

R.I.P. Lee Andrews

[youtube id="3tTlWmAZHm8"] Lee Andrews of the Philadelphia doo-wop group Lee Andrews & The Hearts passed yesterday at the age of 79. Andrews and Hearts were successful in the 1950's with "Teardrops" "Try The Impossible" and "Long Lonely Nights." The group broke-up in 1959 but Andrews and a different lineup of the group made one recording and toured until 1968. In the '70's, Andrews formed Congress Alley which included his wife Jaqui Andrews. The couple is also known for being the parents of Amir "Questlove" Thompson, co-founder of The Roots and singer Donn T. Questlove paid tribute to his father on Instagram and thanked him for all the life lessons and hoped that he and his sister Donn made him proud.



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Donn T Nominated As An Artist Of Tomorrow



Leading up to THE 58TH ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS®, CBS.com is celebrating the next generation of musicians with the launch of the “[Artists of Tomorrow](#)” program, presented by Xfinity. Artists of Tomorrow showcases three rising stars handpicked by GRAMMY veterans and gives the public the chance to pick one of the rising stars to perform during GRAMMY Live, The Recording Academy and CBS’s multiplatform streaming coverage of all the behind-the-scenes action leading up to and throughout THE 58TH ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS®.

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Eclectic singer/songwriter **Donn T** is one of the artists that has been nominated as an Artist of Tomorrow, and she was nominated by none other than Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson, legendary drummer of The Roots, Grammy-winning producer, and bandleader of *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

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Donn T’s sophomore album, *Flight Of The Donn T* (D-Tone Victorious/MRI/RED) was released in 2015 to near-universal acclaim. Bama Love Soul called *Flight* “a delightful mixed bag of eclecticism”, while The Philadelphia Weekly praised **Donn T’s** “effortless cool” and compared her to talented artists St. Vincent and Lianne La Havas.

Donn T defies categorization—playing and recording in a diverse range of styles from house and trip hop, to acoustic soul and pop. She first made an impact with 2010’s critically acclaimed and aptly titled *Kaleidoscopic*. Over the years, she has shared the stage with and opened for a diverse array of artists such as Marsha Ambrosius, Little Dragon, Alice Smith, Patrick Stump (Fall Out Boy), Black Joe Lewis & The Honeybears, John Legend, Nelly Furtado, Amy Winehouse, and Zap Mama. She’s also had songs placed on television and in movies including the Showtime crime drama *Street Time*, UPN’s series *Kevin Hill*, BET’s Ava DuVernay (“Selma”)-directed feature film *I Will Follow*, and in commercials for the wireless audio product Sonos.

The Philadelphia native comes from a storied musical lineage. Her grandfather was Beachy Thompson of the pioneering gospel group The Dixie Hummingbirds. Her father is Lee Andrews, leader of legendary doo-wop group Lee Andrews & The Hearts. He was also in the soul group Congress Alley, along with **Donn T’s** mother, Jacqui. **Donn T’s** brother, Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson, is a Grammy-winning musician and bandleader of *The Tonight Show With Jimmy Fallon*. Family ties notwithstanding, **Donn T** is a unique talent in her own right.

Voting is now open to determine which of the three nominated artists will win the opportunity to perform during GRAMMY Live. Voting can be done daily through [CBS.com](#) or on Twitter by tweeting with the hashtag #artistsoftomorrow. Voting closes on February 10th, and the winner’s GRAMMY Live performance will be streamed on February 15th at 9 PM EST.

Donn T Social Links: [Official Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)



DONN T

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*Last Breath (Questlove
Remix)*

Purchase: [iTunes](#) | [Amazon](#)

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Flight Of The Donn T

Purchase: [iTunes](#) | [Amazon](#)

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Donn T-Last Breath Questlove Remix Lyric Video

[youtube id="hJD06fvzL4w"]

Donn T's "Last Breath" Questlove remix gets a lyric video of calming visuals including scenes from the beach, flowers, clouds and a quiet neighborhood. [Flight of The Donn T](#) is out now.

