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May 16, 2010 | In [Beauty News](#) | [7 Comments](#)

Just Wright Opens Today!

Posted by elaine.ebonymag - 15/05/10 at 12:05:36 am

By Luke Burke and Elaine Welteroth



EBONY was invited to a special screening of the film *Just Wright*, which hits theaters today, starring **Queen Latifah, Common, Paula Patton, James Pickens, Jr., Phylicia Rashad, Pam Grier** and **Laz Alonso**. The film is a love story about Scott McKnight (Common), a handsome NBA All-Star who meets Leslie Wright (Queen Latifah), a physical therapist who lives a humble life in New Jersey. During a chance meeting, Scott and Leslie hit it off and sparks begin to fly. That is until Scott meets Leslie's drop-dead gorgeous friend Morgan (Paula Patton) who begins to stir things up.

EBONY got to sit down with the headliners for a chat. Here's what they had to say.



Common on his b-ball roots and coming full circle in his career:

I was a ball boy for the Bulls. I was there when Michael Jordan first came so it was really cool. I had a pair of Jordans that I got straight from Mike his first year, and I gave them to my father. My father played a couple years in the NBA for the Pittsburgh Pipers and the Denver Rockets. I started playing basketball and then once I started getting better at it I really loved it and I played point guard in grammar school and in high school for some years until I got injured, and once I got injured I started making my demo tapes and getting into rap. So its funny how basketball took me to rap and rap took me to acting and acting took me back to basketball.

Common on acting:

When I started rapping I didn't envision becoming an actor, but once I started acting and got my confidence together. I was like 'Man, I can be a leading man.' I didn't know it would come through this type of vehicle like a romantic lead. I was enjoying doing dark roles and whooping people's asses. It's good for me to show the diversity in my acting and to show the range because my vision definitely is to be a movie star as one of the great actors.



Queen on easing into character:

I have the same mustang that Leslie Wright drove. Mine isn't beat up like hers, mine is hooked up a little better but I'm glad I chose to buy that car because when I had to drive that car on set I knew how to start it and I knew how it drove. It was cutting off on a lot of people but I was like, 'Okay, I know how to drive this thing and I think that's just who I am. I got the Rolls and all that kind of stuff but I still keep a Mustang. I gotta keep some of those basic things just to keep grounded. It feels not too far from who I am because my mentality is still a New Jersey girl who grew up in Newark in East Orange and went to Irvington High School and lived over a barber shop for half of my life and lived on the second floor of a house that we rented. I still have that in my mind and I just have a down-to-earth kind of attitude. It's not that for of a stretch to play someone like that. It is kind of refreshing to be honest with you.

Queen on choosing the right script:

If I read it on the page and it sings to me. If it's just well written, it can be a drama, it could be an action, it could be a comedy I take note of that. And then, if you have the right studio or team, or there is a director already in place that's the next thing I start looking at – who is attached to this, who are the people involved because that tells me whether its going to come out as good in the movie as it is on the page. I tend to like strong female characters no matter what genre it is, I tend to try and show a character with some positivity and strength because I think we need to see that.



5-Minute Film Review: *Just Wright*

After a private film screening, we walked away scratching our head thinking 'another movie about black love and basketball?' Bottom line: don't expect the film to wow you. The plot runs a course that's relatively easy to anticipate and at the end of the day it did little to advance the underwhelming position of today's black films (*Precious* being an exception to the rule). But production pointers and social critique aside, it was a decent date-friendly flick good enough to give you a greater appreciation for both Common and Queen's skills on the silver screen. See it for a weekend date and you're guaranteed to at least leave with a good, fuzzy feeling.

Just Wright is in theaters nationwide TODAY! See it and tell us what you thought!

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Russell Simmons and Mary J. Blige are "Making a Difference"

Posted by elaine.ebonymag - 12/05/10 at 08:05:22 pm

by Erica Lasan



Ebony was uptown NYC and on the scene of P.S. 165 (Robert E. Simon School) where lucky students were paid a visit by not one, but two entertainment superstars: hip-hop mogul **Russell Simmons** and songstress **Mary J. Blige**. The two have partnered up with **Bounty**, the **Helping Hands Network** and the **Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation** to participate in the "Make a Difference" program – a tour that will clean up 30 public schools throughout the country.

