

The Making of the Art: Gospel Singers Release New Music

By Robert Jones Jr.

When it comes to art, many just see the finished product. But a lot takes place behind the scenes in order to showcase that final form to the audience. There is the formula of creativity, brainstorming and inspiration that births a new piece. Musicians go through this process constantly, and some are willing to share the inspiration of their art.

Cassandra Roberson-Kelley and TaRae Smith are two singers that are talented as well as humbled, seeking to minister to others through song. Both are members of Holy Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, located in Fort Worth, Texas, and are involved with the Music Department of the ministry. They can be seen participating with the choir or singing impressive solos on any given Sunday.

Cassandra Roberson-Kelley is someone that finds inspiration in her music. Music has always been a part of her life, a talent within her own family. Kelley says she always been drawn to music since she was a child, singing as a lead vocalist by the time she was 12.

“As a preteen I felt a strong desire to sing like my mom Carrie Roberson,” she says. “Not just having the ability to sing but being endowed with God’s anointing to minister through song. She and the late Dr. Mattie Moss-Clark are my greatest influences.”

Along with those two as her biggest impressions on her singing, Kelley notes that she gains motivation from hearing peoples’ stories and their testaments of faith.

“I get inspiration from personal experiences and others’ testimonies,” she says. “I also find encouragement from scriptures from the Bible and sermons I hear from various ministers of the gospel.”

Kelley recently released two singles, titled *Praise Ye The Lord* and *Jesus Is That Grace* recently.

She hopes these songs will be a blessing and transform lives for the glory of God.

TaRae Smith shares the similarity with Kelley in that her family is also involved with music.

“I started around the age of two, with my mom

God’s power.

“The song was created by a story revolving around my sister. The doctors told my sister that she was very ill. I prayed to God for help while the doctors were saying the diagnosis wasn’t looking too

good,” she details, thinking about the moments. “While waiting for results, the Holy Spirit came, and I started to hum a melody. After humming a melody, the words came. When the words came, I began to write. When calling my sister, I began to sing the song to her. Soon the doctors came and reversed on their telling of bad news. Because of that, I titled the project *So In Awe Of You*, because I was so in awe of God’s power and mercy.”

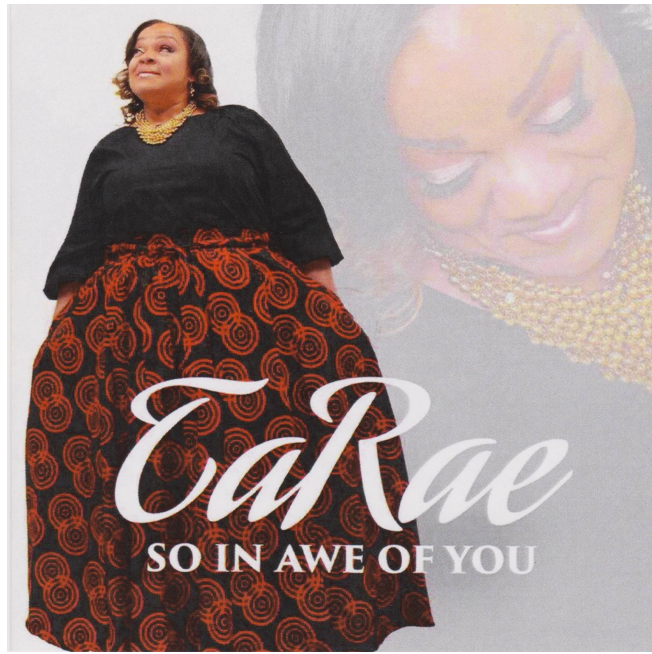
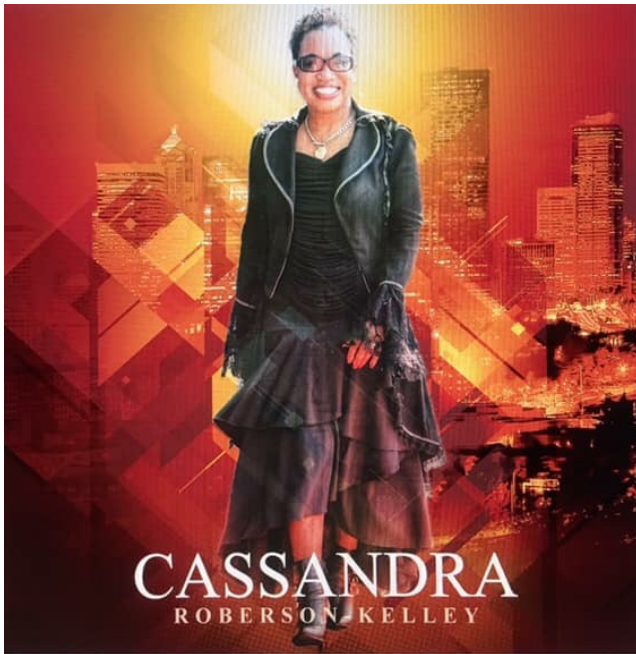
While looking towards the future, both artists believe they will be able to expand their reach with their message.

