

TLC tells public 'What Not to Wear'

By Kate O'Hare
KRT CAMPUS

LOS ANGELES — As even the battered Northeast begins to emerge from the winter doldrums, women across much of America face the daunting prospect of pulling out that warm-weather wardrobe and seeing if it's fit to wear.

But fear not (or less, at least), because the style gurus of TLC's Saturday-night series "What Not to Wear" have a few basic tips.

Based on the British show of the same name (which airs on BBC America), the series takes unsuspecting fashion victims — nominated by friends and families — secretly films them in their reportedly hideous wardrobes (and in various stages of undress), shows them the footage for maximum humiliation and shock value, then rebuilds their shattered egos with fashion advice and a paid-for clothes-shopping spree.

Guiding the fashion bandwagon are celebrity stylists Wayne Scot Lukas (whose long locks and rumpled clothes suggest a "do as I say, not as I do" methodology) and Stacy London (way more personally fashion-conscious).

According to London, accepting a harsh assessment of one's stylistic missteps does

not indicate a lack of self-esteem.

"It speaks, not to people's self-esteem," she says, "but to their confidence level. In a lot of ways, their honesty is what shows me that they have a lot of confidence, even if they're saying, 'Look, I know I'm a mess, help me.' They're willing to be up front about it, in the same way they're saying, 'Look, teach me.'"

"What is common about everybody?" Lukas asks. "We all have body issues, and all of our body issues are secrets. We don't share our body issues."

"But when me and Stacy get you naked, in a room, and we say, 'What do you hate about your body?' When they have to say it, their world crumbles."

"We're asking them to confront it," London says, "not to say, 'Well, then, you should lose 10 pounds.' Work with what you've got. Let's make it better, from the clothing and style point of view."

The stylists insist, as well, that it's not about shelling out the big bucks for designer duds. "That's not the show," Lukas says. "It's the rules, not the price of the clothes."

"We sell you the rules," says London, "and the techniques that empower you to look your best, no matter what the cost."

"You have to know what to look for when

you're shopping," Lukas says, "because every store has one piece that's going to work. You can find that one piece if you know the rules about your body."

"It is not easy for anyone to just buy off the rack," says London. "I do think it is important that people know there are things that are worth buying and altering."

"Most clothes off the rack don't fit correctly. There are things that are worth taking in and having altered. It can make all the difference in the world."

"We are so desperately stuck on fit," Lukas says. "Fit is so important."

Asked about pet peeves, Lukas says, "Dressing for their partners. 'My husband wants me sexier,' or 'My husband likes red.' Never doing it for themselves. That's my thing. We put our clothes on for the world. It's bigger than just saying, 'I put this on because I really want to please the public,' who could care less about you. It starts from the inside out."

"Really an extension of that is the way people try to hide their bodies," London says.

"That's my biggest pet peeve. You don't look thinner when you put yourself in a sack. It makes me crazy, and I don't know how it all got started — lose yourself in big sweatpants, lose yourself in something."

Memorial

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the Spirit Ring and represents the progression of Bonfire from 1909 to 1999.

The focal point of the Spirit Ring will be where centerpole once stood. From that point, the viewer's attention will be drawn through one of 12 portals, each facing the direction of the victim's hometown, Shemwell said.

The design of the ring is "indicative of the spirit" of Bonfire and the significance of the Aggie Ring, Shemwell said.

Each portal will stand 16 feet tall with a smaller bronze gateway inside it. On the side of the portals will be a bronze portrait of each student, their individual signature and their thoughts, along with the thoughts of those who knew them appearing beneath, Shemwell said.

Each of the families of the 12 Aggies killed in the Bonfire collapse are working closely with the designers to give them a better understanding of the victims, Shemwell said.

The families were asked to share their memories of the deceased and provide input during the creation of the bronze portraits. Each family will also give its stamp of approval before the portraits are complete, Shemwell said.

Three of the portraits have been completed.

Tim Kerlee, along with his wife Janice were honored as the 2003 A&M "Parents of the Year." Kerlee said he is pleased with the progress made in building the memorial. The Kerlee's 17-year-old son, Tim Jr., died in the 1999 collapse.

"I'm encouraged by the sensitivity of the architect and the people that are working on it," he said. "I think they're doing a good job."

The construction on the actual site will begin in late summer, and will be completed sometime in October, Shemwell said.