Russell and Mary rolled up their sleeves to help students clean the gymnasium and cafeteria, plant flowers around the school and paint a mural to inspire

creativity. Before starting the clean up activities, both celebrities took time to speak with the day's volunteers. Russell shared wise words about volunteering and its impact on happiness. In the middle of Mary's speech before an auditorium full of quiet star struck students and volunteers, she jokingly exclaimed "Why ya'll so quiet? Ya'll looking at me like I'm something out of the zoo! Yeah I'm here, I'm really here!" The statement broke the room's silence with laughter.

Simmons also took time out to visit the school's Rush Art Gallery where he was given a bilingual tour of the exhibit and the students' art. Before leaving, he took a moment to tell Ebony why he believes that art programs in schools are so important. "We chose art as a business but the practice itself promotes all the happiness and inspires [us] to keep going. That same practice and stillness that comes from it will allow you to do anything, to dream for anything—to be a doctor, a lawyer, and have faith through dreams. Art allows that expression and allows that kind of brain function. That creative muscle has to be exercised."

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Mary J. Blige's Launches "My Life" Fragrance

Posted by elaine.ebonymag - 12/05/10 at 01:05:22 pm

By Elaine Welteroth



A very chic **Mary J. Blige** stood before magazine editors in New York City recently to introduce her first fragrance "My Life." Titled after what she considers her most personal album to date, the scent represents the same juxtaposition of strength and softness that female fans connect with in her songs of pain, triumph and transformation. "I was never this girl," the reformed tomboy contemplated about her lifetime love/hate relationship with fragrance – and all things feminine for that matter. Wearing a trendy blond bowl cut, buttery smooth skin and styled to the nines in a black Catherine Malandrino band dress paired with an embroidered Alaïa topper, she could have had us fooled. Nevermind that she neared perfection in person, her 'round the way recounts reminded us that there's just something about Mary that levels airs even in the stuffiest of crowds. We imagine her scent will garner the same amount of crossover appeal.



Joining Blige in the unveiling of her fragrance was friend and business partner **Lisa Price**, founder of **Carol's Daughter** who offered warm words and addressed the group of familiar faces like family. An edited group of African-American high school girls, representing the first graduating class impacted by Blige's non-profit FFAWN (Foundation for the Advancement of Women Now), waded the room handing out signature notes gardenia petals, tuberose and white freesia. With every layer it became apparent that the scent, like her music, has a unique way of making you feel something – moving you in a way only Mary can.

In the universe of celebrity scents, this one is a hands down hit.

"My Life" will be available late summer for \$46 exclusively at hsn.com.

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Danny Clark Foundation Annual Charity Weekend

Posted by elaine.ebonymag - 12/05/10 at 01:05:35 pm

By *Adrienne Samuels Gibbs*



EBONY was on the scene at the Danny Clark Foundation Annual Charity Weekend, held this past weekend in Chicago. Named "Le Moulin Rouge, a Night In Paris," the evening's entertainment included emceeing by **Hosea Chanchez**, of TV's *The Game*, a cameo appearance by **Robert Townsend**, an hour-long set by soul songstress **Leela James**, what might have been the world's largest *Cupid Shuffle* and scads of professional athletes who – if you play fantasy football – are probably in your lineup.



For those of you who aren't in the know, Clark is a defensive lineman for the New York Giants. His foundation raises money for pre-term birth children and for mentorship programs for underprivileged youth. (He's also a native Chicagoan and an old high school friend.) Here's Danny now, leading the conga line. His white tux is going all George Clooney loose on us.

Purse designer **Christopher Augmon** (recently featured in *Chicago Social*) kicked off the silent auction with an array of supple leather purses. Most bids started at \$325. Good thing there were plenty of ballers in the house. And 20 or so scantily clad burlesque dancers – adorned in only red devilish costumes and angelic breast pasties – floated around the dance floor removing their clothing (!!) to the beat of a colorful array of modern day club fare mixed with Parisienne Can-Can music. Big ups to Chasity Chaos and the Chaos dancers. They looked fab!



