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# Andraé Edward Crouch's Musical and Theological Pursuits: An Analysis of Three Pieces from the *Just Andraé* Album

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ANDRAÉ EDWARD CROUCH'S MUSICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PURSUITS:  
AN ANALYSIS OF THREE PIECES FROM THE *JUST ANDRAÉ* ALBUM

by

Stephen Michael Newby

A thesis submitted in  
partial fulfillment of the  
degree requirements for the  
Master of Arts (Christian Studies)  
at Seattle Pacific Seminary

2019

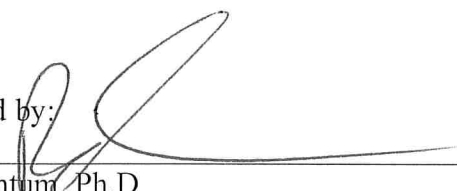
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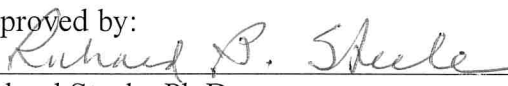
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## Introduction

*“Now write down this **song** and teach it.”*

Deuteronomy 31:19a

*“The best approach in interpreting the song is to feel one’s way into the cultural and historical milieu of the people’s mind and let the song speak to and for you.”*

James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and The Blues*, 33

*“As I walk through real life every day a song will come up.”*

Andraé Edward Crouch, *The Door* Interview with Bob Gersztyn March/April 2004

Each generation of musical artists challenges its audience according to the tenor of the times. Composer and musical prodigy, Andraé Edward Crouch, the father of Modern and Contemporary African American Gospel music, imported blues-infused spirituals, traditional gospel, black hymnody, elements of art song, concert music, jazz and R & B forms into his canon. While his musical craft enlarged artistic boundaries of gospel music’s traditional genre and expressions, his artistic merit and network spanned the breadth and depth of modern secular music culture, inspiring generations of musicians, producers and composers. Does the music of Andraé Crouch offer for us a theology of music? How did Crouch use Christian Scripture in his compositions? What does his musical canon say to us about Ecclesiology, Soteriology and demons, Liberation theology, and Eschatology?

Maeve Louise Heaney posits: “Musicologists and musicians are aware of the challenge involved in even attempting to talk or reason about music, such is the difference between verbal and musical communication. In the words of George Steiner, ‘where we try to speak of music, to speak music, language has us, resentfully, by the throat.’ Theological discourse has been so verbal and conceptual in the Western tradition that this challenge is clear, but unavoidable.”<sup>1</sup> This thesis will analyze Crouch’s work through a variety of musical cultures and theological lenses. The conviction undergirding this work is that particular aspects within the music of Andraé Crouch are inextricably linked to his observations of American life regarding systems of poverty, race, liberty and social justice, as well as his convictions for reaching the lost and challenging the church to evolve spiritually towards a greater advancement of God’s Kingdom. Finally, this thesis will examine particular works within his *Just Andraé* recording as way of engaging a theology of music.

### **Brief Andraé Edward Crouch Biography**

It appeared that gospel music composer, pastor and theologian Andraé Edward Crouch (b. 1 July 1942 in Los Angeles, California; d. 8 January 2015 in Los Angeles, California) was destined to use music to advance God’s Kingdom on earth. Andraé and his twin sister Sandra Elaine were born to Benjamin and Catherine Dorothea Crouch. The family owned and operated Crouch Cleaners in the Compton District in the heart of Los Angeles. “Some of Andraé’s earliest memories were of hearing his father asking his

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<sup>1</sup> Maeve Louise Heaney and Jeremy S. Begbie, *Music as Theology: What Music Says about the Word* (Pickwick Publications - an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), 3.

customers if they had ever met Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup> His father Benjamin was a passionate street preacher evangelist. Eventually, Benjamin engaged in full time ministry as a Church of God in Christ bishop and founded Christ Memorial Church in Pacoima, California.<sup>3</sup>

As a young child, Andraé sang in his father’s church choir, at age eleven, Andraé began playing piano “on his father’s Sunday-night radio broadcasts and performed with the Crouch trio (composed of his brother, sister and himself) at his father’s preaching engagements.”<sup>4</sup> At the age of fourteen, he composed “The Blood Will Never Lose its Power.” The song was popular with both black and white audiences. During high school, Andraé formed a group entitled “the COGICS,” named for Church of God in Christ Singers with organist Billy Preston. After high school, he attended Junior College in San Fernando, then pursued his theological education in Los Angeles at the Life Bible College.<sup>5</sup>

As a young adult, through Campus Crusade for Christ (CCFC), Andraé met Perry Morgan and Billy Thedford. Worshipping in song before their bible studies, he led them both to the Christian Faith. This trio became the core of Crouch’s new musical group: The Disciples. Producer Ralph Carmichael of the new Light label worked with Andraé for a 1968 release of the group’s first album, *Take the Message Everywhere*.<sup>6</sup> His twin sister Sandra, who had worked with Janis Joplin’s Full Tilt Boogie Band, joined the Disciples in 1971.

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<sup>2</sup> W. K. McNeil, *Encyclopedia of American Gospel Music* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 92.

<sup>3</sup> Bob Darden, *People Get Ready!: A New History of Black Gospel Music* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 277.

<sup>4</sup> Eileen Southern, *Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians*, 1st edition. (Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 1982), 88.

<sup>5</sup> Southern, *Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians*, 88.

<sup>6</sup> Darden, *People Get Ready!*, 278.

In the 1970's, Crouch found great success and recognition after being awarded nine Grammy Awards. His ensemble was multicultural and multi-ethnic. Andraé added to this gospel sound a variety of America's music stylings: funk, rock, rhythm and blues, soul, disco, and elements of western European orchestral music as well. Other members of the Disciples were: Sherman Andrus (until 1968-71), Rubin Fernandez (1968-71), Tramaine [Davis] Hawkins (1971-72), Bill Maxwell (1972-78), Danniebelle Hall (1973-78), Fletch Wiley (1973-76), Bea Carr (1976-78), Jimmie Davis (1976-78), Michael Escalante (1976-78), and James Felix (1976-78).<sup>7</sup>

After the Disciples disbanded, Bill Maxwell continued as a music producer in partnership with Andraé for several more years. Later, a formidable cadre of talented sacred and secular singers and instrumentalists would join Andraé on many recordings. Crouch launched the careers of the Winans, Kyrstal Murden, and Walter and Tramaine Hawkins. His works have been recorded by various popular music artists such as: Paul Simon, Elvis Presley, Barbra Mandrell and Elton John.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, "he became the first African American to attract a large white following in early Contemporary Christian Music (CCM)."<sup>9</sup> And, "his songs were translated into more than twenty languages and he continued to play to sold out concerts around the world."<sup>10</sup>

In the early 1990's, both of his parents died of cancer and when Andraé was offered his father's position in the church, Crouch accepted, but refused to take a salary.

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<sup>7</sup> Don Cusic, ed., *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music: Pop, Rock, and Worship* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2009), 92.

<sup>8</sup> McNeil, *Encyclopedia of American Gospel Music*, 93.

<sup>9</sup> Cusic, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*, 92.

<sup>10</sup> Cusic, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*, 92.



He became Senior Pastor where his father served and renamed the congregation New Christ Memorial Church.<sup>11</sup>

“In 1998 he was inducted into the Gospel Hall of Fame. He returned to the recording studio and formed his own label, Slave, in 2002.”<sup>12</sup> Crouch, who suffered from ill health himself in later years, gradually quit recording and touring. He lived off his royalties and faithfully shepherded that congregation until his death in 2015. Currently his twin sister Sandra serves the congregation as Senior Pastor.

## **Brief Historical Overview of Black Religious Sacred Music**

### *Spirituals*

The term “spirituals” was first used before the American Civil War to identify a previously unknown music emerging from African American communities, both enslaved and free, that incorporated elements of African music and themes and narratives from the Christian Scripture. At the time most (white) observers dismissed them as religiously oriented folk music; only later did scholars recognize that many spirituals actually had a second dimension, what Henry Louis Gates calls “double-voicedness”—another simultaneous message of hope and even rebellion known only to other enslaved people. The “true” spiritual is always improvised and is rarely sung the same way twice. The singing of true spirituals continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly by African Americans in the rural South. When a spiritual has been “arranged” in the SATB western

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<sup>11</sup> Darden, *People Get Ready!*, 281.

<sup>12</sup> Cusic, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*, 94.

European classical music tradition and orchestrations, they more properly are termed “jubilee” or “arranged” spirituals.<sup>13</sup>

Negro Spirituals were communal works. Today these works still enrich the lives of millions. Constructing and modeling for their communities a discipline of Christian formation in community, spirituals are theologically prophetic and socially political with their moral compass articulating ethics, holiness, righteousness and justice. Nonetheless, these musical works have migrated from the work fields of the South to the concert halls of the world. Spirituals fused the African and American theological, spiritual, and lyrical components that characterized its community. The sizeable themes and range of spirituals include elements of black subservient relationships with whites, the youthful resiliency of Africans, recognition of Christian and legal hypocrisy, theological inquiries, religious development, occupational singing and the underground railroad.<sup>14</sup>

Spirituals ask the question: Who is Jesus Christ for us today? The Black community seeks to see itself as image bearers of God and Jesus as not only Jewish, but, Black. Jesus is Savior and redeemer to all people who accept him as Lord. Therefore, regarding the musical role of spirituals in the Black community, there is no distinction between sacred and secular. Theologian James Cone describes the functionality and importance of performing spirituals in sacred gatherings and in the work fields:

The Black tradition breaks down the false distinctions between the sacred and the secular and invites us to look for Christ’s meaning in the spirituals and the blues, folklore and sermon. Christ’s meaning is not only expressed in formal church doctrine but also in the rhythm, the beat, and the swing of life, as the people respond to the vision that stamps dignity upon their personhood. It does not matter

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<sup>13</sup> John Lovell, *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame : The Story of How the Afro-American Spiritual Was Hammered Out* (New York: Paragon House, 1986), 129–200.

<sup>14</sup> Lovell, *Black Song*, 129–200.

whether the vision is received on Saturday night or Sunday morning or whether the interpreter of the vision is bluesman B.B. King or the Rev. C.L. Franklin.<sup>15</sup>

Cone further reflects that, “The social context, scripture, and tradition operate together to enable the people of God to move actively and reflectively with Christ in the struggle of freedom.”<sup>16</sup>

Negro Spirituals narrate Black life alongside the life of Christ. According to Cone, “the ‘Blackness of Christ’ is not simply a statement about skin color, but rather, the transcendent affirmation that God has not ever, no not ever, left the oppressed alone in struggle. He was with them in Pharaoh’s Egypt, is with them in America, Africa and Latin America and will come in the end of time to consummate fully their human freedom.”<sup>17</sup> This freedom idea, found in Negro spirituals, radically charges the community with a faith of personal ownership declaring “Jesus is mine!”

### *Black Hymnody*

During the pre-Harlem Renaissance era, Black hymnody presented a growing intelligence and literacy amongst the population. While yet never fully dismissing the performance practice of improvisation, the increasing ability to read and compose sermons and songs gave rise to ‘theologically sound’ and biblically astute prayers, hymns, homilies, and sermons used for worship gatherings. Horace Clarence Boyer, in an essay titled, “Gospel Blues: Origin and History” stated:

After Emancipation, spirituals were gradually laid aside by some black church leaders who sought to elevate the musical tastes of their congregations by employing mainstream hymns of white Protestants for Sunday services. This led increasingly to the performance of spirituals at informal devotional prayer

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<sup>15</sup> James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, Rev Sub edition. (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1997), 105.

<sup>16</sup> Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 125.

