

The Beam Entertainment

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Mercy Johnson Debunks Pregnancy Rumour

It is nothing hidden that curvy actress, Mercy Johnson, is having a great time with her fiance, Odi. But the news in the air is that Mercy has taken in.

Sources claimed that Mercy had been out of the scene for a while because she didn't want people to see her bulging tummy since she is yet to walk down the aisle.

But speaking to Life and Beat on the phone recently, Mercy denied being pregnant, saying she had only been out of Lagos for a while for personal reasons.

"Ah! This is serious. I am not pregnant. Why would I deny it if I were pregnant. I was out of Lagos for a while but I am back. They have come again. Look, I am on location and I am playing the lead role of a princess. In the movie, I am meant to dress in native attires with my tummy showing. If I were pregnant, do you think I would be playing such a role? Please, I am not yet pregnant and I am telling you the truth," she said.



Actor and director Lionel Jeffries dies, aged 83

The well-known actor and film director Lionel Jeffries has died at the age of 83, his family has announced.

Best known for directing *The Railway Children* and appearing in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, his long career spanned theatre, film and television.

Known for his bald head, baritone voice and bristling moustache, the London-born actor trained at RADA before making his screen debut in 1950.

In later years he played the lovable Grandad in children's TV show *Woof!*

According to a family friend, Jeffries died in a nursing home in Poole, Dorset.

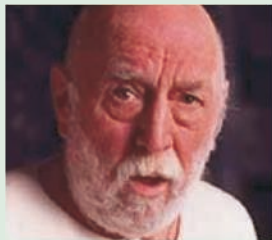
Actress Jenny Agutter, star of *The Railway Children*, remembered him as being "an extraordinary character" and "wonderfully funny".

"He was a total dear to work with," she told the BBC. "He very much created a family on set."

Born in the East End in 1926, Jeffries served in Burma during World War II and would later blame its humidity for his hair loss.

His career saw him play an array of larger-than-life characters, notably the odious Marquis of Queensbury in 1960 drama *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*.

Despite the success of *The Railway Children*, whose script he wrote, he



only made four more films as a director.

These included *The Amazing Mr Blunden* in 1972, *Wombing Free* in 1977 and *The Water Babies* the following year.

Jeffries's features served him well over the years but would often consign him to authority figures and elderly relatives.

He played Dick Van Dyke's father Grandpa Potts in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, despite being the US actor's junior by six months.



Jay-Z:

'Music labels must streamline to survive'

Newly-crowned best international male at the Brits, Jay-Z's advice to the British music industry is less is more.

The rap superstar set up his own Roc Nation music business, a joint venture with gig promoters Live Nation to manage artists, which looks after their tours as well as putting out CDs and downloads.

So far there are only a handful of artists on his watch, including British acts the Ting Tings and Sugababes.

Jay Z said: "Records are not selling as many as they were before and you've still got to go out and pay the Bentley bill."

Which perhaps explains why he's just announced some more live UK dates.

Jay-Z will play Manchester's MEN Arena on 7 June, Birmingham's LG Arena on 9 June and he'll headline the Wireless festival in London's Hyde Park on Sunday 4 July.

Tickets for all the shows go on sale on Friday 19 February.

Smartsales

He admits touring is where a lot of the cash lies and Jay-Z gets a say in his merchandising deals as well, thanks to his own 360 deal

with Roc Nation that dips into all aspects of his work.

When quizzed on the plight of the UK's music industry, which has struggled to cope with illegal downloading, Jay-Z said "people have to be smarter about how they A and R, and what they put out".

He added: "Record companies need to catch up to that, someone needs to send them the memo."

He makes his point by reminiscing about his time in charge at US label Def Jam, a decade ago.

"I remember the first year I was at Def Jam we put out 56 artists. There's not 56 great artists in the world, and this is one company.

"One company operating for like, 80 artists in a year. That's just too many."

So does Jay-Z plan to add Cheryl Cole to his Roc Nation family?

"Cheryl Cole, I saw her (at the Brits) last night," he admitted.

"She's had a big production. I don't know, I have no idea but we'll figure it out soon though."

Manchester 'special'

He also wouldn't say if Chipmunk or Tinchy Stryder were acts he was considering.

But Jay-Z does credit Amy Winehouse

with reinventing the British music scene.

"There's a strong push coming out of London right now which is great," he reckoned.

"It's been coming ever since I guess Amy (Winehouse). I mean always, but I think Amy, this resurgence was ushered in by Amy, that's how I see it."

Tears Dry On Their Own is Jay-Z's favourite Amy Winehouse track and he finds her incredibly talented but says he's "just praying she doesn't turn into Lauryn Hill and we never get another album".

Chewing on chips to combat his Brits hangover, the rapper admitted the ceremony was a good opportunity to sign up touring buddies.

After cornering Lily Allen at the show, he's hoping she'll join him for the 4 July gig in London.

Beyonce's husband also admitted Manchester was a special city.

"That's the place where Kanye (West) brought me the tracks for *Blueprint 3*, so there's a little connection there," he said.

June's gig in Manchester promises good things then?

"Yeah that's what I'm saying," Jay-Z laughs. "Who knows? *Blueprint 3* and a half?"

Court dissolves Segun Arinze's marriage

Lagos High Court, Ikeja presided over by Justice Sybil Nwaka yesterday barred journalists from reporting the final dissolution of the marriage of popular Nollywood actor, Mr. Segun Arinze Aina-Padonou.

The court dissolved the 14-year-old marriage between Segun and his estranged wife, Annette.

At the resumed hearing, the police orderly, Thomas Agwa, with service number 378778, told reporters present in the court not to report the proceedings.

Nevertheless, a reporter with Daily Independent, Dolapo Muraino who defied the order had her writing pad and pen seized by the police orderly, who said he was acting on the orders of the judge.

In her judgment, she granted the custody of the only child of the union, 13-year-old Morenike Chioma Aina-Padonou, to the mother, who did not enter appearance in the suit but ordered that the father should have free access to his daughter.

She also ordered that the couple should maintain

status quo on the upkeep of the only child of the marriage.

The Judge accepted the testimony of Arinze that his marriage had broken down irreparably and irreconcilably, adding that his evidence was not controverted by the respondent.

She said the couple have been living apart for the past 11 years which led to the breakdown of the marriage that was solemnized at Ikorodu Local Government Registry on May 10, 2009.

Arinze had on May 25, 2009 during his testimony sought the leave of the court for the dissolution of the marriage so that they can go their separate ways.

Arinze had told the court that his marriage with his wife had "broken down irreparably and irreconcilably," after the couple had been staying apart since May 29, 1998.

He then promised to continue to shoulder the responsibility of the daughter's welfare and education.

