

LIONSGATE

TYLER PERRY'S
**MADEA'S
FAMILY REUNION**

Learn dignity. Demand respect.

Starring

Tyler Perry
Blair Underwood
Lynn Whitfield
Boris Kodjoe
Henry Simmons
Lisa Arrindell Anderson
Maya Angelou
Jenifer Lewis
Keke Palmer
and
Ms. Cicely Tyson

Rating: PG-13 (for mature thematic material, domestic violence, sex and drug references)
Running time: 107 mins.

THE CAST

Madea
Joe
Brian..... TYLER PERRY

Carlos.....BLAIR UNDERWOOD

Victoria.....LYNN WHITFIELD

Frankie.....BORIS KODJOE

Issac.....HENRY SIMMONS

Vanessa.....LISA ARRINDELL ANDERSON

May..... MAYA ANGELOU

Lisa.....ROCHELLE AYTES

Milay Jenay Lori.....JENIFER LEWIS

Donna.....TANGI MILLER

Nikki.....KEKE PALMER

Myrtle.....CICELY TYSON

THE FILMMAKERS

Written and Directed by.....TYLER PERRY

Produced by..... TYLER PERRY
REUBEN CANNON

Executive Producer.....MIKE PASEORNEK

Co-Producers.....MIKE UPTON
.....ROGER M. BOBB

Director of Photography.....TOYOMICHI KURITA

Editor.....JOHN CARTER A.C.E.

Production Designer.....INA MAYHEW

Costume Designer.....KEITH G. LEWIS

Music by.....TYLER PERRY
.....ELVIN ROSS

Music Supervisors.....JOEL C. HIGH
.....CAMARA KAMBON

Casting by.....KIM WILLIAMS

SYNOPSIS

Based upon Tyler Perry's acclaimed stage production, **MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION** continues the adventures of southern matriarch Madea begun in the hit film **DIARY OF A MAD BLACK WOMAN**.

An unstoppable force of nature, Madea may have finally taken on more than she can chew. She has just been court ordered to be in charge of **NIKKI**, a rebellious runaway, her nieces **LISA** and **VANESSA** are suffering relationship trouble, and through it all she has to organize her family reunion.

As the reunion approaches, secrets are revealed and tensions rise. Madea must use every tactic in her arsenal to not only keep the peace, but keep her family together.

The cast of **MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION** includes Tyler Perry, Blair Underwood, Lynn Whitfield, Boris Kodjoe, Henry Simmons, Lisa Arrindell Anderson, Maya Angelou, Rochelle Aytes, Jenifer Lewis, Tangi Miller, Keke Palmer, and Ms. Cicely Tyson. **MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION** was written and directed by Tyler Perry. The film is produced by Tyler Perry and Reuben Cannon.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Lions Gate Films' *MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION* marks writer/director/actor Tyler Perry's highly anticipated follow-up to his debut hit, *DIARY OF A MAD BLACK WOMAN*. Based on his acclaimed stage production, *MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION* brings back Perry's beloved matriarch, Madea, as she struggles to resolve mounting tensions within her family, all in anticipation of a massive family reunion. With his trademark combination of riotous, irreverent humor and dramatic intensity, Perry once again delivers a story that is rife with larger-than-life characters, rousing gospel music and inspiring messages about love, forgiveness and family.

"*MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION* is about family and the things we go through as family," says Perry. "It's about how secrets that are hidden and buried have to be uncovered for any healing to take place. It's also about laughing yourself to that place of healing."

Broader in scope than *DIARY OF A MAD BLACK WOMAN*, Perry's new film examines an extensive ensemble of related characters, each engaged in a life-changing relationship: Madea struggles to forge a real bond with Nikki, a rebellious runaway who has been ordered to her care; Lisa, Madea's niece, is questioning her upcoming marriage to Carlos, her abusive fiancé; and Vanessa, Lisa's half-sister, is grappling with her mother's life-long animosity towards her, while tentatively exploring a relationship with Frankie, a handsome bus driver.

Already a firmly established star of urban theater, Perry became a bona fide film star with the release of *DIARY OF A MAD BLACK WOMAN* in movie theaters last year. His devoted theater audience, built through years of touring and creative output, helped push *DIARY*, made on a modest \$5 million budget, to a domestic gross of over \$60 million. With both old and new fans clamoring for more, Perry and his producing partner Reuben Cannon saw *MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION* as the logical follow-up to *DIARY*, this time with Perry in the director's chair.

"The genius of Tyler is that he's so in touch with his audience from all of his touring. He knows what they want," says Reuben Cannon. "Even though it's true to the

play, the film version of MADEA is so much bigger and better than the play in terms of the characters . We expect the fans to be just over the moon about this.”

“Tyler has transitioned beautifully from stage to screen,” adds executive producer Mike Paseornek. “He’s found a way to capture all the spirit and humor and energy that have made his plays hits and make it all work on screen. This film is a real triumph for him.”

Perry sees this second film as a welcome opportunity to add depth to his characters, particularly Madea, the tough-talking grandma played by Perry in a padded dress and layers of prosthetics. “Madea’s dropped the guns and the pot-smoking, and has become more of a voice that helps people with their issues,” he says. “She’s a figure who helps bridge generations and hold them together.”

“You can’t make a Tyler Perry movie without Madea,” says Cannon. “Audiences want to adopt her. She’s relatable because everyone has a Madea in his or her family on some level. She says things a lot of us would like to say but don’t.”

Uncle Joe, the lascivious, flatulent brother to Madea who is also played by Perry, also returns to deliver a handful of crass, sidesplitting moments. Despite the four hours it takes in the make-up chair to transform into Uncle Joe, Perry admits he’s his favorite character to play. “Uncle Joe is just so authentic and consistent to who he is,” says Perry. “When I play him, I get to say whatever I want to say. Whatever comes up, comes up.”