<sup>17</sup> Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 125.

meetings rather than at formal worship services in the late nineteenth century. These songs were indiscriminately called church songs, revival hymns, missionary hymns, or tabernacle hymns. They were not unlike slave jubilee spirituals in structure, although in performance they were sung with greater rhythmic variety and with more tertian harmony than slave songs or Protestant Anglo-American Hymns.<sup>18</sup>

It was during this period that Black congregants began to support their gatherings with hymnody, which presented a new era of liturgics. Black hymnody's performance practices, however, began to evolve into the creation of gospel blues. Charles Tindley, composer of "Stand By Me" (1905), gave birth to a new hymnody infused with a blues codification. Thomas Dorsey, whose early composition, "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" and "Peace in the Valley," remain popular in hymnals into the present day, did much to popularize the new musical form. These pieces were hymns framed with blues chord progressions. According to Boyer, composer Lillian Bowles further developed the genre in 1939. Her composition entitled, "God's Gonna Separate the Wheat from the Tares," appropriates everyday language of the people. This musical nuance is an extension of the tradition found in spirituals.<sup>19</sup>

The new hymnody continued during the 1950s and 1960s. These gospel blues hymns—also called gospel music—were written by a cohort of composers such as Kenneth Morris ("Blessed and Brought Up by the Lord"), James Cleveland ("He's the Joy of My Salvation"), and Edwin Hawkins ("O Happy Day"). These compositions were

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<sup>18</sup> Horace Clarence Boyer, "Gospel Blues: Origin and History," in *New Perspectives on Music: Essays in Honor of Eileen Southern*, by Eileen Southern, Josephine Wright, and Samuel A. Floyd, Detroit Monographs in Musicology/Studies in Music ; No. 11 (Warren, Mich.: Harmonie Park Press, 1992), 125–26.

<sup>19</sup> Boyer, "Gospel Blues: Origin and History."

progenies of hymns, spirituals and blues. The performance practice of these hymns encouraged extension of musical form, as well as vocal and instrumental improvisation.<sup>20</sup>

### *Fusion of Black Sacred and Secular Soundings*

That said, the fusion of black sacred and secular soundings actually continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century on several, sometimes widely divergent, fronts. According to historian Eileen Southern, Harry Thacker Burleigh was the earliest of the black nationalistic concert music composers. His sacred music and arrangements of Negro Spirituals for solo voice are remarkably progressive. In 1917, he was awarded “the Spingarn Achievement Medal for his excellence in creative music.”<sup>21</sup> Burleigh’s genius lies in his discernment and determination to capture and document in musical score the spiritual essence of Black sacred song. His distinguished canon of musical literature has influenced composers of all nationalities.

In 1931, several significant Black musical explorations were in motion. Duke Ellington’s tenure at New York’s Cotton Club would fund his musical creativity for the beautiful sacred sonorities that would ultimately be found in his sacred services. Giving thanksgiving to God, composer William Grant Still, the Dean of Afro-American composers, premieres the first Black symphony, titled “Afro-American Symphony.” In 1933, gospel hymnodist Lucie Eddie Campbell released her seminal fusion of gospel and blues, “He’ll Understand and Say Well Done.” She continued to unify Black Baptists, crossing the gender leadership gap. Campbell also invested in the career of “The Lady

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<sup>20</sup> Boyer, “Gospel Blues: Origin and History.”

<sup>21</sup> Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, Second. (W. W. Norton & Company, 1983), 284.

from Philadelphia,” Marian Anderson. Programming a variety of art songs and Black sacred songs, Anderson’s critically acclaimed concert music career was remarkable during a period when few African American performers were allowed on American concert stages. She debuted career in Berlin in 1933, a performance that was followed by “two years of successful concertizing in the leading capitals of Europe.”<sup>22</sup> In sum, the 1930’s were years of artistic renewal and renaissance in every musical genre for black composers. Sacred works composed during this decade produced significant, innovative black theologies and musical lineages for its participants and those who followed them. Another well-known composer who created sacred concert music was Duke Ellington, in 1958, Ellington began collaborating with Mahalia Jackson, “the best-chronicled gospel artist of all time,”<sup>23</sup> to practice his theology of sacred song. His sacred services of 1965 radically imported jazz, both instrumental and vocal, and tap dancing into the Catholic mass.

By the end of World War II, Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky had created new music compositional approaches to atonality. While the Western-European classical school developed their music composition school on the West Coast, similarly, on the West Coast in the black modern gospel music composition school, Andraé Crouch, Edwin Hawkins, Walter Hawkins, and James Cleveland, cultivated a new modern gospel music thought culture. In the late 1960s, this community of faithful gospel music composers held to a musical aesthetic of possibilities,<sup>24</sup> Christian theologies and

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<sup>22</sup> Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 422.

<sup>23</sup> Darden, *People Get Ready!*, 210.

<sup>24</sup> Crawley states, “Imagination is necessary for thinking and breathing into the capacities of infinite alternatives. Blackpentecostal aesthetics, this work will argue, are but one enactment of alternative modes, alternative strategies, for organizing, performing and producing thought. In a very real and material way,

evangelical yearnings. Each decade of composers/songwriters had their burgeoning community.

### **A Contextualization of African American Sacred Music: Imagination, Language, Liberation Theology and Meaning in Music**

*“Black History is a spiritual.”*

(James Cone, *The Spiritual and the Blues*, 33)

*In a theological analysis of language, one handles the word of God as public property at play within its biological, historical, cultural, and linguistic environment.”*

(Philip E. Stolfus, *Theology as Performance*, 171)

*“Blackpentecostal Breath is not about resolve but about openness to worlds, to experiences, to ideas. Blackpentecostal Breath does not so much arrive at conclusions as it tarries with concepts.”*

(Ashton T. Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*, 3)

African American musical creations engulf the world with their artistic wonder.

Since the times of the North American slave trade, the nature of Black art and its

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*Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* is a meditation on the violence that infused and produced the occasion for Eric Garner’s (I can’t breathe) announcement.“ (p.3) This writer is aware of the politics of racism and white gaze upon black life. Perhaps it is through a theological imagination and hope found through aesthetics of possibility that we find healing, freedom, love, faith and hope through the musical works of Crouch. It appears, in the wake of white gaze and racism, Crouch wants to create a style of music that brings diverse cultures together in unity.

performance practices have always been community driven and liturgical in execution. Whether sacred or secular, Black sacred music is critically applauded and acknowledged worldwide. Experiencing Black sacred music as Negro Spirituals, laments, victory and shout choruses, Black hymnody and gospel (traditional or contemporary), hip-hop, and jazz, or westernized concert music, the listener will take in a vast array of Black narratives that work to conquer oppression and perpetuate the healing power of God's Spirit. A prevalent theological trope in Black music is the notion of the power of words and their transformative meaning.

But what about Imagination? Theologian Walter Brueggemann proposes "the ancient prophets are in fact imaginers; and those of us who follow in their wake are imaginers after them."<sup>25</sup> Music itself is prophetic. It declares and decrees that which has not been seen yet. Music invites us to contemplate and imagine. It stirs the imagination of what could be. Ashon T. Crawley invites us to rethink and reimagine Black Life. He states:

I believe in Black Study and *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* is about the movement toward and emergence of collective intellectual projects... *Blackpentecostal Breath* argues that blackness is released into the world to disrupt the institutionalization and abstraction of thought that produces the categorical distinctions of disciplinary knowledge... Imagination is necessary for thinking and breathing into the capacities of infinite alternatives. Blackpentecostal aesthetics, this work will argue, are but one enactment of alternative modes, alternative strategies for organizing, performing and producing thought.<sup>26</sup>

Is this an ideology of Black thought—what to say, when to say it, and to whom should we say it? Is there a way to make sense of sacred Black music in terms of its

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<sup>25</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Practice of Prophetic Imagination: Preaching an Emancipating Word*, First Edition edition. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 24.

<sup>26</sup> Ashon T. Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*, 1 edition. (New York: American Literatures Initiative, 2016), 3.



meaning? Can we identify elements in music that matter to terms of meaning? James Cone's *The Spirituals and the Blues* argues the effectiveness of Black music as community music — anyone involved in Black music experiences some form of community or attempt at being in community. A universal theme in Black music is about the idea of coming together and being together. In *Music as Theology*, theologian Maeve Louise Heaney notes that a definition of music as universal is inaccurate.<sup>27</sup> Music in and of itself is not universal, yet, music has a fundamental universal way of exploring the meaning and the context of others.

James Cone discusses this idea in the context of a theology of liberation. He poses the question:

How do we distinguish our words about God from God's Word, our wishes from God's will, our dreams and aspirations from the work of the Spirit? This is a crucial problem for Christian theology. Unless this question is answered satisfactorily, black theologians' distinction between white theology and Black theology is vulnerable to the white contention that the latter is merely the ideological justification of radical black politics.<sup>28</sup>

It appears to this author that a theology of Black sacred song, indeed, that of any musical form, is always tied to the intentions of its contributors. The very nature of musical mechanics serves to articulate Black thought. The belief that God is trinity, God is balanced, and God desires holiness for all humanity defines itself into musical rudiments in Black song. Gospel music's theology points to a unification of purpose not a unity of differences. Musical elements (melody, harmony, rhythm and time) are different by design. Yet, these elements work cohesively delivering a musical message. All these

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<sup>27</sup> "Can we identify universal elements present in music that offer keys to the intelligibility of our common human nature? The affirmation of music as a universal language on one level, "makes sense" in that music is an intrinsic part of all human life." (Heaney and Begbie, *Music as Theology*, 65)

<sup>28</sup> Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 77.

musical rudiments or elements are critical towards the existence of music. Whether we experience the pentatonic melismatic melodious singing within Black spirituals, the thunderous vocal triadic polyphonic gospel harmonies or the piercing backbeat of rhythmic intensified groove, African American sacred song exudes theology. One may argue that musical elements and its rudiments instantiate for us theological considerations. For example, when a choir sings a triad, does the character of that triad or tri-chordal collection, whether diatonic, modal, quintal, quartal, dissonant or consonant harmonies, suggest a Trinitarian doctrine? Does our involvement with singing any organization of particular pitches encourage us to work at forming a sense of unity within our humanity, unified with God's Kingdom purposes, not to change a particular essence within our humanity, but to rearrange how we think about being human? How do we engage others in singing together? Are we doing theology together as we sing together?

This process of theologizing our musical participation helps us to live out what we believe is true. We practice music. Music puts in practice its participants. According to theologian Jeremy Begbie, music is a practice.<sup>29</sup> Black sacred song exists to practice the art of becoming liberated and living in community with a purpose. Hip Hop culture and rap music empowers its participants to be fully presence in community. For example, Hip Hop and rap are more than a musical genre. For many, it is a way of living life. In her treatise on "The Promiscuous Gospel: The Religious Complexity and Theological Multiplicity of Rap Music," Monica Miller observes Hip Hop's future engagement in the community. She writes: "The cultural productions of Hip Hop cannot be perceived as solely passive products waiting to be co-opted in the service of religious and institutional

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<sup>29</sup> Don E. Saliers, *Music and Theology* (Abingdon Press, 2010), 19.

market maintenance rather, they call us to listen, to begin the story again as they invite us into the messy, creative and chaotic reality of every (black) life.”<sup>30</sup> This method of storytelling is similar to the First Century church sharing the gospel. They practiced, in community, an apostolic way of being together in fellowship, breaking bread and praising God. This practice is liberating.

### **Gospel Music as Liberating**

Gospel music historian Bernice Johnson Reagon describes “African American gospel music as a twentieth-century phenomenon, born of a people moving from rural communities to the urban centers of the country.”<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, while this upward mobility, articulated and lived out through the great Black northern migration in the early 1900s, was a move for the people, it exemplified a type of spirited leadership that would refuse to succumb to the inhumane community disarticulation and economic famine blacks endured while being enslaved and reconstituted as share croppers in the American South. That same spirited leadership reemerged during the insurrection in 1967, the riots of black urban America.

