



WASHINGTON STATE RESIDENT WINS AT GOSPEL MUSIC ASSOCIATION NATIONAL TALENT COMPETITION IN NASHVILLE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – August 10, 2009 – **Quincy, Wash. resident Holly Starr** was among several aspiring artists and songwriters celebrated by music industry executives and leaders after winning honors at the GMA Artist and Song of 2009 National Competition held last week in Nashville during GMA IMMERSE (<http://www.experienceimmerse.com>), the Christian music industry’s premier training experience and talent competition.

The GMA Academy Artist & Song of 2009 National Competition is the Christian and gospel music community’s premier talent competition for unsigned artists and songwriters that has in recent years seen entrants like Chris Tomlin, Matthew West, Nichole Nordeman, BarlowGirl and American Idol 2007 winner Jordin Sparks go on to successful music careers. Fellow American Idol finalist and another former GMA competition winner Chris Sligh hosted this year’s competition finals. (To watch the Artist Finals which was broadcast live at GodBeat.com, visit <http://godbeat.com/godbeat-news/live-broadcast-of-immerse-finals> .)

Hundreds of artist and songwriting contestants from all over the United States and Canada competed for grand prizes which included a record development deal with Centricity Music, a “Disney Best of Show” award and performance slot at Night of Joy at Walt Disney World and a Compassion International ministry trip. Also at stake were GMA’s grand prize titles for Artist and Song 2009 and American Bible Society’s ABS Scripture Song Awards which offered a chance for the winning songs produced by a major Christian music recording label.

Holly Starr, from Quincy, Wash., was recognized for the ministry emphasis of her music by Compassion International (www.compassion.com), a Christian child advocacy organization which helps more than one million children in 24 countries. Compassion named her their recipient of the Music & Ministry Experience, an all-expense paid ministry trip to a Compassion International destination.





The Gospel Music Channel (www.gospelmusicchannel.com), the 24-hour, all music entertainment network devoted to the uplifting, inspiring and diverse music that is Gospel, was a competition sponsor for the first time this year, choosing Worship Jazz band **TC Carter and the Musical Sensations** from Martinsville, Va., as its winner. TC Carter will appear on GMC's "Joyful Noise," hosted by Christine Pullara and be featured with its own artist page on GospelMusicChannel.com.

In addition these artists, winners were also honored in several categories defined by musical style and/or age. These winners, too, receive prizes including personal consultation meetings with music industry executives, free tuition to future GMA events, and several other product prizes. The complete list of winners for both the Artist and Song of 2009 are:

DISNEY NIGHT OF JOY

Jake Brothers, Indianapolis, Ind., www.jakebrothersmusic.com

CENTRICITY MUSIC

Shelly E. Johnson, Franklin, Tenn., www.shellyejohnson.com

COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL

Holly Starr, Quincy, Wash., www.hollystarmusic.com

GOSPEL MUSIC CHANNEL

TC Carter and the Musical Sensations, Martinsville, Va.

GMA ARTIST 2009

GMA Vocal One (ages 13–26)

Winner – Shelly E. Johnson, Franklin, Tenn., www.shellyejohnson.com

Runner-up – Matt Knutson, Longview, Texas,

www.myspace.com/mattknutsonmusic

GMA Vocal Two (ages 27 and up)

Winner – Jared Salte, Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada

Runner-up – Jake Brothers, Indianapolis, Ind., www.jakebrothersmusic.com

GMA Band

Winner – Jake Brothers Band, Indianapolis, Ind., www.jakebrothersmusic.com

Runner-up – T.C. Carter and the Musical Sensations, Martinsville, Va.

GMA Group/Duet

Winner -- Denwyler, Spokane, Wash., www.stevenwylie.com and www.evandenlinger.com

Runner-up - Noelle, Raleigh, N.C.,

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Noelle/122594790016?ref=ts>

GMA SONG OF 2009

GMA Amateur Class

“Solid Rock” by Tracey Barker, Round Rock, Texas

GMA Semi-Pro Class

“She Said” by Bev Herrema, Highland Ranch, Colo.

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY SCRIPTURE SONG AWARDS

ABS Amateur Class

“Wait,” by Joshua Johnson, Los Angeles,

<http://www.myspace.com/joshuajohnson>

ABS Semi-Pro Class

“Bless the Memories” by Marc Arthur Pierre-Louis, Charlotte, N.C.,

<http://www.marcapl.org>

More than 600 Christian artists, songwriters, worship leaders - and those that want to be someday - gathered last week in Nashville to IMMERSE in a four-day event presented by the Gospel Music Association (GMA) that is the Christian music industry’s premier training experience and talent competition. The event, held on the campus of Belmont University, offered unparalleled training, professional and personal feedback, one-of-a-kind concerts and a sense of community to uniquely equip creative Christians to impact culture through music both in and out of the church.

At the conclusion of this year’s IMMERSE, GMA announced the dates for next year’s event - July 28-31 - as well as an earlybird registration rate of \$129 for individuals and \$399 for bands. Complete information is available at www.experienceimmerse.com

About GMA:

Founded in 1964, the Gospel Music Association serves as the face and voice for the gospel/Christian music community and is dedicated to exposing, promoting and celebrating the gospel through music of all styles including pop, rock, praise & worship, black gospel, R&B, hip hop, southern gospel, country, and more. The GMA community consists of more than 3,000 members including agents, artists, church leaders, managers, promoters, radio personnel, record company executives, retailers, songwriters and other industry visionaries. The GMA produces the GMA Dove Awards, GMA Music Week and the GMA Academy. For more information, please visit www.gospelmusic.org