Based on Perry’s growing fame and the quality of his writing, he and Cannon had no trouble attracting a talented, and notably attractive, cast for the project. As the abusive Carlos, Blair Underwood (“L.A. Law,” SET IT OFF, RULES OF ENGAGEMENT) brings genuine menace and complexity to a role that might have been one-note in lesser hands. “I love playing the bad guy,” admits Underwood. “It’s not only interesting for me to play, but hopefully it’s more interesting and more unnerving for the audience to try to understand who Carlos is and why he is the way he is.”

“I’ve always wanted to work with Blair, and finally the timing was right,” says Perry. “I have a tremendous amount of respect for him. He’s been working forever, but I still think he’s a hugely underrated actor in Hollywood.”

Perry was still writing the script for MADEA when he realized that the part of Victoria, the imperious, materialistic mother, should go to Lynn Whitfield, an actress he has admired since her portrayal of Josephine Baker in the television movie “The

Josephine Baker Story.” “When I wrote the scene where Vanessa tells Victoria, ‘You’re gonna rot in hell’ and Victoria replies, ‘I vacation there,’ I suddenly thought, Lynn has to play this,” remembers Perry. “She’s so intense and so powerful. She’s just incredible.”

“Victoria is just desperately evil and so deeply afraid of not having,” says Whitfield of her character. “It’s always great to play these high sea roles. They’re so exaggerated and severe that you can bring a lot to them and move yourself out of the way. It’s very freeing.”

For the half-sisters Vanessa and Lisa, the two characters who form the heart of the film, Perry discovered two relatively unknown actresses, Lisa Arrindell Anderson and Rochelle Aytes. As the headstrong, bohemian Vanessa who is disowned by her resentful mother, Anderson demonstrates a fierce intelligence and strength onscreen. “A lot of what’s written for African American women is all surface,” says Anderson. “But with Vanessa, I couldn’t ask for a better character to play. I’m so thankful.”

“Lisa is amazing, intelligent, and so beautiful,” says Perry. “I had never heard of her before the casting process began. But when I saw her audition tape, I said, ‘There she is. That’s Vanessa.’”

“I’m so impressed by her performance and how energetic and truthful she is,” says co-star Boris Kodjoe. “She’s a genius.”

As Lisa, the abused wife-to-be who must find the strength to stand up to both her abusive husband *and* her tyrannical mother, Aytes is achingly vulnerable, subtly charting her character’s difficult transformation from timid victim to independent woman. “Lisa’s struggle is with whether or not she deserves somebody good in her life,” says Aytes. “She’s always lived for her mother, and she goes through this film trying to own up to what *she* wants.”

“Rochelle has this innocence about her,” says Perry. “She had done only one movie before MADEA, and she definitely found it challenging to be in such a big and difficult role, but she nailed every beat of Lisa’s journey.”

Boris Kodjoe (LOVE AND BASKETBALL, BROWN SUGAR), who stars as Frankie, an artistically inclined bus driver who manages to break Vanessa out of her shell, was another young actor with whom Perry was eager to work. Also rounding out the cast are Keke Palmer, who plays Nikki, Madea’s headstrong foster child, Jennifer Lewis as the wedding planner Milay Jenay Lori, and Tangi Miller and Henry Simmons as

Donna and Isaac, a young couple struggling with a painful divorce. Audiences will have the opportunity to watch Perry perform without prosthetics in the role of Brian, a returning character from DIARY who is a lawyer and relative of Madea's family.

Of all the cast, however, MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION is distinguished most notably by the presence of two iconic African-American women: Academy Award® nominee and multiple Emmy Award winner Cicely Tyson (SOUNDER, "The Autobiography of Miss Hane Pittman"), and revered poet, activist and actor, Dr. Maya Angelou.

Says Kodjoe, "Dr. Maya Angelou and Ms. Cicely Tyson are living legends, heroes, trailblazers. These two women have changed the face of Hollywood. They've changed the face of this culture so tremendously by inspiring millions of people to reach their potential."

For Perry, having both women on set together was a humbling, inspiring experience. "It was just amazing to hear Cicely Tyson and Dr. Angelou talk about being in a play together 40 years ago," recalls Perry. "Dr. Angelou's life span goes from Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington on up to Oprah. And for me, to be touched by that tradition of black artists is an amazing thing."

At the titular family reunion, Tyson appears as Myrtle, an elderly relative who, alongside Dr. Angelou's May, delivers a rousing speech to her extended family about their responsibilities as a family and as African-Americans. Says Underwood, "She was saying, 'Young men of color, where are we? Take your place. Remember where we came from. Remember so we can know where we're going.'"

Adding immeasurably to the scene's resonance is its setting. The reunion sequence was shot on a former plantation, with Tyson addressing her family from the steps of the plantation's slave quarters. The result is a powerful and resonant evocation of African-American history, identity and civil rights progress. "It was amazing," says Perry. "Nobody was moving. The extras were crying. It was spellbinding. When it was over, it was complete quiet. Just complete quiet."

"That speech was so simple and clear and yet profound, and not at all preachy," remembers Whitfield. "I just felt like, 'Yes, this is so great. Somebody's finally saying this out loud. It'll be on screen. It'll all be said.'"

Perry is passionate about mending the apparent disconnect that today's youth have with older generations, a cause for which he feels particularly suited. "There are certain people who are able to stand in the middle, who can reach these very, very young people and can reach our seniors," says Perry. "Too often today we let go of older things. We throw them away. But elders have so much wisdom if we just listen."

Dr. Angelou is also featured during the climactic wedding sequence, in which she recites a poem she wrote specifically for the film. "It's a love poem called 'In and Out of Time,'" says Dr. Angelou. "I wrote it since a number of young black people would have us believe that white people make love and black people just have sex. And it's not true. So I wrote about romance."

"She just lets out this barrage of incredible words that motivate and lift you," says Perry of Dr. Angelou. "When she leaves your presence, you know she's been there."

The film's wedding sequence was designed by Perry to rival any other wedding ever put to film. Staged in a lavish tent with angels floating from the rafters, the scene features Dr. Angelou, as well as R&B star Johnny Gill singing an original song written by Perry. "I wanted to make it really, really incredible," says Perry. "My production designer, Ina Mayhew, is an incredible artist. And she got it instantly. When I walked into the tent, I saw my dream."

