

Gospel Singer Inez Andrews Passes Away

Inez Andrews, the lead singer of the legendary gospel music group Caravans, died from cancer Dec. 19 at her home in Chicago, the New York Times reported. She was 83.

"She was the last great female vocalist of gospel's golden age," Anthony Heilbut, author of *The Gospel Sound: Good News and Bad Times*, told the newspaper. The book is a history of the era from the mid-1940s to the early '60s.

Heilbut added that Andrews was known as the "High Priestess," ranking among the likes of Mahalia Jackson, Marion Williams, Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Clara Ward.

Andrews came to prominence in 1958 with the Caravans, a Chicago gospel group led by Albertina Walker that also nurtured such stars as Shirley Caesar, the Rev. James Cleveland and Bessie Griffin, the Times reported.

Andrews made her mark with two of the Caravans' biggest hits—"I'm Not Tired Yet" and "Mary Don't You Weep." She was also the lead singer on other hits like "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand," "He Won't Deny Me" and her own composition, "I'm Willing to Wait."

"Nothing ever worked for the Caravans until Inez started whistling—hitting the high notes," said Albertina Walker, who started the Caravans and died in 2010.

Andrews was also the leader of the Andrewettes and recorded "Lord, Don't Move My Mountain" a song that became a gospel and R&B cross-over hit.

Andrews will be honored with the Ambassador Dr. Bobby Jones Legends Award at the 28th Stellar Awards event, to be held

Jan. 19 at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville.