

## Universal Recording Artist “Ashanti” Rang The Opening Bell® at the NYSE to Commemorate Black Music Month

On Tuesday, June 3, 2008, R&B/Hip Hop Artist Ashanti visited the New York Stock Exchange to ring The Opening Bell to commemorate Black Music Month. President of the United States of America, George W. Bush proclaimed June 2008 as Black Music Month. He encourages all Americans to learn more about the history of black music and to enjoy the great contributions of African-American singers, musicians, and composers. Black Music Month celebrates the extraordinary talents and creativity of African-American singers, musicians, and composers whose achievements have enriched our culture and enhanced our lives.



Ashanti and Larry Liebowitz

The fourth studio album by The Inc./Universal Motown superstar singer-songwriter **ASHANTI**, titled **THE DECLARATION**, reached retail stores and digital online sellers the same day. Album producers and collaborators include such genre-defining talents as Robin Thicke, Jermaine Dupri, Babyface, L.T. Hutton, and Pharrell Williams. Joined on the bell podium with Ashanti were : National Disc Jockey, Wendy Williams; President of Essence Communications, Michelle Ebanks; *North East Vice President – Coca-Cola* , Steven Boyd; *Community & Multicultural Marketing – Coca-Cola*, Charles Sessoms. Music Executive & Entertainment Author, Thembisa Mshaka and Ashanti’s Mother.

**MEGA Dream Entertainment** owners, Richard E. Pelzer II and Nefertiti Strong produced and managed this special event.

*Ashanti joined by Wendy Williams, Michelle Ebanks of Essence Communications, Larry Liebowitz , Executive VP, US Markets and Robert Marchman Executive VP, Enforcement of NYSE Regulation and Sponsors*



Grammy-winner **ASHANTI** has been a trailblazer and role model for the new breed of multi-talented young artists since her 2001 chart debut as a featured artist on the No. 1 Ja Rule single “Always on Time.” She made history at the 2002 release of her first album *Ashanti*, which entered at No. 1 nationally, and sold over 500,000 in its first week, the record for a female debut artist. In the same week, she held the No. 1 and No. 2 singles in the Billboard Hot 100, with her self-written solo single “Foolish” and her collaboration with Fat Joe, “What’s Luv?” With “Always on Time” remaining in the Top 10, she became the only artist since The Beatles to have her first three singles charting in the Top 10 simultaneously. Ashanti also co-wrote a *fourth* song in the same week’s Top 10, Jennifer Lopez’ “Ain’t It Funny.”

### Black Music Month with the NYSE



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**Left to Right:** Nicole Petallides, (Fox Business News), Nefertiti Strong (CADE), Richard E. Pelzer II (MEGA), Recording Artist, Ashanti, Thembisa Mshaka (BET) & Michelle Ebanks (Essence)