In *God of the Oppressed*, James Cone begins by telling the story of his time in Detroit during the civil right riots, claiming: “*My concern was intensified during the black insurrection in Detroit in the summer of 1967. I moved the year before to teach in Adrian, Michigan, just seventy miles from Detroit. I remember the feeling of dread and*

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<sup>30</sup> Monica Miller, “The Promiscuous Gospel: The Religious Complexity and Theological Multiplicity of Rap Music,” in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship*, by James Abington, vol. 2 of (Chicago, Illinois: Gia Publications, 2014), 629.

<sup>31</sup> Bernice Johnson Reagon, *We’ll Understand It Better By and By: Pioneering African American Gospel Composers* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 1992), 4.

*absurdity as I asked myself, what has all this to do with Jesus Christ?*”<sup>32</sup> James Cone challenged a particular status quo within the North American church. While most white American Christians sat idly on the sidelines of oppression, watching Black Americans fight for the struggle of equality, Cone sat on the precipice, considering what the appropriate theological response might be. He decided to speak the truth in love and write the historical narrative within the social context of American’s civil rights history. He states, “My point is that one’s social and historical context decides not only the questions we address to God but also the mode and form of the answers given to the questions. That is the central thesis of this book. And I intend to illustrate it through theological themes, with particular reference to the contrasting ways that black and white people think about God.”<sup>33</sup> Black Liberation theology is freedom from, freedom to, freedom for, and freedom with any type of industry or cultural context that will shape, form and frame a new constitution for the well-being of stated Black community. Within a gospel music context, liberation theology is a music modifier. It is a musical idea nuancing liberation theology that imports “freedom” into the creative process.

Andraé Crouch winsomely responded to the 1967 insurrection in America with a music to liberate all God’s people. To theologize or live out a multi-ethnic Christian community in spiritual formation, was breaking ground for a racially divided North American Christian Church. Crouch realized very early into his musical ministry and as a minister and songwriter-composer, that the racial tensions might be dismantled through the liberating power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. According to James Cone “There is no liberation independent of Jesus’ past, present, and future coming. He is the ground of our

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<sup>32</sup> Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 14.

present freedom to struggle and the source of our hope that the vision disclosed in our historical fight against oppression will be fully realized in God's future."<sup>34</sup> Crouch was interested in building a beloved community. In an interview with Bob Gersztyn, Andraé Crouch, reflecting on his experiences in the 1960s, amid the cultural, political and social revolution and how it serves his ministry and music, shares his viewpoint on race and God:

A lot of my music never addressed those issues. My music was very inspirational and dealt with a person's one-to-one relationship with God and people that felt that relationship. I wrote, and I still write about me or we, rather than saying "you should do this Mr. White man," or "you need to feel this way." I say "we are going to do this," or "take me back." I'd either say, "Join with me, people of God," or "Friend, you should know the Lord," or I would address myself. A lot of times politically I wouldn't get involved, because I felt like there were enough people doing that, and I felt that if a person had a really strong relationship with God things would change in his surroundings, because the way he would react to things would make a difference.<sup>35</sup>

Crouch was concerned with persons one-on-one relationship with God. He wanted to see people liberated. His composing-songwriting creative process was liberating. He chose to disrupt the political and social structures through his process of doing the work of the ministry. Through his music, wherever he had performed, the environment changed into a space of healing, reconciliation and love. As James Cone was writing *God of the Oppressed*, Andraé Crouch was composing and arranging music for his debut work, *Take the Message Everywhere* (c.1967). Crouch knew racial tensions were increasing. Yet, he focused on the possibilities of what God's Kingdom could look like rather than the politics of race and racism. For Crouch, he wanted to sing the gospel story with a larger imagination and creativity. He wanted his innovative form of gospel

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<sup>34</sup> Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 127.

<sup>35</sup> Bob Gersztyn, "Andraé's Music Will Never Lose Its Power," *The Door*, April 2004.

music to impact culture. It appears that Crouch believed if his music was theologically sound, liberating, attractive and creative, people would hear the gospel of Jesus Christ differently. In turn, his audience would respond to America's race challenges by living together in the peace of Jesus Christ.

### **Andraé Crouch's Influences: An Evolution of Church of God in Christ Worship Music Traditions, Gatherings and Pneumatology—Imagination—Breathing into Music Creative Aesthetic Possibilities**

The COGIC, a Pentecostal denominational tradition, in its worship gatherings, through spirited acts of imagination and creativity, allowed its musicians to discover, pioneer, and practice artistic risk-taking. COGIC musicians have always taken gospel music to new levels of creativity. According to gospel music historian Horace Clarence Boyer, the Church of God in Christ was an “evangelical movement which swept through the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, which coincided with and directly inspired the performance style of black gospel music.”<sup>36</sup> Church of God in Christ musicians with creative musical performance practices complimented and served alongside entrepreneurial spiritual leadership in the pulpit. Charles Harrison Mason, one of the founders of the organization in 1897 which was to become the Church of God in Christ, received word that the Holy Ghost had fallen in Los Angeles. In 1906, he attended a revival in Los Angeles conducted by Elder W. J. Seymour. Mason received the Holy Ghost and returned to Memphis. There he conducted services that were highly emotional: speaking in tongues, shouting, dancing, trances and supernatural visions. These

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<sup>36</sup> Horace Clarence Boyer, “Afro-American Church Music” (Lecture, UMass Amherst, February 1984).

gatherings promoted and cultivated a new theology of the Holy Spirit, with new aesthetics of possibility.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, in Dallas, Texas, Samuel M. Crouch, uncle of Andraé Crouch, became the First Assistant Bishop of new the denomination COGIC. He travelled all over the United States planting COGIC churches. Bishop Samuel Crouch (1896-1976) met Blind Arizona Dranes (c.1905-c.1960). According to Boyer, “In Texas he began an association with Dranes that lasted throughout her career as a recording singer.”<sup>38</sup> Later Bishop Crouch landed in Los Angeles, planting Emmanuel Church of God in Christ. In the early 1960s Andraé Crouch was the pianist for his uncle Bishop Samuel M. Crouch. Andraé had to have an encounter with singer, song leader and pianist, Blind Arizona Dranes. Considered as the mother and founder of Pentacostal piano performance practices, she carried a humble mantle of creativity.<sup>39</sup> There had to be a new imaginative musical accompaniment for these newly inspired COGIC worship gatherings. This type of stylistic borrowing from secular music traditions was highly valued in the COGIC tradition. Such creativity and imagination had to have influenced Andraé Crouch.

Fusing secular and sacred musical genres for the glory of God might have been a way Crouch had reimagined his own music. As we will explore this theory, we will determine his creative songwriting process was framed with a passion for sharing his faith, liberation theology, eschatology and the pursuit of new possibilities. The notion of new possibilities has always been in the minds and music of many 20<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>37</sup> Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> “Her piano playing was a combination of ragtime, with its two beats to the bar feel, octave passages in the left hand, exaggerated syncopation in the right hand, and heavy full and ragged (syncopated) chords of barrelhouse piano, and the more traditional chords of the standard Protestant hymn.” Horace Clarence Boyer, *The Golden Age of Gospel*, Music in American Life (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 37.

<sup>39</sup> Boyer, *The Golden Age of Gospel*, 37–38.

composers, including, for example, American classical music composer Aaron Copland: “In the art of making music, creation and interpretation are indissolubly linked, more so than in any of the other arts, with the possible exception of dancing. Both these activities—creation and interpretation—demand an imaginative mind—that is self-evident.”<sup>40</sup> Like Boyer, Darden and others, I believe that the highly emotionally charged Holy Spirit driven COGIC worship gatherings have historically been incubators for freedom, creativity and imaginative possibilities with sacred music. As the Apostle Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 3:17: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” The Spirit’s work in creation, I believe, anticipates the work of redemption.

“The Creator Spirit brought forth intelligent creatures for communication and fellowship with God.”<sup>41</sup> It appears to me that Crouch believed that God’s voice through music speaks to people everywhere. “The Spirit meets people not only in religious spheres but everywhere—in the natural world, in the give and take of relationships, in the systems that structure human life.”<sup>42</sup> Add to Pinnock’s formula the conception of imagination. “Imagination is necessary for thinking and breathing into the capacities of infinite alternatives”<sup>43</sup> for reaching souls for Christ.

It appears the nature of COGIC worship gatherings commands our full participation. In the Spirit, we dance, shout and sing. The Spirit calls us to breath together. As numerous participants have attested, at Andraé Crouch concerts, whatever

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<sup>40</sup> Aaron Copland, *Music and Imagination*, New Ed edition. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 40.

<sup>41</sup> Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (InterVarsity Press, 1999), 83.

<sup>42</sup> Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 85.

<sup>43</sup> Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 3.



your cultural context or musical background, he insisted that everyone participate. To accomplish this, Crouch would use call and response musical tropes, one of oldest forms of artistic engagements, as a tool for surveying his audience. The work of Samuel A. Floyd's, *The Power of Black Music*, examines the object of call and response as a signifying symbol.<sup>44</sup> Humans doing art together comprises the engagement of individuals and groups of people practicing *being* together. The engagement of call and response ignites a multiplicity of aesthetic performative possibilities. Time after time, Crouch played on and emphasized that approach.

With Crouch's untimely passing, it is impossible to understand all of his musical intentions. However, Crawley said that he believes that "Blackpentecostal Breath" suggests the fact that racial categorization and distinction is but one way to think the world. One way to consider organizing, and racial categorization and distinction is, in many and fundamental ways, about the disruption and interruption of the capacity to "breathe in the flesh."<sup>45</sup> Therefore, I believe, it is necessary to re-imagine ways of interpreting Crouch's music. Imaginative theological stylistic expressions and this idea of converging artistic genres through human relationships, aesthetics of possibilities, historical artifacts and narratives, present different modalities of expression, performativity and theological inquiry.

In the late 1960s, Crouch intentionally chose to collaborate with men and women who were non-black. An interview with his former drummer and co-producer, Bill

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<sup>44</sup> Samuel A. Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 226, <https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195109757.001.0001/acprof-9780195109757>.

<sup>45</sup> Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 3.

Maxwell, offers us insight on how Crouch, heard the music in his creative mind, thought about the theology in the music and subsequently how he created music from secular cultural contexts.

According to Maxwell, Crouch wanted to work with excellent talented musicians.<sup>46</sup> He chose to surround himself with great artists because he constantly wanted to stretch his musical and theological imagination. Crouch was a composer and songwriter in the oral tradition. John Miles Foley presents ethnomusicologist Albert Lord's theory and aesthetic of comparative oral traditions. Foley quotes Lord:

A singer well established in the oral technique is unlikely to be attracted to reading and writing; likewise, even one who does not appropriate the new medium may still continue to compose orally if he is thoroughly enough steeped in the prior oral tradition. On the other hand, a singer who is not secure in the oral technique, no matter what his age, when the newer ideas come to him, will succumb quite easily to the concept of the fixed text, and he will rapidly lose whatever ability he had in the oral composition.<sup>47</sup>

Crouch's historical narrative and legacy in the COGIC musical tradition, oral skills and techniques, spiritual concern for souls, imagination in the Spirit and ways of engaging others outside his ethnicity is a recipe for new possibilities. And Crouch, in his pivotal *Just Andraé* recording, re-imagined telling the gospel story in song. In this recording, through importing new chord progressions, framing theological ideas with new secular stylings and working with a community of creative people, he was able to stretch his imagination towards new creative aesthetic of possibilities.