“As my gifts and talents receive more exposure, I believe more doors of ‘ministry opportunities’ will open from the local to international level,” Kelley states. “This will also allow me to develop as a psalmist, songwriter, choir director and gospel recording artist.”

Smith also notes that she may release an album soon but is praying to God about it.

“It will be a worship CD, but I want it to reach all nationalities. I hope to do a full CD project and travel to Africa and other countries someday,” she says.

Every artist’s creative process is different, but both Kelley and Smith pull from personal experiences and the power of God. These two elements are key in what they have created so far and will be mainstays for whatever project they release in the future. The making of art can be a stimulating, yet motivating process but when it’s done everyone can see a beautiful, finished product.



When You Pray

By Arnita L. Ware, Author

Have you ever prayed and gotten discouraged because it seemed your prayers weren't going to be answered, or maybe your prayer didn't "get through," so to speak?

Perhaps, you thought God didn't hear you at all. Be assured God hears you when you pray; as this story in Daniel so distinctly reminds us.

Daniel 10:12-13 (The Living Bible Paraphrased):

vs. 12 . . . Then he said, "Don't be frightened, Daniel, for *your request has been heard in heaven and was answered the very first day you began to fast before the Lord and pray for understanding; that very day I was sent here to meet you.*"

vs. 13 . . . "But for twenty-one days the mighty Evil Spirit who overrules the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael one of the top officers of the heavenly army, came to help me, so that I was able to break through these spirit rulers of Persia."

What an excellent illustration to remind us that God hears us when we pray.

God wants us to trust Him and believe when we pray. **Mark 11:24** – (NKJV) "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Prayer is simply a form of communication. Although, the Lord knows what we desire before we ask, He still wants to hear from us. It's similar to communicating with someone you live with.

Communication makes you closer. It brings intimacy in the relationship. Get to know Him through prayer.

As parents, we want our children to communicate with us. We want to know the details of their

lives. It's the same with God. He wants to know *you!*

Can you think of anything more important than spending time with God?

Another scripture to assist us in building our confidence in God when we pray is **1 John 5:14-15**. "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, *He hears us*, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of him."

So, I just want to remind you ... "Don't lose your confidence, when you pray."



Submitted by Arnita L. Ware, Author

Ware has written a book entitled, **Look Through the Window.**

The book candidly reveals experiences in her life. She has been transparent in exposing truths in her life and the intellectual challenges that she faces in her own life with mental health.

Her purpose for writing the book is to share with others that you can be successful in life, even if you are facing mental health concerns.



The book is available online at Amazon, Barnes and Nobles.

Stellar Awards

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)



(Top Left) Jekalyn Carr, (Right) The Walls Group, (Bottom Left) Yolanda Adams



awarded twice as *Duo/Chorus Group of the Year* and *Contemporary Duo/Chorus Group of the Year*.

