

“One of the things that kept me out of trouble was doing something creative – creativity can’t be judged.”

Frazer Harrison/Getty Images

Dream ticket

Beyoncé’s role as a pop diva in a sixties group is seemingly a supreme match for unique talents, but acting isn’t every singer’s destiny **Jay Stone**

One of the major releases of last year, which opened on the Oscar-friendly date of late December, was *Dreamgirls*, the movie version of the Broadway musical about a 1960s girl group loosely modelled on the Supremes. It stars Beyoncé Knowles as the lead singer, the Diana Ross character, who left the group for a solo career – just as Beyoncé branched out from her musical group, Destiny’s Child – and took on a second career as an actor – much like Beyoncé is doing in this, her breakthrough film role.

All in all, it sounds as if *Dreamgirls* and Beyoncé are a match made in heaven, one of those coincidences in which Hollywood specializes when it has a rising star to celebrate. It could be the start of superstardom for the latest movie hyphenate, a pop diva-actor who has the voice and the look to become a major force in cinema.

On the other hand, what have you heard from Diana Ross lately?

Movies didn’t always have hyphenates, but they always had singer-actors. Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland and Bing Crosby comfortably succeeded in

both media without one career crashing into the other. Doris Day was a band singer before she became the star of a series of fresh-faced romantic comedies. Dick Powell was a singer-dancer who was instantly accepted as a tough-guy private eye in film.

In the modern era, however, the transition is fraught. Ross won an Oscar nomination for *Lady Sings the Blues*, the role of a lifetime, and then faded. Madonna made a promising start in movies before a series of bad choices turned her into a has-been before her time. J-Lo’s film career had stuttered in tabloid headlines. On the other hand, Barbra Streisand and Cher have had stunning acting careers and rap stars like Ice T and Will Smith have managed the crossover easily.

The life story of Beyoncé Giselle Knowles is a movie of its own. Born 25 years ago in Houston, she started her first singing group at the age of seven – a duo called GirlTyme – and Matthew Knowles, her father, became their manager. GirlTyme eventually became a trio, changed their name to Destiny’s Child, and were discovered, the story goes, by Whitney Houston, another beautiful singer whose promising film career had stuttered. Destiny had taken a hand. Their first album went platinum.

There was trouble in paradise, however; the group changed personnel when the other women thought Matthew was favouring his daughter. By 2003, Beyoncé began a solo career with a series of No. 1 hits, most famously *Crazy in Love*. The Grammys piled up. She started dating rap star Jay-Z.

Around that time, she also started looking at the big screen. Following her appearance on a TV adaptation of the opera *Carmen*, called *Carmen: A Hip Hopera* (are you sure Dick Powell started this way?) she was cast as Foxy Cleopatra in *Austin Powers in Goldmember*. It was a small role, but it showcased her beauty, her charisma, and her need to take acting lessons: She was on the short list for a Razzie Award as Worst Supporting Actress. She took a safer road in the Steve



DESTINY’S CHILD: KELLY ROWLAND, BEYONCÉ AND MICHELLE WILLIAMS

Kevin Winter/Getty Images

m a r c h

03

Donald Trump, attacked by wind, feels vindicated; it’s not a hairpiece!

Frazer Harrison/Getty Images



05

Oscar comes easy for *It’s Hard Out There for a Pimp* by **Three 6 Mafia**, the first hip-hop act to be honoured by the Academy.



07

Five million DVD copies of **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire** are sold in one day.

Warner Bros



14

Media outlets pick up a prank press release claiming **Will Ferrell** died in a freak paragliding incident. He is informed of his death while filming in Montreal.

Michael Buckner/Getty Images

24

Stuff Magazine readers would rather go camping with Saddam Hussein than **Tom Cruise**.

27

Morrissey joins **Heather and Paul McCartney** in boycotting Canada over its annual seal hunt.

28

Cleveland boycotts **Pamela Anderson** over her PETA TV commercial.

Mark Mainz/Getty Images



30

In the third such incident, boxing enthusiast **Naomi Campbell** is arrested for allegedly assaulting her assistant.

Most Tiresome Tabloid Targets: Tom Cruise, Katie Holmes, Oprah Winfrey’s Couch, the Eiffel Tower, and “Tom’s Baby” (Razzies); **Richest Rock Stars of 2006:** U2 (Rolling Stone); **Top Toy of All Time:** Hula Hoop (VH1); **Most Profane Film of the Year:** Crash (Family Media Guide); **Unluckiest in Love:** Jennifer Aniston (thedoghouse.com)



Vitals

Date of birth: Sept. 4, 1981

Place of birth: Houston, Tex.

Family: Father Matthew Knowles managed Destiny's Child; mother Tina Knowles designed their costumes; sister Solange is a singer and actress.

Paramour: Rapper Jay-Z.

With a voice: Five-octave vocal range.

Alter ego: Sasha. "When I feel uncomfortable about something, I tell myself, 'I'm Sasha, I'm a diva, I'm fierce, I can do it.' And then I can."

Career highlights

Early years: Won more than 30 local singing and dancing competitions.

1998: Destiny's Child rises to fame with Top-10 hit No, No, No Part 2.

2001: Destiny's Child wins two Grammys for Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals and Best R&B Song for Say My Name.

2001: Stars in the MTV TV movie Carmen: A Hip Hopera.

2002: Plays Foxy Cleopatra opposite Mike Myers in Austin Powers in Goldmember.

2003: Releases debut solo album, Dangerously in Love.

2004: Wins a record-tying five Grammys, including Best Female R&B Vocal Performance and Best Contemporary R&B Album.

2004: One of People Magazine's 50 Most Beautiful People for most wanted lips.

2005: Destiny's Child receives World Music Award for the biggest-selling girl group of all time with record sales of over 50 million.

2005: Destiny's Child disbands.

2006: Wins Songwriter of the Year Award from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers Pop Music Awards.

2006: Releases B'Day. In its first week, the album sells more than 540,000 copies in the U.S. and goes to No. 1.

2006: Plays Deena Jones – the Diana Ross-based character in the film Dreamgirls.

Selected discography

Destiny's Child (Destiny's Child) – 1998

The Writing's on the Wall (Destiny's Child) – 1999

Survivor (Destiny's Child) – 2001

8 Days of Christmas (Destiny's Child) – 2001

This is the Remix (Destiny's Child) – 2002

Dangerously in Love (solo) – 2003

Destiny Fulfilled (Destiny's Child) – 2004

Live at Wembley (solo) – 2004

#1's (Destiny's Child) – 2005

B'Day (solo) – 2006

Selected filmography

Carmen: A Hip Hopera – 2001

Austin Powers in Goldmember – 2002

The Fighting Temptations – 2003

Fade to Black – 2004

The Pink Panther – 2006

Dreamgirls – 2006



KPAZUMA/KEystone Press

DREAMGIRLS: ANIKA NONI ROSE, BEYONCÉ AND JENNIFER HUDSON

Martin remake of The Pink Panther; her character, the movie's love interest, is a singer and most of Beyoncé's scenes are on the comfort of the stage.

Her personal life – which can make or break careers in this paparazzi age – is as clean as most, although she angered the animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals because she uses fur in her clothing line, and she posed for the cover photograph of the album Ring The Alarm with a baby alligator whose mouth had been taped shut. "He was upset, so he peed on me," Beyoncé revealed (can't remember Doris Day saying anything like that) causing PETA to complain about animal abuse.

That will be forgotten, though, if she can take Dreamgirls to box-office glory. The movie will be the real test: is she Diana Ross or is she Judy Garland? The singer herself sees the role as a stretch rather than a casting trick.

"Initially I was afraid audiences would think this is my life story," she told the New

York Times. "But I don't see myself at all in this performance, which is exactly what I wanted." Beyoncé has shown she can be Beyoncé; Dreamgirls will tell us who else she can be.

Jay Stone is the Ottawa-based national movie writer for CanWest News Service.

TOP-EARNING DEAD CELEBRITIES IN 2006 (IN U.S. DOLLARS)

Kurt Cobain - \$50 million

Elvis Presley - \$42 million

Charles M. Schulz,
Peanuts creator - \$35 million

John Lennon - \$24 million

Albert Einstein - \$20 million

Andy Warhol - \$19 million

Dr. Seuss (Theodor Geisel) - \$10 million

Ray Charles - \$10 million

Marilyn Monroe - \$8 million

Johnny Cash - \$8 million

J.R.R. Tolkien - \$7 million

George Harrison - \$7 million

Bob Marley - \$7 million

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