

New museum traces history of Black music across genres

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Feb. 8, (AP) — A new museum two decades in the making is telling the interconnected story of Black musical genres through the lens of American history.

The National Museum of African American Music, which opened with a virtual ribbon-cutting on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, is seated in the heart of Nashville's musical tourism district, alongside honky-tonks and the famed Ryman Auditorium and blocks from the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum.

Even as Nashville has long celebrated its role in the history of music, the new museum fills a gap by telling an important and often overlooked story about the roots of American popular music, including gospel, blues, jazz, R&B and hip-hop.

"When we think of the history of African American music and the important part it has played in our country, it was long overdue to honor it in this type of way," said gospel great CeCe Winans, who serves as a national chair for the museum.

The idea for the museum came from two Nashville business and civic leaders, Francis Guess and T.B. Boyd, back in 1998, who wanted a museum dedicated to Black arts and culture. And while there are museums around the country that focus on certain aspects of Black music, this museum bills itself as the first of its kind to be all encompassing.

"Most music museums deal with a label, a genre or an artist," said H. Beecher Hicks III, the museum's president and CEO. "So it's one

thing to say that I'm a hip hop fan or I'm a blues fan, but why? What was going on in our country and our lived experience and our political environment that made that music so moving, so inspirational, such as the soundtrack for that part of our lives?"

The museum tells a chronological story of Black music starting in the 1600s through present day and framed around major cultural movements including the music and instruments brought by African slaves, the emergence of blues through the Great Migration, the Harlem Renaissance and the civil rights movement.

When Winans recently took a tour of the museum, she saw her own family of gospel singers, The Winans, represented in the museum's exhibit on spiritual music alongside the artists that influenced her own musical career.

Inspired

"You never start out doing what you're doing to be a part of history or even be a part of a museum," said the 12-time Grammy-winning singer.

She noted that the museum put gospel music in context with how it inspired social change, especially during the civil rights era.

"When you look at all the different movements that have happened down through the years, and Martin Luther King Jr., it was always with the church behind them," said Winans. "It was the gospel music that

inspired us to love one another, to build bridges."

The museum has 1,600 artifacts in their collection, including clothes and a Grammy Award belonging to Ella Fitzgerald, a guitar owned by B.B. King and a trumpet played by Louis Armstrong. To make the best use out of the space, the exhibits are layered with interactive features, including 25 stations that allow visitors to virtually explore the music.

Visitors can learn choreographed dance moves with a virtual instructor, sing "Oh Happy Day" with a choir led by gospel legend Bobby Jones and make their own hip-hop beats. Visitors can take home their recordings to share via a personal RFID wristband.

There will be a changing exhibit gallery, with the first topic to be the Fisk Jubilee Singers, an a cappella group originally formed in 1871 to raise money for Fisk University. The group sang slave spirituals at their concerts. The tradition continues today.

After a year of racial reckoning through the movement of Black Lives Matter, Hicks said the timing couldn't be more perfect to highlight the contributions of Black music to our shared American experience.

"(It) is not an accident that we are able to finish and get the museum open in this moment, in this moment where we need to be reminded, perhaps more than others or more than in the recent past that we are brothers and we share more together than we do our differences," said Hicks.

Music

Variety



This image released by A24 Films shows Morfydd Clark in a scene from 'Saint Maud.' (AP)

Film

Glass establishes herself as a filmmaker to watch

A psychological horror in 'Saint Maud'

By Lindsey Bahr

Religion and horror are hardly novel bedfellows, but writer-director Rose Glass crafts something fresh of the construct in her promising debut "Saint Maud." The film follows the psychological undoing of a devout hospice nurse who becomes obsessed with saving the soul of her terminally ill patient.

An uneasy and slightly sinister mood is established right from the start and barely lets up for the duration. Lean and measured, Glass' film drops the audience in the middle of a bloody mess, although it's ambiguous at first as to whether or not we're seeing the beginning or the end. There's a body on an operating table and a young woman in the corner with her face covered in blood. The next image we see is a close-up of boiling tomato soup in a grim and claustrophobic studio apartment in the seaside hamlet Coney Island (in Northern Ireland, not New York). The woman there, Maud (Morfydd Clark), is packing up to leave.

The first words we hear from her are in voiceover. She's not talking to us, but to God, wondering when she'll find clarity of purpose. "I can't shake the feeling that you must have saved me for something greater than this," she says. Her musings often sound like diary entries.

The new client is Amanda Kohl (Jennifer Ehle), a 49-year-old dancer, choreographer and "minor celebrity" who has written books with vaguely erotic titles like Anatomy of Dance and The Body is a Stage. She has stage 4 lymphoma of the spinal cord and, Maud says, is not long for the world.

They are a mismatched pair in almost every way. Maud has a Victorian sternness to her, while Amanda is pure hedonism. Maud even says early on that she has little time for creative types, "as they tend to be rather self-involved." But the film teases us a bit with the possibility of connection between the two who at least seem open to each other at first. Maud projects what she wants to on Amanda, and Amanda does the same for her, but we don't get the benefit of Amanda's internal dialogue. At least Amanda is curious, which is more than most people seem to be about the mousy Maud. And besides, she has Big Questions about the nearing end of her life and Maud believes she is uniquely posi-

tioned to provide answers. The odd and immediate intimacy of hospice care permeates the more off the wall aspects of "Saint Maud."

But be careful who you call your savior because they might take it literally. Amanda quickly becomes an enveloping obsession for Maud, who with this new clarity of purpose has ecstatic fits and visions. She also gets incredibly and oppressively sanctimonious. It's even kind of awkwardly funny at times. But she oversteps and, eventually, is dismissed in humiliating fashion. And things just devolve into a nightmare from there. Some of her modes of penance will surely invade your dreams.