During the evening, an emotional tribute to Aretha Franklin was per-

Held at the Orleans Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada in March, the Stellar Awards was hosted by Kirk Franklin, and will air in broadcast syndication April 27 through May 26. The premiere shows on BET Network April 21.

Jekalyn Carr received three awards for *Albertina Walker Female Vocalist of the Year*, *Traditional Female Vocalist of the Year* and *Traditional CD of the Year*. The Walls Group were

formed by Kelly Price, Erica Campbell and Regina Belle. Family members of the late-legend Brenda Corbett, Jordan Franklin and Kecal Franklin were presented with the inaugural *Aretha Franklin ICON Award* "to give posthumous recognition of her profound impact on the Gospel music genre and unforgettable contributions."

A special award presentation was also given to honor Gospel legend Delores Washington

Green of The Caravans with the *Dr. Bobby Jones Legend Award*. Gospel star Yolanda Adams and Stellar Awards Founder, Chairman & CEO Don Jackson inducted James Robinson Jr., Jackie Patillo and Phil Thornton into the Stellar Honors Hall of Fame.

This year's line-up of performances included an opening number by Hezekiah Walker, Kirk Franklin stirring the audience to their feet performing new music and a rousing medley by Phil Thompson, Kelontae Gavin and Maranda Curtis. Other performers included Brian Courtney Wilson, Koryn Hawthorne, Todd Dulaney, Charles Jenkins and Jekalyn Carr.

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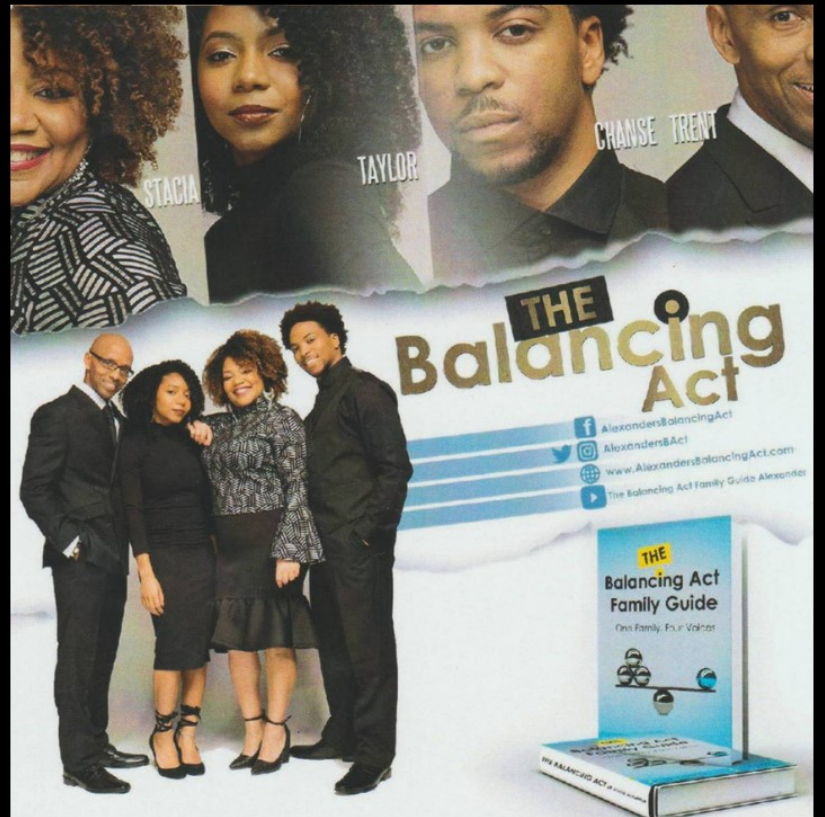


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Dr. Lynda J. Mubarak is a retired special education teacher, facilitator, and adult ESL adjunct who read constantly as a child. She is an advocate for early literacy and life long learning. She loves to create stories for young children with an emphasis on community service, global empathy, and human compassion.