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<sup>46</sup> Bill Maxwell, "The Bill Maxwell Interview," interview by Robert Darden and Stephen Michael Newby, 18 May 2019.

<sup>47</sup> John Miles Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Indiana University Press, 1988), 45.

## Andraé Crouch as Composer/Theologian/Cultural Conversation Facilitator

*<sup>19</sup> Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.*

*Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.*

Ephesians 5:19 New International Version (NIV)

*“In the 1960s-1970s Andraé Crouch was the only Black modern gospel music composer leading an engaging conversation with world.”*

Robert Darden, Gospel Music Historian

Just as his father Bishop Crouch shared Christ with everyone who walked into his dry-cleaning business in the early days of Andraé’s youth,<sup>48</sup> it appears Andraé desperately wanted to share Christ with others. For Crouch this process of composing songs well and evangelizing others was doing good theology. We need to find a way to discuss this process of fusing secular and sacred musical styles into one’s own compositional process. For in the musical world of Andraé Crouch, both sacred and secular domains speak to each other in the Spirit. Musicologist and theologian, Jon Michael Spencer, offers a way to think about the process of analyzing Black gospel music compositions: “The task of discerning and articulating theological meanings in music involves an analysis of both religious music and music that is not overtly religious by text or usage, in order to determine how music expresses and mediates the dominant values of a culture and how music is an experience of encounter with whatever is taken to be divine or of ultimate importance.”<sup>49</sup> Crouch moved beyond mainstream gospel

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<sup>48</sup> Darden, *People Get Ready!*, 276.

<sup>49</sup> Jon Michael Spencer, ed., *Theomusicology* (Duke University Press, 1994), 13.

stylings, by importing funk, jazz, rock and roll, soul, R&B, western European classical, and global musical stylings and sensibilities into ways of engaging and creating art.

Every artistic and compositional school heralds a musical thought, theory and aesthetic. As mentioned before, for example, the destruction of tonality and the presentation of atonal systems in 12 tone serialism emerged between World Wars I and II. Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky, both relocated to Los Angeles, California by the 1930s, created new music compositional approaches to atonality. In the late 1960's, a community of faithful gospel music composers in California, Crouch, Hawkins and Cleveland, thought about their musical possibilities: their Christian theologies and evangelical yearnings. We hear it in their music. They had their own burgeoning community.<sup>50</sup> In critical discussions over the decade of 1967-1977, gospel music fused eclectic sacred and secular sounds of musical progressions, grooves, ecumenical theologies, and multicultural reconciliation sensibilities. Crouch's musical compositions developed from spawning and surging of musical ideas and values, working together in communities with Black, White and Latino musicians. Whether Andraé Crouch or his drummer Maxwell were thinking concept album or not, the *Just Andraé* album responds to culture in much the same way. Through the tracks, we hear Crouch's influencers such as The Beatles *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Jesus Movement praise songs, and Crouch's willingness to directly address salvation, the deity of Jesus Christ, eschatology, angels and demonic activity in the world. In an interview with Robert Darden, Bill Maxwell and myself, Andraé Crouch's musical influences, songwriting

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<sup>50</sup> Jean Kidula, "The Gospel of Andrae Crouch," in *California Soul*, ed. Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and Eddie S. Meadows (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 298, <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520206281/california-soul>.

process, relationships with other members of The Disciples and the surrounding community of artists was discussed in detail. Bill Maxwell joined Andraé Crouch in July 1972 after the release of the two previous albums, *Take the Message Everywhere*, with Sherman Andrus, Billy Thedford and Reuben Hernandez, and *I'm Gonna Keep on Singing*. By the second album, Andrus and Hernandez had departed and were replaced by Andraé's twin sister, Sandra.

### **The Just Andraé Recording**

As creativity flourished in the Harlem Renaissance Era, giving birth to a new Black ecclesiology, a new Jesus movement, the 1970s, birthed a new multiethnic ecclesiology. This was fertile ground for Crouch's musical and lyrical explorations. Andraé's community of artists, multi-ethnic and eclectic, "used both acoustic and electronic instruments (including synthesizers) in his accompanying bands."<sup>51</sup> Additionally, Crouch "was among the first gospel artists to leave behind the lyrics of the spirituals and Dorsey and devote entire songs to praising and worshiping God. The emphasis has shifted from dealing humanity's problems and ultimate glorifying an Almighty God."<sup>52</sup>

The COGIC tradition success was groundbreaking. It had continued to develop important composers in the black gospel tradition. In critical discussions of the decade of 1967-1977, gospel music fused eclectic sacred and secular sounds of musical progressions, grooves, ecumenical theologies, and multicultural reconciliation

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<sup>51</sup> Southern, *Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians*, 88.

<sup>52</sup> Darden, *People Get Ready!*, 280.

sensibilities to create something altogether new. The style and success of Crouch's musical compositions brought together Black, White and Latino musicians who were at the forefront of their musical and lyrical innovations in secular and sacred music industries.

Three pieces from Crouch's *Just Andraé* album in 1972, in particular, exemplify and illustrate how his musical and ecumenical collaborations with a multi-ethnic creative community allowed him to flourish musically. We propose to examine how Crouch fused secular and sacred musical styles, thus, creating a new sound: modern gospel music.

Published in the *Just Andraé* liner notes of the album is a dedication and words of appreciation from Andraé's parents:

*Dear Andraé,*

*What a blessing it is to be the parents of three talented children who love the Lord. We remember when you, your elder brother Benjamin, and your twin sister Sandra were a cute little trio singing in Sunday School. Little did we ever dream that this would be the beginning of a glorious life of singing for Christ.*

*About the time you gave your heart to the Lord, at age of nine, your father was appointed to a little church in the canyon, and we needed a piano player. He prayed that God would give you the gift of playing the piano, and within two weeks you were picking out the melody of "What A Friend We have in Jesus."*

*Through the next years Jesus did become your Special Friend. Your inborn love for music inspired you to practice every morning before going to school, and the day always ended with the ringing of the piano. Sandra would join you with her accompaniment on the nearest pie pan. Through the years she has always been ready to give her approval on the words of a song or offer a suggestion in the beautiful way that only she can. Son, God has given you many songs that thrill the hearts of people as they hear the message that Jesus loves them. We are so happy that Sandra has joined with in your ministry, trading in her pie pan for a tambourine, and singing with you for Jesus. Our hearts are joyful when we think that you've visited thirty-two countries in the last two and a half years and have recorded three LP's with the Disciples. And now this fourth album is YOU, "JUST ANDRAÉ," and it gives us a special joy.*

*We really miss you and Sandra. Benjamin and his family send their love. He is really busy with the church now, helping us faithfully.*

*Please take care of your sister. I know you two don't eat right. When you come home, I'll cook your favorite meal - fried chicken, mustard greens and rice.*

*One more thing, Son. Remember that we love you, but more than that, we love the God who gave you to us. He has given you a very special gift, that of being able to communicate His love through music. We pray that you remember that blessings are given so that you may again give to others. Your giving in music will bring a song to many a sad heart, a smile to many a troubled face, and hope to many who have lost their way. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!  
Love, Mom and Dad<sup>53</sup>*

*You Ain't Livin'*

*Just Andraé* opens with a track entitled: “You Ain't Livin'.” This song features echoes of Motown and west coast R&B styles in a medium tempo rock groove. The work begins with an opening piano ostinato in an Eb Dorian mode. With the Hammond B3 organ entrance coupled with the trap set and tambourine, the ostinato morphs into a vamp. A soaring electric guitar improvises in dialog with Andraé's piano improvisations. This is a jam session. Outside the COGIC tradition, conservative black church denominations such as Baptist culture in the early 1970's probably would not have approved of such improvisation. But there are tropes of sacred music culture in this soulful sound. After 21 bars, the jam session meets a syncopated plagal cadence, one of the classic “AMEN” cadences in the ecclesiology of the African American church, the listener to hear the meaning and messaging in song. Crouch instinctively fuses plagal cadences, classic Dorian modality, Black church improvisation, vamps, call and responses, tape deck echo effects on his voice. The 1970s pop music female background vocals (BVG's) voicings, with the gospel message of salvation and personal experience with the savior Jesus Christ, illumines the listener Crouch's quest for musical excellence in

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<sup>53</sup> Andraé Crouch, *Just Andraé*, Vinyl LP (US: Light Records, 1972), <https://www.discogs.com/Andra%C3%A9-Crouch-Just-Andra%C3%A9/release/588206>.

execution and Christian message, The track ends with a screaming guitar solo with a slow faded outro. This is like no other gospel song before it.

In this challenging and innovative short track, I believe that Andraé is having a conversation about salvation and Jesus Christ with the rich, elite and aristocratic culture. In the middle of the song, the lyric talks about loneliness and despair. But, in the next verse, Crouch returns to the notion of hope and living well with the Savior Jesus Christ.

The lyrics are as follows:

You may be a ruler or a king.

You may have the best of ev'rything.

You may be a millionaire,

but the Father made it so,

And here's one thing He wants the world to know.

**You ain't livin' until you've met the Savior,**

**Had a personal experience with the Savior,**

**Livin' until you've met the Savior,**

**Until you've answered His call**

**You ain't livin' at all.**

You may have success and worldwide fame.

This world may be impressed by your great name.

You may be a millionaire,



but the Father made it so,

And here's one thing He wants the world to know.

**You ain't livin' until you've met the Savior,**

**Had a personal experience with the Savior,**

**Livin' until you've met the Savior,**

**Until you've answered His call**

**You ain't livin' at all.**

My life was filled with loneliness;

No trace of joy, no trace of happiness.

But when I opened up my heart

and let Christ in,

life for me began.

Just like a log I was driftin' in the sea;

I was on my way without a destiny.

But when I opened up my heart

and let Christ in,

life for me began.

**You ain't livin' until you've met the Savior,**

**Had a personal experience with the Savior,**

**Livin' until you've met the Savior,**

**Until you've answered His call**

**You ain't livin' at all.**

If you don't know the Lord (You ain't livin' at all,)

you'll never find peace of mind, (You ain't livin' at all,)

You'll never find joy sublime, (You ain't livin' at all,)

You ain't livin' at all. (You ain't livin' at all.)

**You ain't livin' until you've met the Savior,**

**Had a personal experience with the Savior,**

**Livin' until you've met the Savior,**

**Until you've answered His call**

**You ain't livin' at all.<sup>54</sup> ©**

Scripture references:

Matthew 4:16 “the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

Matthew 16:16 “Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Luke 20:38 “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.”

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<sup>54</sup> Andrae Crouch, *Just Andrae: Arrangements For Youth Choirs* (Lexicon Music, Inc, 1973).

*That's What It's All About*

In 1965, co-songwriters Hal David and Burt Bacharach released “What the World Needs Now Is Love.” In Bacharach’s 2014 autobiography, he explains how the primary melodic idea, chorus and  $\frac{3}{4}$  time signature had been developed in 1962.<sup>55</sup> The song soared on the charts in the United States and Canada for more than a decade. Crouch loved pop music and he was an avid consumer of the genre. In 1972 Crouch composed “*That's What It's All About*” track three from the *Just Andraé* recording. This work responds to Bacharach’s piece, *What the World Needs Now Is Love*, which codified the Vietnam war crisis, civil rights movement, Jim Crow South and poverty-stricken neighborhoods in urban America.