Also in the house was **Corey Mays**, another Chicago native who currently plays for the Kansas City Chiefs. Rather than strictly following the black tie edict, this Notre Dame alumni (and member of Omega Psi Phi) showed his eclectic personality by wearing a pair of canvas sneakers with his

designer suit and no tie. See above. The guy with the locks and his tongue out is Mays. That's me in the long dress. The lady to the right, throwing up the sign of Sigma Gamma Rho, is Hadiya Reynolds, of Atlanta.

The setting was in the West Loop's chic Alhambra Palace, where some 300 guests dined on scallops, red velvet cake and braised beef. Sounds odd, but it worked out fine. The open bar was a nice touch as the Bacardi flowed all night long, the bow ties popped off and even the toniest lady tossed her shoes to the side as she ran back to the dance floor to sway to genuine Chicago house music mixed with a bit of Earth, Wind and Fire and Michael Jackson for good measure.

Ah, the joie vivre of the Chi-style gala.

May 12, 2010 | In [Fashion Week 2010](#) | [1 Comment](#)

Ailey At The Apollo

Posted by elaine.ebonymag - 11/05/10 at 02:05:28 pm

By *Luke Burke*



"Dance should educate, entertain, and uplift" — Judith Jamison

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the rising young dancers of Ailey II and students from The Ailey School proved Judith Jamison's words to be true with an evening of dance at the legendary Apollo Theatre in Harlem.



Attending an Ailey Dance performance makes it clear why Alvin Aileys American Dance Theater (AAADT) remains to be known as America's cultural ambassador to the world. Each dancer exuded discipline in each move that was made. The dancers could very well have been staging a play – yet no words were ever spoken. The melody of music and the echo of vocal legends like Nina Simone infused with dramatic dance sequences told stories both past and present, often taking the audience on an emotional journey.

Renee Robinson, Debra Lee, Judith Jamison Gabriella Morris and Dennis Brownlee *Photo by Kwame Brathwaite*

Celebrating 20 years as Artistic Director, Judith Jamison gracefully addressed a full house of supporters of the Ailey School's Scholarship Program. This year's honorees were Ailey Board of Trustees member **John Schaefer** and his wife **Pamela Zilly**. Honorary Chair, actress **Tamara Tunie** emceed the event. Proceeds from the gala will support The Ailey School's Scholarship Program, which underwrites the tuition for young students in the United States and abroad, who would otherwise be unable to afford the high caliber training offered by the internationally renowned institution. Proceeds will also support The Ailey organization's Arts in Education & Community Programs, including AileyCamp and AileyDance Kids.

The evening concluded with dinner and dancing inside a colorful and festive tent that expanded one entire Manhattan block in Harlem. Dancers from the stage joined guest on the dance floor for a night that is sure to be remembered by all.

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Target and Ulta Make Room for Curly Girls

Posted by elaine.ebonymag - 11/05/10 at 04:05:08 am

By *Elaine Welteroth*



Summer is almost here and that means it's time for sisters to find a fuss-free 'do that can survive the heat, humidity and last-minute beach trips. Take it from us; natural styles are the way to go! Luckily, liberation from hot tools and relaxers has never been easier. Until now, natural hair wearers have been limited to prowling the internet and niche beauty supply stores to find quality products that address their kinky, curly and wavy hair needs. Luckily, the industry heard your cry just in time for summer. Mass retailers Target and Ulta are making space for the growing niche of products that cater to the naturally curly and tightly coiled crowd. Here are the top four brands we love that have recently broken into a store near you.



Hair Rules, created by celebrity stylist Anthony Dickey, owner of the sought after multi-textural Hair Rules Salon in NYC, was just added to the Ulta roster with products starting at \$9.50.



Curls created an exclusive line for Target using the same certified organic ingredients as Curls Professional for a fraction of the cost, starting at \$7.99.



Miss Jessie's, though pricey, packs the punch when it comes to manning a head full of thick, unruly, wannabe wearable hair that craves moisture and control. 10 products rolled out into Target starting at \$16.



