

In the Know

A LOOK AT THE WEEK AHEAD

Tribute Concerts Head to Retailers

The fruits of unprecedented cooperative efforts among the major record companies and television and cable networks will arrive in record stores starting Tuesday, when the all-star double-CD "The Concert for New York City" is released by Columbia Records. That was the Oct. 20 concert at Madison Square Garden, a collaborative effort among VH1, Cablevision, Miramax and America Online whose lineup included Paul McCartney, the Who, David Bowie, Elton John, Destiny's Child and Billy Joel.

A week later comes "America: A Tribute to Heroes," a two-disc set from Interscope packed with rock luminaries including Bruce Springsteen, U2, Stevie Wonder, Alicia Keys, Dave Matthews, Dixie Chicks and Wyckl' Jean. The performances are from the Sept. 21 telethon shown on 35 U.S. broadcast and cable networks, including ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox. It was also carried over the Internet, on 8,000 radio stations, on the Armed Forces Network and on TV outlets in more than 200 countries. (DVD and video versions come out the same day, with the DVD-video release of "The Concert for New York City" still pending.)

"We've been getting a lot of requests from customers for both records, so we're anticipating



Paul McCartney

very big things for both," says Wherehouse Entertainment senior pop buyer Bob Bell. Although both should be shoo-ins for Top 10 debuts on the sales chart, "America: A Tribute to Heroes" figures to have stronger sales initially, according to Bell. "That one certainly had a high profile, being the week after Sept. 11 and airing on multiple [television networks] simultaneously."

Competition from other major fall releases shouldn't be a big factor on these benefit albums. "They'll pretty much be in a class by themselves," Bell says. "I know all the retailers will be supporting them. I don't think the record companies are worrying about how they do versus other releases. I think everybody is doing them for the right reasons."

Forster Polishes His New 'Diamond'

Pictures often survive or die by word of mouth, and Robert Forster is hoping his new film will attract some attention. Since his Oscar nomination for best supporting actor in "Jackie Brown," Forster has, he says, done some "really nice stuff" that stands in stark contrast with many of his previous roles.

"I've stopped doing bad guys," Forster said. "I got stuck doing those kinds of roles in 'The Delta Force' [in 1986] and couldn't get a good-guy role for another 13 years." Forster has recently been seen in films as diverse as the Farrelly brothers' raunchy comedy "Me, Myself and Irene," David Mamet's new drama "Lakeboat" and the David Lynch mystery "Mulholland Dr."



Robert Forster

small-time traveling jewelry salesman named Eddie Miller (Forster) who clings to his job by breaking in a brash young replacement, Bobby Walker (the feature debut of Donnie Wahlberg, brother of actor Mark Wahlberg). The film also features Bess Armstrong, Jasmine Guy and George Coe.

Forster said "Diamond Men," which opened in Washington, D.C., the weekend before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the East Coast, has received such strong reviews that the backers are attempting an Oscar push. "Word of mouth seems to be really, really strong," Forster said.

'Schwartz' Faces Tough Challenge

After being benched all month, "Inside Schwartz" returns to NBC's lineup Thursday, making what amounts to a last-ditch run for the latest occupant of the post-"Friends" time slot.

In familiar fashion, the new sitcom—about a young man (Breckin Meyer) whose fantasies play out in cameos by sports figures—has struggled to retain the "Friends" audience, losing roughly 40% of those watching the long-running hit to CBS' "Survivor: Africa."



Breckin Meyer

In partial defense of "Schwartz," the only thing NBC has found that reliably keeps "Friends" viewers is more "Friends," with the network inserting reruns of the show at 8:30 during sweeps (which ends Wednesday). Moreover, a test of another new NBC comedy, "Scrubs," fared no better after "Friends" a few weeks ago, although the series has received a warmer reception from critics than "Schwartz."

With both "Schwartz" and "Emeril" preempted this month

and looking shaky, the expectation is that NBC will make some scheduling changes in January, though the network also intends to hold back a few new series until March to capitalize on the promotional platform the Winter Olympics will provide in February. Whatever NBC's plans, "Schwartz" will need to exhibit more promise over the next few weeks if its sports-fan protagonist wants to see the Olympic torch lit.

