

New Series on Aretha Franklin Honors the Gospel Singer's Faith-Filled Legacy

National Geographic is set to premiere a new TV anthology season based on the faith-filled life of gospel singer Aretha Franklin titled *Genius: Aretha*.

The series will air for four nights starting March 21, 2021.

Grammy Award-winner Cynthia Erivo (*The Color Purple*, *Harriet*), who has made a name for herself as an actress and singer, will portray the famed performer.

Franklin's musical prowess began in the pews of her father's church, New Bethel Baptist in Detroit, Michigan. Both parents were musicians, but Franklin cultivated her God-given talent under the influence of the likes of Clara Ward of the Ward Sisters and Albertina Walker. She traveled with C.L. Franklin, singing in gospel programs in major cities throughout the country, where she was eventually recognized as a vocal prodigy. At just 14 years old, she produced her first album celebrating her deep spiritual roots: *Songs of Faith*.

She once said, "Being a singer is a natural gift. It means I'm using to the highest degree possible the gift that God gave me to use."

Her unmatched music career served as a powerful platform for her Black activist efforts and led to her naming as the "Queen of Soul."

According to Britannica, *Amazing Grace* (1972), a live recording of her performance with a choir at the New Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles, is considered one of the great gospel albums of any era.

The *Genius: Aretha* trailer can be viewed on the National Geographic website. Watch this video of Franklin's stirring performance of "Precious Lord" to hear the powerhouse vocals—and love for God—that defined her chart-topping career.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.