Donn T Takes Flight (Interview)



Earlier this year Donn Thompson Morelli released her sophomore album, *Flight Of The Donn T*. It had been 5 years since her DJ Simbad-produced *Kaleidoscopic* and since then she's married, started her own label and launched a DJ career to add to her resume. Music is a DNA thing for her as she is a member of Philadelphia's Thompson family responsible for The Dixie Hummingbirds, Lee Andrews And The Hearts and her brother Questlove of The Tonight Show band and The Roots fame. As a singer-songwriter she delves into complex feelings with poetic language whether she's writing about world concerns or personal travails. She has had her songs to appear in Ava DuVernay's *I Will Follow* and Lifetime's *With This Ring*. Her video for "Waiting" is one of the year's best for its minimalist use of her face and black and white cinematography to convey profound emotions. In the following interview she discusses the source of her maverick R&B expression, Philadelphia, family and future works.

We all get to a place in life where we're not sure how to step forward or what's going to occur but we just step

You come from a musical family what was it like growing up with musicians for parents?

The atmosphere was pretty lively all the time. And when I say all the time it literally was 24 hours a day sonically it was rich definitely. It was really inspirational and it really put me in touch pretty early on with the fact that I was a creator and I was connected to something special. It's creativity and you're working in that process and you're dealing with other challenges growing up and I notice as an adult that that background helped me with other things by showing me resilience, which is where I am with *Flight Of The Donn T*.

When did you discover your creativity and voice?

I don't remember a moment where like I was one thing and something shifted I always identified with being a writer and a storyteller. I identified with the writing aspect probably more than other members of my family. We're all writers and create music from that place. I identified with words and so that was my entry way into the rhythm, the sound and all that. I would notice as a kid if I would read the stories or recite poetry to my parents or friends of the family, they were really impacted. I just recently did a remix of my song "Last Breath" and I needed to listen to the original and there's an additional chorus and my husband and I newly wed, I call it newly wed but we've been married for three years and he brought to the marriage a beautiful little girl, she's very creative, my daughter and she actually collaborated with us on a chorus. If you listen to the remix there's something additional there and so I say all that to say as a kid it was a very familiar space to have my thoughts and have my lyrics considered by my parents who were veterans in the business and I had that approach but I passed that on and there was a line or two changed and uncle Amir was very impressed.

Philadelphia has so much music and culture, what are some things about your city that has influenced and inspired you?

I mean it's legendary from every angle. Maybe it's the awareness that so much is possible creatively. I get asked this question a lot and it actually stumps me because it's this intangible thing. I think people who are creative there whether it's the jazz community or the hip-hop community or the rock community, you're just aware that something can happen. We have a special approach in that we are for innovators and I think that's the thing that always inspires me. You know coming from a family with my dad being in doo-wop, his audiences as a Black man his audiences were predominantly white. Watching that I felt like there was this play on boundaries where the music industry may have been

trying to guide him in a particular direction, his creativity and broadness. He was like the Nat King Cole of the doo-wop era and then you know my grandparents, The Dixie Hummingbirds the music they were known to inspire, that was kind of new at that time. So I just always identify with I think it's the fearlessness in an organic way. You know someone telling you things should happen a certain way within these boundaries and I think in Philly in a very gritty way just says no. As I'm looking at so many of the artists from Jill to Santi, The Roots, my parents and myself. And not to say there are not folks in the traditional categories but there's something in the air that inspires people to say "I'm going to do this, this way." You know Kindred The Family Soul like who's doing that? Being from Philly I don't think people are sitting around and I know there are tons of artists who claim "I'm different" I don't think Philly really tries to do that. I think there's so much influence that in a very organic way it makes that possible. There's so many flavors there people draw on that.

What was it like working with your husband Jake Morelli on Flight Of The Donn T?

I felt like I allowed the music to come in a way I had not, there was so much pressure making *Kaleidoscopic* because I didn't know I was making that particular album. It was very satisfying because I was it happened around the time I was getting married, love blossoming and figuring out love in a lot of different ways, my husband my daughter. Much of it just felt like home my parents are in the house and one thing they do really well is work and create it felt very natural. My husband plays for everyone out there right now and I have tremendous respect for not just guitar and bass playing, he's a multi instrumentalist but his production, his engineering and he respects me as well. We're both professionals and we've both been out there doing it for a little bit and today we both feel really proud for co-writing

and co-producing a lionsâ€™s share of the album itâ€™s literally a labor of love.