When asked about the impressive feat of performing three different roles during production, two of which involved heavy prosthetic make-up, *and* making his feature directorial debut, Perry is characteristically humble. "I had a great team of people working with me who totally understood my vision," he says. "I feel like now that I've finished my first film, I'm ready to direct my first film."

For the first two weeks of production, Perry focused solely on scenes in which he didn't appear as an actor, allowing himself to wet his teeth as a director. During the remaining weeks, he was often directing in full make-up as either Madea or Uncle Joe. "There was a lot of laughing and snickering at first," says Perry. "But once I got my breasts past the monitors I was okay."

"Tyler's got an ease about him," says Underwood. "The scene at the plantation, he was playing three different characters, working with two iconic figures in Cicely Tyson and Maya Angelou, and dealing with two hundred background artists, and in the

face of all of that, he was calm and easy. He's collaborative and listens to other people's ideas and embraces them."

Adds Kodjoe, "Tyler is an actor's director. He loves to talk to you about your character. And the set is just – you can feel the harmony, you can feel the positive energy. Tyler is responsible for that."

When she is acting with Perry, Whitfield doesn't even hope to measure up against him. "He's a huge scene-stealer, that's what he is," she says, laughing. "Being in a scene with Tyler Perry as Madea or Joe is like being in a scene with a child or a dog. They say, you know, forget it. You're never going to win. He's amazing."

With such a varied, talented cast and rich storylines, MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION is poised to satisfy Perry's loyal fan base and win him many new admirers. Like his previous work, the film provokes laughter and tears, and manages to impart vital life lessons without heavy-handedness.

"The themes that Tyler writes about are classic themes: revenge, repentance, forgiveness, the victory of the human spirit over adversity," says Whitfield. "They are dramatic themes, but he communicates them to his audience in a heightened, funny, and very human way."

"I hope this is a crossover work that will urge people to look at their families," says Dr. Angelou. "That is whites and blacks and Asians, Spanish speaking, Native Americans, gays, straights, pretty and plain. We can always look back into our families, two generations, four generations, last week and see someone we admire."

For Perry, MADEA develops a theme that has been a through-line in his work for the past thirteen years: forgiveness. "If you can forgive the wrongs of your past and of your parents, who were only doing what they knew, then you can look forward," he says. "Apart from my personal relationships, that message has been the passion of my life."

And, as with every Tyler Perry experience, audiences should expect to have a good time. Says Reuben Cannon, "I think the great thing about Tyler Perry is that you always, always leave the theater feeling better than when you came in. It's true of his plays and I believe this film will provide the same experience."

"MADEA" MABEL SIMMONS

The Abridged Biography

Madea, whose real name is Mabel Simmons, was born according to most accounts in rural Greensburg, Louisiana in 1937, but others show her age as older. Some have speculated it might have been related to attempts to qualify earlier for Social Security benefits. She is also fondly remembered by some as "Delicious" from a brief but popular career working at what was politely termed in the late 1950's and early 1960's as "exotic dancing."

Madea had strict upbringing under her mother, Big Mabel Murphy, the original Madea who her daughter calls "Madea Over The Top." She had to start doing household chores from the age of six months. "I'm Madea Lite compared to her," she once explained.

Since moving to New Orleans in her high school years, Madea has been in the neighborhood, watching out and speaking her mind, what she calls "keeping it real." According to her friend Tyler Perry, "She has a heart of gold but has a tough exterior and takes no crap. Madea is the kind of person who will beat the hell out of you one minute and take you to the doctor the next."

Madea has one child, Cora, who is referred to as the biggest blessing and the biggest regret of her life. Madea's first date was going to her high school prom with her neighbor Brown. She had too much to drink, and one thing led to another. Nine months later, Cora was born.

When her tips as a stripper started to dwindle, Madea had a very short career working for a company that made protective paper toilet seat covers, but her outspokenness did not prove popular with the front office. She turned to the business of husbands, believing that marriage is for life, that is, the lifetime of her husbands. All eight of them died of mysterious causes soon after heated arguments. Thanks to life insurance policies, Madea has lived comfortably but frugally over the last few decades.

The fact that so many people like to come to Madea for advice is the reason why you've heard of her today. Madea once said, "Every time I'm out in front of people, they ask me for advice. 'Madea, what should I do about this? Madea, what should I do about that?' I tell people I've got problems of my own, but for some reason, they keep asking and they seem to like to listen to the advice that I've got to give."

So, whether she's talking about the miraculous uses of Vaseline, tips on the art of flirting or the hidden benefits of a deep fried diet, Madea's voice is heard far beyond her neighborhood today. Her large body can be found on theater stages, in motion pictures and even on the cover of best selling books.

Her motto is "Life is sometimes hard, and you have to laugh your way through it."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

TYLER PERRY (Director, Writer, Composer, “Madea”, “Joe”, “Brian”)

Tyler Perry—writer, producer, director, and actor extraordinaire—emerged from the poverty-stricken streets of New Orleans to his multi-million dollar mansion in Atlanta. But the story to be told is his journey from homelessness to bliss.

This rags-to-riches tale is astonishing and inspirational to all. Tyler’s younger days were troubled, and he suffered from endless abuse from his father. Later in life, the dejection and rejection caused him to do some soul-searching. In 1992, inspired to write by Oprah Winfrey, he penned a series of letters to himself in an effort to find catharses for his childhood pain. Those same letters would eventually evolve to become Tyler’s first hit musical, *I Know I’ve Been Changed*. His humble spirit and relationship with God kept him faithful and obedient. He believed God was calling him to share his story with as many as possible, to help and heal others like him. In his words, Tyler learned real forgiveness deep within—a type of forgiveness that leads to success in one’s soul. Perry chose the stage life as the vehicle. It was definitely a learning process of hard work. But now Perry has raised the bar tremendously on the way people perceive and attend urban theatre selling out to millions across the country.

