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**THE “2018 AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS®”**

**TO HONOR ARETHA FRANKLIN**

**WITH SPECIAL TRIBUTE**

**Soul and Gospel Legends Gladys Knight, Ledisi, Mary Mary, Donnie McClurkin and**

**CeCe Winans to Headline Performance Honoring the Queen of Soul**

**Rickey Minor on board as Musical Director**

**The Live Broadcast Will Air**

**Tuesday, October 9th at 8:00 p.m. ET on ABC**

*[EDITOR’S NOTE]: For media assets please click* [*here*](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/o2jhxbb7onujyqy/AAAZYV-CxhG2gxLRQbFkC_pVa?dl=0)

*For digital assets, please go to:* [*bit.ly/AMAs18Media*](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/avwy00vzelsv660/AAAEfjaHt523s-FTPgimeUBMa?dl=0)

**Los Angeles (September 27, 2018)** – dick clark productions and ABC today announced an all-star lineup of soul and gospel legends who will come together to pay homage to the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, at the “2018 American Music Awards.” Gladys Knight, Ledisi, Mary Mary, Donnie McClurkin and CeCe Winans, friends of the late, luminary singer/songwriter, will take the AMAs stage for a moving tribute honoring Franklin’s gospel roots and iconic gospel album, *Amazing Grace*. Consulting Producer for the tribute is the Emmy Award**®** winning music director, composer and producer, Rickey Minor. Hosted by Tracee Ellis Ross, the “2018 American Music Awards,” the world’s largest fan-voted awards show, will broadcast live from the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles on Tuesday, October 9, 2018 at 8:00 p.m. ET on ABC.

“We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the American Music Awards, dick clark productions and American Music Awards’ producer, Larry Klein, for honoring Aretha Franklin with a musical tribute for this year’s broadcast,” said Sabrina Owens, Franklin’s niece and executor of the Aretha Franklin Estate. “Throughout its 46-year history, the American Music Awards has continued to stand by the music and honor the best in talent and the greatest in popular music culture. When I heard some of the initial ideas for the tribute, I knew without a doubt that this tribute will go down as one of the best in American music.” Owens adds, “We still remember when Aretha won her first American Music Award in 1976 for Favorite Female Artist – Soul/R&B, and throughout the years, she went on to win five more awards and we will never forget when she hosted the show; as well as her memorable performances. Dick Clark helped to revolutionize American music, and along the way, Aretha Franklin was part of that revolution.”

“It’s a blessing to be a part of this moving musical tribute to honor our late queen and sister, Aretha,” said Gladys Knight. “She was an icon and visionary, radiated light and love through all of her life’s work, and touched all of us through her incredible gift of music.”

“Aretha was the voice of a generation,” said music director, composer and producer, Rickey Minor. “She transcended racial barriers by reaching into the depths of her soul and taking us on a journey with every note she sang. Her spirit will live forever in her music.”

One of the most iconic voices in music history, Franklin accumulated six American Music Awards in her lifetime, including Favorite Female Artist – Soul/R&B (1976, 1977, 1984 and 1986), Favorite Female Video Artist – Soul/R&B (1986) and Favorite Album – Soul/R&B (1983). She served as host of, and performed on, the AMAs in 1976 and 1983, and last performed on the AMAs stage in 1986. Franklin left a resounding mark on the music world and beyond, also garnering an induction into the Rock and Roll and Rhythm and Blues Halls of Fame, a Kennedy Center Honor, a Presidential Medal of Freedom and by utilizing her voice for social issues including civil and women’s rights.