Crouch was concerned with the presentation of a song. He wanted his music to hold to a high standard of excellence. In a 2004 Bob Gersztyn interview, Crouch discusses his musical influences, how he fused musical styles together and the importance of presenting everything with excellence. In his mind, Crouch was fusing song stylings of Paul Simon, Carole King, James Taylor and gospel guru James Cleveland. Crouch was fusing styles for his diverse audiences.:

“I always liked the writing of Paul Simon and Carole King. I liked the writing and presentation of James Taylor. Of course, the gospel influence would be James Cleveland, he's actually the guru of gospel. Then there was a group that my dad would always listen to, made up of five women and a piano player. When I was growing up they were probably one of my biggest influences, because their background vocals sounded like horns to me. These women were called the Davis Sisters, and they were out of Philadelphia. Then there's the group that Shirley Caesar came out of called the Caravans. The Caravans were Albertina Walker's group and she's out of Chicago, and she's a great singer. That's the group that discovered Shirley Caesar, who was probably the youngest in that group. They

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<sup>55</sup> Burt Bacharach, *Anyone Who Had a Heart: My Life and Music*, Reprint edition. (Harper Paperbacks, 2014).

influenced me a lot. I liked the clarity of their background vocals, and I like to call their style response type music. My father was a music enthusiast, and as long as the message didn't say anything that conflicted with the kingdom of God, it was okay for us to listen to it. Many different people, if you talk to them, say that their parents wouldn't let them listen to something if it wasn't Christian music. But if the music was good music, and the people were skilled at what they did, my father would let us listen to it. We heard the blues records that he'd have, and some of the jazz guys like Duke Ellington, and people like that. I would hear them playing, but at that time I didn't know that I would even be in music.”<sup>56</sup>

The track *That's What It's All About* is beautifully fused with a gospel jazz rhythm section, pop sounding background vocals, and highly orchestrated with strings and brass. For a Black recording artist in the 1970s, this sound production quality is unprecedented. We hear Crouch sounding like a secular artist with gospel lyrical tropes. Like Bacharach's piece, *What the World Needs Now Is Love*, *That's What It's All About* carries a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time signature and unusual harmonic progressions. The song's form is similar to a traditional ABA secular song with accompanying bridge. The piece has a stop time, tempo changes as well as a variety of musical transitions, Near the end of the song Crouch is quoting Christian scripture. He is listening deeply to what the culture is saying. He is seeking innovative artistic collaborations, practicing radical hospitality and mining biblical and theological resources to enhance what he is saying. Catching the attention of others in the Jesus Movement, he is restating the true nature love.

The lyrics are printed below:

Loving, caring,  
sharing with each other,  
Treating each one

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<sup>56</sup> Gersztyn, “Andrae’s Music Will Never Lose Its Power.”

like sister and brother,

**That's what it's all about, little children**

**That's what it's all about.**

Give a cup of water

to someone in need

I know you will be blessed

as you plant love's seed.

**That's what it's all about, little children**

**That's what it's all about.**

Just like an angel,

you may be saved,

But if you don't have love,

Oh you don't have anything,

**That's what it's all about, little children**

**That's what it's all about.**

And they'll know

you're My children

by your love,

Yes, they'll know

you're My children

by your love. (x2)

**That's what it's all about, little children**

**That's what it's all about.**

Narration: Though I speak with tongues of men and angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I can remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing. You see, of these three: faith, hope and love - - the greatest of these is love.

For God so loved that He gave. That's what it's all about.

And they'll know

you're My children

by your love,

Yes, they'll know

you're My children

by your love. (x2)

And they'll know

you're My children

by your love,

Yes, they'll know!

**That's what it's all about, little children,**

**That's what it's all about, little children,**

**That's what it's all about!<sup>57</sup>**

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<sup>57</sup> Crouch, *Just Andrae*.

Scripture references:

Matthew 10:42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.

Mark 9:41 Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.

1 Corinthians 13 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

1 John 3:10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

1 John 3:18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

*Lullaby of the Deceived*

*“As noted in the introduction, the underlying criteria or touchstone for discerning if and how this happens is revelatory itself, since the word, in Christian terms, is Someone—our God revealed in the incarnated Christ. Christian faith is a response to the revealing God. It is faith in our triune God who has taken the initiative of creating the universe of space and time, the desire of living in a loving relationship with human beings, and of coming to meet humanity in history, through the people of Israel, in and through the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, and through the Spirit in the church.”*  
(Heaney, *Music as Theology*, 136)

There is a spirit in the world and a spirit in the church. Not many—if any!—gospel songs during this era dealt with being face to face with demonic activity. In this song, Crouch’s music is theology in action. The actual music functions theologically so that one may practice their own hermeneutic on the II Timothy 3:13 passage. Theologian Heaney suggests that, in fact, not just the lyrics, but musical composition itself means that “music as theology, or theological praxis and music as a means by which we can listen to and receive the Word of God.”<sup>58</sup> In the composition “Lullaby of the Deceived,” Crouch imagines what it would be like to experience deception from demons. This is a particularly vivid illustration of how Crouch sometimes seeks to prove how his compositions are importing the Word of God into culture.

The song places its listener on a carousel. A background of carnival sound fills the space. Crouch sings about dreams turning into nightmares. A carousel organ and clown sounds are set in a 3/4 time signature, as they dance with laughing demons. The composition ends with a horror picture show pipe organ, sounding fully diminished seventh chords, painting a picture of what it means to sit in a conundrum of deception. Crouch gives his listeners a warning, no wheeling and dealing with the devil and the

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<sup>58</sup> Heaney and Begbie, *Music as Theology*, 135.



demon. Andraé sings descending minor third intervals “Jesus help me.” The song concludes with an outro featuring haunting minor and fully diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chords.

Andraé Crouch told Bill Maxwell that he had a visitation with spirits which prompted him to write this opus.<sup>59</sup> In 1960s where drug culture meets the Jesus Movement, many new believers had claimed they were delivered from drug, alcohol and sex addictions. The haunting musical images in this convey the idea of being trapped and deceived. Crouch is interested in seeing people secure their salvation in Christ. The music reveals the warring for our souls. Just as Jesus Christ is real, so are the demons in hell and the angels in the heavenlies. Crouch is using his imagination to communicate the dangers of spiritual deception. When analyzing where the piece sits on the album, it is the second to the last song. This piece portrays bondage. Immediately following, the next song, *Bless His Holy Name*, a popular hymn written by Crouch, presents victory, salvation, worship and praise, gives a spiritual relief and sense of rescue. These two pieces work side by side, presenting what the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The lyrics are as follows:

If somebody tells you  
that you have been deceived,  
Don't let them change you,  
just believe what you believe.

La la la la la la la,

---

<sup>59</sup> Maxwell, “The Bill Maxwell Interview.”

la la la la la. (x2)

When I watch the storm  
I find my destiny,  
And almost ev'ry night  
Some spirit visits me.

I know I'm not, I hope I'm not,  
Oh, maybe I've been deceived.  
I know I'm not, I hope I'm not,  
Oh, help me I need relief.

Now I cannot tell  
the good from the bad  
nor the night from day.  
I guess I can say  
I've waited too late  
for they're taking me away.  
Jesus help me.<sup>60</sup>©

Scripture Reference:

II Timothy 3:13 While evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

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<sup>60</sup> Crouch, *Just Andrae*.

## Conclusion

Andraé Edward Crouch was a master composer, communicator and theologian in song. He knew a good sacred or secular song reflected good theology. His theological and musical pursuits their ahead of its time. He had an imagination for all the musical possibilities in his work. In a time in America where racism was fortified, Crouch's artistry flourished. The *Just Andraé* album was never really 'just' Andraé Crouch. He could not have accomplished what he did without a diverse community of talented musicians by his side. In the Bill Maxwell interview, Bill articulates how Crouch was surrounded by a vast array of excellent musicians. Based upon my interview, with Bill Maxwell, it appears he was an integral part of Crouch's early success. Crouch and Maxwell needed each other.

Living in Christian ecumenical community impacts one's theological perspective. Crouch had his diverse community of Christian musicians. Indeed, his COGIC Christian practices were creative. But, to influence America with his music, he knew he would need more than the creative spirit found in the musical offerings of his Black community of musicians. Perhaps a multi-ethnic diverse community of Christian musicians can even be more dynamic and creative than musicians from one particular denomination. Hence, his community of musicians was diverse. If it was necessary to "sell" the message of a lyric, Andraé Crouch could speak any secular styling musical language and deconstruct it. He incorporated Christian Scripture in his compositions, telling the story of God's salvation and healing for the world. Compositions from the *Just Andraé* recording present themes of heaven and hell, demons and angels, and worship and praise. Whatever the musical genre, Crouch wanted his diverse audiences to experience an encounter with

Jesus Christ and God's Kingdom. For in the musical world of Andraé Crouch both sacred and secular domains speak to each other in the Spirit.

Crouch's music from the *Just Andraé* recording is not overtly religious in musical sound. However, it is an extension of the gospel music tradition, stylings and ecumenical ecclesiastical influences found within the work of Roberta Martin, Thomas Dorsey, Rosetta Tharpe, Lucie Campbell, and William Herbert Brewster. In order to make the message more relevant, in order to tell different stories of faith, Crouch allowed himself to move beyond mainstream gospel stylings. He did not leave gospel music, he simply expanded it for a new era. Every artistic and compositional school heralds a musical thought, theory and aesthetic. In order to accomplish his evangelical mission, Crouch insisted that the sound production, mixing and mastering be of the highest quality.

At a time when virtually all gospel artists were forced to record an entire album's worth of material in a single day in substandard studios, Crouch quickly was able to insist on top-flight musicians and production. Not many gospel artists from this era had secured financial capacity and multi-ethnic community's social equity to create such challenging lyrics, sophisticated musical arrangements, and theological praxis in making art. Crouch insisted his audiences would experience and encounter Jesus Christ the Wise Creator. His creative process was hailed by many other artists and composers for its artistry. As Crouch's community of artists evolved, his artistic practices and musical traditions evolved. The *Just Andraé* album was a foreshadowing of the future 'Crouch Sound' to come. His music carries sound Christian doctrine, a balanced theological authenticity, integrity and honesty. And his musical canon continues to hold a high standard of excellence for artists today.

## Appendix: The Bill Maxwell Interview Part 1/Transcription

Robert Darden: Bill Maxwell, I'm Robert Darden and Stephen Newby is the other voice. You joined Andraé when again?

Bill Maxwell: July of 1972.

Robert Darden: And he had ... when you joined him, he had already written and recorded another album with another group under a different name, which is named ...

Bill Maxwell: Andraé?

Robert Darden: Yeah.

Bill Maxwell: No Andraé had ... Andraé had done two previous albums with Andraé Crouch and the Disciples. *Take the Message Everywhere* which was an all male group, where Sherman Andrews was the main lead singer. Perry Morgan, Billy Pepper and Reuben Fernandez.

Robert Darden: Right.

Bill Maxwell: Then the second album, I can't remember what was the name of it. It was the one with "I've Got Confidence" and those ...

Stephen Newby: *I'm Going to Keep on Singing.*

Bill Maxwell: *I'm Going to Keep on Singing.* *I'm Going to Keep on Singing* was the second album he'd done with ... and that was Sherman and Ruben had left the group and Sandra joined. So it was Billy Pepper, Perry Morgan, Sandra and Andraé. They didn't really consider the band as a part of Andraé Crouch and the Disciples at

that time. They weren't pictured on the album covers. They didn't play on the records. They were done by studio arrangers and studio musician very quickly, low budget gospel recordings for Light Records.

Bill Maxwell: *Keep on Singing* did well. That's the album I heard, when I first became a Christian which was roughly a year before that, that I really liked Andraé's songs and he was already starting to become very successful when I joined.

Robert Darden: He had heard you play a number of occasions before that?