Looking back through his illustrious career thus far, Perry ingeniously created the sixty-eight-year-old character Mabel “Madea” Simmons. In 1997, his first production, *I Know I’ve Been Changed*, gave theater its facelift. It was followed by *Woman, Thou Art Loosed* and *Behind Closed Doors*, both collaborations with Bishop T.D. Jakes. In 2000, he wrote *I Can Do Bad All By Myself* and introduced “Madea,” successfully making her a household name to thousands across the country. Soon after, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, *Family Reunion* and *Class Reunion* all starred Tyler Perry as “Madea.” Two of his projects, *Why Did I Get Married* with Grammy Award-winner Kelly Price and *Meet the Browns*, have toured successfully without him while Tyler focused on new ventures. He has changed the urban genre of theatre, thus touching and inspiring the lives of many. His legacy encounters mega-sellout performances throughout the country.

In December 2004, Tyler wrote and produced “Madea’s Christmas Play” for Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). The program netted the highest ratings for the local broadcast and 3rd highest in TBN history!

His new ventures included his first major motion picture. The screen adaptation of his stageplay, *DIARY OF A MAD BLACK WOMAN*, was the #1 movie at the box office. The film starred Kimberly Elise, Shemar Moore, Steve Harris, Cicely Tyson and, of course, Tyler Perry who played three roles. The success of the movie surprised Hollywood movie moguls and theater critics who knew little or nothing of “Tyler Perry”. (Tyler also filmed a stage production of *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, released in February 2005.) The current tour, *Madea Goes to Jail*, is the best stage production yet. To date, it has sold out every theater since January 2005.

Tyler has made several major television appearances, the highlights of which were his two guest appearances on “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” where he talked about the power of forgiveness and his new movie. He was also a guest on ABC’s “Good Morning America” and “20/20.” He was nominated for the prestigious Helen Hayes Award for Excellence in Theatre and for MTV’s Breakthrough Man of the Year Award.

Tyler has been featured in such publications as Black Enterprise; Ebony; Essence; JET, Sister to Sister; and was a recipient of 2004 Black Business Professionals Entrepreneur of the Year as well as many others.

“People look at the money or the resources I have achieved but it is far better than that. The laughter, values, wisdom, and spirituality that I am bringing to the productions are worth far more than what I am earning.”

“Remember that life is short and my motto is “Laugh your way through it!”

REUBEN CANNON (Producer)

Producer Reuben Cannon's background in film and television is in casting. In these roles he has worked with some of the biggest names in film and TV, including Bruce Willis, Oprah Winfrey, Will Smith, Spike Lee and Whoopi Goldberg.

After attending Southeast City College in Chicago, Cannon moved to Los Angeles. Cannon began his career in Hollywood in the mailroom at Universal Studios. This position led to him becoming a casting director and then he served as head of television casting at Warner Brothers.

Some of Cannon's producing credits include last year's WOMAN THOU ART LOOSED, based on the book by Bishop T.D. Jakes; LOVE DON'T COST A THING with Nick Cannon; DANCING IN SEPTEMBER; DOWN IN THE DELTA, directed by Dr. Maya Angelou; Spike Lee's GET ON THE BUS; and THE WOMEN OF BREWSTER PLACE with Oprah Winfrey and Cicely Tyson.

Among his casting credits are JOHNSON FAMILY VACATION, DELIVER US FROM EVA, THE BROTHERS, THE COLOR PURPLE, WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE, A SOLDIER STORY, WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?, and THE JOSEPHINE BAKER STORY, and "The Bernie Mac Show".

Cannon has received an Honorary Doctorate of Human Letters from Morehouse College. His work was recognized at the 2002 NAACP Image Awards when Daimler/Chrysler honored him with the Behind the Lens Award for his contributions to both film and TV.

MIKE UPTON (Co-Producer)

Mike Upton today is one of Hollywood's most prolific independent producers. After graduating from The University of Texas he began his career interning with FilmDallas, producers of such independent hits as "Da," "Kiss of the Spider Woman" and "Trip to Bountiful."

In 1987 Upton headed to Los Angeles where he worked for legendary low-budget movie producer Roger Corman, best known for his long tradition of finding and fostering new talent. Corman recognized Upton's ability and quickly tapped him to run his Venice, California studio. Soon Upton was supervising the production of twenty features per year.

In 1996 with more than sixty pictures under his belt, Upton began to produce independently. He ventured into international waters making the successful Fox Family television dramas "Au Pair" and "Au Pair 2", as well as "After the Storm" (a USA Network drama with Benjamin Bratt, which won top honors at multiple festivals including New York and City of Angels).

Other notable producing credits include "Casper: A Spirited Beginning" which became and remains the best-selling non-Disney video of all time; "Michael Jordan: An American Hero" for Fox Family Channel; "Addams Family Reunion" for Twentieth Century Fox; theatrical features "Boat Trip" with Cuba Gooding Jr. and "Down in the Valley" with Edward Norton.

In 2000 Upton began to produce for Lions Gate Entertainment on such projects as "Wonderland" with Val Kilmer, "Happy Endings" with Lisa Kudrow, "Undiscovered," and the soon-to-be-released "Akeelah and the Bee" with Angela Bassett and Laurence Fishburne. He served as co-producer on the 2004 smash "Diary of a Mad Black Woman".

Currently Upton resides as 2929 Productions' Senior Vice President of Production on such films as "Good Night, Good Luck", "Turistas" and "Fast Track".

KEITH G. LEWIS (Costume Designer)

Keith Lewis received his graduate degree from the North Carolina School of the Arts. He began his career designing costumes in theater with work on such shows as "The Miracle Worker," "Hamlet," "Chicago," "1940's Radio Hour," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" and "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

Lewis served as Wardrobe Supervisor on the films YOUNG GUNS, GRUMPY OLD MEN, GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE and HBO Films' BOYCOTT.

He worked as the costume designer for MEN AT WORK with brothers Emilio Estevez and Charlie Sheen, UNSHACKLED with Morgan Freeman and FIRST OFFENSE with Joan Severance and Corbin Bernsen.

