

After Serious Accident, Amy Grant to Receive Historic Kennedy Center Honor

Read Time: 2 Minutes 42 Seconds

Contemporary Christian singer Amy Grant, a Nashville native, stayed close to her roots in advance of traveling to New York City, where she will be recognized for a lifetime of achievement and become the first contemporary Christian music star to receive the Kennedy Center Honors Award on Sunday, Dec. 4.

It seemed nothing short of a miracle that Grant, 62, was able to headline a free Christmas concert at Lipscomb University in Nashville for the 18th year in a row. Due to some loss of memory and a shoulder injury that required surgery following a bicycle injury in a Nashville park, she had to cancel all her fall concert dates.

Several times throughout the Christmas concert at Lipscomb University held on Nov. 29, Grant expressed thankfulness that she was able to be a part of Lipscomb's gathering of Nashvillian's at the start of the Christmas season.

As has often been the case for nearly two decades, the names of her surprise guests were announced at the start of the concert. This year they were Selah and Michael Tate.

With their performance of "At This Table," the iconic trio Selah encouraged the audience to welcome all, even those who may seem harder to love than others, to the family table.

The lyrics and melody, originally sung by Idina Menzel, prompted tearful soul-searching. The opening lines are: "At this table, everyone is welcome. At this table, everyone is

seen. At this table, everybody matters. No one falls between.”

“At This Table” is included on Selah’s new Christmas album with the same title.

Michael Tate, founding member of DC Talk and current lead singer of the Newsboys, took the Lipscomb audience on a quick journey from a high-energy, rock-gospel version of “All I Want for Christmas” to a soulful version of “Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire.”

This year, Tate is a part of the annual Christmas tour to U.S. cities with fellow Christian artist Michael W. Smith and Grant.

Other popular entertainers who have joined Grant in past years for the “Lighting of the Green” festivities performance at Lipscomb include Michael W. Smith, Jordan Smith, Brenda Lee, Stephen Curtis Chapman, Lennon & Maisey from the hit ABC show “Nashville,” Vince Gill, Danny Gokey, Nicole C. Mullen, Mandisa, Melinda Doolittle, CeCe Winans, Point of Grace, the Fisk Jubilee Singers, Buddy Greene, Ruth McGinnis, Cody Fry, Jon and Valerie Guerra, David Phelps, Guy Penrod, Dave’s Highway and the Annie Moses Band.

With the backdrop of this being a part of the week of Grant’s return to the stage, “Tennessee Christmas” being sung by Grant and Lipscomb Academy’s elementary and middle-school choirs was especially heart-warming. Then, the atmosphere shifted to triumphant when the children, Lipscomb University’s ensembles and Grant seemed to join their voices with worshipping and warring angels as they sang “Emmanuel.”

Grant went to the Lipscomb’s elementary school for a year when she was a very young child and her grandparents have deep Lipscomb ties that include a building named after them—the Burton Health Sciences Center.

Grant has sold over 30 million albums and won multiple Grammy

and Dove Awards. Her singing career was launched when she was a teenager and was discovered during a time when she and Michael W. Smith were a part of the youth group at Belmont Church in Nashville.

Upon her return from New York, Grant will be joined by her husband of 22 years, Vince Gill, for their annual "Christmas at the Ryman," series of concerts in December.

The Kennedy Center Honors will be broadcast Dec. 28 at 8 p.m. on CBS. {eo}

Bring *Charisma* magazine home with a subscription today!

Renee DeLoria is a freelance writer based in Nashville, Tenn.