Bill Maxwell: A few yeah. We met him in Oklahoma City. We were all living in Oklahoma City. We're from Oklahoma City except for Fletch Wiley. Fletch was from Seattle and has been in school at North Texas and he was in our band and we were ... you know rock and roll musicians, essentially on our way to being full time drug addicts. That's where I was at and God delivered me from a total marijuana addiction. That's why I laugh out here in California when they say it's not addictive. I was an addict. I'd wake up in the middle of the night and smoke weed and go back to bed. All day and all night, that's all I did.

Bill Maxwell: Fletch was into harder drugs and God delivered him instantly. But, we had come together and we were writing our own songs, Christian music, and playing it at a little mission called The Open Door, that a former drummer Jimmy Hill was preaching at.

And Kenneth Copeland came in there and preached for the drug addicts and he told Andraé about these young musicians in Oklahoma City that were really good. And when Andre did a concert at Bethany University, that used to be Bethany Nazarene College in Oklahoma City, we came to hear him and when we went backstage he said, I heard about you guys. Kenneth Copeland. He said can I hear you play? And he went over to the mission and we played for him a bunch of our songs.

Bill Maxwell:                   And after that Andraé was ... we ran into him again at Expo '72. We were backing up other artists and that's when he started asking us to become his band.

Robert Darden:               And who else was in the band? The core group with you?

Bill Maxwell:               Harlan Rodgers. Fletch Wiley. Hadley Hockensmith and myself.

Stephen Newby:              Who played bass?

Bill Maxwell:                   Billy Preston. We used organ bass. Harlan Rodgers played left hand or had the pedals wired into his left hand and ran it out of bass amp. We used organ bass.

Robert Darden:               That's fun. What do you think attracted him to your playing? He had heard a lot of drummers before he heard you.

Bill Maxwell:                   Oh I don't know.

Robert Darden:               Oh yes you do. Tell me.

Bill Maxwell:                   I really don't. I really don't. I just think that he was getting young musicians out of the church and we had already, we had had

an album that T Bone Burnett had produced and I had, right before I came to the ward, I was living in Nashville working with a band called Barefoot Jerry which was a recording band. We had been professional guys, Fletch was already one of the better trumpet players that I'd ever heard and Pat was a extremely gifted guitarist. I mean he was as good as anybody working in LA. So to think that he was getting studio quality musicians that were Christians, it was kind of the beginning of that.

Bill Maxwell:

So I think that's what ... you know I was 21, 22, and that period of time, but I had been playing professionally since I was 13. I started playing full time 15 years old. Actually 14. Six nights a week in nightclubs while going to school, so I had been working, playing with guys who were 30. So we were all pretty experienced as opposed to just church musicians.

Robert Darden:

So did you tour with him before you recorded with him?

Bill Maxwell:

Yeah actually ... I'll tell this story. He actually didn't like it being told before. But Andraé recorded an album at Carnegie Hall, right before I joined him. Like in March of '72. And he hated it. His ears were off. He hated it. Because the band was not good. And so he wasn't going to put it out, but he kept playing it and the crowd was so good and actually Andraé was good. So Andraé told him, they wanted to put it out, the record company.



Bill Maxwell:

He said I can't put it out. I need to work on it. So he took it away from the record company, and they didn't trust him to leave with the master so they made a copy of the master. They were afraid he would mess it up. In those days, it was 16 track. We literally, they recorded this piano on a Help and Still pickup which was a pickup ... instead of microphones, so it didn't have much leakage. Then literally the only thing that they kept off the ... or that we kept, off the concert was Andraé and his piano. And the audience.

Bill Maxwell:

His vocals were great. He was great. The piano was great. But there was a drummer that dropped the beat and turned it around. The guitar player wasn't good. The vocals were all over the place. The background vocals. So Andre wanted to do it, and he asked me to come help him and that's how it started. We would go in. We'd try to figure out what to do and so I ... we didn't know what we were doing but I would just turn everything off and just play with Andre. So if the song sped up, I sped up. If it slowed down, I slowed down. If it dropped the beat, I'd adjust it.

Bill Maxwell:

So I got to where the drums fit with Andraé. Then Hadley Hockensmith replaced most of the bass. Then he put guitars on it. Then Harlen Rodgers overdubbed and Fletch overdubbed and then we brought in the singers again and re-sang their parts in tune and right and that came out and that became his biggest album.

Bill Maxwell: But we weren't there.

Robert Darden: I can't hear that.

Bill Maxwell: Yeah and you wouldn't know it. If you hear it, you wouldn't even know it. But that was ... and that was the start of Andraé and me kind of working together. And then right about that same time or actually right before that, he did a solo project *Just Andraé*. He asked us to play on it. And the record company was so cheap, I think they paid \$150 a piece for the whole album. We went in and did that album. Played on all but one song. He had another track that was cut in the studio with somebody else. But we were on the rest of it.

Bill Maxwell: And I encouraged Andraé, just as a friend, that he needed to record “Bless the Lord on my Soul.” And he was like it's nothing. It's just a little chorus. I really just said you have to try it. He did it and it became a big song and so he trusted me after that, that maybe I had an ear for what he had. Because Andraé had a gift. But he didn't know what his gift was. It just comes out and then you tell him if its good. He's just supremely gifted with no idea where that came from. He didn't know the names of the chords. He didn't know, he barely knew the names of the notes on a piano. He couldn't read anything. He just heard everything. He was an absolute genius.

Stephen Newby: Maybe I could dove tail and kind of ... pick apart what you're saying. In theory, I'm a composer, and in academia we call this a

Mozartian effect where you hear everything and it's just dropped in your mind and in your spirit. You describe Andraé's process. Can you describe a little bit more of that. He would hear something and then just ...

Bill Maxwell: Andraé was a genius. I don't use that word lightly in music. He is the only composer that I've ever worked with that would get everything at once. Melody, harmony and lyrics. Instantly. Instantly. We challenged him one time a few years ago. It was about a year before he died. We went over to his house and Boyd Matson is a friend of mine who was at the *National Geographic* and he said Andraé, write us a song. And we started recording and he was writing songs about how Boyd wouldn't loan him any money. Instantly rhyming everything and all the chords and just ... he could just come up with one after the other, instantly. Where is he getting this from?

Bill Maxwell: The odd thing is Andraé couldn't remember events or where he met someone, but he could remember like a song ... on the *Just Andraé* album, he recorded a song of Halsey's called In Remembrance. Very complicated chord changes. A few years before Andraé died, we ran into him and he sat down and played that and had every chord right and remembered every word. And I know he hadn't done it in 40 years. He remembered everything musically.

Bill Maxwell: I mean his harmonies, when I started working with better arrangers like Larry Muhoberac who was a great [inaudible 00:11:47], he'd say there are no names for these chords. They were nine note chords. It's this over that over this with this. It was astounding.

Stephen Newby: So ... it's interesting that you're tracking this way, because I would concur and what I ... in some of my observation in the *Just Andraé* album is that, what's happening tonally. Sometimes it would be by tonality, and then you know try chords, superimposed off of other chords. Like for example "If Heaven Was Never Promised to You," that comes to me, that first chord like where did that come from? It moves in a succession from like a 251 but it's a very sophisticated pitch collection. And so I think part of what I want to unearth for the academic audience and for the community is Andraé as a composer.

Bill Maxwell: Well he was unparalleled but one of the problems we had with him was that he was totally free, so he might have played that one time and next time he's not going to play the same way anymore. So it was very hard to get other people to record with him because if you ... you know they can't, the musicians don't have the ears that he has in the first place, so you write out something. Well he doesn't remember what he played and he won't play what's on the chart.

Bill Maxwell: And so you had ...

Stephen Newby: You have to scoot around it.

Bill Maxwell: You had to really scoot around him and we'd find, he didn't want to play in the first place. He didn't like playing on it. I would make him play. I'd say nobody plays your songs as well as you. But he would always try to squirrel out of it. Get another piano player. But he'd sit down and play it and Joe Sample would just be amazed. He'd say why are you having me? You should do this. I don't play this like you.

Bill Maxwell: Andraé would say, no, but you bring something to it I don't. And really it was Andraé's gift. So some of the better things that I ended up doing with him, was when I just got with him and bass and then I could overdub to match him, because he would just not play it the same way twice.

Stephen Newby: Would you say that that was his process when you worked on the *Just Andraé* album?

Bill Maxwell: Well like on that song that you mentioned, when it was just him and piano, so he could just sit down and do whatever he wanted to. Yeah that was his process. Now I'm going to go back. If you go listen to the other album, the album that we didn't mention which was before the *Just Andraé*, but it came out later, or it was done soul fully. Andraé didn't play on any of that. As far as I know. It was all other musicians. It was all just studio musicians. It was arranged by Kurt Gasman and some Motown arrangers. So if you

listen to it, it kind of sounds motownie, because Sandra had been working at Motown. The songs are Andraé but the feeling of the music is not really as much Andraé. Those are other people's contributions.

Stephen Newby: It was highly orchestrated. I can hear that.

Bill Maxwell: Yeah, I kind of brought it back to him when I started with him. I wanted to go back to the source, because I felt like that was where the meat was. It was in Andraé.

Stephen Newby: Now did Tramaine Hawkins actually sing on that ...

Bill Maxwell: She sang on one song.

Stephen Newby: On "Lord I'm Coming Home?"

Bill Maxwell: Yeah "Coming home." She may have sung background on ... that wasn't on *Soulfully*. That was on ...

Stephen Newby: Oh "I'm Going to Keep on Singing." That's right.

Bill Maxwell: "I'm Going to Keep on Singing."

Stephen Newby: The *Soulfully* recording. Yes. Yes. I hear what you're saying. So *Soulfully* he didn't play one instrument on it?

Bill Maxwell: As far as I know. I could listen to it now and tell you. I know his piano player. It was really kind of Motown arrangers and Curt Glassman.

Robert Darden: So those are somebody else on strings. Somebody else ...

Bill Maxwell: Yeah and piano player is what I'm specifically saying. I tried to tailor the songs around Andraé. When I started, I just said, I want it

to be like you and we are expanding on you. He fought it every time. Consistently would try to get out of it. But I thought that's where the gift was on him. That's what was special.

Stephen Newby: What was so unique about the *Just Andraé* album? Why was it labeled that way?

Bill Maxwell: Well he had been Andraé Crouch and the Disciples. And so, that was ... he just kind of wanted to do an album that showed his versatility. He liked different things, so he would do “God Loves the Country People” which was totally absurd kind of thing for what you would traditionally hear. Then he would do a hymn, like “Bless the Lord, Oh My Soul.” He just did different kinds of songs. It was kind of a mishmash of different things, but it was him. It was him being creative. I think it was his really first time trying to do things on his own in the studio. Even though Bill Cole produced it, Andraé was really kind of running it.

Stephen Newby: You didn't co-produce this one?

Bill Maxwell: I didn't co-produce that. I played on it. I was there. It was my start of really working with him. I went to all the sessions. He would show up at my apartment, not far from here, and he would show up with his lyrics almost done and he would say listen and he would ask me to help him go over things. It was the start of us, we were friends and he trusted me and we started working together. But I'm

just listed as the drummer, but I consider that the start of our relationship.

Robert Darden: Can I ask quickly on there? So you say these are just songs from him ... there were no overarching theme or no ...

Bill Maxwell: Nothing.

Robert Darden: There wasn't a concept album.

Bill Maxwell: No there's no concept. It's just Andraé's ... do it as quickly and cheaply as possible. Just songs that didn't feature the Disciples. It wasn't ... it wasn't Billy Perry and Sandra. They had girls singing background as opposed to the guys singing. It was a solo album.

Robert Darden: Is that typical that he would show up with songs or would he come sometimes with bigger themes in mind?

Bill Maxwell: What do you mean the bigger things?

Robert Darden: I'm trying to say concept album. Did he have a ... to go from point A to point B?

Bill Maxwell: No. Andraé had no concept.

