Tickets & information:
www.pcs.org • 503.445.3700

JOIN US FOR OUR 2017-2018 SEASON

FUN HOME Sept. 16 - Oct. 22

EVERY BRILLIANT THING Sept. 23 - Nov. 5

MOJADA
A Medea in Los Angeles Nov. 4 - Nov. 26

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY paired with
WINTER SONG Nov. 18 - Dec. 31

TWIST YOUR DICKENS Dec. 5 - Dec. 31

ASTORIA: Part Two Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

KODACHROME Feb. 3 - Mar. 18

THE MAGIC PLAY Mar. 3 - Apr. 1

AND SO WE WALKED Mar. 31 - May 13

MAJOR BARBARA Apr. 14 - May 13

LADY DAY AT EMERSON’S BAR AND GRILL May 26 - July 1

Right: DeLanna Studi in Astoria: Part One. Photo by Jennie Baker.