In addition to his design work, Lewis has returned to the North Carolina School of the Arts to serve as an instructor and guest designer. He has also been the Resident Costume Designer and Instructor at East Carolina University.

BILL JOHNSON (Prosthetic Make-Up)

Bill “Splat” Johnson has been working in the film industry for over 20 years. He began his make-up skills working in super eight features back in the late seventies. He then moved on to creating effects for student films at the University of Georgia. After graduating from college with a BFA in graphic design, he was accepted in Dick Smith’s Advanced Professional Make-Up Course. It was during his enrollment that he got his first major make-up effects job, doing SLEEPAWAY CAMPS 2 & 3. He has now worked on over 30 movies including THE PATRIOT, EIGHT LEGGED FREAKS, HOODLUM, IN DREAMS, and OCTOBER SKY.

In addition to his make-up effects talents, Johnson is also a graphic designer with the Horror Channel and has moved into directing some of his own horror projects.

ELVIN ROSS (Composer)

NAACP Nominated composer ELVIN ROSS (Music Score, Original Songs, Musical Director) has composed music for an extraordinary number of hugely successful urban theatrical productions, including Tyler Perry’s “I Know I’ve Been Changed,” “I Can Do Bad All By Myself,” “Diary Of A Mad Black Woman,” “Madea’s Family Reunion,” “Meet The Brown’s,” “Madea Goes To Jail,” Bishop T.D. Jakes’ “Woman Thou Art Loosed” and NAACP-nominated “Behind Closed Doors.”

Within the last few years, Elvin has added several more mega accomplishments to his resume: Creator and Executive Producer of the Telly Award Winning -Gospel Dream Talent Search. Gospel Dream is the gospel music industry answer to American Idol. The television special broke a household viewer ship record on Black Entertainment Television (BET) in 2003 garnering over two million viewers. He produced the Gospel Dream special in association with his company, SONHO Entertainment in which he is the CEO. Elvin has recently composed a memorably melodic movie score for Tyler Perry’s “Diary Of A Mad Black Woman” for Lions Gate Films and is currently finishing the score Tyler Perry’s/Lions Gate follow-up movie, “Madea’s Family Reunion”.

Working on a vast array of projects, Elvin has been achieving success and winning industry awards for over ten years. Some of his honors and achievements include but are not limited to: 2001 NAACP Urban Theatre Award Nominee for “Best Musical Director” for Bishop T.D. Jakes’ “Behind Closed Doors”; Winner of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, Inc. award for outstanding musical contributions, and received two proclamations recognized by St. Charles Parish, LA for outstanding musical achievement.

Raised just on the outskirts of New Orleans, Louisiana, Elvin was surrounded by the influence of the city's great history of music that encompassed jazz, gospel and rhythm and blues. He contributes the nurturing of his musical gift to his mother, Frozine Francis, who is a classically trained pianist.

A new resident of Atlanta (after suffering the loss of his family's home in New Orleans), Elvin is married to the lovely Jasmine Ross, the proud father of Elvin Ross, Jr. and cherishes the memory of his beloved daughter, Kai L'ani Ross.

CAMARA KAMBON (Music Supervisor)

Emmy Award winning composer /producer Camara Kambon has works featured in motion pictures, on network television and cable. Although recognized for writing Mary J. Blige's #1 hit, *Family Affair*, Mr. Kambon has also written with Dr. Dre, Eminem, Xzibit, Macy Gray, just to name a few. He's composed and produced music for *Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights*, Oliver Stone's, *Any Given Sunday*, *Citizen King* and Dreamwork's *Biker Boyz*. In addition to his film work, Camara also composed the themes for UPN's *Girlfriends*, now in its fifth season and Lion's Gate Films' *The Cookout* featuring Queen Latifah, Danny Glover and Farah Fawcett.

Mr. Kambon received a BA degree with honors from Berklee College of Music's prestigious Film Scoring and music production/engineering program. During high school, in Baltimore he earned an advanced diploma in jazz piano, classical piano and musical theory at the Peabody Preparatory, attended the Eastern Music Festival in Greensboro, NC, and the Walden School for Young Composers in Dublin, NH. Camara has performed professionally since age 12, including appearances with Dizzy Gillespie, Roberta Flack, Roy Hargrove, Will Downing, Dennis Chambers and Chuck Rainey.

ABOUT THE CAST

BLAIR UNDERWOOD (Carlos)

Blair Underwood is an award-winning actor, writer, producer, and director.

He next stars in the romantic comedy “Something New” (February 3, 2006). His other feature film credits include Steven Soderbergh’s *Full Frontal* (opposite Julia Roberts); William Friedkin’s *Rules of Engagement* (for which he won an NAACP Image Award); Mimi Leder’s blockbuster *Deep Impact*; F. Gary Gray’s *Set It Off*; Andrew Niccol’s *Gattaca*; Mario Van Peebles’ *Posse*; Arne Glimcher’s *Just Cause* (opposite Sean Connery).

Underwood also starred in and produced the independent film *How Did It Feel?*, which Daniel Faraldo adapted and directed from his play; and plans to star in and produce the supernatural thriller *My Soul to Keep*. His earlier filmmaking credits include writing, executive-producing, and directing *The Second Coming*, a short film in which he portrayed Jesus Christ returning to Earth; and producing and starring in the independent feature *Asunder* (directed by Tim Reid) and the short film *Sister, I’m Sorry* (directed by his brother, Frank Underwood). He has also directed several music videos.

Among Underwood’s series television work is a memorable recurring role opposite Cynthia Nixon on *Sex and the City* and his current star turn as the lead voice of the hit animated series *Fatherhood* (based on Bill Cosby’s book of the same name).

He has starred in several notable telefilms and miniseries. These include Roger Young’s *Murder in Mississippi*, for which he was honored with an NAACP Image Award for portraying real-life slain civil rights worker James Chaney; *Mama Flora’s Family*, for which he won an NAACP Image Award, directed by Peter Werner and based on Alex Haley’s book of the same name; Kevin Hooks’ award-winning *Heat Wave*; and Kevin Rodney Sullivan’s *Soul of the Game*, in which he starred as sports legend Jackie Robinson.

