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Black Music Month 2014: June 9 musical salute to Aretha Franklin



Photo by Rick Diamond

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It's Black Music Month. Enjoy the 2014 series. Support the artists. Buy their licensed music. And turn up as you dance along.

Brief history: In 2010, I wrote a music series honoring Black Music Month on Associated Content's site (republished on **Examiner**). The focus was to honor new R&B singers, veteran R&B singers, solo rappers, and evenly split the musical salute between female and male rappers. The only artists I was not willing to split up were Salt n' Pepa because they worked as a unit. In 2014, it's about time to salute more artists, but in the spirit of Salt n' Pepa's legacy, R&B groups and rap groups will be included. The pattern in 2014 will be newer R&B singers (from 2000 to present), R&B and/or hip-hop groups,



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veteran R&B singers, and then solo rappers, still evenly split between women and men.

Black Music Month Turn Up Factor

"Turn down for what?": From huge hats (that black church members know all about, especially on Easter) to colorful ensembles, Aretha Franklin has never been afraid to take a fashion risk. Only the folks living under a cultural rock (or those who never read **"Curtis" comic strips**) are unaware of the power of the church hat. And she was one stunning woman when she first came on the scene. **Photo 1** and **Photo 2** are examples of how much style and confidence she brought listeners. Yes, her voice was what made her get the nickname Queen of Soul, but she wasn't short-stopping on her attire either. There are so few artists from the music era of the early '60s who could put out a song right now and it'd still fly off the shelves, but Aretha Franklin has that ability.

My Connection/First Memory to Artist: When I was a kid, my father used to love watching "The Blues Brothers" so I watched it with him. And I distinctly remember memorizing and singing the words (off-key) to "Think" when Aretha Franklin made an appearance in the 1980 film. But outside of that film, I didn't originally consider myself a fan. It took Jennifer Hudson singing her songs at the **2013 BET Honors** before I realized I was actually a much bigger fan than I thought I was. Not only was I introduced to a couple of songs I never knew before ("Never Loved a Man"), but I was surprised to find that I knew the words to almost every song J-Hud belted out in honor of the singer. It took me seeing a **Black Ensemble Theater "Chicago's Golden Soul" play** to realize that En Vogue's song "Giving Him Something He Can Feel" was Aretha Franklin's song first.

Although I still find it quite petty that she was upset that Beyonce regarded Tina Turner as her own Queen of Soul, every singer has the right to believe they are the best. If Jay Z believes he's the best rapper alive and T.I. thinks he's the king of the south, you better believe Aretha Franklin will probably always want the title as Queen of Soul the same way Michael Jackson was labeled the King of Pop. In my opinion, there's more than enough room for all artists. And regardless of the name, she's still fierce as hell no matter what kudos are given to other artists.

Numbers Don't Lie: This list would run on forever if every hit song from the early '60s to now was named, but notable ones that made it to the Top 100 Billboard charts include "I

Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)" (17 weeks on The Top 100 charts, peaked at number one), "Who's Zoomin Who" (19 weeks, peaked at number seven), "Freeway of Love" (19 weeks, peaked at number three), "Until You Come Back To Me (That's What I'm Gonna Do)" (21 weeks, peaked at number three), "Day Dreaming" (12 weeks, peaked at number five), "Rock Steady" (nine weeks, peaked at number nine), "Spanish Harlem" (12 weeks, peaked at number two), "I Say A Little Prayer" (11 weeks, peaked at number 10), "The House That Jack Built" (nine weeks, peaked at number six), "Think" (10 weeks, peaked at number seven), "(Sweet Sweet Baby) Since You've Been Gone" (12 weeks, peaked at number five), "Chain of Fools" (12 weeks, peaked at number two), "A Natural Woman (You Make Me Feel Like)" (nine weeks, peaked at number eight), "Baby I Love You" (11 weeks, peaked at number four), "Respect" (12 weeks, peaked at number one) and "I Never Loved A Man (The Way I Love You)" (11 weeks, peaked at number nine).

For the first series of Black Music Month artists republished on Examiner (originally on Associated Content), [click here](#) to see all 30.

*Shamontiel is also **The Wire Examiner**, and for the gladiators, she's the **Scandal Examiner**, too.*

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