Jane Carter Solution, the always affordable homespun line is made with natural ingredients and has been a favorite among the multi-textural world for years. Now that they are in Target nationwide, here's the catch: like all of these brands, they need YOUR support to prove they belong on shelves. So Jane is offering a special incentive for customers who purchase \$50 worth of JCS products from any Target store to receive a FREE "Come Fly with Me" Travel Kit worth \$25. Just email a scanned copy of your Target receipt to Target@janecartersolution.com.

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Venus Williams: The Goddess off the Court

Posted by elaine.ebonymag - 09/05/10 at 05:05:47 am

By Erica Lasan



Many people know Venus Williams as the older half of the "Williams Sister" duo, an athletic icon, and a force to be reckoned with when it comes to answering her serve. What many people do not know is just how much of a "Starr" she is outside the world of athletics— owning an interior design company (*V. Starr*

Interiors), a clothing company (*EleVen*), working on a book, doing a campaign with **Tide**, all while training for a major tennis tournament. We wondered how anyone could stand up to so much pressure. But as we chat with the tennis pro who is as cool as a cucumber, sitting pretty in her hot pink blazer it is obvious that for Venus juggling responsibilities is no sweat.

Ebony: All the girls want to know how you manage to keep your hair up while working out as often as you do? Do you have any quick fixes or tips you can share?

Venus: My life is a big, huge workout. I mean honestly I have two workouts a day so it doesn't stay done. There really is no trick unless you just don't work hard and if you don't work out hard then you don't sweat a lot. You can try to pin it up. Sometimes I do this [puts hair in a twist up bun] and if you can keep it that way, it will help keep the sweat off and it will stay relatively... [throws hands in the air as if to admit defeat and laughs] I really don't care anymore!

Ebony: Exactly how rigorous is preparing for a huge sports event like Wimbledon? Can you take us through a day in the life of Venus Williams in-training?

Venus: Every day of my life is preparing. I mean, everyday of almost my whole life has been preparing. So it's really a normal thing and nothing new. I just train all day, everyday – that's the bulk of my day. I do have days off and I *really* enjoy them to the fullest!

Ebony: So what do you do on your off time?

Venus: I like to work so I end up doing a lot of design, especially the design projects that I'm really interested in. The ones that I'm not as into always end up barely making the deadline, but it is what it is. I do a lot of that and I sit back, relax, read books, hang out with my little buddy [nods towards her dog] and toddle around town.

Ebony: As your fans, we know that you were introduced to the game of tennis by your father. How much of your will and drive to do well and become a superstar in the sport was fueled by your father?

Venus: I think I always did it for me, because if I would have absolutely hated it I would've never continued. Ultimately I did it for me. I never felt like I did it for anyone else.

Ebony: How difficult was it growing up and managing all of your training along with the simple struggles of being growing up? What sacrifices did you have to make in order to achieve stardom?

Venus: I think we got to have fun. We did the regular things that kids want to do. Kids like to go to the mall and that kind of stuff. We did that and we were training too, so it was a priority in our lives. I think a lot of time that some people may use as dead time we were training.

Ebony: How did you get involved with the Tide campaign?

Venus: When I got the opportunity to work with tide I was very excited. We did a really cool commercial. It's all about looking good and keeping your clothes looking good. So that way you can look good and play well. So it's about keeping your colors bright and fresh even if you get them dirty, which I do.

Ebony: I love how you incorporate part of you and your name into your businesses (i.e. V Starr Interiors). What made you think of naming your clothing line "EleVen"?

Venus: Well because Eleven is about being your best and it's about being better than your best. Usually 10 is the top of the scale or 100%, but if you're [giving] 110% you're an eleven. So it's about being your best all of the time and you can feel that way while you're wearing Eleven.

photo via exposay.com

5 Things That Say I Love You Mom

Posted by elaine.ebonymag - 08/05/10 at 06:05:49 am

By Erica Lasan



Luckily for those still pining over what to get mom and those who forgot that Mother's Day is this Sunday (shame on you!), there are Mother's Day gift gurus like TV personality/style expert **Robert Verdi**. @RobertVerdi hosted a fabulous twitter party at his illustrious hot spot Luxe Laboratory in New York City where he shared sweet mom experiences with us (@MyEbonyMagazine) and answered Mother's Day questions asked by his twitter followers. We tweeted great gifting tips and ideas for anyone with access to the twitterverse. If you weren't following along, don't fret. Here are our favorite Mother's Day picks of the night.