Liz Smith

Ex Predicts New Mrs. Cruise

NEW YORK—Tom Cruise will marry his current girlfriend, Penélope Cruz, or so his first wife, Mimi Rogers, seems to believe. At a recent L.A. party given by music maven Norby Walters at the Beverly Hills Friars Club, Mimi unburdened herself with this remark: "Knowing Tom, it will be sooner than later."

That should be interesting. Tom and Penélope's last names are, after all, homophones—words that sound the same.

There were as many stars as MGM used to say were in the heavens at this annual "Norby" holiday dinner—George Segal, Tony Danza, Gary Busey, Judd Nelson, John Savage, Loni Anderson, Marilu Henner,

Sharon Gless, Connie Stevens, Charles Durning, Ed Begley Jr., Robert Forster, Carol Channing, Hector Elizondo, Sally Kirkland, Amanda Plummer, Anne Jeffreys, Stefanie Powers—and even more!

John Stamos and Aussie beauty **Melissa George** were doing their stealing right in the Le Meridien Hotel on La Cienega Boulevard the other day: There was a long shoot for their ABC one-hour drama series, "Thieves." They play masterminds coerced into illegal acts on behalf of Uncle Sam. The Oscar-winning **Arnie** and **Anne** Kopelar produce this modern-day cross between "Moonlighting" and "Hart to Hart," which airs Fridays.

Insight Within Arm's Reach

The images in the works of Enrique Martínez Celaya invite examination of the interior world.

Art Review

By LEAH OLLMAN
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

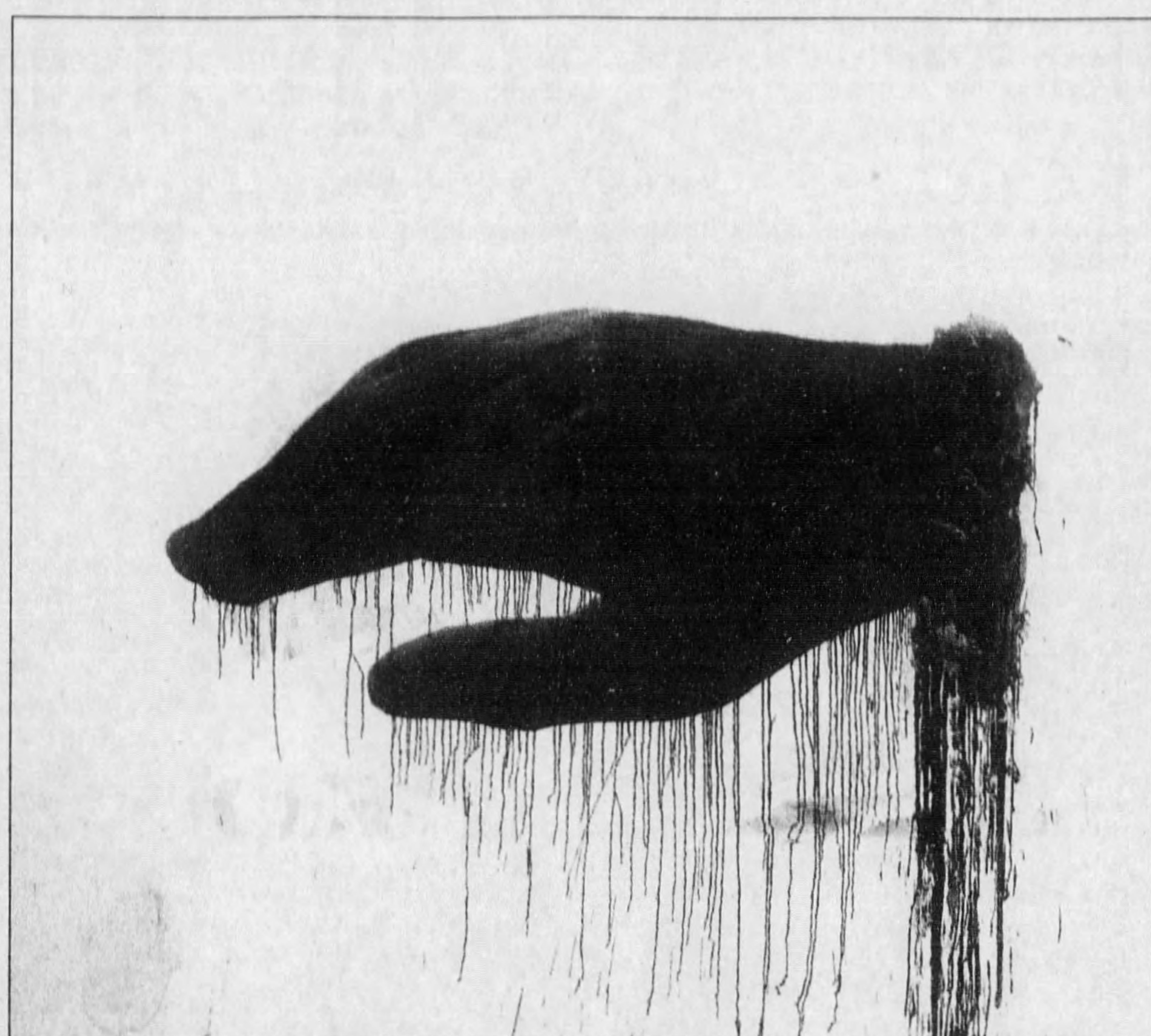
What might it mean that the figures in Enrique Martínez Celaya's work rarely meet our gaze? Their eyes are usually closed, and sometimes articulated among their other features. Steeped in solitude and immersed in profound reckonings with the self, these figures cannot connect with our gaze because theirs is turned entirely inward. We, reflexively, turn inward too. And by the end of Martínez Celaya's absorbing show at the Orange County Museum of Art, that same rich and unforgiving solitude has taken us over.

