

**AFRICAN AMERICAN**  
**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
**WESTCHESTER & ROCKLAND COUNTIES INC.**

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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**BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS HONORED AT**  
**11<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
**AWARDS DINNER**



White Plains, NY – The African American Chamber of Commerce of Westchester and Rockland Counties will host its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner on Thursday, October 18, 2007 in White Plains, NY. The evening begins at 6:00 pm with a cocktail reception followed by the awards and dinner at 7:00 pm. Local political and business leaders in six categories will be honored for their contributions to the African American small business community.

The 2007 honorees include:  
**LEBO M** - 2007 National Business Leader of the Year.

Grammy-award winner, Oscar nominated producer/song-writer, choral master, humanitarian...Lebo M is all those things, but is best known as the voice and spirit of THE LION KING. A native of South Africa, Lebo was first recognized as the only African working on Disney's smash feature film sensation, 'The Lion King' during the fall of apartheid.

Ironically, it was Lebo that brought the insatiable spirit of Nelson Mandela's endurance of a 27-year prison sentence to rule his country through the music that told the same story about a lion returning to Pride Rock. After an oppressive childhood in the notorious ghetto of Soweto, it's no mistake that this profound story of overcoming became an entire body of work for him.

His start was rough, but his large dreams carried him from being a 9-year old performing in smoky homeland nightclubs to Los Angeles, where he begged on street corners, cleaned church floors and worked at the famous double arches, until he finally landed on the doorsteps of Quincy Jones, famed composer Hans Zimmer and Disney.

Lebo M is critically acclaimed for his creation of some of the most moving and resonant music to pass the ears of modern audiences. He is deftly talented at putting together an incredibly rich menagerie of voices, chants, instruments and melody. An original cast member of the Broadway debut of THE LION KING, Lebo put his performing hat aside to compose the stage renditions of the play in New York, Tokyo, Osaka, London, Toronto, Los Angeles, Germany, The National Touring Company (Houston and San Francisco) and now Australia.

His credits for work as an arranger, performer and producer include the feature films DINOSAUR, THE LION KING and RETURN TO PRIDE ROCK for Disney; THE POWER OF ONE, BACK ON THE BLOCK, LISTEN UP; THE LIFE OF QUINCY JONES, and OUTBREAK for Warner Bros.; MADE IN AMERICA, CONGO, BORN TO BE WILD for Paramount; LONG NIGHT'S JOURNEY INTO DAY, winner of Best Documentary at The Sundance Film Festival, and Academy Award nominee for Iris Films; and TEARS OF THE SUN, with Bruce Willis for Sony Pictures (collaboration with Hans Zimmer).

Lebo has performed at the Rain Forest Benefit concert at Carnegie Hall alongside Sting and Elton John; the Academy Awards; and performed with a 100-piece choir in Kosovo in 1999 to honor Vanessa Redgrave and her project Kthimi to inspire and bring hope to the people; The Essence Awards; the Montreaux Jazz Festival with Randy Crawford and Tony Bennett, and has been honored by Artists For A New South Africa while performing for Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

With three albums under his belt, 12 feature films, an Ivor Novello song writing award, a Grammy, A Tony and an Oscar nomination, a golden note reputation with Disney and a fan club, Lebo returned to South Africa for the first time since he was exiled in 1979. He built his dream house for his family and now splits his time between the two farthest points on the globe, Johannesburg and Los Angeles. In the New South Africa, Lebo has launched Till Dawn Entertainment, a multi-faceted creative entity specializing in music, theatre and film. The company has a mandate to bring as much fresh African talent to the U.S. and the world, and American talent to Africa.

Tilldawn Records and Yavaya Records, a division of Tilldawn Entertainment has recently released three new acts; Adillah (a five member group), solo artist, Puleng, and gospel group, Redeemed.

Lebo's contribution to THE LION KING and to upliftment in his home country, continues from South Africa where he regularly holds auditions in all corners of the country to out source raw African talent which has resulted in a minimum of 8 South African cast members (per show) becoming part of the Disney family.

In 2006, he realized his life-long dream of bringing the Lion King home to Africa, so that his countrymen and women could share the magic and splendour of this phenomenal production on home soil. Lebo M is co-producer together with Pieter Torien of Theatre on the Bay for the Lion King South Africa production.

Lebo established the Lebo M Foundation in 2000 (earlier known as the Karabo Foundation) to provide resources to ensure a better quality of life for those who are disadvantaged. The foundation's main areas of focus include Child Welfare, HIV/AIDS and Housing. The foundation was supported by Quincy Jones's "Listen Up Foundation" and "Artists For A New South Africa." The Lebo M Foundation has to date invested more than half a million rand towards MAAPSA (Musicians, Artists, Assistance Program of South Africa) and raised nearly R70,000 through Party For A Purpose events, for Variety Club. The work of The Lebo M Foundation was recognised by South Africa's captains of industry when it was presented with The BBQ Award for Corporate Social Investment in November 2006.

This hard working and gifted artist launched "Celebrate 10 yrs." in 2003, a South African Music Awards nominated CD single featuring luminaries such as Hugh Masekela, Tsepo Tshola, All 4 One, Rebecca Malope and some of South Africa's sparkling and young talents including hip-hop group Skwatta Kamp, TK, Thando, Stagga, Stoan of Bongo Maffin and Phinda Mtya. The song was also performed in France in 2004 at Euro Disney, thanking the people for their support and contribution to South Africa's 10<sup>th</sup> year of democracy. □

"We are thrilled to honor such exemplary community and business leaders in Westchester and Rockland County who continue to serve as role models not only in the minority community but the business community as a whole" said Robin Douglass, President of the African American Chamber of Commerce of Westchester and Rockland Counties.

The AACCCWR, Inc, was established on June 28, 1996 as an independent not-for-profit agency to aid, counsel and protect the interest of African American businesses. The mission is to preserve competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of Westchester and Rockland Counties.

As a volunteer organization, the Chamber's members are individuals and businesses who work together to advance the commercial, financial, industrial and civic interests of a diverse community. The Chamber sponsors small business seminars, networking events and procurement diversity workshops. Topics range from financial planning, marketing and business management. To learn more about the African American Chamber of Commerce and membership information visit [www.AACCNYS.org](http://www.AACCNYS.org).

The 2007 dinner is sponsored by: Golden Sponsor, Black Enterprise Magazine; Silver Sponsor, Commerce Bank and IBM; Supporting Sponsors: Starwoods Hotels, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Macys, Con Edison, PepsiCo and Verizon. For tickets information visit the Chamber's website at [www.aaccnys.org](http://www.aaccnys.org) or call 914-699-4749.

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