Distinctive

"Saint Maud" is not terribly interested in why Maud became this way or who exactly she was before (although we do get some tidbits). That becomes a bit alienating and tests your investment in watching this character self-destruct, but Glass moves things along quickly and viscerally and always has something interesting or distinctive on the screen. It is also more restrained than, say, an Ari Aster horror. With "Saint Maud," Glass firmly establishes herself as a filmmaker to watch.

"Saint Maud," an A24 release in theaters now, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "disturbing and violent content, sexual content and language." Running time: 84 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: A documentary series examining Woody Allen and Mia Farrow's doomed relationship and its fallout, including allegations that he sexually abused a daughter, will air on HBO.

"Allen v. Farrow" will include the "charmed courtship" of filmmaker Allen and actor Farrow; daughter Dylan Farrow's allegations of abuse as a child, and Allen's relationship with Mia Farrow's adult daughter, Soon-Yi Previn, who became his wife, HBO said.

The documentary will explore the "private story" through interviews with Mia, Dylan and Ronan Farrow and investigators, and an examination of court doc-

uments and previously unreleased material, the channel said. Film experts will discuss Allen's work and its re-evaluation in light of his personal life.

Allen and Previn didn't participate in the documentary, nor did Moses Farrow, the son of Allen and Mia Farrow.

Allen has long denied sexually abusing Dylan. In a 2020 memoir, he said he "never did anything to her that could be even misconstrued as abusing her; it was a total fabrication from start to finish."

Two separate investigations were conducted in the 1990s and Allen wasn't charged. Dylan Farrow has maintained that she was abused and her allegations have been embraced in the #MeToo era.

"Allen v. Farrow," from filmmakers Kirby Dick, Amy Ziering and Amy Herdy, will debut Feb. 21 on HBO, with episodes airing weekly.

PARIS: The new face of Paris Fashion Week is digital.

With shows taking place behind closed doors due to the coronavirus pandemic, designers such as Julien Fournie are becoming versatile: getting their designs out to the public by making a film of their collection and streaming it online.

"At the start, I was asked to know how to draw.... Now, I realize I also need to learn to become a filmmaker," the designer said at a behind-the-scenes preview of his spring-summer 2021 couture movie filming.

Calling the move "brave," he noted that "a great crew with you (is needed) to even imagine reinventing oneself through digital film."

In his video entitled "First Storm," three young women are plunged into dreamlike environments. They are, of course, dressed in the strong architectural sleeves, sharp busts and elongated silhouette of the season, contrasting with the fluidity of Fournie's chiffon dresses.

Fournie said the impact of the virus has led him to question "whether fashion shows were really necessary" in the first place.

Fournie's eponymous fashion house is just one among dozens in Paris — and fashion capitals around the world — opting to show their designs in this way. It is usually much cheaper for the house than staging a show. (AP)

NEW YORK: Hall of Fame coach and NFL analyst Bill Cowher has a book coming out in June that his publisher is calling "more than just a football story."

The former Pittsburgh Steelers coach, who led his team to a Super Bowl title at the end of the 2005 season, has a deal with Atria Books for the memoir "Heart and Steel." Cowher, inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame, will look back not just on his career, but on his private struggles. In 2010, he lost his wife and father within three months of each other.

"As I went through the beginning of 2020 and I received the Hall of Fame honor, it allowed me to be reflective upon my football career," Cowher said in a statement issued through Atria, a Simon and Schuster imprint. "When the pandemic hit, it was a great opportunity to write this book and reflect upon my life."

Cowher, 63, led the Steelers from 1992-2006 and besides the Super Bowl win helped guide the team to eight division titles and two conference championships. In his first year with Pittsburgh, he was named coach of the year by The Associated Press and by the Sporting News.

Cowher is collaborating on "Heart and Steel" with Michael Holley, who has also worked on a memoir by Boston Red Sox David Ortiz and on books about the Boston Celtics and New England Patriots. (AP)

NEW YORK: This year's winners of the Carnegie medals for fiction and nonfiction, presented by the American Library Association, have each checked out a few books in their time.

"I work from libraries a lot, and my wallet is full of library cards," says Rebecca Giggs, an Australian author whose "Fathoms: The World in the Whale" received the nonfiction prize Thursday.

James McBride, the fiction winner for "Deacon King Kong," has library cards in four different cities and wrote parts of his novel in branches in New York City and Philadelphia.

"In New York you can get anything you want but it takes longer because you can't leave the library with them. But in Philly, you can," explained McBride, whose novel last year was chosen by Oprah Winfrey for her book club. With a grant from the Carnegie

Corporation of New York, the library association established the award in 2012, with winners in each category receiving \$5,000. Previous honorees include Donna Tartt, Doris Kearns Goodwin and Colson Whitehead.

McBride and Giggs each have strong childhood memories of libraries. McBride, a longtime New Yorker, would visit them often



Prince



Cowher

because they were a "safe space" and because his family couldn't afford to buy many books. Giggs remembers her mother getting into aerobics "in a big way" and, a few nights a week, dropping off her and her sister at a library next door to the workout space. (AP)

CHANHASSEN, Minn.: One

of the original white doves that Prince kept at his iconic Paisley Park compound has died, officials at the rock legend's mansion-turned-estate has announced.

The dove, a female named Divinity, lived to be 28 years old, surpassing the average lifespan of the most doves. Paisley Park officials said her health had been declining and she died.

Prince was 57 when he died of an accidental fentanyl overdose on April 21, 2016. Divinity remained at Paisley Park and could be seen during tours of his former estate.

"Divinity's beautiful coo has welcomed visitors since Paisley Park first opened its gates to the public in October 2016," Paisley Park Executive Director Alan Seiffert said in a statement. (AP)