Underwood’s many stage credits include *Love Letters*; *Measure for Measure*, at the New York Shakespeare Festival; *Purlie*, as part of City Center’s famed Encores! Series; and the one-man show *IM4: From the Mountaintop to Hip Hop*.

He recently had his nonfiction book [Before I Got Here](#) published. It is a collection of parents’ stories and anecdotes speaking to the existence of a child’s soul prior to birth.

Underwood is also among the founding members of ANSA (Artists for a New South Africa) in 1989.

LYNN WHITFIELD (Victoria)

Celebrated for her award winning portrayal of the world's first black international star, Josephine Baker, in "The Josephine Baker Story" (1991), Lynn Whitfield has enjoyed a busy career in film, television, and theatre since beginning acting in the early 1980s.

Born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Lynn Whitfield admired Audrey Hepburn and Bette Davis as a child. After earning her bachelor's degree at Howard University, she appeared in off-Broadway productions in New York City. In the early 1980s, Whitfield received early acclaim for her role on stage in Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf."

Throughout the next few years, Whitfield maintained an active career in films and television. She appeared with Denzel Washington in *The George McKenna Story*, (1986) and co-starred with Oprah Winfrey in the acclaimed miniseries, "The Women of Brewster Place" (1989). Her feature film roles included parts in *The Slugger's Wife* (1985) and *Dead Aim* (1990).

1991 catapulted Lynn Whitfield to fame with her Emmy award winning performance in "The Josephine Baker Story." Whitfield won the highly publicized search for the role of Baker, beating out more than 500 women worldwide. The competition rivaled that of the role of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind*. She also received an NAACP Image Award in 1992 for her role in the drama series, "Stompin' at the Savoy." Whitfield has since appeared in the Martin Lawrence comedy *A Thin Line Between Love and Hate*, the ABC miniseries, "The Wedding" (1998), and the film *Eve's Bayou*. Most recently Whitfield appeared in the film, *Head of State* (2003), with actors Chris Rock and Bernie Mac and *Redemption* with Jamie Foxx a film chronicling the life "The Crips," (a Los Angeles street gang) founder Stan "Tookie" Williams.

BORIS KODJOE (Frankie)

Boris Kodjoe, was born in Vienna, Austria, to Ursula Kodjoe, a psychologist from Germany, and Eric Kodjoe, a physician from Ghana, West Africa. He grew up in Germany with brother Patrick and sister Nadja, where he went to school and where his parents exposed him to athletics and the arts early in his life. He became one of the best tennis players in the country and was amongst the top ten junior players in the world. In the fall of 1992 he accepted a Tennis scholarship to Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

While studying in Richmond, he was approached by an agent of the Ford Modeling agency in New York, but went on to earn his marketing degree in May of 1996. After graduation in June, he joined Ford in New York and his career skyrocketed immediately when he booked twelve campaigns such as Ralph Lauren, Perry Ellis, Yves Saint Laurent, the GAP, within the first seven months. He worked with photographers like Bruce Weber, Herb Ritts, Mathew Rolston, and Marco Glaviano for all the major publications, such as Vogue, GQ, and Esquire, making him one of the few recognizable

faces amongst male Supermodels. Boris' impressive track record was awarded with a Supermodel Award at the Fall '98 fashion shows.

Hollywood soon took notice in Boris. While studying with acting coach Janet Alhanti, he started guest starring on such sitcoms as "Steve Harvey" and "For Your Love", and he was featured in the Spike Lee produced feature film "Love and Basketball", starring Omar Epps and Sanaa Lathan.

Soon he was starring in "Brown Sugar", a film also starring Queen Latifah, Mos Def, Taye Diggs, Sanaa Lathan, and Nicole Ari Parker (for which he was nominated for an NAACP Award for the Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture) and in the Showtime series "Soul Food." The roles prompted an instant onslaught of scripts from all major studios. He also starred in the feature film "The Playmaker", then sold a pitch, named "Papa was...", to Fox Searchlight. 'Papa was..' is currently in development. He also wrote and sold a Reality TV show, named "Undercover", to VH1.

In April 2004, Boris starred in the Sony/Screen Gems produced "Hard Time." He then produced and starred, alongside Nicole Parker, in the Paramount/UPN pilot "Second Time Around." 2005 brought a starring role in "The Gospel."

LISA ARRINDELL ANDERSON (Vanessa)

Lisa Arrindell Anderson was born and raised in New York City where she attended the exclusive High School of the Performing Arts and The Julliard School. Anderson also participated in the Alvin Ailey dance program, where she had a scholarship for six years.

One of Hollywood's rising talents with a busy career in film and television, she is poised for a breakthrough year with starring roles in two diverse, high-profile film projects, scheduled for release in early 2006. Along with TYLER PERRY'S MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION, Anderson will appear as the female lead in the drama, THE SECOND CHANCE, the feature film debut of Christian music icon Michael W. Smith, which is scheduled for a February 17, 2006, release by Sony Pictures Classics.

Anderson's previous credits include a starring role in the CBS telefilm "Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years," opposite Audra MacDonald, Diahann Carroll and Ruby Dee. Based on the book Having Our Say, written by New York Times journalist Amy Hill Hearth (adapted as a Broadway play that earned three TONY nominations), the film followed the inspirational lives of sisters Sadie and Bessie Delany, who lived well beyond the age of 100 after having built successful careers at a time when most women, and most African Americans, were being denied opportunities.

In addition, Anderson starred opposite Don Cheadle as 'Vivian Baptiste,' in HBO's Emmy Award winner for Outstanding Made-for-Television Movie, "A Lesson Before Dying," based on the Ernest J. Gaines best-selling novel about 'Jefferson,' a young, wrongly accused black male who is put on death row for murder.

Anderson's feature film credits include "Clockers," "Trial by Jury," "Livin' Large," and "One Good Cop." Television credits include guest-starring roles on numerous series

including “The Practice,” “The Steve Harvey Show,” “The Cosby Show,” “In the House,” and recurring roles in the daytime dramas “As the World Turns” and “One Life to Live.”