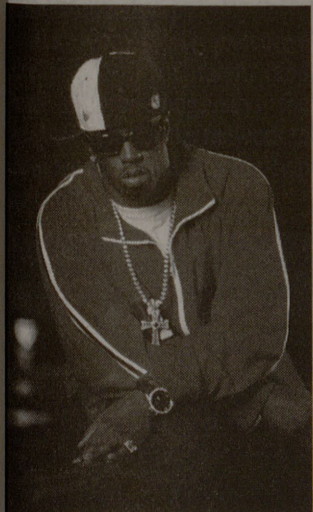
VH1 to showcase hip-hop's best artists

By Alan K. Stout
KRT CAMPUS

Friday night on VH1, the kings and queens of hip-hop will get their proper due. Some of the biggest names of the musical genre will comment on the musical influence they've had on one another and on the social implications of the music itself. And when it's all said and done, one act will be named the greatest hip-hop artist of all time.

The channel's latest musical countdown, the "50 Greatest Hip-Hop Artists," premieres at 8 p.m. EDT. Everybody from Snoop Dogg to Dr. Dre, Ice Cube to MC Hammer and Coolio to Public Enemy will offer their insight into the rise and widespread commercial explosion of rap.

Rick Krim, VH1 executive vice president of talent and music programming, says the time was right for the network to showcase the best artists hip-hop has to offer.



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Sean "P-Diddy" Combs is among the artists featured on VH1's "50 Greatest Hip-Hop Artists" special.

"Musically, we've broadened considerably in the last year or so and have certainly broadened our horizons from the old VH1," Krim says. "There are hip-hop artists now getting played on our channel, and we've also had success with hip-hop artists with some of our other shows, whether it be with 'Behind the Music' or 'Driven.'"

"Hip-hop has become more mainstream, and whatever polarity there may have been in the past from people being opposed to rap — I don't think it exists anymore."

In addition to some of today's hottest hip-hop stars, the special also gives nods to pioneering acts such as the Sugarhill Gang, Tone Loc, LL Cool J, Grandmaster Flash and the Beastie Boys.

"A lot of our viewers were teens when Run-DMC or LL Cool J or Public Enemy hit big for the first time, so there's also a nostalgia factor," Krim says, adding that seeing stars speaking with reverence about one another can make for educational and interesting viewing.

Some examples: P-Diddy on Run-DMC: "They inspired me so much as an artist, a producer, a businessman and an entertainer. They would have to

be hip-hop's greatest entertainers."

Ice-T on Tupac: "You don't become the greatest just by being able to rap good. You become the greatest by being able to touch people ... that was a skill."

Nelly on Notorious B.I.G.: "No one was better as far as putting words together ... Big, big dog was smooth."

Krim says having older acts sing the praises of new acts also can make for insightful television.

"It's sort of a reference for people," he says. "Audiences want to know why they should like something new, and when they see somebody that they respect and an artist that they like telling them about something new, I think it resonates with them."

Although some artists showcased on the countdown have been killed, the show does not dip into the world of violence often associated with rap. Those aspects of the genre, Krim says, have been well-covered with other VH1 programming.

"The nice thing is it's about the music, and it leaves all of that behind," he says. "We've told those stories. That's what we have 'Behind the Music' for. If you saw the Biggie 'Behind the Music,' it was almost like a crime drama. It was a big part of the story, and I think in some ways it overshadows what their musical influences were. The goal of this show was to focus on their musical heritage, and we tried to stay as true to that as possible."

One artist who shows up in the countdown, Sean "P-Diddy" Combs, also happens to be the host.

"We were thrilled to have him," Krim says. "It's someone who obviously has been influenced by a lot of these people and is also so mainstream, which may make it a little user-friendly for some people that still may not be sure if hip-hop is for them. We want to appeal to the real serious hip-hop fans as well as to the causal people who are just tuning in, and I think he helps with that."

Although we won't reveal who No. 1 hip-hop artist of all time is, some other acts found within the countdown are N.W.A., Wu-Tang Clan, Eminem, Will Smith & DJ Jazzy Jeff, Ja Rule, Cypress Hill and Arrested Development. Krim says picking the order of the countdown was no easy task.

"It's tough," he says. "It was a combination of popularity and influence and trying to have a balance with the current and the historical. There's no exact science to this, and there's a lot of back-and-forth because a lot of people weigh in to try to come up with a consensus. There's always debate internally, but I think that's part of the appeal of the show, because somebody watching may also have a debate."

"We were pleased with the list. It's a good mix of influential artists and current artists that are going to influence the next wave."

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