The great ones endure, and **Gladys** **Knight** has long been one of the greatest. Very few singers over the last fifty years have matched her unassailable artistry. This seven-time Grammy winner has enjoyed #1 hits in Pop, Gospel, R&B and Adult Contemporary, and has triumphed in film, television and live performance. Fall of 2015 marked the release of Knight’s first mainstream dance record, “Just A Little” in nearly twenty years. The song serves as lead single from her twelfth studio album that she is currently working on. Knight, who is a two-time Grammy winner in the gospel category, yet again embraced her gospel roots, releasing her inspirational album “Where My Heart Belongs,” in September 2014. The album was a major success and won an NAACP Image Award for “Outstanding Gospel Album.” All told, Knight has recorded more than 38 albums over the years, including four solo albums during the past decade:  “Good Woman” (1991); “Just for You” (1994); the inspirational “Many Different Roads” (1999); and “At Last” (2001).  “At Last” showed the world that she still has what it takes to record a hit album, employing the talents of contemporary producers like Randy Jackson, Gary Brown and James D.C. Williams III, Jon John, Jamey Jaz, Keith Thomas, Tom Dowd and Tiger Roberts. Her involvement in other creative undertakings, business ventures and humanitarian activities has been extensive, and has brought her honors from industry and community alike.

**Ledisi** is a 12x Grammy-nominated vocal powerhouse who has wowed fans ever since she came onto the scene. She's earned a place in the pantheon of the best soul singers of her generation. Ledisi is a favorite of The Obamas and has performed eight times at the White House. Her fans include icons, legends and current chart-toppers like the late- Prince, Patti LaBelle, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder and more. She has headlined two national sold-out tours, performed alongside Richie Sambora, Dave Matthews, Kelly Clarkson, Jill Scott, Maxwell and many more. She’s appeared on nationally recognized shows like Good Morning America, HARRY, The David Letterman Show, The Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, and VH-1’s Diva’s Live to name a few. In 2015 she appeared in the Oscar-nominated movie Selma as Mahalia Jackson and is currently starring in Gabourey Sidibe's Shatterbox Anthology film, The Tale Of Four. Ledisi released her ninth Grammy nominated studio album Let Love Rule, which features John Legend, Kirk Franklin, and B.J. The Chicago Kid among others. The album received three GRAMMY nominations in the “Best R&B Album,” “Best R&B Performance” (High), and “Best Traditional R&B Performance” (All The Way) categories.

**Mary Mary** is the multi-Grammy® and multi-award winning Gospel recording, sister duo of Erica and Tina Campbell. The sisters broke through in 2000 as Mary Mary with the pioneering hit “Shackles (Praise You).” Mary Mary has earned numerous Stellar & Dove Awards, four Grammy® Awards, three NAACP Image Awards, two American Music Awards, a Soul Train Award, a BET Award, the BMI Trailblazers of Gospel Music Award, ASCAP Golden Note Award and more. After seven Mary Mary albums and a lifetime--18 plus years of professionally singing--the commercially successful and critically acclaimed Mary Mary has sold more than 5 million albums, toured internationally, graced the covers of multiple high-profile magazines and both have recently launched successful, award-winning solo careers. Erica Campbell’s solo debut album, *Help*, won a 2015 Grammy® Award for Best Gospel Album. Erica is the host of the nationally syndicated radio show, “Get Up! Mornings with Erica Campbell.” In 2015, Tina Campbell independently released her solo debut album, *It’s Personal*, winning the 2016 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Gospel Album. Her single, “Too Hard Not To,” from her follow-up album, *It’s Still Personal*, received a 2018 Grammy® nomination for “Best Gospel Performance/Song. Erica and Tina continue to perform as Mary Mary while embracing their solo careers. They are loving wives and mothers who are devoted to their faith and their families.

