

CELEBRITY
WATCH

WHO DO YOU TRUST?

Not Jane, Ludacris or
Whitney, that's for sure.

WHAT THE WORLD'S BEEN WAITING for: scientific analysis of how stars stack up in the collective consciousness. Davie-Brown Entertainment surveyed 1.5 million regular joes to create the Davie-Brown Index, rating stars on factors like appeal, trustworthiness and ability to influence trends. Businesses pay 20 grand to access DBI's database; we asked for a (free) peek at how Atlantans rank. Jane Fonda is the most famous (183 compared to Paris Hilton at 229) but one of the least trustworthy. Almost everyone (92 percent) knows who Whitney is, but no one likes, trusts, listens to or wants to be her.



Appeal Trust Influence

Jane Fonda	60.2	49.3	51.9
Whitney Houston	55.5	40.5	48.4
Jeff Foxworthy	78.2	64.2	66.1
Ted Turner	55.8	47.4	51.5
Usher	68.2	58.8	69.5
Michael Vick	67.7	55.6	65.1
Chipper Jones	70.7	59.2	60.6
Ludacris	61.8	50.5	60.9
Andre Benjamin	78.5	64.1	71.6
Andruw Jones	72.1	56.8	59.0

SOURCE: DAVIE-BROWN

OUR★TOWN

MEDIA MATTERS

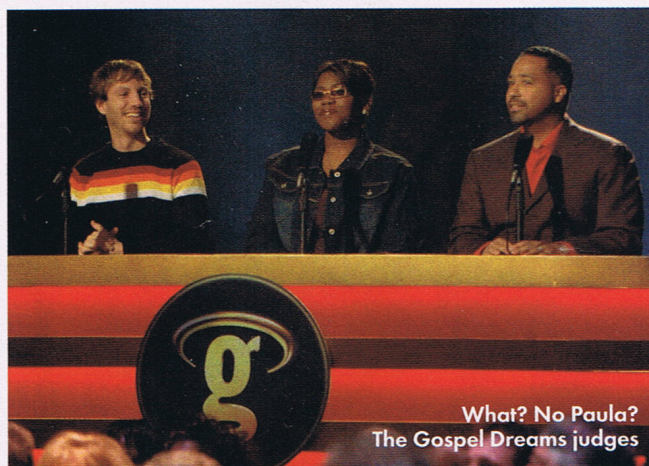
WHAT WOULD SIMON SAY?

An Atlanta-based
network helps would-be
stars pursue their
GOSPEL dreams.

By Chandra R. Thomas

AMERICAN IDOL MAY HAVE wrapped season five, but another musical search is underway—a competition for crooners whose musical tastes swing more toward Kirk Franklin than, say, Kelly Clarkson. These contenders aren't concerned with impressing an infamous judge named Simon, but are focused instead on offending a more combative force: Satan.

Starting this month, hopefuls are lining up in seven cities across the country—including Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Kansas City—for a chance at, shall we say, answering a higher calling, courtesy of a new season of *Gospel Dream*, a reality television show where singers compete for a gospel recording contract. The show is the centerpiece of Atlanta-based Gospel Music Channel, the country's first 24-hour, all-music television network



What? No Paula?
The Gospel Dreams judges

devoted to gospel and Christian music. Think MTV with morals. VH-1 with virtues. BET *without* blasphemy.

"Gospel music is a billion dollar industry, and, until now, it was the only major genre that did not have its own 24-hour network,"

explains Alvin Williams, the network's director of music industry development.

"Atlanta is a great place to launch this effort because of the diversity of artists here and the proximity to Nashville, where a lot of gospel artists are based."

Launched in 2004 by cable industry veterans Charles Humbard, previously of Discovery, and Brad Siegel, former

president of Turner Broadcasting, the Gospel Music Channel, broadcast locally on Comcast channel 189, now reaches more than 4 million subscribers in 75 markets and 1,300 cities, offering 100 hours of original programming, including *Hype & Glory*, a hip-hop gospel countdown show; *Faith and Fame*, an artist biography series; and a concert series that includes *Gospel Angels*, a Hurricane Katrina relief effort. The network recently beat out the National Geographic Channel and Scripps' Do-It-Yourself Network in a consumer study that ranked it tops in making an emotional connection with viewers.

And how does *Dream* compare to *Idol*? There's a national talent search, semi-finals (held

TIDBIT
Gospel music represents sales of more than \$1 billion annually, and there are 80 million gospel radio listeners nationwide.

in Atlanta), then televised performances in front of an audience. Viewers don't get to vote, but a panel of judges duke it out, and a quirky host (self-described "gospel comedian" Jonathan Slocumb) adds comic relief. But the show's creator insists that this is not merely a false *Idol*.

"We're actually an outlet for a lot of *American Idol* rejects," quips Elvin Ross, a New Orleans native living in Buckhead since Hurricane Katrina. "They aren't allowed to sing Christian songs on that show. We're giving these contestants the freedom to be who they are. Think about all of the talent that has come out of the church, like Aretha Franklin."

When the series airs this fall, don't expect to see any pouty-lipped, bootylicious, midriff-top-wearing model types gyrating before the camera, but do expect some exceptional singing. "We haven't really had any scandals with the contestants," adds Ross. "We did have a contestant who had a lot of piercings, but she also had a pure voice. The judges debated about her until one of them finally said, 'She's singing the Lord's music. How can you turn your back on that?'" ❖

This Date
in History

JUNE 12,
1936

Notoriously
cranky
"Georgia Peach"
Ty Cobb
became the first
player inducted
into the Baseball
Hall of Fame.

OUR★TOWN

TEST DRIVE

CLUTTER BUSTING

What's it like to
ask a total stranger to
clear out your **JUNK**?

Oddly therapeutic.

By Chandra R. Thomas

EVERY ADDICT RECALLS A rock-bottom moment. Mine came when, while on deadline, I attempted to retrieve something from the printer down the hall and, in my haste, tripped on the mountain of paper on my office floor and lost my footing, nearly falling over the trash bin perched next to my desk.

It was as if a higher power screamed, "Hey, Chandra, here's the TRASH CAN... you know, where you THROW STUFF AWAY!" I glanced around. Creative minds are known to be a bit untidy, but this was ridiculous. On my desk, stacks of paper spilled in every direction; piles of business cards teetered by the computer; goofy toys, used flower vases and case-less CDs marked the perimeter. The shelf in the corner overflowed with magazines and newspapers stacked in no particular



order. Post-It notes were everywhere. Somewhere in the mess was my gym bag and stacks of fast-food restaurant napkins.

The time had come to seek professional help. Armed with a referral from my colleague, Virginia (who admitted magazine staffers were considering an "intervention"), I made a call to organization expert Monica Ricci.

As Johnnie Cochran was to defense, Monica is to de-cluttering. She runs Atlanta-based Catalyst Organizing, appears on HGTV's *Mission: Organization* and penned the

book *Organize Your Office in No Time*.

She asked a few questions: What are my major issues and how would I rate my clutter problem? "A 10—definitely a 10," I said. After all, the first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem, right?

Monica was polite when we met a few days later. We exchanged pleasantries, but one glance around my office and she brusquely said, "Let's get to work."

She put things in piles in the hall, with sticky notes above each stack labeled, "bring home," "donate," "file," etc. She forced me to scrutinize

Go to
atlantamagazine.com
for tips on how to better
execute your own
clutter cleansing.