

Media Questions Of The Week

Why did gospel and R&B singer Bishop Marvin L. Sapp have the doors locked on the congregation at the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World Convention last July to collect a \$40,000 donation?

**Throwback: Sister Rosetta
Tharpe: Up Above My Head**



Sister Rosetta Tharpe recorded "Up Above My Head" with Marie Knight in 1947 for Decca Records. The traditional gospel song was first recorded by the Gospel Sons in 1941 but Tharpe and Knight's version is the most known. Their rendition reached number 6 on the Billboard Race Records chart in 1948. Tharpe had already asserted herself as a pioneer of gospel turned into rock and rhythm and blues since her 1938 recording of "Rock Me." Her unique style included being one of the first to play the guitar using distortion with a technique that would

lead the way for future rock icons like Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Eric Clapton, and many others. "Up Above My Head" became one of her signature songs and she gave a solo performance of the song sometimes in the '60s on the show *TV Gospel Time*. Tharpe's early contributions in the '30s and '40s as a gospel artist who was accepted by secular audiences had the music press calling her the Original Soul Sister and the Godmother of Rock and Roll. Conservative gospel organizations were critical of her, but she was invaluable to the development of American pop, rock, and English blues. Her 1945 single, "Strange Things Happening Every Day," was the first gospel record to cross over, with a number two position on the race records chart.

Okeh Records came up with the name race records in 1922 to describe music that was marketed to Black people. By 1942, Billboard created the Harlem Hit Parade to list songs popular with Black audiences. In June of 1949, the term race records was replaced with R&B. Tharpe's music survived all of the music industry politics and her music is still recognized in 2025. Tharpe passed away in 1973 and received several posthumous honors. The United States Postal Service issued a stamp in her honor in 1998. In 2007, she was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame. The BBC aired the documentary *Sister Rosetta Tharpe: The Godmother of Rock & Roll in 2011*. The play *Marie & Rosetta*, based on Tharpe's relationship with Knight, was staged at New York's Atlantic Theater Company in 2016. Tharpe was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2017.

R.I.P. Cissy Houston



Cissy Houston, gospel singer and mother of Whitney Houston, passed away on Monday at age 91. Houston, who was born Emily Drinkard, started her music career in 1938 when she and her sister Anne and brothers Larry and Nicky formed The Drinkard Four gospel group. Their sister Marie joined the group and the name was changed to The Drinkard Singers. Houston's sister Lee managed the group and later became the mother of Dee Dee and Dionne Warwick. The group performed regularly around Newark,

New Jersey, and after an appearance at the Newport Jazz Festival, they signed a deal with MCA Records and became the first gospel group to release an album on a major label. The group would experience some more changes in the lineup and become The Sweet Inspirations. They had a Top 40 hit in 1968 with "Sweet Inspiration" and became an in-demand backup group. Van Morrison used them on his iconic hit, "Brown Eyed Girl," and Jimi Hendrix, Elvis Presley, Dusty Springfield, George Benson, Wilson Pickett, Aretha Franklin, and Carmen McCrae were some of the artists that used The Sweet Inspirations in their recordings.

Houston started recording solo records in 1963 with the single "This Is My Vow." Her solo album, *Presenting Cissy Houston*, was released in 1970. Houston recorded four solo albums in the '70s and had a disco hit with "Think It Over." She was the first to record "Midnight Train To Georgia" in 1972, one year before Gladys Knight & The Pips made it a hit. Houston was in demand as a session singer and recorded with Paul Simon, Better Midler, Burt Bacharach, and Linda Rondstadt. She performed live with her band around New York City and Whitney would frequently join her on stage. In the 90s, she won Grammy awards for her gospel albums, *Face To Face* and *He Leadeth Me*. She recorded the duet "I Know Him So Well" with Whitney in 1987 and it appeared on Whitney's second album. In 2006, she recorded "Family First" with Dionne Warwick and Whitney for the *Daddy's Little Girls* soundtrack. BET did a tribute to Whitney Houston in 2012 after passing and Cissy performed "Bridge Over Troubled Water." The average pop culture historian has relegated Cissy Houston to being the mother of Whitney but she was a vocalist in her own right that made music listeners understand that a backup singer was just as important as the lead vocalist. Her work on Aretha Franklin's "Ain't No Way" elevated the song into an otherworldly listening experience and this is why Franklin made sure to have Houston on stage with her during their last television appearance together in 2014 on *The Late Show with David*

Letterman. Houston paved the way for her daughter Whitney and numerous singers, especially those who showed their star power in a supporting role.