Robert Darden: So he would come in ...

Bill Maxwell: That was one of the interesting things. We did *Take Me Back*. And the record company told me when I brought it in. I think, they maybe wouldn't say this now, they thought I ruined Andraé because it was ... it had lost his basic gospel core appeal to the audience that he had and it was too all over the place.

Robert Darden: The *Take Me Back* album?



Bill Maxwell: Yeah. Fortunately the public loved it. And it sold really well and it won it's first Grammy and that was my first project with him officially. But we had a song, like "Take Me Back," which was a great gospel song that was appealing to white church and black church. Everything about it. Then you'd have "It Ain't No New Thing," which was Dixieland. Then you'd have something with mandolins, "Tell Them," that sounded like you were in Venice on a gondola or something. It was all over.

Bill Maxwell: Then you'd have ... you can depend on me, which was kind of a shuffle ... it was all over the place songwise. You'd have something that would sound like the Delphonics, with that kind of orchestration. French horns and strings and electric sitars. We were ... there was no form but that was one of the nice appeals about it. We just, when they challenged me and they challenged Andraé, Andraé said, I don't believe there's any kind of 'saved music.' And I don't think there's any kind of 'saved chords.' I think the only thing that is unique is the gospel message.

Bill Maxwell: So I'd go back and put this message to any kind of song, any kind of melody, any kind of beat and I'm going to do that. And I like it. When they'd say, Andraé was much bolder than me. If the record company said they didn't like something, I took it personal. Andraé was like, well I like it. I like this. He would just ... we just went with it.

Robert Darden: Were the lyrics suggesting the music to him or did you both have the lyric and the music ...

Bill Maxwell: Well it was like I said. They came almost instantly. But if he sang or if he had a song like "It Ain't No New Thing," he wanted to sound old, so that's why we went back and did Dixieland kind of. We kind of tailored it to what they were about. He just ... there was no, I mean I'd have to look at the song titles in front of me but they were very different kinds of songs. But I think in a way, that was the appeal. You couldn't pigeonhole him into just saying, this is gospel music. Underneath that all though, if you just took all the instrumentation off and just put it with Andraé at the piano, the gist of it was the songs were great. And Andraé's musicality and his song writing was fantastic.

Robert Darden: Can you take it back where you were?

Stephen Newby: All this is extremely poignant and very ... I mean it's so spot on. The Lullaby of the Deceived, you know when I listen to the orchestration and how things were arranged on the *Just Andraé* album, I'm wondering, okay who is he listening to? What were his influences?

Bill Maxwell: He was listening to Beatles or he was listening to ... he liked all kinds of music. Andraé loved like ... what do you call them? Boy's choirs. He loved the harmony of those. Like West Point kind of men's ... he loved all kinds of ... he loved harmonies. And in that,

he just, Andraé had an experience with some demons. Some demonic things that were really trying to scare him. And he wanted to kind of put the fear he had into that song. That's what we did.

Bill Maxwell: We were blowing ... making kind of weird sounds, but Andraé just wanted, he was sincere about it, because it was something that creeped him out.

Stephen Newby: So when I look at this piece *Just Andraé*, I look at this work and then I look at the other work *Waiting for the Sun*. I see them as these opus, O-P-U-S, were these like works. And I'm not saying symphonic but it seems like these two pieces hold together in a different way that are really pushing the envelope on the whole notion ... it doesn't matter what the beat is. Just to repeat what you were saying there.

Stephen Newby: But when I think about this *Just Andraé* project and how it all mapped out, this "Lullaby of the Deceived," then all of the sudden, this opus ends with "Bless the Lord, Oh My Soul."

Bill Maxwell: Yeah we had to end it on positive.

Stephen Newby: Okay. So can you tell me about the process ...

Bill Maxwell: Well it wasn't planned that way. You kept 10 songs or 11 songs.

Stephen Newby: And then you order them.

Bill Maxwell: Then you order them and you say, where you going to place this? And "Lullaby of the Deceived" is a hard one to place. You're not going to start a side with it.

Stephen Newby: No.

Bill Maxwell: And you definitely didn't want to end with it because it's so ... we kind of knew that we had to end with "Bless the Lord, Oh My Soul."

Stephen Newby: Because it feels as if there's some deliverance.

Bill Maxwell: That was what ... I know that I remember talking to Andraé about that. We were debating if that was where that should go. Those two should go together at the end. And then you're just kind of ... then it's a process. You want to start the album kind of up, a little bit, you don't want to start it at the bottom. What flows after this song, you try them. You listen to them. Does this key match? How long should we wait between this song and the next one? It feels quick or should we have it longer or slower? Then you might move one. Then you keep messing with it until it finally becomes clear, you've made your best choice.

Bill Maxwell: The other thing, in those days, which is not an issue now, is you had sides to a record. So you didn't want one side to be 28 minutes long and the other side to be 15, because then you would have a really soft first side because it was level. You get much more level on the ... with less time. So you want the sides to be as close as possible, 21 or to 24 minutes a side. It's closely matched.

Bill Maxwell: You look at those times which you don't do now. But that was ...

Stephen Newby: Yeah, you don't have to.

Bill Maxwell: Yeah, that was the process because of flipping the disk.

Stephen Newby: When I listen to the orchestration on “What Does Jesus Mean to Me,” it's not a typical orchestration in a Black church.

Bill Maxwell: No, it's just Andraé really. It's just a couple things on it.

Stephen Newby: Yeah yeah. It almost feels like, okay here's this wonderful guitar. Nylon string or acoustic guitar. Then you're hearing these different instruments as if you're sitting. You're sitting in another place and experiencing, you know what the gospel is saying. Do you think that he was very intentional with regard to reaching to others who would not normally come to church, dealing with these types of musical stylings?

Bill Maxwell: Absolutely. But with Andraé though, intentional doesn't mean that he knew what he was going to do. It was really just show up and see what happens. Obviously, he didn't want it to just be the same old church thing. He was bored with that.

Stephen Newby: So Bill ... Andraé was a writer, but who arranged some of his work?

Bill Maxwell: Different arrangers on different songs.

Stephen Newby: Okay.

Bill Maxwell: The rhythm track or say for example the song, “Take Me Back” that Fletch Wiley did, who was in the band. Larry Muhoberac arranged the strings and the horns, but Billy Preston and Andraé and me and Wilton Felder and Dean Parks played the track and it

was based on what Billy did. Billy played something inspirational on the organ or Andraé, then an arranger had to be very aware of that and we found a guy Larry Muhoberac who was a great string and horn arranger, who was sensitive to Andraé. He arranged Michael's long string intros, like I like to explain ...

Stephen Newby: We were just listening to that piece last night.

Bill Maxwell: Which is Perry singing. That string intro, that's Larry Muhoberac. He just would ... Larry was really terrific at taking one of Andraé's melodies or an idea for one of his harmonies and creating an intro or ...

Stephen Newby: And, developing it.

Bill Maxwell: Yeah, developing it.

Robert Darden: I'm sorry. This is Larry who?

Bill Maxwell: Muhoberac.

Robert Darden: Muhoberac?

Bill Maxwell: Yeah. Larry ... he was actually Elvis' keyboard player. He was the one that Elvis, when he did his comeback special, he hired him to put together the Las Vegas band and arrange it and Larry didn't like it, so he did like the first Las Vegas then he quit. He was his music director. But he had worked with Barbara Streisand. Doing string arrangements in a lot of movies. Dean Martin. He's a Louisiana keyboard player who really played piano and was very musical. Could write anything. He was like ... if Andraé would sit

and play a song, Larry would sit here with his pencil and by the time Andraé played it, the chart was done. No piano. He'd have it exactly. He had that kind of ear. And he could sit down. He understood. And he was amazed at Andraé's gift.

Bill Maxwell: He personally loved him, so he was a go to guy in those early albums.

Stephen Newby: So he had his community of music copiest, arrangers, people

Bill Maxwell: Yeah I mean Clark Gaspin was the one who had done ... he arranged the song Quiet Times, which was beautiful harmonies. Clark Gaspin.

Stephen Newby: *This is Another Day?*

Bill Maxwell: Yeah. Yeah. And that's Joe Sample is playing Fender Rhodes Piano. Andraé is not playing on that one.

Stephen Newby: At all?

Bill Maxwell: Yeah.

Stephen Newby: Wow.

Bill Maxwell: That's me and Wilton. They had [inaudible 00:28:44], Larry Muhoberac of course Fletch and Clark Gaspin. Later one, we got some different arrangers in. When we got into a little bit more hard R and B funk, we got Jerry Peters who had worked with Earth, Wind, and Fire. And he did "Handwriting on the Wall."

Stephen Newby: Oh Jerry Peters. Keyboard player?

Bill Maxwell: Uh huh.

Stephen Newby: Yeah I know Jerry Peters.

Bill Maxwell: And so ... we would go, try to find different people to help. My big fight with Andraé, he always wanted more. I always wanted less. He wanted ... oh the strings ... more vocals. Let's put more ... see you put so much it becomes nothing. And I kind of always wanted to skip back to what he was doing. But somewhere in the middle we found something that works. But he liked good arrangers.

Bill Maxwell: Then we did a pretty famous film arranger, Alan Ferguson. Did the *Finally* album and did some of the strings and stuff we did in London. We could get anybody to work with Andraé. All the musicians were in awe of him. It was incredible.

Stephen Newby: Early on, Andraé, I had read somewhere in an interview with regard to race and just some things he dealt with early 70s. Do you think when Andraé came out with *Take the Message Everywhere* and maybe this is a question for Perry, but the country was really wrestling at the time, after the 1967 Black insurrection with the riots and I remember as a child my mother said, no Stephen you can't go out in the streets and play because there are tanks in the streets.

Bill Maxwell: Where were you raised?

Stephen Newby: In Detroit, Michigan. So, when I look at *Take the Message Everywhere* when it came out, and what had happened in the 60s and the death of Dr. Martin Luther King. Did Andraé have any



conversations with you or with people in the band about those particular times? Did he make any connections with what was going on in the country and what he was doing at the time?

Bill Maxwell: Of course. I mean of course. But as I say, I joined in '72. But I'll take it a little further back in my life. I grew up in Oklahoma. In my high school, there were no Black people. Only Native Americans maybe and a couple Asians. I started playing in a band. We had an African American guy in the band. He family was not allowed to come into the club where we played. Then I would play in [inaudible 00:31:38] clubs and I would be the only white person there or the few of us in the band. But music integrated everything.

Bill Maxwell: When you start playing music, everything was kind of forgotten. And Andraé was like, to him, it was Jesus. Jesus integrates everything. He didn't care. When I joined Andraé in 1972, you might hear other people have different stories, but his -

PART 1 OF 7 ENDS [00:32:04]

Bill Maxwell: You might hear this. Other people have different stories. But his audience was 90% white, if not 98%.

Stephen Newby: Where was this at 19?

Bill Maxwell: In 1972, when I saw him at Bethany Nazarene College, there was no white people. Black people ... Black gospel music business was another business. Andraé's was totally white. He was a black group, but he would know how to work it. He would do songs that

sounded like Gospel quartet songs. He would do through it all very straight. And then at some point in the concert, he would say, "I'm gonna take you to my Father's church". And he would slowly integrate that kind of South music into the white community.

Bill Maxwell: But Andraé was not aware of racism, he loved people so much. And when I joined, I knew what these white people were thinking. I knew ... We checked in a hotel, and I was very protective over it. Because Andraé just didn't even feel it. He just loved people and just kind of walked past ... He was extraordinary. And he rejected that so much on the stage that he was loved. The white community embraced him greatly. They didn't see him as an African American, although he was and he is in every ... much. And very conscious of it. But, at the that point, when he was singing about the world, he just felt like the world loved everybody and he loved everybody and everybody should love each other.