The show, organized by James Jensen for the Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, surveys a decade of the Los Angeles artist's work, from 1992 to the present. Painting, drawing, photography, sculpture—Martínez Celaya has tremendous facility with them all, singly and in combination. His reach is even broader than the show reveals, for he has also published several books of poetry and done graduate work in physics. His is a remarkably agile sensibility, ever attempting to articulate the nature of being.

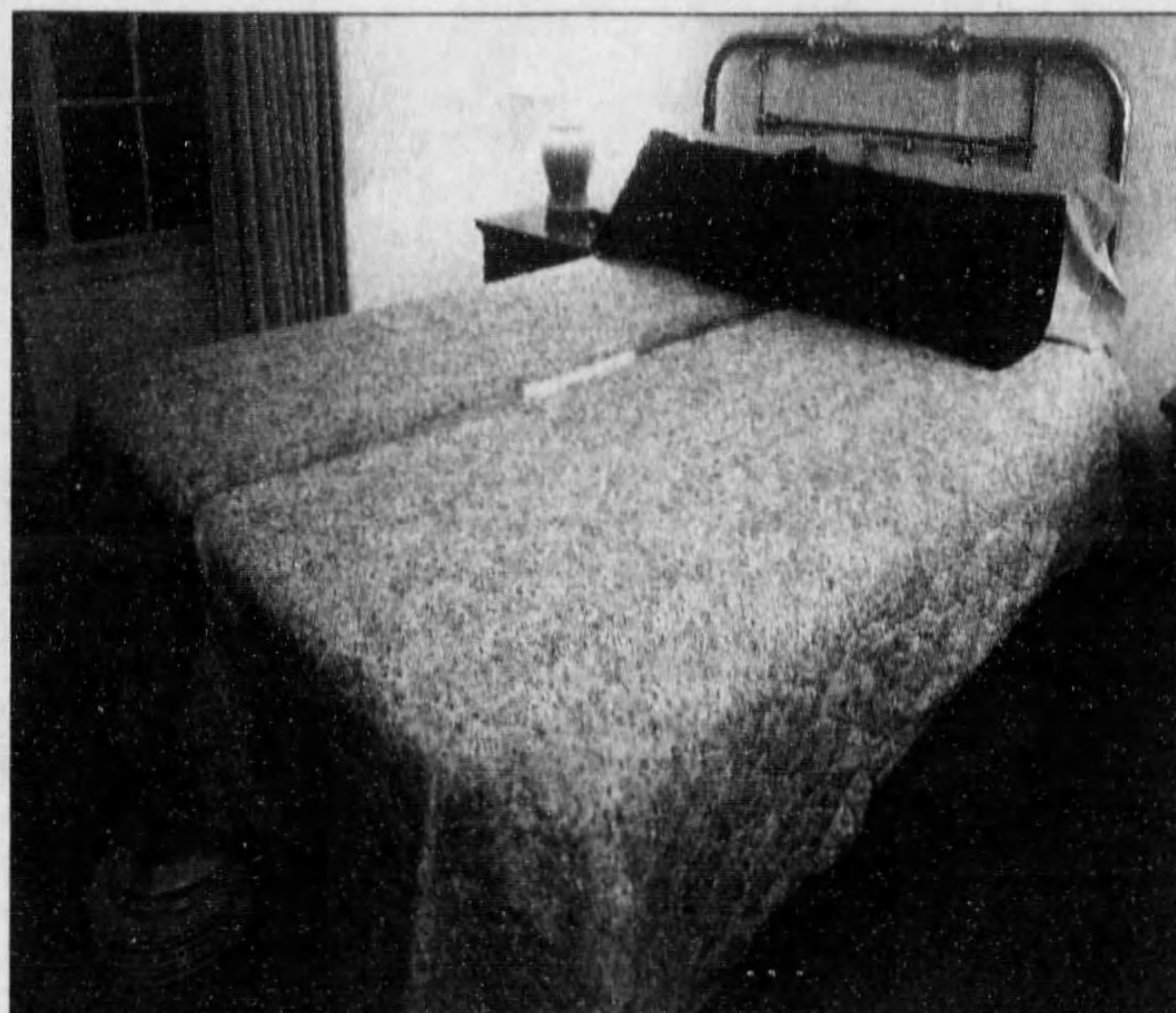
Titles of many of the works refer to physical and emotional conditions: longing, tiredness, redemption, renunciation, fragility, return, possibility, remembering, mercy. Martínez Celaya doesn't venture to illustrate or externalize these states as much as he conjures up forms around them, the way sound frames silence.

"Pena (Sorrow)" (1997-99), a single large hand dominates the canvas. Rivulets of burnt brown paint drip from the slightly curled fingers, stilled in mid-reach. Martínez Celaya ends the hand at the wrist. Just where it would normally link to the arm, it hovers, disconnected. Reinforcing that disjunction are objects adhered to the canvas, objects that reek of loss and the past: flower petals, baby shoes and dried leaves, relics encrusted in tar.

"Bed (the Creek)" (1997) consists of an actual double bed, neatly made with two sets of pillows and an ivory embroidered spread. The picture of domestic security is complicated, though, by a shallow trough, a resin-lined dip in the covers, that runs down the center of the bed. A steady stream of clear water flows through this "creek" to the bed's foot, where it splashes into a cooking pot that sits atop a stack of dinner plates. Is the water a life-force, a nourishing



The striking "Pena (Sorrow)," of oil, tar and objects on canvas, conveys a sense of disconnectedness.



In "Bed (the Creek)," a trough of water trickles down a double bed.



"Unbroken Poetry (Herman Melville)" portrays one of Martínez Celaya's typical solitary beings.

fluid that vitalizes, cleanses, regenerates? Or is the creek divisive, forging a rift in the marital bed?

Martínez Celaya's work resists explanation more than most, because it resonates with quiet—with an interiority that defies language. Most writing about his work, including the essays in the show's beautifully designed catalog, consists mostly of talking around it, cluttering its silence.