The three-time Grammy winner, **Donnie McClurkin**,debuted as a solo artistin 1996 with his self-titled album Donnie McClurkin, featuring mega-hits *Stand* and *Speak To My Heart.* Before launching his solo career, he started the New York Restoration Choir and recorded his first album, *I See A World* that contained the original version “*Speak To My Heart.”*  The gospel anthems, *We Fall Down* and *Great Is Your Mercy, both* from the top-selling *Live In London And More album* was released in 2000.  The acclaimed gospel singer won his first Grammy in 2004 for *Again* for *Best* Soul TraditionalGospel Album. McClurkin’s double CD, *Psalms, Hymns & Spiritual Songs* earned a Grammy in 2006 as Best Traditional Gospel Album.  In 2010, he accepted his third Grammy (Best Gospel Performance) for *Wait on the Lord,* featuring Karen Clark Sheard from his *We Are One: Live in Detroit* album.  His other top honors include over 12 Stellar Awards; two BET Awards, three NAACP Image Awards, two Soul Train Awards and three Dove Awards.   He appeared as a judge on BET’s Sunday Best for six seasons 2010-2015. McClurkin is currently in the recording studio, look for new music in 2019.

**CeCe** **Winans** has released a slew of duo and solo albums that crossed genres and boundaries and influenced a generation of gospel and secular vocalists. Her mantel today holds a staggering 12 GRAMMY Awards, 23 Dove Awards, and seven Stellar Awards. She's been inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, Hollywood Walk of Fame and Nashville Music City Walk of Fame, in addition to being named a Trailblazer of Soul by BMI and garnering multiple NAACP Image Awards, Soul Train Awards, Essence Awards, and more. She's sold in excess of five million albums in the U.S. alone, topping the Gospel charts repeatedly while managing to cross over with smashes like "Count On Me," her stunning duet with Whitney Houston from the multi-platinum 'Waiting To Exhale' soundtrack, which sold two million copies and cracked the Top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100, Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, and Adult Contemporary charts. She touched millions more with inspirational performances everywhere from Oprah to The White House, and even showed off her acting chops on television series like '7th Heaven' and 'Doc.' In 2016, Winans became a member of the Artist Committee for the prestigious Kennedy Center Honors.  Winans’ upcoming project*, Something’s Happening!  A Christmas Album* is scheduled for release on October 19th.

**Rickey Minor** is a composer and Emmy Award winning Music Director who’s worked with such renowned recording artists as: Whitney Houston, Adele, Rihanna, Demi Lovato, Keith Urban, Diana Ross, Katy Perry, Aretha Franklin, Jennifer Lopez, Little Big Town, Stevie Wonder, Arianna Grande, Carrie Underwood, Sting, John Legend, Common, Elton John, Andra Day, Usher and Beyoncé. His numerous television credits include *The Tonight Show starring Jay Leno*, *The Emmys, American Idol*, *The American Music Awards,* and *The Kennedy Center Honors*. In addition, he has worked on several major live events and award shows, including some of the most memorable *Super Bowl* and *Grammy Award* performances. He has received seven Emmy Award nominations and one win for *Outstanding Music Direction* —*Genius: A Night for Ray Charles, An Evening of Stars: A Tribute to Chaka Khan, The 50th Annual Grammy Awards, The 51st Annual Grammy Awards, The Smithsonian Salutes Ray Charles: In Performance at the White House, Stayin’ Alive: A Grammy Salute to the Music of the Bee Gees,**Taking The Stage: African American Music* and *Stories That Changed America.*

Gladys Knight, Ledisi, Mary Mary, Donnie McClurkin and CeCe Winans join previously announced performers Benny Blanco with Halsey and Khalid, Cardi B with Bad Bunny and J Balvin, Mariah Carey, Post Malone featuring Ty Dolla $ign and Carrie Underwood, with additional performers to be announced.

The American Music Awards winners are voted entirely by fans. Voting is now open in all categories.

For New Artist of the Year presented by Capital One® Savor® Card, Favorite Social Artist presented by Xfinity and Collaboration of the Year, fans can vote for each award 100 times per day, per voting platform in one or both of the ways below. Fans can vote for all other awards once per day, per voting platform.

* Via web at [VoteAMAs.com](http://voteamas.com/)
* Posting a tweet on Twitter that includes the nominee's name or Twitter handle, the [category name](https://www.theamas.com/2018-vote-categories/) and #AMAs within the tweet

Voting for New Artist of the Year presented by Capital One Savor Card and Collaboration of the Year will close on Tuesday, October 9 at 5:59:59pm PT, one hour into the live broadcast. Voting for all other categories will close on Thursday, October 4 at 11:59:59pm PT.

