

themix

tangi miller
hell-bent on acting

"My mother referred to television as 'hellivision,'" recalls actor Tangi Miller, 27, who faced "no TV or dancing" restrictions in her stern, religious household. Today the Miami native still won't accept just any part: "I have no interest in doing certain roles now because of my upbringing and fear of going to hell." Landing the role of



Hammer time: Miller with actor Romany Malco.

strong-willed coed Elena Tyler on WB's *Felicity* was a godsend for Miller, as was the role of Stephanie Burrell, wife of rapper-turned-minister MC Hammer in *Too Legit: The MC Hammer Story*, which airs throughout January on VH1. Miller says of Burrell, whom she praises for standing by Hammer when financial woes halted

his career, "She knew a lot of his decisions weren't the best, but she let him learn that on his own." Of Hammer, Miller says, "He reached back to help his community, and that's rare." As rare as a TV-less Florida girl who's determined to make one hell of a mark on Hollywood. —SAMANTHA HUNTER



Clockwise from top: Levar Burton as Kunta Kinte; Ben Vereen as Chicken George; John Amos as adult Kunta Kinte.

TV
ROOTS the classic series marks 25 years

For eight evenings in 1977, Alex Haley's family saga *Roots* captured the attention of millions of American TV viewers. Now we have the chance to revisit the groundbreaking miniseries with *Roots: Celebrating 25 Years*, a documentary airing January 18 at 8 P.M. EST on NBC. "It's not just a story about how the people involved were changed, but how the country changed forever," says Judith Leonard, executive producer of the project.

Though ABC initially aired Haley's miniseries, its sequel and a spin-off Christmas movie, the network opted against airing this month's special. Despite the fact that more than half the U.S. population tuned in for the original—still the third-highest-rated show in TV history—ABC believed there wasn't a substantial audience. NBC president Jeff Zucker disagrees. "*Roots* was critical because it dealt with material that had never been dealt with before," he says. "There's a whole generation of Americans who remember *Roots* and a new generation that will be fascinated to learn about it." —JANICE RHOSHALLE LITTLEJOHN

WYNTON MARSALIS one for the road

He's one of the most accomplished artists of our time. For two decades, Wynton Marsalis—the first jazz musician to win a Pulitzer Prize—has brought jazz to the forefront of American culture through his brilliant performances and his advocacy for music education. This month the nine-time Grammy-award winner and artistic director of New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center plans to expose a new generation to the art form he so loves with *United in Swing*, a 46-city and 26-state tour of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. The ensemble will perform compositions spanning the history of



jazz, from Coltrane and Mingus to its own original works. Says Marsalis, "Wherever we play, audiences have the same joyous reaction. Our goal is to see America truly 'united in swing.'" Call (212) 258-9800 for tour schedule.

—MILES MARSHALL LEWIS ▷

TOUR

MILLER, MONTY BRINTON, MILLER AND MALCO, MONTY BRINTON, ROOTS, EVERETT COLLECTION, MARSALIS, KEITH MAJOR.