[youtube id="Lldv_49z8-o"]

How did you decide to let your face be the focus of expression for your video for "Waiting"?

Whatâ€™s interesting is that "Waiting" and "Midnight" got recorded in the same weekend and the process is so very intimate. idegosuperego media are Eternal Polk and Arthvr Alleyne and they are working on my next video which is "The Last Breath" Questlove remix. Theyâ€™re innovators and we have a really pretty magical chemistry. These are two friend filmmakers that Iâ€™ve known for a very long time and we reconnected recently and just felt like we could do some special things together and we're going to be telling a lot of stories from *Flight Of The Donn T*. The idea came from the mind of Eternal Polk and Arthvr Alleyne you know the three of us, late night in the room it was just what made sense. Itâ€™s interesting because I donâ€™t think we necessarily started there. You feel the piece and thereâ€™s something in the piece lyrically and sonically and Eternal and Arthur wanted to have that line-up with the visual.

The lyrics, I canâ€™t think of less used word than haunting but, when you say "There's a word that silence breathes when the whole world turns away" I think about social issues like the apathy people can have about things like police misconduct, racism, etc. Is that something you were thinking of when you wrote that?

Yes Yes and Yes. The idea was so much apathy thatâ€™s coming to light right now especially with all of the talk around Black Lives Matter, Black women, Womenâ€™s Lives Matter, itâ€™s a whole thing there. It was social but also very personal I wanted to create or write a song that didnâ€™t have the answer or didnâ€™t resolve itself and just really left the

questions out there. And something in "Waiting" and then maybe say a thing or two about the things we don't necessarily want to express. I would say I'm a person of faith at my core I'm spiritual but it doesn't make me super-human. At another point I say, "There's an angel keeping you from everything you need" and when I say that line I don't really believe that but there are moments I think we all have expressed some angst about the way things are. I wanted some of that to come to light and to feel very human.

What kind of shoes are you wearing in the "Midnight" video?

They're a floral pump, they're vintage, I got them in a thrift store. I try to combine lots of different things I will combine the high and the low in a minute and I love that and sometimes even in my dress-up I like for it to be stylish but in a way playful and I think that was a part of that.

[youtube id="FzxDiB0rcmg"]

What is the most personal moment on this record?

There's quite a few songs but I'm going to say "Last Breath." It is a conversation that happened it's what happens after "Waiting" and that's why we are doing the next video for that song. We all get to a place in life where we're not sure how to step forward or what's going to occur but we just step. There's something there that will carry us on or we'll get a new piece of information. I live life in that place a lot right now. I just recently DJ'ed for the D.C. Record Fair which was a tremendous thing for hundreds of people and I was requested to play three more events. I wasn't pursuing that but just based on my history with vinyl, my connection there and the Record Room releasing *Flight Of The Donn T* on vinyl I was requested to DJ this party and there are reputable and well-respected DJs who have given

this event two or three times a year and I learned how to do this and it wasn't intimidating. And I got with my homegirl in Philly Lisa Love, she's a DJ and she's legendary she's very respected by the King Britt's and the Cash Money's but the thing that makes this woman unique is that tons of people can DJ but can you teach. She's a scratch DJ, she's one of Philadelphia's finest and she took me under her wing. I knew I could bring something sonically incredible but I needed the mechanics. I walked into this fair with confidence and I got a lot of incredible feedback.

What's next?

Throughout, I'll be touring/performing and promoting Flight Of The Donn T, DJing, running my label D-tone Victorious and making music videos with my friends IDegosuperego Media (Eternal Polk, Arthvr Alleyne.) They are the video super duo and brain trust behind the Waiting, Midnight and forthcoming Last Breath/Questlove Remix video. I also have a writing project coming out next. It's an anthology called "Behind The Song." The idea is around the age of 12 whether you're a musician or not there's a song that comes into your atmosphere that opens up the world. I am a contributing writer on this project. There are 11 other contributors and it's 6 or 7 writers on the New York Times bestsellers list. It's going to be published by Sourcebooks and has a release date for Fall 2017. My fascination with the written word happened around age 9. It really is home for me which makes this particular project so special.

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