American Music Awards nominees are based on key fan interactions as reflected on [Billboard.com](http://billboard.com/), including streaming, album and digital song sales, radio airplay, social activity and touring. These measurements are tracked by Billboard and its data partners, including Nielsen Music and Next Big Sound, and reflect the time period of September 15, 2017 through August 9, 2018.

YouTube Music is the presenting sponsor of the “2018 American Music Awards.”

Capital One Savor Card and Subaru of America, Inc. are sponsors of the “2018 American Music Awards.” Media partner is Cumulus Media/Westwood One.

The “2018 American Music Awards” is produced by dick clark productions. Barry Adelman, Mark Bracco and Tracee Ellis Ross are Executive Producers. Larry Klein is Producer.

For the latest American Music Awards news, exclusive content and more, be sure to follow the AMAs on social and join the conversation by using the official hashtag for the show, **#AMAs**.

**Facebook:** [Facebook.com/AMAs](https://facebook.com/AMAs)

**Twitter:** [@AMAs](https://twitter.com/AMAs)

**Instagram:** [@AMAs](https://instagram.com/AMAs)

**Snapchat:**[TheAMAs](https://www.snapchat.com/add/theamas)

**YouTube:** [YouTube.com/TheAMAs](https://www.youtube.com/TheAMAs)

**Tickets are now on sale at** [www.axs.com](https://www.axs.com/events/359571/american-music-awards-tickets?q=american+music+awards).

**About the American Music Awards**

The American Music Awards, the world’s largest fan-voted award show, features performances from today’s hottest artists and presents fan-voted awards in the music genres of Pop/Rock, Alternative Rock, Country, Rap/Hip-Hop, Soul/R&B, Adult Contemporary, Contemporary Inspirational, Latin, EDM and Soundtrack, and the categories of Artist of the Year, New Artist of the Year presented by Capital One Savor Card, Collaboration of the Year, Tour of The Year, Favorite Social Artist presented by Xfinity and Favorite Music Video. The American Music Awards pays tribute to today’s most influential and iconic artists.  The show is produced by dick clark productions and is seen in more than 200 countries and territories around the world. For more information, visit [www.theamas.com](http://www.theamas.com), [www.dickclark.com](http://www.dickclark.com) or [abc.go.com/shows/american-music-awards](http://www.abc.go.com/shows/american-music-awards).

**About dick clark productions**

dick clark productions (dcp) is the world's largest producer and proprietor of televised live event entertainment programming with the "Academy of Country Music Awards," "American Music Awards," "Billboard Music Awards," "Golden Globe Awards," "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve with Ryan Seacrest" and the “Streamy Awards.” Weekly television programming includes "So You Think You Can Dance" from 19 Entertainment and dcp. dcp also owns one of the world's most unique and extensive entertainment archive libraries with over 60 years of award-winning shows, historic programs, specials, performances and legendary programming. dcp is a division of Valence Media, a diversified media company with divisions and strategic investments in premium television, wide release film, specialty film, live events and digital media. For additional information, visit [www.dickclark.com](file://dcpfs/dcpdata/Communications/NYRE-%20ABC/NYRE%202015_2016/PRESS%20RELEASE-DRAFTS/www.dickclark.com).

**About YouTube Music**

YouTube Music is a completely reimagined streaming music service with music videos, official albums, singles, remixes, live performances, covers and hard-to-find music you can only get on YouTube. It’s ALL here! YouTube Music serves music based on your tastes and what’s moving the community around you. Discover something new or keep up with what’s trending. Basic functions such as playing music and watching videos are totally free, but you can upgrade to YouTube Music Premium to explore the world of music ad-free, offline, and with the screen locked. Available on mobile and desktop.  For additional information, visit  [www.youtube.com/musicpremium](http://www.youtube.com/musicpremium).

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