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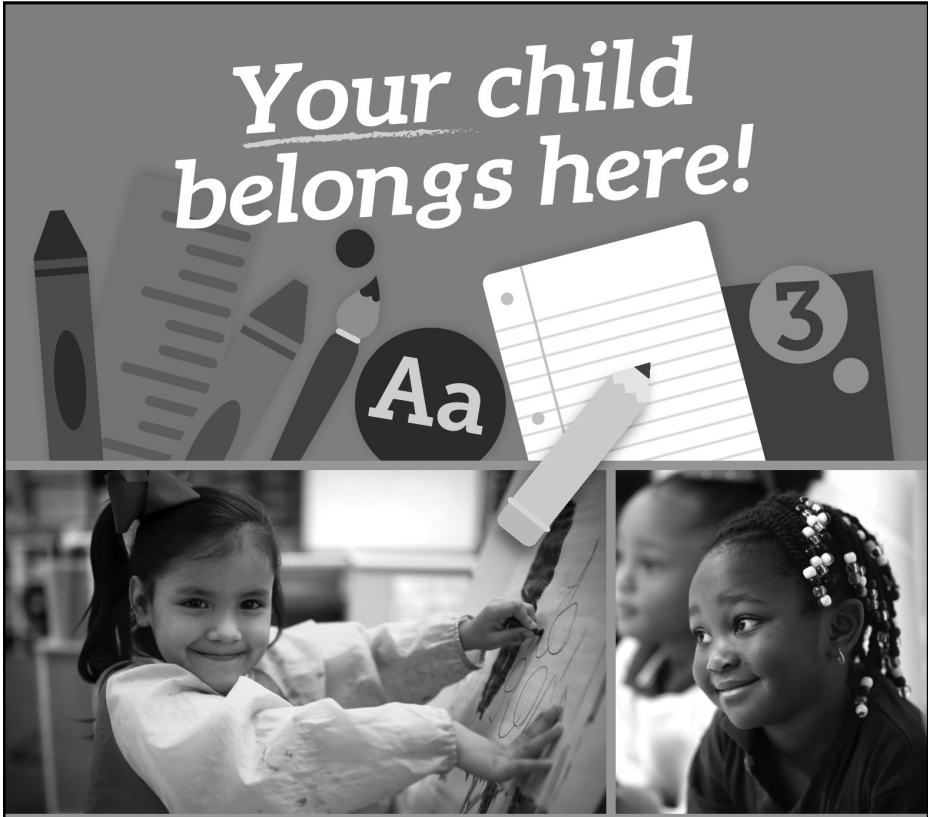
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Center for African American Studies

(Continued from Page 3)

Dr. Shelton said his interest in studying the black experience started in childhood.

“Long before I became a professor, I was a kid that read books on black history, and talked with my elders at length about conditions facing black people,” he explained. “I majored in Sociology and minored in Pan-African Studies in college, and earned my doctoral degree and served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Rice University on a major research project concerning the links between religion and race in the United States.”

Now he works as a professor with teaching and research interests focusing on “various political, socioeconomic, cultural, and religious factors influencing contemporary African American life.” Dr. Shelton also writes books and articles about the black race and has developed courses on the topic.

“I hope that my teaching and research efforts help to inspire a new generation of scholars—the same way that I was inspired as a youth,” he stated.

The public is invited to participate in events and initiatives sponsored by

CAAS. The center offers monthly “Power Hour” lectures where professors, experts, and activists are invited to share their knowledge and experience with students. Every fall they sponsor an Annual Opening Lecture, and every spring, an Annual Conference. These events feature keynote addresses by African American leaders across a variety of fields.

Though CAAS launched at UT Arlington in 2012, the focus on African American history has been included in college curriculum for many years.

“Black Studies has remained a key part of college and university curriculums since the 1960’s. These programs help to highlight progress of race relations in America, as well document continuing disparities as well as areas of needed attention,” Dr. Shelton said. “Centers can also serve as liaisons to the African American community, as well as provide a basis for community engagement.”

To find out more about the Center for African American Studies at UT Arlington, visit www.uta.edu/caas.

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