



Rhythm & Blues

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Yolanda Gets Busy

A Contemporary Gospel Icon's Active Agenda

Yolanda Adams is enjoying a little R&R. But in this particular instance, R&R stands for revamping and revitalizing.

Those are the words manager **Kevin Evans** (a former gospel music label executive) uses to describe the career strategy that he and her attorney **Christopher Brown** began devising for Adams six months ago. Since then, the contemporary gospel icon has launched a syndicated morning show, signed a multiple-album deal with Columbia Records, entered a publishing pact with Rondor Music Publishing for her Jam Yo Music, and will bow her own clothing line, Yolanda's Clozet, in June (Billboard, May 19).

Born out of Adams' desire to spend more time with her 6-year-old daughter, her 3-month-old morning show is syndicated via Radio One and the Yolanda Adams Radio Network. Originating from Radio One's Houston station KRO1-FM, the five-hour show features co-host **Larry Jones** and is executive-produced by **D.C.** Currently heard in 11 markets including Raleigh, N.C.; Cleve-

land; Philadelphia; and Atlanta, the show will add five more markets within the next 30 days, says Adams, who has a degree in radio/TV journalism.

Exiting from Atlantic with the release of a "Greatest Hits" album earlier this month, Adams says the move to Columbia is similar to what happened to her at Elektra under former label boss **Sylvia Rhone**.

"Sylvia was very instrumental in my making the transition from gospel artist in a box to inspirational artist recognized across the nation," Adams says. "And it's the same idea here with [Columbia chairman] **Steve Barnett**. He's a fan and wants to get my music out to more people, really concentrating on enhancing my presence in the international market."

Right now she's collaborating with **Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis** ("There's some kind of magic that happens when we get together") on an October-slated Christmas album to be followed by a new studio album in 2008. Also working with her on the Columbia side is senior VP of A&R **Kawan "KP" Prather**.

With the help of Rondor Music senior VP

of urban **Kevin Hall**, Adams entered her first music publishing deal. "The ball would get dropped, the discussion wouldn't go any further or there was no interest," the singer/songwriter says as to why this hadn't happened earlier. "But now I've been given the chance."

Yolanda's Clozet, which caters to taller women, bows online in June. The line of T-shirts (from sloganized \$35 designs to \$150 Swarovski crystal-decorated styles), jeans (\$70-\$350) and other items will then be available at Macy's and Bloomingdale's stores.

Adams is also training her sights on writing and presenting empowerment seminars. She and her team are negotiating with McGraw-Hill to pen a PowerPoint book series slated to bow in 2008. Dedicated

to different audience segments (i.e., single women, businesswomen, single dads, teens), the books will offer various life-improving empowerment tips.

She plans to take her show on the road, hosting special fitness weekends that are a spinoff from her twice-daily "Witness Fitness Mix." A Visa card featuring Adams' likeness that Evans says will be available to consumers in July/August is on the R&R drawing board, too—as are a major tour, acting roles, endorsement opportunities and writing music for TV/film projects as well as other artists.

"I'm busy with a purpose," Adams says of what lies ahead. "This is the time in my career to find smarter ways to work."



ADAMS

NEWBURY: COURTESY OF NEWBURY COMICS; OSBOURNE: ROGER RICH

T-PAIN: ANTHONY CUTAJAR; ADAMS: ARNOLD TURNER/WIREIMAGE.COM