

Christian music seeks audience at Dove Awards

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The 25th annual Dove Awards, which have proven spirituality can earn big ratings, and now contemporary Christian music wants to show it appeals to a wide audience.

With superstar Whitney Houston performing, the industry will be on display Thursday for a national television audience during the 29th Annual Dove Awards. "It's our mission to take it to a broader audience," said Frank Breeden, president of the Gospel Music Association. "We show our best, and in typical American style it's an awards show. It's a place for you to take a sample of something that you may not normally know anything about."

John Tesh, former host of Entertainment Tonight, will be the host with country singer Naomi Rand. To support the notion of the music's new popularity, Tesh cited his listening habits of his 16-year-old son, starting with Led Zeppelin, Hendrix, then the Christian bands of Clay.

"It's really starting to spread that way," said Tesh, who recently struck a deal to have his instrumental albums sold in Christian bookstores. The Dove Awards will be broadcast live from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. EDT on The Nashville Network. Votes come from the association's 6,000 members.

Forty-one categories include pop/Hip Hop Album, Spanish Language Album and Bluegrass Recorded Song. Steven Curtis Chapman is most nominated — up to seven categories, including best artist, song writer and male vocalist.

Producers are thrilled that Houston has agreed to perform "I Got to the Rock" from her best-selling gospel album. The song, from the soundtrack of her movie *The Preacher's Wife*, is nominated in the Traditional Gospel Recorded Song category. Houston boycotted the Grammys this year because her album was nominated for R&B, not gospel.

Tesh will perform on the piano with vocalist James Ingram. Other performers include Chapman, Jars of Clay, Bob Carlisle, Michael W. Smith and God's Property with Gek. Franklin.

The industry is trumpeting 32 percent growth in sales from 1996 to 1997. But that figure is questionable because it includes four million in sales of country singer LeAnn Rimes' *You Light Up My Life: Inspirational Songs*.

Still, there is evidence that Christian music is growing. Invading the mainstream, rock groups Jars of Clay and dc Talk have sold millions of albums in recent years. Carlisle had a smash last year with his song about his daughter, "Butterfly Kisses."

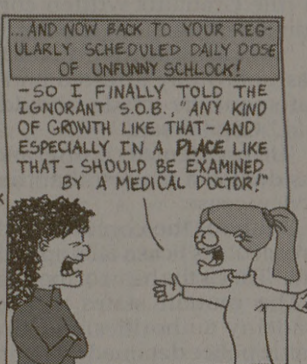
Sketch



TO THE SURPRISE OF MANY AND THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF FEW, I WILL ONLY BE RUNNING THIS STRIP ONCE A WEEK DURING THE SUMMER. I KNOW, I KNOW - BOO HOO (ADD SARCASTIC IF YOU WISH); BUT AFTER ELEVEN CONSECUTIVE SEMESTERS OF DOING THIS CRAP, I DEFINITELY NEED TO LET MY BRAIN GO ON VACATION FOR A BIT (AS IF IT HASN'T ALREADY BEEN). NOT ONLY THAT, BUT I ALSO NEED TO REVAMP MY NOW-DEFUNCT WEBSITE, SEND OUT MY PORTFOLIO (AGAIN), STUDY FOR THE GRE, WORK ON GETTING INTO GRAD SCHOOL, GET A PART-TIME JOB, BLAH BLAH BLAH - THE LIST GOES ON AND ON.

HOWEVER, FOR YOU DEBARDS OUT THERE, THE POSSIBILITY OF A MINI-BOOK IN THE FALL WILL HOPEFULLY OUTWEIGH ANY FUTURE DEPRIVATIONS YOU MAY EXPERIENCE IN THE UPCOMING WEEKS. EMAIL ME WITH YOUR YEAS OR NAYS - quatro@famu.edu.

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By Quatro

Ewe Hall



By JED

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By Mell

Love takes aim at weekend box office, hits the mark

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The supernatural love story *City of Angels* continued its affair with the box office, holding onto the No. 1 spot for the second weekend.

Love stories dominated overall, with three of this weekend's four top-grossing movies about romance, according to industry estimates Sunday.

City of Angels, which grossed an estimated \$13.2 million, stars Nicolas Cage as an angel who must choose between immortality or human life after falling in love with a heart surgeon, played by Meg Ryan.

The Object of My Affection, a poorly reviewed movie starring Jennifer Aniston as a pregnant woman in love with a gay man, was second, with an estimated \$10 million in its first week of release, according to Exhibitor Relations Co., Inc.

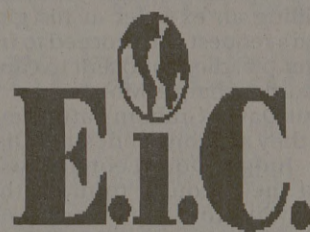
Lost in Space, based on the 1960s television series, dropped to No. 3 with \$7.7 million followed by the epic love story *Titanic*, which grossed \$7.3 million in its 18th week.

Here are estimated grosses for the top movies at North American theaters for Friday through Sunday:

1. *City of Angels*, \$13.2 million.
2. *The Object of My Affection*, \$10 million.
3. *Lost in Space*, \$7.7 million.
4. *Titanic*, \$7.3 million.
5. *Paulie*, \$5.5 million.
6. *Species II*, \$3.9 million.
7. *Neil Simon's The Odd Couple II*, \$3.7 million.
8. (tie) *Mercury Rising*, \$3.6 million.
8. (tie) *The Players Club*, \$3.6 million.
10. *Major League III: Back to the Minors*, \$2.1 million.

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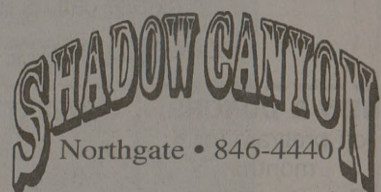
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