There is, in fact, a good deal of physical emptiness in the work, particularly in the paintings. A few primary motifs—hummingbirds, birch trees, flower petals and fragmented body parts—float within undefined, placeless spaces. White, black and brown predominate, and often the emotionally charged color of dried blood. Martínez Celaya creates sometimes

breathtakingly beautiful objects, whether photographs that engage that medium's indexical relationship to material reality; resin body casts, which correspond more directly to the physical world; or paintings, with their own emblematic grammar. Considering his focus on ineffable essences and intangible conditions, those objects have stunning physical presence.

The work does nestle into a visual tradition, however. The string of small lights around an early painting echoes installations by Christian Boltanski. The surfaces encrusted with dark debris bring to mind Anselm Kiefer, and the use of aerial, mapping lines recalls the work of Guillermo Kuitca—all of whom are equally attuned to issues of memory and the interiorization of history. Martínez Celaya

wanders among influences the way he eases among media, his internal compass remaining strong.

He's had plenty of practice with geographic moves. Born in Cuba in 1964, he moved to Spain at age 7, then to Puerto Rico, and attended universities (Cornell, UC Berkeley and UC Santa Barbara) on both U.S. coasts. Since 1996, he's lived in Venice.

The sense of displacement that permeates his work corresponds, naturally, to his experience of geographic exile, but also to something more primal—an utter solitude, an unfulfilled longing, an incompleteness. Martínez Celaya composes in what writer André Aciman calls "the key of loss." Just as his work is physically spare but emotionally dense, so is it steeped in absence and yet a model of deeply reflective presence, of turning inward, eyes fixed on the soul.

Orange County Museum of Art, 850 San Clemente Drive, Newport Beach, (949) 759-1122, through Feb. 3. Closed Mondays.

Mellow Romance From Vandross

Pop Music Review

By STEVE APPLEFORD
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Luther Vandross likes to sing of his love reaching to the moon and the stars, yet he's a romantic who keeps his distance. He's a smooth operator with a voice of genuine power and personality, but whose chosen approach is R&B at its softest and, generally, its least revealing.

