

10th Annual We Love Christian Music Awards Highlight Indie Music, Welcome Alveda King, President Donald Trump

Winners in 24 categories were announced at the Feb. 22 live two-hour We Love Christian Music Awards, sponsored by New Release Today and Visible Music College in Memphis, Tennessee.

Phil Wickham walked away as a big winner of the evening as fans awarded his latest release, *Hymn of Heaven*, as Album of the Year and Worship Album of the Year and “House of the Lord” as Worship Song of the Year and Song of the Year.

“This is a special album to me,” Wickham said in his acceptance speech. “Every song was just written to preach to my own soul of who I am in Him and how great Jesus is. It’s amazing that this record is doing the same for other people too.”

The show received an elevated media footprint, due in part to the participation of activist and author Dr. Alveda King, who appeared in person and accepted the Unity Award. She was presented the award in a special taped message from her friend, President Donald J. Trump.

“Greetings to you at the 10th annual We Love Christian Music Awards, a special group of people,” Trump said. “Tonight’s very, very special for a different reason. We’re going to do the first Unity award. And it’s a person that we all love, we all respect, Dr. Alveda King. It’s an honor to be able to speak on her behalf.”

Reflecting on the award, Dr. King said she was “honored” and elaborated on what music meant to her and the entire Christian

world.

"Whenever I think about Christian music, it is the opportunity to send Judah first," she said. "That means the singers or dancers and musicians, all of those who are involved in what we would call the music industry today, are going first into the battle. And it can often cause the enemy to become confused. God inhabits the praises of his people."

In addition to celebrating the evening's winners, there were 14 live and prerecorded performances from multiple nominated artists and special guests, bookended between sets from comedian Jeff Allen.

Kevin McNeese, founder of the awards and president of New Release Today, said the purpose of the awards show is to showcase Christian music and give opportunity for new artists.

"What this weekend is all about is we call it our 'love letter to the industry'," he said. "We walk out of this with 300-400 hours put into this we live Christian music awards and, and it's just our way to give artists who don't usually get on the Dove awards or get on the K-Love fan awards or necessarily on radio. Half of our artists are independent."

McNeese said that being located at the Visible Music College has meant they "didn't have to reinvent the wheel every year," but gave them opportunity to add more to each event.

"We're adding a lot this year, but it's been all fun," he said. "Being able to talk about it with major media, that's new for us. We've been on a lot of media sites, such as NewsMax and Fox Business Channel."

New artist Cade Thompson, currently working on his follow-up project on Red Street Records, performed during the ceremony and expressed gratitude for the chance to preview new music and enjoy community.

"I'm so thankful for Kevin and the whole team at New Release Today for believing in me and allowing me to be here and be alongside some awesome artists, too. It's been such a blast," he said.

The full two-hour show is now available to watch on-demand on Facebook and YouTube.

Learn more about the We Love Christian Music Awards, view the full list of nominees and winners and watch this year's ceremony at .

Complete List of Winners

Hook Award (Pop Album of the Year): Riley Clemmons, *Godsend*

PopLITE Award (Pop Contemporary Album of the Year): Newsboys, *Stand*

Inspo Award (Inspirational Album of the Year): MercyMe *inhale (exhale)*

Encounter Award (Worship Album of the Year): Phil Wickham, *Hymn of Heaven*

Chorus Award (Church Worship Album of the Year): Elevation Worship, Maverick City Music, *Old Church Basement*

Hype Award (Urban/Rap Album of the Year): Andy Mineo, *Never Land II*

Amp Award (Rock/Alt. Album of the Year): boiling point, *Hope Lives Here*

Album of the Year: Phil Wickham, *Hymn of Heaven*

Live Album of the Year: Michael W. Smith, *Worship Forever*

EP of the Year: Rhett Walker, *Gospel Song EP*

Song of the Year: Phil Wickham, "House of the Lord"

Worship Song of the Year: Phil Wickham, "House of the Lord"

Contemporary Song of the Year: Anne Wilson, "My Jesus"

Pop Song of the Year: for KING & COUNTRY, "Relate"

Dance/Remix Song of the Year: NEEDTOBREATHE feat. Carrie Underwood, "I Wanna Remember"

Rock Song of the Year: The Letter Black, "Born For This"

Rap/Hip Hop Song of the Year: Social Club Misfits, "Without You"

Music Video of the Year: for KING & COUNTRY, "Relate"

Male Artist of the Year: Danny Gokey

Female Artist of the Year: Riley Clemmons

Group of the Year: Maverick City Music

New Artist/Group of the Year: Anne Wilson

The Next Big Thing: Grace Graber

Mainstream Impact Award: Skillet {eoa}

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