Body Count, Fantastic Negrito, Thundercat, Brittany Howard, Nas, Megan Thee Stallion, Ledisi & More Take Home Grammys



The 63rd Grammy Awards took place at the Los Angeles Convention center with Trevor Noah as the host. There were performances from Bruno Mars with anderson.paak, Doja Cat, Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi B. Beyonce made history and became the woman with the most Grammys after taking her home her 28th one. She joined Megan Thee Stallion onstage for their joint win for Best Rap Song for "Savage" which Jay-Z also won his 23rd Grammy for because he helped write the song. Their daughter Blue Ivy became the second-youngest winner ever at 9-years old for Best Music Video for "Brown Skin Girl." Megan Thee Stallion became the first woman to win Best Rap Song. Ice-T's Body Count took the award for Best Metal Performance. Nas won his first Grammy after 14 nominations over his almost 30-year career. Fantastic Negrito picked up his third Grammy for Contemporary Blues Album. Fans questioned why Taylor Swift became the first woman to win

album of the year three times and why Billie Eilish won Record Of The Year two years in a row. See all the winners below:Â

Song Of The Year:

“I Can’t Breathe” – WINNER

Dernst Emile II, H.E.R. & Tiara Thomas, songwriters (H.E.R.)

Best New Artist:

Megan Thee Stallion

Best Dance Recording:

“10%”Â

Kaytranada Featuring Kali Uchis

Kaytranada, producer; Neal H. Pogue, mixer

Best Dance/Electronic Album:

BUBBA – Kaytranada

Best Metal Performance:Â

Bum-Rush – Body Count

Best Rock Song:

“Stay High” – Brittany Howard, songwriter (Brittany Howard)

Best R&B Performance:

“Black Parade”-BeyoncÃ©

Best Traditional R&B Performance:Â

“Anything For You” – Ledisi

Best R&B Song:

“Better Than I Imagined” – Robert Glasper, Meshell Ndegeocello

& Gabriella Wilson, songwriters (Robert Glasper Featuring H.E.R. & Meshell Ndegeocello)

Best Progressive R&B Album:

It Is What It Is -Thundercat

Best R&B Album:

Bigger Love -John Legend

Best Rap Performance:

“Savage”-Megan Thee Stallion Featuring BeyoncÃ©

Best Melodic Rap Performance:

“Lockdown”-Anderson.Paak

Best Rap Song:Â

“Savage” -BeyoncÃ©, Shawn Carter, Brittany Hazzard, Derrick Milano, Terius Nash, Megan Pete, Bobby Session Jr., Jordan Kyle Lanier Thorpe & Anthony White, songwriters (Megan Thee Stallion Featuring BeyoncÃ©)

Best Rap Album:Â

King’s Disease -Nas

Best Contemporary Christian Music Album:

Jesus Is King-Kanye West

Best Gospel Album:

Gospel According To PJ -PJ Morton

Best Contemporary Blues Album:

Have You Lost Your Mind Yet? -Fantastic Negrito

Best Traditional Blues Album:

Rawer Than Raw – Bobby Rush

Best Reggae Album:

Got To Be Tough-Toots & The Maytals

Best Global Music Album:

Twice As Tall – Burna Boy

Best Music Video:

“Brown Skin Girl”-Beyoncé, Blue Ivy & WizKid
Beyoncé Knowles-Carter & Jenn Nkiru, video directors; Astrid
Edwards, Aya Kaida, Jean Mougín, Nathan Scherrer & Erinn
Williams, video producers

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