

How Andraé Crouch Changed Gospel Music Forever

I knew people had been praying for Andraé Crouch, and we reported as recently as Saturday that Andraé was doing better after he was admitted to the hospital for serious health complications. So it was a shock to learn that he died in Los Angeles on Jan. 8 at 4:30 PM PST.

I was a huge fan of Andraé Crouch's music going back to my teenage years when he was just emerging on the music scene. In my early 20s, while a reporter with the *Orlando Sentinel*, I had the opportunity to interview him—which for me was a highlight.

He had come to Orlando to sing at a concert sponsored by the Rock House youth ministry, of which my wife and I were a part. After that interview, we were able to share a meal with him and his twin sister, Sandra. I found him to be humble—almost timid behind the scenes. From his music and his demeanor it was clear he really loved Jesus.

Some of his songs such as “To God Be the Glory” have almost become anthems they are so well known. I especially like “The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power.” I’ve been to many communion services where that was the song that was sung as we thought about the Lord’s body and blood.

His impact on Gospel music cannot overestimated. He was a crossover artist who made the black Gospel music sound part of Contemporary Christian music mainstream.

His songs have been recorded by everyone from Elvis Presley to Paul Simon, and he has worked as a producer and arranger with many of music's top artists including Michael Jackson, Madonna, Quincy Jones, Diana Ross, Elton John and many others. Andraé can also be heard on Michael Jackson's hit singles “Man

in the Mirror," "Keep the Faith," "Will You Be There" and "Earth Song."

I didn't have a lot of interaction with him the last few years of his life, but we did cover some of the ups and downs of his life, including a cover story in 1998 which you can read by clicking [here](#).

In the 1980s, the police stopped him in Los Angeles for an unspecified reason and found a vial on him. In an interview with [Rolling Stone](#), Crouch said he had never done drugs, but the story says he was detained for 10 hours before posting bail.

Whether his account of the situation was true or not, I know that Andraé had been going through a difficult part of his life and that instance was a real wake-up call for him to get things right.

Andraé grew up in the Church of God in Christ, a well-respected Pentecostal denomination. He told a story on how as a child his father, Bishop Benjamin Crouch, prayed for him to receive the gift of music, and he actually learned to play the piano without ever having taken lessons. Benjamin Crouch was highly respected in COGIC. When he died in 1993, Andraé became the pastor of his father's church along with his twin sister, Sandra. The church in Los Angeles thrived under his leadership.

I have one of Andraé's most recent albums, *Mighty Wind*, on my iPod, and I listen to it regularly. There is a certain song that he sings about coming home on track No. 10.

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You may have some problems and life might be so confusing. But when you come home, God is gonna fix it for you." The lyrics could have been taken as his own testimony about that difficult time.

Yet today as I listened to the song, I could imagine that Jesus must have been saying to Andraé: “Come home. Please come home. The door is always open and the family is waiting. We’ve been waiting for you to come home.”

Andraé Crouch is home with the Savior he loved and served so well.

If you have a memory of Andraé, please share it along with your favorite song of his. As a tribute to his memory, please share this through social media.

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