Annual Heroes Awards brings music stars to Atlanta

By Meg Monaco
Contributing Writer

In a pseudo-stylish event last Thursday, June 5, the Atlanta chapter of the Recording Academy hosted the Second Annual Heroes Awards. The Heroes Award is the highest honor given by an Academy chapter and is given to honor outstanding individuals and institutions in the Atlanta region that have improved the environment for the creative community.

Hosted by Backstreet Boy Brian Littrell and his model/actress wife Leighanne Wallace, this year’s Heroes Awards honored seven outstanding contributors to the music scene and their communities.

Held on the eighth floor of the Westin Peachtree Plaza, the event was fairly low key. All of the press waited in a ballroom suite while the various respective celebrities and honorees showed up for interviews and photo opportunities with the press and other honorees. The honorees did not show up in Jennifer Lopez-esque ball gowns, the security was very minimal, and to the average Atlantan hanging around in the lobby that afternoon, nothing would have seemed out of the ordinary.

Surely few, if any of them, knew that the Godfather of Soul was strutting around upstairs, and that if they had gone up a few flights, they would have seen Chilli and T-Boz of TLC charting with reporters by the elevators.

The Heroes Awards was not about glamour, however, and these musicians were not there as celebrities, but as people who are trying to make a difference in the lives of the underprivileged and underappreciated people of the Atlanta region.

Interestingly, the most recognizable face there was that of James Brown. He is one of the most sampled artists to date, has received more honors and awards than any artist in music history, and has had 17 singles reach the number one spot on Billboard’s R&B charts. He is a charter member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and he received a Lifetime Achievement GRAMMY Award in 1992.

He was honored as a hero for his contributions to the world of academia by mentoring neighborhood kids on the importance of staying in school and by giving away college scholarships.

The remaining members of TLC were there to accept awards for themselves and their late group member Lisa “Left Eye” Lopes, who was killed in a car accident last year. Tionne “T-Boz” Watkins and Rozonda “Chilli” Thomas just released their fourth album, and the group has sold over 27 million albums and 9 million singles worldwide in the past decade.

TLC is also known for supporting a number of social causes, including raising funds to help fight sickle cell anemia (with which T-Boz is afflicted), promoting safe sex (particularly among teenagers), and starting a scholarship fund in honor of Lopes.

Leslie Fram from 99X’s show “The Morning X” received an award from the Academy on behalf of her charity work for Breast Cancer Awareness for the Young Survival Coalition, Brain Tumor Foundation for Children, Samaritan House of Atlanta, Angel Flight of Georgia, Grady Pediatric AIDS program, Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network.

Among the night’s honorees at the Annual Heroes Awards held last week at the Westin Peachtree in Atlanta were James Brown, Leslie Fram and the remaining members of TLC, T-Boz, Watkins and Rozonda “Chilli” Thomas.

Melting Pot offers sizzling entrees

By Vivan Vakil
Entertainment Editor

Name: The Melting Pot
Address: 857 Collier Rd NW
Atlanta, GA 30318
Phone: (877) 651-7242
Website: www.meltingpotatlanta.com
Cuisine: Fondue
Price: $$$
Rating: 4 stars out of 5

The Melting Pot, situated conveniently close to Tech on Collier Road near the Howell Mill Kroger, is everything one imagines a romantic dinner spot to be. It is quaint, dimly lit, set within an intimate atmosphere and has a dining style where closeness is a requirement.

Upon entering The Melting Pot, you will immediately notice the professional staff and prompt service. All the tables in the restaurant seem to be set reasonably apart from one another and although the tables may seem large and bulky, the dim atmosphere and positioning of the booths create an intimate experience.

Before embarking on an explanation of The Melting Pot’s exquisite and diverse menu, it is necessary to give a brief synopsis of fondue, the main theme of the restaurant.

For those that are unfamiliar, fondue is a mode of dining in which a large pot filled with a hot substance is used for dipping and/or cooking the food that it is to be eaten.

At the Melting Pot, the fondue experience is a four-course process.

For the appetizer, you are given a choice of cheddar cheese, traditional Swiss cheese, Swiss cheese or fiesta cheese fondue. You are also provided with fresh vegetables, fruits and breads to dip into your fondue of choice. My suggestion would be the cheddar cheese fondue. I have tasted all four, and unless you have a hankering bitter taste. Along with this traditional Swiss, keep in mind that it certainly not to be missed. Nine different types of chocolate fondue are certainly not to be missed. Nine different types of chocolate fondue are offered, each scrumptious-sounding in its own respect.

Examples include the flaming tulip fondue, which is comprised of milk, chocolate, caramel, and chopped pecans. Yin and yang boasts half dark and half white chocolate, and there is even a chocolate mores fondue.

You are provided with such luscious desserts as brownies, strawberries, pound cake, marshmallows, and graham crackers to dip into your selected chocolate batter.

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Off the field changes

Changes should be on the way for the Athletic Association’s Academic Services due partly to last month’s football mishaps. Page 15
work (RAINN), Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (GCAPP), Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Fund, Noah’s Ark and Camp Sunshine, among others. Fram is also the Director of Programming Susquehanna Atlanta overseeing the Programming Departments for both WNNX (99X) and WWWQ (Q100).

The final recipients were Fred and Dinah Gretsch, president and first lady of Gretsch Company, makers of fine guitars and drums since 1883. The Savannah based company is respected around the world for its beautifully crafted and innovative instruments that have been played by the likes of Chet Atkins, George Harrison, Brian Setzer, Phil Collins, Bo Diddley, Neil Young and many others.

The Gretsches were major sponsors of the Georgia Music Hall of Fame two years before the museum opened, were early contributors to the Save the Music Foundation and regularly contribute musical instruments to nationwide charity auctions that benefit education. Fred is on the Board of Trustees for Loyola High School in New York City and a member of the Advisory Board for the Salvation Army in Savannah.

Dinah devotes her time as a member of Savannah West Rotary Club and supports children’s programs at Royce Center, St. Jude Children’s Hospital, International Child Outreach and the Rotary Foundation. The Recording Academy is a nonprofit organization of 18,000 musicians, producers and other recording professionals. It is best known for the GRAMMY Awards but is also responsible for numerous outreach programs involving education, human services and cultural enrichment. All proceeds benefited the Academy’s professional arts education programs for the music community of the Atlanta region, and a portion went to the MusiCares Foundation — the Recording Academy’s health and human services charity.

The highlights of the evening were performances by Brian Littrell, Kelly Price, Cee-lo and Joi and appearances by the celebrities’ spouses and families as well as Shawn Mullins, Jermaine Dupreé and the oh-so-lively Bo Diddley, who shared with a CNN reporter his views on the war with Iraq and the Bush administration, and later sang to me a few lines from a new song he has been working on, “You ain’t got nothing I want, you ain’t got nothing I need…so why don’t you just leave!” Not the greeting I expected, but at least I got a picture and the opportunity to meet music’s finest.

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