In her spare time, Anderson enjoys reading, home decorating, cooking, jogging and playing with her two children.

MAYA ANGELOU (May)

Dr. Maya Angelou is hailed as one of the great voices of contemporary literature. A remarkable Renaissance woman, Dr. Angelou is a poet, educator, historian, best-selling author, actress, playwright, civil-rights activist, producer and director. She captivates her audiences lyrically with vigor, fire and perception, and possesses the unique ability to shatter the opaque prisms of race and class between reader and subject throughout her books of poetry and her autobiographies.

Dr. Angelou has authored numerous best-selling books, including I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now, Even The Stars Look Lonesome and Hallelujah, The Welcome Table.

In 1981, Dr. Angelou was appointed to a lifetime position as the first Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University.

Personally selected by President Bill Clinton, Dr. Maya Angelou became only the second poet in U.S. history to have the honor of writing and reciting an original work at the Presidential Inauguration where she delivered her dedicatory poem "On The Pulse of Morning" at the inaugural ceremony on January, 20 1993. She most recently visited the White House once again when, on December 1, 2005, she delivered her poem, “Amazing Peace” at the lighting of the National Christmas Tree at the White House.

Dr. Angelou continues to travel the world making appearances on college campuses, spreading her legendary wisdom to America's future. A passionate and powerful speaker, Dr. Angelou challenges her audiences to invest their spirits and hearts in the elevation of the human condition. Considered one of our national treasures, her life represents the value of ethnic, economic and religious diversity in all undertakings. With compassion and candor, Dr. Angelou's works speak to the heart, encouraging us to love life, to persevere through its challenges and to share our gifts with others.

ROCHELLE AYLES (Lisa)

Rochelle Ayles is quickly establishing herself as one of Hollywood's brightest starlets with an impressive film and television career on the rise. Her ability to transition from theater to television to film is flawless and has given her the added boost to take her to the next level.

In 2004 she made her summer she made her big screen debut in a leading role playing the love interest of Shawn Wayans in the hit comedy *White Chicks*. Aytes plays “Denise” a reporter for Hamptons Magazine who gets caught up in the confusion of two FBI agents (Marlon and Shawn Wayans) who dress up in drag in order to protect “the Wilton Sisters” from being kidnapped. The film was directed by Keenan Ivory Wayans. Recently Rochelle shot guest leads *My Wife & Kids*, for ABC, and in FOX’s *Johnny Zero*, for acclaimed director, Mimi Leder. She also just booked a lead in the horror film “Primal Scream” for “Purple Rain” director, Albert Magnoli.

A native of New York, Aytes’ first love was ballet. As a trained ballet dancer, Aytes appeared with Ballet Hispanico as well as the national tour and Broadway cast of *Aida*. Fueled by her growing passion to pursue acting, she quickly built up an impressive commercial resume by appearing in the advertising campaigns for Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, L’Oreal and Mercedes Benz, to name a few. This past year, she was also featured in the campaigns for Dasani, Tylenol, Gillette, Johnson & Johnson, Heineken and Burger King.

But Aytes hardly put on the brakes at that point. She landed a guest starring role on the HBO series “Sex & The City,” and then moved to Los Angeles to land her role in *White Chicks*. Aytes has hit the ground running and has not looked back.

Rochelle currently resides in Los Angeles, CA.

JENIFER LEWIS (Milay Jenay Lori)

Jenifer Lewis stars as Lana Hawkins, the no-nonsense receptionist who keeps order amidst the chaos in the clinic, in Sony Pictures Television’s hit drama series “Strong Medicine” for Lifetime. Lewis’ talent to captivate an audience stems from her incredibly versatile voice, her bawdy, well-developed sense of humor and her powerful acting performances.

Born on January 25, in St. Louis, Missouri, Lewis was the youngest of 7 children. After graduating from Webster College, she followed her heart and packed her bags for New York City. Once there, it wasn’t long before her gifted voice and talent as an actress were instantly noticed and put to use in consecutive hit Broadway musicals including “Eubie,” “Comin’ Uptown,” and “Dreamgirls.” Lewis has also performed in City Center Encores! Presentation of Neil Simon’s musical “Promises, Promises,” but it was her tour with Bette Midler as an infamous Harlotte that got Hollywood calling.

It wasn’t long before she began making her mark in Hollywood as well, garnering two Image Award nominations as Best Supporting Actress for her brilliant performances in the Tina Turner biopic, “What’s Love Got to Do With It,” portraying Turner’s mother, Zelma Bullock, and in the romantic comedy, “The Preacher’s Wife,” with Denzel Washington, both of which earning her the endearing title of “The Black Mother of Hollywood”.

Since her arrival in Los Angeles, Lewis has appeared in over 45 feature films and over 65 Television dramas/sitcoms, displaying her talented versatility as both a dramatic actress and comedic star. Her film work includes "The Antwone Fisher Story" directed by Denzel Washington, "Corinna Corinna" with Whoopi Goldberg, "The Mighty", "Renaissance Man", "Sister Act I & II", "Dead Presidents", "Blast From the Past", "The Brothers", "Mystery Men", and "Poetic Justice" and "Castaway" with Tom Hanks. She's lent her voice to such animated features as "Shark Tales" and will soon be heard as "Flo" in Pixar's new animation film "Cars."

In television, critics praised her for her role as the controversial lesbian Judge Rosetta Reide in the CBS television series "Courthouse," but it was her unforgettable role as "Jackie Washington" in Lifetime Television's "Jackie's Back!" that gave her a cult following recognizing her as a genuine 'Diva' and an Icon. Her television credits include starring roles in such hit shows as "The Temptations", "Friends", "Touched By An Angel", "The Cosby Show" "Murphy Brown", "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air" and "Girlfriends".

Lewis has had the added distinction of being Johnny Carson's final guest with her friend Bette Midler on the historic final taping of "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson." Lewis resides in Los Angeles with her adopted daughter Charmaine and is a relentless supporter and activist for Breast Cancer and HIV/Aids research.

