



## **Inspiration Celebration Gospel Tour Artist Bios**

### **Smokie Norful**

Considered the Voice of Inspiration, Grammy Award-Winning Artist Smokie Norful once again lives up to his name by delivering his third full-length CD, Life Changing. The new project is a regeneration of the EMI Gospel artist, and was inspired by a series of life-changing events that have taken place in Norful's life over the past few years: fatherhood, pastoring a rapidly growing church and experiencing musical success.

Since the release of his Gold-certified debut, I Need You Now, Norful has never left the Gospel charts. His follow-up sophomore CD, Nothing Without You, debuted at number one when released, and has remained on the sales charts since its release in 2004. In addition to touring in music venues and churches throughout the country, Norful has made numerous personal performances. Most notable was his performance for President and First Lady Laura Bush at the White House last year. He has also journeyed internationally, traveling on a five-stop South African tour, in support of the Save Africa's Children campaign. For more information, go to [www.smokienorful.com](http://www.smokienorful.com).

### **Vanessa Bell Armstrong**

Recently signed to EMI Gospel, a new label for her, Vanessa Bell Armstrong brings her vast arsenal of talent, anointing and experience to the table on her new CD, suitably titled, Walking Miracle. Featuring a blend of contemporary sensibilities and 'Ole school' rips and runs Armstrong's forte cannot be defined as just one thing. "When I started out, I was a contemporary vocalist however the late Thomas Whitfield mixed it up with a traditional feel and since then I never went far from that," Armstrong explained.

Both accomplishment and career highlights prove that Armstrong has truly withstood the test of time. Her first release in 1984, "Peace Be Still," has since become a defining song for her, and subsequently she has released a number of memorable releases including "Something Inside So Strong," and "Don't Give Up On Jesus." It is her ability to mix it up that has kept Armstrong relevant in today's field.

### **Kierra "Kiki" Sheard**

Kierra "Kiki" Sheard -- granddaughter of the late Dr. Mattie Moss Clark, roundly credited as one the defining influences in the history of Gospel music, and daughter of Rev. J Drew Sheard, and Karen Clark-Sheard, a founding member of Gospel legends the Clark Sisters -- is the first of the next generation of Clarks who is reshaping the face of modern Gospel, just as her mother and aunts did before her.

The title of her second and latest release, This Is Me, speaks quite well for itself. While giving a reverential nod of respect to her forebears, and delivering knockout R&B ballads (the album's title cut, and Hear This), Kierra delivers her messages through the modern, up-to-the-minute R&B and hip-hop language of today.

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