- For the cool mom: a stylish watch. Robert suggested a cute pink one from Anne Klein (www.anneklein.com)




- For the hip mom: a day of pampering complete with a mani and pedi using Ginger+Liz nail colors (www.gingerandliz.com)



- For the chic mom: superstar shades that bring out her inner diva. How about these Hollywood sunblockers from Banana Republic? (www.bananarepublic.com)



■ For the traditional mom: a floral arrangement always does the trick but be careful not to order just any flowers. Get an arrangement that uses her favorite color and reflects her taste. Rebecca Cole, author of "Paradise Found: Gardening in Unlikely Places," suggests that when ordering flowers you get an ephemeral arrangement and are as specific as possible using phrases like "tight color palette," "one color," "low arrangement," "no greens," "few greens," and if you have the budget, splurge on the vase. (We would also like to add that if your mother is into gardening, volunteering a day of free labor is sure to put a smile on her face!) 



■ And lastly, for the practical mom: a nice umbrella because we would never want her to be caught out in the rain – especially with all the money spent on her 'do. For an eco-friendly touch, Robert suggests theBrelli umberella, an umbrella that is 100% biodegradable, uber-chic and comes in a summer time style that blocks UV rays (www.thebrelli.com)



Like these gift suggestions and want some more? Log on to twitter and check out @MyEbonyMagazine's timeline and #RVtips to see what else Robert had to say!

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Sherri Shepherd's Picture of Strength

Posted by elaine.ebonymag - 28/04/10 at 05:04:42 am

By *Erica Lasan*



Ebony was on the scene for SoftSheen-Carson's "Picture of Strength" event held at the Harlem Hip Hop Center in New York City. The program, hosted by *The View's* **Sherri Shepherd**, celebrated the community and raised money for the Harlem Children' Zone. Other attendees included former Destiny's Child member/Broadway star **Michelle Williams**, Mental Health Advocate **Terrie Williams** and SoftSheen-Carson's Artistic Director and celebrity stylist **Johnny Wright** (who styles the tresses of our First Lady personally).

Ebony took a moment to sit down and talk with Sherri about her enthusiasm to be involved in the event and the source of her strength.

Ebony: I just can't get over how gorgeous you are!

Sherri: First of all, Johnny did my hair and I'm so excited because you can't tell where my hair ends and the fake hair begins...I can't even tell! He had me up in the kitchen, it was like a whole fashion and beauty shop. I was sitting between his legs and he was just combing the kitchen, boy!

Ebony: What made you want to do this event with SoftSheen-Carson?

Sherri: First off, they said they were donating to the Harlem Children Zone. And I'm a big supporter because Geoffrey Canada and his staff are making an investment into the children in Harlem. Also, I'm a family girl; my folks are from Chicago, we're loud, we laugh, we get together, we cook and that's who I am. So when they said the event was all about family and about strength, I was like 'those are the ingredients for me to be here.'

Ebony: What is your picture of strength?

Sherri: My son who is 5 years old was born at 5 and a half months; he was a pound and 10 ounces. He had so many things wrong with him: severe head bleeding, a hole in his intestines, a hole in an artery in his heart, and they predicted that he would have severe mental retardation, severe cerebral palsy, the loss of his left side, but everything that they predicted has not come true. He has his challenges and he cries but it makes him fight harder. My son is a fighter and every time I look at him, it gives me strength. So my picture of strength is my son, Jeffrey Charles Tarpley and I'm proud to be his mother.

Ebony: That is beautiful!

Sherri: It's from the heart. That's my miracle baby. Everyday I wake up and I thank God for giving me this little boy that has made me look outside the box of

what is considered perfection. And God has made me look at everything that is unique about my son because he is so different from every little boy his age. He is unique and I have learned to embrace being different and embrace every little milestone that he makes. There are times when I've gone through things when I go "I don't know if I can get up" and that little boy runs into the room and says 'wake up, wake up mommy!' I look at him and it gives me strength.

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