It is rumored Lewis' first words at birth were 'It's showtime'!

KEKE PALMER (Nikki)

Keke Palmer's was most recently in the spotlight after having been nominated for *Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries* for her starring role in the TNT movie "The Wool Cap" alongside William H. Macy. She competed with four of Hollywood's top actresses: Glenn Close, Hilary Swank, Charlize Theron and Patricia Heaton. Palmer, at just 11, is the youngest person ever nominated for a top award and her career has just begun.

She sings and performs with the ease of a seasoned veteran and her face is simply unforgettable. Her parents, Lawrence & Sharon Palmer, are former professional actors who confess that their daughter spent many a late night backstage, in the dressing rooms, orchestra pit and lighting booth of the Chicago Theaters, where they frequently performed during the early 90's.

Her big break came playing "Gina's niece" in "Barber Shop 2: Back in Business" and she got to work alongside one of her idols, Queen Latifah. Palmer later said, "Queen let me sing for her, and she said I was the total package..." Palmer and her family have now relocated from Chicago to California and she most recently booked an episode of the hit CBS series "Cold Case." Palmer will star in the Lionsgate film "Akeelah and the Bee," in theaters April 28, 2006.

CICELY TYSON (Myrtle)

Cicely Tyson's life and career tell a story of personal excellence and profound choices. She is perhaps best known for her performances in roles that not only challenge universal stereotypes, but also raise the consciousness of audiences to our common humanity. This she consciously set out to do in groundbreaking award winning films and television dramas.

In 1962, she became the first black actress to co-star in a television drama series, *EAST SIDE – WEST SIDE*. It was in the role of George C. Scott's secretary, Jane, that Ms. Tyson set the "natural trend" by daring to wear her hair in its natural state and in so doing challenged the soul of African Americans to recognize the beauty in their own hair. In the role of Rebecca, her character in the feature film *SOUNDER*, for which she received an Oscar nomination, she once again validated African American beauty by wearing her hair in cornrow fashion.

A gifted actress, she represents success without compromise. She has been noted as being serious, soul stirring, powerful and majestic with extraordinary range. Over the span of her career, she has defied stereotypes. She sets standards and makes others rise to them. She is self-assured, knowing, and perceptive and has been credited by critics as having helped shape and elevate an entire generation.

All of these attributes have led to her award winning career. Ms. Tyson has received numerous Emmy nominations and received an Emmy for her performance in the role of Castalia in *THE OLDEST CONFEDERATE WIDOW TELLS ALL*, an ACE award for the TV *DOCUDRAMA* on Watts, *HEATWAVE* and holds an unprecedented two Emmys for her performance as Jane, the title character in *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MISS JANE PITTMAN*.

Among some of her other awarded films are, *A WOMAN CALLED MOSES*, *THE MARVA COLLINS STORY*, *THE WOMAN OF BREWSTER PLACE*, *BLESSED ASSURANCE*, *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES*, *KING*, *MAMA FLORA'S FAMILY* and *A LESSON BEFORE DYING*, based on the novel written by Ernest Gaines. Additional recognition of her talent have come from *THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN*, *PUSH*, *SOLO*, *CORE*, *THE MARTIN LUTHER KING CENTER* and a record thirteen Image awards from the NAACP.

Ms. Tyson has served as World Ambassador for UNICEF, calling her attention to the plight of children throughout the world and is currently involved with Save The Children. Along with Arthur Mitchell, its artistic director and actor Brock Peters, Cicely Tyson co-founded The Dance Theater of Harlem. She also co-chaired the first and second National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta with Harry Belafonte.

On the occasion of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Mandela's first visit to America, Cicely Tyson served as Mistress of Ceremony for the tribute to Winnie Mandela held at BAM and was asked by Mayor Bradley to speak at the Tribute to Nelson Mandela in Los Angeles.

At the 1988 economic summit of world leaders in Texas, Ms. Tyson was selected by President Bush, Sr. to serve as Mistress of Ceremony. She was invited by President Carter to perform for President Shagari of Nigeria at a White House dinner and has served on the Kennedy Center Honors Board since his administration.

In 1994, Cicely Tyson co-starred in the TV drama series SWEET JUSTICE and received her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on August 21, 1997.

In 2001, Ms. Tyson was called upon to serve as Mistress of Ceremony for President Clinton's "Welcome to Harlem." She also served as Emcee for the Democratic National Committee's "A Night at the Apollo" fund raiser for voter registration.

In 2003, Cicely Tyson was appointed Commissioner by President George W. Bush, and acknowledged as a driving force in creating the National Museum of African History and Culture which will be located in Washington, D.C.

Her deep concern for young people led her to set aside one month out of the year to communicate with them on campuses, in churches and other organizations across the country. On November 3, 1996, the New Jersey Board of Education unanimously voted to change the name of a public middle school to the Cicely Tyson School of Performing and Fine Arts. Within a year it was expanded to a high school. The school located in East Orange, N.J., has a student body close to 800 primarily underprivileged students. Among her many accolades, Ms. Tyson acknowledges this to be one of the most meaningful and is involved in many aspects of the students' education.

Ms. Tyson believes that in an age of brokenness, self-aggrandizement, polarization and the increasing breakdown of family life, that each one of us is an embodiment of an indomitable life giving spirit and must be involved in some voluntary capacity ministering to the lives of those less fortunate than others. In this regard, over the years, she has solicited, collected and distributed clothing, food and toys to homes and shelters in the New York and New Jersey areas. In January, 2005, she visited Phuket, Thailand, to assist in the planning and rebuilding of an elementary school that was devastated by the Tsunami.

Cicely Tyson is a founding member of CHAA (Coalition for a Healthy and Active America), FuturePac, an organization dedicated to raising funds to support women with political aspirations, and spokesperson for the anti-smoking organization the American Legacy Foundation.

Ms Tyson's latest works "Diary of a Mad Black Woman" and "Because of Winn-Dixie" debuted in first and third place on the list of highest grossing movies of the week.