Bill Maxwell: So the story I'm going to make with this, about this, is when we played in Detroit. Your hometown. Marvin Winans told me this story. That we were played at the ...

Stephen Newby: Cobo Hall?

Bill Maxwell: No, what's the ... Oh, Gosh.

Stephen Newby: Ford?

Bill Maxwell: Ford.

Stephen Newby: Ford Auditorium.

Bill Maxwell: Yeah, we were playing Ford Auditorium. And so, the Winans wanted to come see Andraé Crouch and the Disciples. So he walks in, and he goes up to where we always sit in the balcony. Because he sees all these white people, and black people always sit on the balcony. He goes to the balcony and it's full of white people. And then he was like, "What are these white people doing in my seats?" Because he had never been used to sitting anywhere but the balcony. There was no room for him in the balcony. He went down, sitting around white people. He had never done that in his life.

Stephen Newby: This is Marvin Winans?

Bill Maxwell: Marvin Winans. He'll tell you this. And then, he goes on the stage, and there comes Andraé and Sandra and Perry and Billy. And then it was me. And there's Fletch. And, I think, Harlan and Hadley had left by with some white guys, but he had never seen that in a Gospel concert.

Bill Maxwell: He'd never seen that. And then, to see everybody worshipping together, and pray ... He said it changed his life. It just literally changed ... because he just said ... everything was segregated in the Gospel world at that time. And, as a matter of fact, Andraé wasn't really accepted in the Black Gospel world. It was like, Mighty Clouds of Joy was out ... He sang. He didn't shout and then get everything ... Because we didn't do traditional Black Gospel music.

We played some of those programs with Rance Allen and the Hawkins family and it didn't go over. Because Andraé was ministry. Andraé would start ministry and that's what he would do. He would talk about Jesus, ministry from the keyboard. There is what's a Gospel music experience.

Bill Maxwell: We've met two reporters from the BBC who came over. We were doing a special on Gospel music for the BBC. And they didn't tell anyone they were Christians, these reporters. And they would travel with all these bands, and went around and they told me later that the only two people that talked to them about Jesus was me and Andraé, and Jessy Dixon. Everything else was just Gospel. Gospel music business.

Stephen Newby: Fascinating. You picked up on my next question, was just the whole integration and the multi-ethnic thing. I think it was about 1980 when I saw you all at Cobo Hall, Detroit. When the Winans had opened up. And, I remember, Andraé was saying something that he has not left the Church. Because people thought that something was going on because he had left Light Records and he moved to Warner Brothers.

Bill Maxwell: That was probably like '83.

Stephen Newby: Yeah, about '80. Do you remember anything about that tension? Was there tension there? Why was the move to Warner Brothers?

Bill Maxwell: Oh, you know Andraé probably ... It wasn't a great move, by the way. He probably could reach more people, they were gonna give bigger budgets and he ended up being signed to both, by the way. He ended up still doing Gospel music ... but the Warner Brothers album was a little more pop music oriented style. And they did all be thinking you, right about the same time, for Light. Then he came brought back after the Warner Brothers album and we did *Finally*. And then we did *No Time To Lose*, for Light, after that. So, there wasn't really tension. The Warner Brothers Album bombed.

Stephen Newby: It did?

Bill Maxwell: Yeah.

Stephen Newby: Why?

Bill Maxwell: I don't know. It wasn't ... Maybe the ... It bombed, it just didn't do well.

Stephen Newby: It didn't do well, yeah.

Bill Maxwell: It didn't do anything, like, just Andraé ... I mean, like *I'll Be Thinkin' Of You* had done. *I'll Be Thinkin' Of You* was really big.

Stephen Newby: When I look at that Waiting For The Sun recording, when I see this ... I listen to the music like "Hollywood Scene," "I'll Be Good To You Baby," "Handwriting On The Wall" -

Bill Maxwell: Which, I like all of those ... What we were doing -

Stephen Newby: Those pieces, compositionally and theologically, I think he was really dealing with ... It appears to me that these are justice issues. And he was talking about things, that people wouldn't ... Black preachers wouldn't preach about in the Church. There was male homosexuality, prostitution, there was abortion. And, do you think, there were people that didn't understand the concepts?

Bill Maxwell: Well, yeah. I think the people were just like, "Just go back and sing those praise songs".

Stephen Newby: How did Andraé feel about that? How did you feel about that?

Bill Maxwell: I believed in the project. I felt like we could have been a little more solution-oriented and Hollywood Scene, but -

Stephen Newby: What do mean by that?

Bill Maxwell: We just talk about the problem. About some guy lost on the streets. [crosstalk 00:38:59] But I didn't feel like we, maybe, took it to as fruition as much as we could but I still agreed with ... because that's what was going on. Where we were recording that, on Santa Monica Boulevard, Paramount Recording Studios, that was ... The whole streets, that's were [inaudible 00:39:14] with guys, after selling themselves. That's where we would go to work every day and that's what was going on. That's why we wrote it. In the middle of Hollywood.

Stephen Newby: So, Andraé was writing and responding to what he was experiencing?

Bill Maxwell: Yeah, that was ... Always.

Robert Darden: It got some of the same criticism as even “Papa Was A Rolling Stone” or “What The World Is,” those are just saying, "Here's the problem! Here's a great beat". Didn't move on.

Bill Maxwell: I didn't realize how good “I'll Be Good To You Baby” was until Andraé's funeral.

Bill Maxwell: I gotta think of his name ... The brain is a terrible thing to waste. He wrote the song for Eric Clapton, “Change The World” ... There was a black guitar player, producer. Extremely talented. But he cornered me back in the back of the church and he said, "Let me play you something" and he started playing and singing to me “I'll Be Good To You Baby.” And just sang his heart out and I listened to it harmonically and he said, "People don't get this" and I said, "No, you need to record this", because he was really right. He said, "I understood what you guys were trying to do".

Bill Maxwell: Tommy Sims.

Stephen Newby: Tommy Sims! The producer?

Bill Maxwell: Yeah.

Stephen Newby: Tommy Sims. Yeah. He worked with Michael McDonald -

Bill Maxwell: Yeah, Tommy. Tommy is the one who was brilliant [inaudible 00:41:22]. Tommy is a great guy. He is another one that studied Andraé. Now they're a producer, Raphael Saadiq, I don't know if you know Raphael. But he has produced D'Angelo and Jennifer

Hudson, and he works with Usher. He's one of the biggest producers out. He's another one that is total Andraé. When I met him he was total star struck because of all the Andraé records. He gets it, he really studied him.

Stephen Newby: So, musically, out of the recordings that you've worked with Andraé, what would you say were some of the highlights for you?

Bill Maxwell: I enjoy the *This Is Another Day* album. Probably because we didn't have the pressure that I had on *Take Me Back*, because Andraé ... That was the first time he was not using the in-house producers. And he was in charge of the record himself. And so, the record company was dealing with me and they were ... I just felt a lot of pressure from them, like it was going to fail. And then, once it was a very big success then, all that was all gone. So, *This Is Another Day* ... The process was more fun.

Bill Maxwell: And I like some of the songs, I think "Quiet Times" is great. I think "Soon And Very Soon" is a classic and I even ... I was listening to, a couple days ago, and the end of "Soon And Very Soon," you know the, "Oh were going, going to see the King", and the ... Had an old woman singing, "Oh yeah, I'm going". I said, that is like a preview of what we get for the *Color Purple*. That was ten years before. Because Andraé and I worked on the music for ... All the Black Gospel for *Color Purple*.

Stephen Newby: Talk about that. It seems like that was a highlight to you.



Bill Maxwell: Well, it was just fun to be in ... cinematic world and we had the music ahead of time and they shot the picture to it and they just kind of left us alone. And it was Quincy Jones with Andraé and Andraé brought me in and he just basically said, "Stephen Spielberg likes this title, "Maybe God Is Trying To Tell You Something." I need a song that goes in like four movements, that goes from the juke joint, to here, it being sung from ... to draw you in And there's a part where to start going in and then there's a part a transformation and then the celebration". And so, Andraé and I worked for a while on that. And it was just fun, we kept the music and I didn't go around to any sets or anything. They called me back to do a couple of overdub sessions and then you see it in a shot with all the actors doing it and it was my first time in a big project, Steven Spielberg project, to see something like that. So it was fun.

Stephen Newby: So let's go back to this ... We talk about this Mozartian effect, with Andraé. When you all were creating the music for the *Color Purple*, did that happen again? Andraé would just hear it, or what -

Bill Maxwell: No, it was easy for him, that's like, "Ah, this is just old". [inaudible 00:44:38] That was like ... He didn't even get in to this [inaudible 00:44:45] stuff. That was just easy for him. What that was required, which was, nineteen whatever time that was, 1930's or something. Juke joint music, that was easy.

Stephen Newby: The period music.

Bill Maxwell: Yeah. But I can say, the way it sounds, the foreshadowing of that “Soon And Very Soon” thing, is very much like *The Color Purple*, it reminds me of that. But I hadn't noticed it until I just listened to it the other day. And then, [inaudible 00:45:12]. That album was fine. We had a lot of different things, we had steel guitar, a really good steel guitar, Al Perkins. On “Quiet Times.” We did different styles and then I had played a little bit in New York with a great Jazz sax from [inaudible 00:45:29] Micheal Brecker. He's one of the greatest ever. And he came in and played on ... He was in town doing something, I got him, he played on “You Gave To Me” and “The Choice Is Up To You.” And then Leon Russell, who was my friend from Oklahoma, came in and played piano on “The Choice is up to You.”

Bill Maxwell: So it was just fun to get my old friends and his things. And we were supported and the album did really well ... It didn't win a Grammy, but it sold really well.

Stephen Newby: I don't want to be presumptuous here, but, brother Bill, it seems like you had an integral part in his creativity as well.

Bill Maxwell: Well, thank you. I -

Stephen Newby: It seems to me -

Bill Maxwell: We egged each other on -

Stephen Newby: But it also seems to me that he's credited for writing, but sometimes some composers, they don't necessarily arrange their

songs. I'm just wondering, how would he submit to you ... As you look back at your musical career, and starting with Andraé, what piece of the creative process so you think you helped to serve him, as unto the Lord?

Bill Maxwell: I protected him.

Stephen Newby: You protected him.

Bill Maxwell: Protected his music, protected his integrity, protected the sessions.

Speaker 1: When you were protecting the sessions, what could have gone bad?

Bill Maxwell: A lot of things. Things that don't fit, things that are in bad taste. The wrong musicians. The wrong singers, the wrong kind of things. One of the things that I have dealt with ... And there is a friend of mine who is a great singer, and I love his voice. I even produced an album for him. But I would fight Andraé to have him not sing. Because I felt the gift was on Andraé. That it need Andraé's. I would get ... Not really upset because I loved Perry's voice, but I would say, "Are you sure you want Perry to do this and not you?". Because Andraé would try to get everybody to sing it but himself. Everybody. He would Danniebelle to do this part here. Billy ... and he hated his voice. And I loved his voice. And I would -

Stephen Newby: The world loved his voice.

Bill Maxwell: And I would fight for him. I would fight for him all the time. "Andraé, it needs more of you". And so, I feel like I protected him.

Stephen Newby: So, you protected him. It sounds like you were an encourager.

Bill Maxwell: Well I hoped to be. Sometimes he would call me worse than that, he would fight with me. And he would get mad at me. We would go through it. But it ended up coming out good, and he loved me and respected me. I respected him. But ... if I felt something was wrong, I would argue, I would fight. I would stand up and fight for. There was a period of time when I thought we sounded too much like disco records. I didn't want to be like the disco. You're more creative than the disco.

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