

MARTHA MUNIZZI BIOGRAPHY

In the last decade, acclaimed music minister Martha Munizzi has risen to the upper reaches of the Christian and gospel music spheres, becoming an in-demand worship leader, songwriter, and speaker across the United States and beyond.

Since the 2002 release of her first independent effort, *Say the Name*, Munizzi has expanded her ministry reach thanks to an unflinching commitment to cross-generational, multiethnic praise and worship music—a calling that began when she was 8 years old in her family’s traveling music ministry.

Munizzi, a Pastor’s daughter, was born in Lakeland, Florida, and since an early age she was involved in day-to-day ministry alongside her parents, her twin sister Mary, and her older sister Marvelyne.

Though chiefly southern gospel in style at the time, the music Munizzi and her family were making was instrumental in planting in her a desire to reach audiences with more than just a song or a musical performance.

In the brink of adolescence, at the age of 12, Munizzi and her sisters came off the road and went to Orlando, FL, where her parents decided to settle so that their children could attend public school just like everyone else.

Munizzi got her first taste of musical and ministry autonomy when, at 16, she and her sisters formed the group *Testament*, a praise ensemble that in time created enough of a buzz to book its own concerts at various church events and conferences across Florida.

It was during her stint in *Testament* that Munizzi, then Martha Stallings, met her husband Dan, a bassist and keyboardist with the group, whom she married in 1987. It was Dan who introduced the fledgling worship leader to black gospel music from the likes of Andraé Crouch and Fred Hammond. Those singers’ ability to mix soulful arrangements with worshipful lyrics revolutionized the way Munizzi viewed her own artistry.

With a renewed vision for worship, the couple continued to minister until 1993, when they were asked to fill a music directing post at FaithWorld, a rapidly growing church in the Orlando area. As founding members of the church, they saw the 250-member congregation and 30-member praise band grow into a “mega church” of more than 5,000 with a music team almost the size of the early church.

Following the end of their tenure at FaithWorld in 2001, the Munizzis felt called to start a ministry of their own. Shortly thereafter, *Martha Munizzi Ministries* was born—a church-oriented music ministry and independent record label with strong roots in gospel and praise-and-worship music.

Munizzi’s first live release, *Say the Name*, released quietly but set the pace for the singer’s genre-blending brand of praise. The disc generated the church favorites “Because of Who You Are,” “Say the Name” and “Shout,” and it would later go on to be nominated for a GRAMMY® Award in the Best Traditional Soul Gospel Album in 2006.

The worship leader’s breakthrough came in 2003, with the release of *The Best Is Yet to Come*. Recorded live at Pastor Joel Osteen’s Lakewood Church and produced by Israel Houghton and Aaron Lindsey (Israel & New Breed), the album catapulted Munizzi to the top rungs of the contemporary gospel world, yielding such hits as “Mighty God,” “Glorious,” and “God Is Here.” The project sold in the hundreds of thousands, peaked at No. 2 on Billboard’s Top Gospel Albums tally in 2004, and remained on the charts for more than a year.

To bookend a capstone season, “The Best Is Yet to Come” earned Munizzi the Best New Artist trophy at the 2005 Stellar Awards—the first time a non-African American singer snagged the honor.

The worship leader followed up the award-winning album in 2006 with *No Limits Live*, a two-disc set released in conjunction with worship giant Integrity Music. The label also secured rights for the album in the general market through Sony-BMG, an added avenue of exposure that helped the album debut at the top spot of Billboard’s gospel sales chart and at No. 60 of the Billboard 200. *No Limits Live* was produced by Noel Hall, a former music director with one of Munizzi’s influences—Fred Hammond.

Back in independent mode, Munizzi issued *Change the World* in the spring of 2008. The album saw the worship leader returning to her roots—namely, her home church and working with Houghton and Lindsey, the same team behind *The Best Is Yet to Come*. Guests on the album include Houghton, Micah Stampley, and Ricardo Sanchez.

Among other accomplishments over the years, Munizzi has scored multiple GRAMMY®, Dove, Stellar, and Soul Train Award nominations, as well as several radio hits and appearances on BET, TBN, Daystar, and the Sisters in the Spirit Tour. Concurrently, Munizzi has attended to a long list of ministry opportunities with Osteen, T.D. Jakes, Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyer, Benny Hinn, CeCe Winans, and many others.

Of her heart’s passion for global worship expressions, Munizzi says, “My deepest desire is to transcend cultural, generational, and denominational boundaries, and to bring all people together through worship.”

For immediate contact: info@marthamunizzi.com / 407.834.5620

www.marthamunizzi.com / myspace.com/marthamunizzi

© 2008 Martha Munizzi. All rights reserved.