AAAMC presents Black Music Honors (For Immediate Release)

Indiana University’s Archives of African American Music and Culture (AAAMC) will host its inaugural Black Music Honors event on March 24, 2022, at 6:30pm in the Grand Hall of the Neal- Marshall Black Culture Center. Black Music Honors celebrates artists, executives, and scholars who have profoundly contributed to Black music and culture. This year’s presentation features trendsetters in gospel music: two-time Grammy award-winning singer, songwriter, producer Hezekiah Walker and veteran gospel music industry executive Dr. Teresa Hairston. Together, Hairston and Walker’s careers in gospel music have extended gospel musical beyond traditional religious, artistic, generational, class, racial, and gender boundaries. Both honorees will participate in a 50-minute conversation about their significant life and career experiences, moderated by AAAMC Director, Dr. Tyron Cooper, followed by a Q & A. Black Music Honors will also include a live performance by Indianapolis-based gospel ensemble, Thomas & The Situation. This event, co-sponsored by the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center and the College Arts and Humanities Institute, is FREE and open to the public.

Hezekiah Walker

Featuring his ensembles Love Fellowship Crusade Choir and Love Fellowship Tabernacle Church Choir, Platinum-selling gospel artist Hezekiah Walker has released 15 gospel albums on several national recording labels beginning with Sweet Rain, Benson, Verity, RCA Inspiration and eOne. His music is influenced by genres ranging from R&B and soul to hip hop. Walker also pastors the Love Fellowship Tabernacle Church in two locations (Brooklyn, NY and Bensalem, PA), attracting thousands of congregants including mainstream artists such as R&B singer Aaron Hall, hip hop mogul Sean “Diddy” Combs and rapper Lil’ Kim. Additionally, he is a television personality who hosts his own syndicated radio program, The Hezekiah Walker Show, and the founder of the record label Hez House Entertainment. His hit single, “Every Praise,” was named Gospel Song of the Decade by Billboard in 2019. In 2021, Walker launched the Center for Gospel Music at Virginia Union University. As a community leader, he is currently facilitating the development of an affordable housing project in his hometown, Brooklyn, NY.

Dr. Teresa Hairston

Teresa Hairston, a songwriter, choir director and keyboardist, began her industry career in marketing at Savoy Records and later became Director of Marketing and A&R for the Black gospel division at Benson Records. In these roles, she supported the careers of numerous chart-topping artists such as James Cleveland, Commissioned, Albertina Walker and Hezekiah Walker, to name a few. One of her crowning achievements was founding Gospel Today magazine, a nationally...
distributed publication providing broad insight on seminal gospel artists, pastors, and mainstream entertainers such as Kirk Franklin, Bobby Jones, Mary Mary, Richard Smallwood, CeCe Winans, Fred Hammond, and Steve Harvey. Even more important, *Gospel Today* expanded the scope and image of the genre and its associated community by including topics such as health, fashion, fitness, spirituality, entertainment, and politics. Hairston is also founder of the Gospel Heritage Foundation, an organization dedicated to celebrating, preserving and transmitting the legacy and contemporary practice of gospel music and ministry within church and industry contexts. She recently authored her memoir, *Unstoppable: The Incredible Journey of America’s #1 Christian Lifestyle Magazine* (2021) and is currently producer and host of *Higher Impact* on the Impact TV Network, where she interviews “who’s who in gospel.”

For more information about this event, contact Archives of African American Music and Culture at 812-855-8547 or aaamc@indiana.edu.