

Fashion & Beauty Photographer Matthew Jordan Smith Releases Aretha Cool: The Intimate Portraits



Beauty and fashion photographer Matthew Jordan Smith releases *Aretha Cool: The Intimate Portraits*. Smith's fourth book is his tribute to the Queen of Soul during Women's History Month. Smith is the author of *Sepia Dreams: A Celebration of Black Achievement Through Words and Images* (St. Martin's Publishing Group), *Lost and Found* (Filipacchi Publishing), and *Future American President: 50 States, 100 Families, Infinite Dreams* (Goff Books). The photographs were taken between 2005 and 2018, the last years of her life. Smith was the iconic singer's favorite photographer and their rapport included conversations about photography, food, album titles, and plenty of laughter and jokes. Smith says,

"The first time I captured Aretha Franklin through my lens, I presented her with my maiden publication, Sepia Dreams: A Celebration of Black Achievement Through Words and Images, says Smith. "Her immediate response, laced with her iconic mix of humor and sincerity, 'Why am I not in this book?' It was then that I made a heartfelt promise to rectify this oversight in a future endeavor."

Aretha Cool: The Intimate Portraits has two distinct editions. The Limited Edition has 100 copies and includes all the same photos as the standard one but each book is signed, numbered, and packaged within a clamshell enclosure. This edition also has a signed and number 8 x 10 fine art print that collectors will appreciate.

Smith is no stranger to photographing larger-than-life figures including Queen Latifah, Oprah, Courtney B. Vance, Quincy Jones, George Lucas, Samuel L. Jackson, and many others.

Aretha Cool: The Intimate Portraits will be available via [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) on March 15th. For international purchases visit ArethaCool.com.



Aretha Franklin and Matthew Jordan Smith



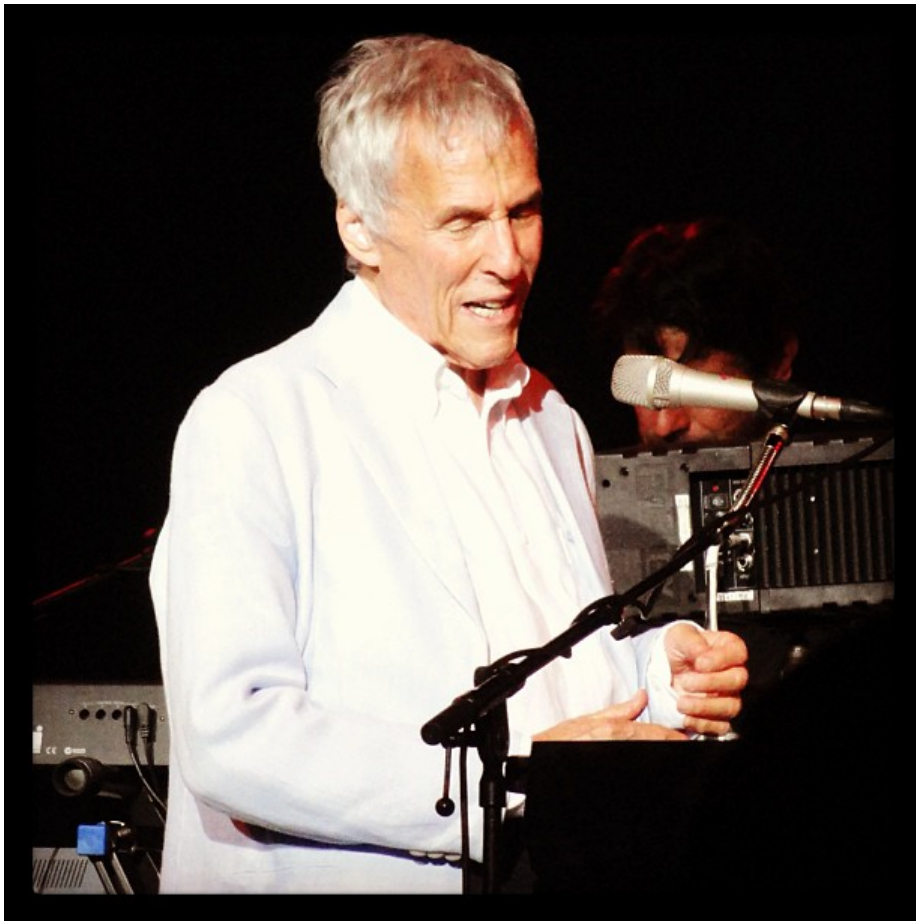
Throwback: Aretha Franklin- Get It Right



Luther Vandross and Marcus Miller wrote “Get It Right” for Aretha Franklin’s 1983 album of the same name. It was the second time Vandross produced an album for Franklin with him first taking the honor with her 1982 release *Jump To It*. “Get It Right” was a sassy dancefloor hit with an inspirational message of resilience. Miller’s bass, the backup singers, the trap drums and Franklin’s vocals made an indestructible groove that could make anyone dance and feel motivated to do their best in anything. Vandross was fulfilling a dream again after the success of *Jump To It* which earned Gold status. Franklin

was in the second decade of her career and proved her versatility and that she still had something musically vital to say in the '80s. The album did not have high sales or climb the charts but "Get It Right" was a number-one R&B hit and has gone down as one of Franklin's underrated dance classics.

R.I.P. Burt Bacharach



Songwriting legend Burt Bacharach died of natural causes on February 8th at age 94. Bacharach was responsible for some of the most memorable pop songs of the 20th century many co-written with Hal David. Dionne Warwick became a star in the '60s singing "Don't Make Me Over," "Anyone Who Had A Heart," "Walk On By," "I Say A Little Prayer" and "Do You Know The Way To San Jose" all written by Bacharach and David. Their work

continued with endless hits recorded by Dusty Springfield, Herb Alpert, Tom Jones, Christopher Cross, Rod Stewart, Neil Diamond, Patti LaBelle and so many others. "The Look Of Love," "Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head" "Promises Promises" "I'll Never Fall In Love Again" and "Only Love Can Keep Break A Heart" would all be recorded by several artists through the decades. Aretha Franklin recorded "I Say A Little Prayer" in the '60s and Luther Vandross would be one of the artists to bring his legacy to the '80s with his recording of "A House Is Not A Home."

Warwick's career was revived in the '80s when she recorded "That's What Friends Are For" written by Bacharach and his partner Carole Bayer Sager. Bacharach started recording as a solo artist in 1965 and was most successful in that realm with his song "Trains and Boats and Planes" becoming a top hit in the UK that year. In the late '90s, he co-wrote the Grammy-winning album *Painted From Memory* with Elvis Costello. His 2005 solo album *At This Time*, had guest appearances from Elvis Costello, Rufus Wainwright and Dr. Dre. Ron Isley collaborated with Bacharach on the *Here I Am* album of his compositions in Isley's style. In 2013, Bacharach's autobiography, *Anyone Who Had A Heart* was released. The songwriter was active through his later years performing at Glastonbury in 2015, scoring the film *A Boy Called Po* and working with pop artist Daniel Tashian. He was honored with induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song. There are plans to release another Elvis Costello collaboration album in March 2023. *The Songs of Bacharach and Costello* are from the musical *Taken From Life*.

<https://youtu.be/p9M744rDd40>

Aretha Franklin Was The Subject Of FBI Surveillance



Aretha Franklin was monitored by the FBI for her civil rights activities as revealed by a 270-page declassified file. Journalist Jenn Dize requested the document using the Freedom Of Information Act. Franklin's relationship with Dr. Martin Luther King and her overall interest in Black politics put her on the FBI's radar. The agency paid close attention to the concerts she performed for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference where King was the president. The organization had planned a big memorial concert for King after his assassination in 1968 and Franklin was scheduled to perform but they changed plans and opted to have a march to Morehouse.

The singer once talked about paying to get Angela Davis out of jail when the activist/scholar was jailed in an upstate New York prison because she was the owner of the guns Jonathan Jackson used in a California courthouse attack. She also performed at a fundraiser given for Davis in 1972 and this was another affiliation the FBI monitored. The organization linked Franklin to the Coordinating Counsel for the Liberation Of Dominica and they also looked at her communication with the Black Panthers.

The file also has documentation of multiple death threats against Franklin including one she received in 1979 after her father C.L. Franklin had passed. There is information about a lawsuit filed on behalf of Franklin regarding copyright infringement in connection to Yahoo! Groups message board and a participant who sold pirated copies of her music and

performances. Franklin was one of several entertainers surveilled under J. Edgar Hoover's leadership of the FBI. Hoover was overzealous about the political actions of famous figures especially Black ones like Dr. King and Franklin because of his well-documented fear of "the rise of a messiah" who could unify Black people. Dize's discovery is a reminder of the influence artists have and the power of music. Franklin's version of Otis Redding's "Respect" was adopted early as a civil rights and feminist anthem.

1976: document states that a "west coast communist newspaper" carried a story that The National United Committee to Free Angela Davis raised \$38,000 and that Aretha Franklin sang at the event. Further, they claimed Franklin was associated with other "Black extremists" and groups.
pic.twitter.com/HK61qvgQ15

– Jenn Dize ???? [CourageNews.Substack.com \(@jennelizabethj\)](https://couragenews.substack.com/@jennelizabethj)
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