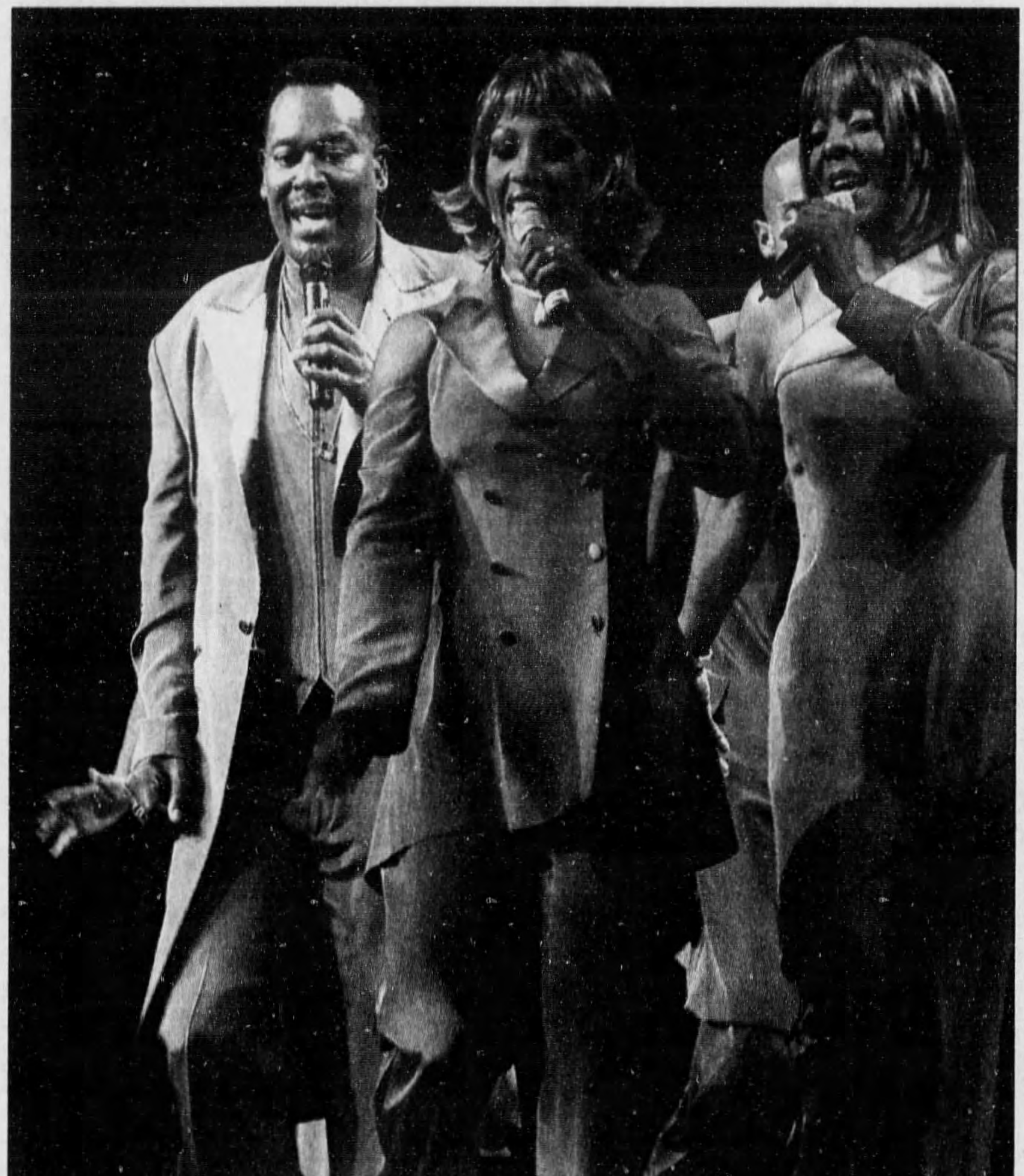
Though Vandross began his recording in the '70s doing session work for such artists as David Bowie and Chaka Khan, the New York native epitomizes the glossy sound of '80s R&B. And that's what he offered at the Universal Amphitheatre on Friday, the first of two dates at the venue. He is still more romantic crooner than passionate soul stirrer.

This approach sets him apart from his competition in the new generation of R&B singers, many of whom draw inspiration from the monumental '70s work of Al Green, Curtis Mayfield and Marvin Gaye. In a genre now defined by the smoldering voices of Maxwell, Bilal or Alicia Keys, the music of Vandross sounds more conservative than ever.

It's not a matter of age, but style. While these younger singers mix traditional soul with an awareness of hip-hop, Vandross ignores both. His music contains elements of gospel and jazz, but he first conquered the charts at the moment mainstream R&B lost the funk, trading feeling for studio technique—a change that left such a void that the rise of hip-hop was almost inevitable.

On Friday, Vandross' music was agreeable, easily digestible romantic pop. Though he did cut loose with the occasional dance step and discreetly towed the sweat from his face, his manner was always controlled. That worked to his advantage when married to elegant melodies, as in his performance of the moving epic, "Superstar/Until You Come Back to Me (That's What I'm Gonna Do)," and less so elsewhere.

Vandross performed for more than two hours with a comforting ease, and his songs



Luther Vandross, with backup singers, croons in his signature R&B/pop style.

benefited from the warmth of his six-man band and five backup singers. The absence of studio gloss was especially welcome when he was unexpectedly joined by Gregory Hines for their 1987 hit, "There's Nothing Better Than Love," and during "Can Heaven Wait," a song from his new, self-titled album that balanced acoustic guitar with a voice filled with regret.

The singer, whose new collection on Clive

Davis' J Records has sold more than 800,000 copies, was a pleasant, even playful host, joking about forgetting a bass player at a highway rest stop or recounting a recent concert where a couple of newlyweds were invited onstage to be serenaded with his 1989 hit "Here and Now."

"They loved it—because I only charged them \$75," he said with a grin. "I'm not that sentimental."