**BMI CELEBRATES ITS TOP GOSPEL MUSIC CREATORS
AT THE 2021 BMI TRAILBLAZERS OF GOSPEL MUSIC AWARDS**

***Donald Lawrence, Sir the Baptist, Kanye West and Songs of Kobalt Music Publishing
Receive Top Honors***

***The 20 most-performed Gospel songs were also announced***

**NEW YORK, NY (June 7, 2021)**– [**BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.)**](http://www.bmi.com/) is proud to celebrate the **2021 BMI Trailblazers of Gospel Music Awards**, honoring some of today’s legendary and rising Gospel music luminaries. The Gospel **Song of the Year**, **Songwriter of the Year**, **Publisher of the Year** and the 20 most-performed songs of the previous year were announced today on BMI.com and across the company’s social media platforms. In tribute to this inspiring generation of Gospel songwriters, BMI created a special page featuring uplifting performances and first-hand accounts of the songwriting process behind some of the award-winning songs, as well as special messages from the winners. To view this exclusive content and more, visit <https://www.bmi.com/trailblazers2021>.

“It is always an honor to celebrate BMI’s incredible community of Gospel music songwriters,” said **Catherine Brewton, Vice President Creative, Atlanta**. “Their artistry is a gift through which we find the strength to persevere in the face of adversity and the words to rejoice in moments of worship. Today we applaud their outstanding contributions to the genre, which continue to inspire so many with messages of love and hope.”

“**Deliver Me (This Is My Exodus)**,” written by **Donald Lawrence** and **Sir the Baptist**, was awarded **Song of the Year**. Performed by Donald Lawrence and the Tri-City Singers with Le'Andria Johnson, the powerful decree of deliverance spent a total of 99 weeks on the *Billboard* Gospel Airplay chart, peaking at number one and winning the prized GMA Dove Award for Traditional Gospel Recorded Song of the Year. This is the first BMI Trailblazers of Gospel Award for Sir the Baptist, while Donald Lawrence earns his eighth Trailblazer Award. Lawrence was previously awarded the Gospel Song of the Year in 2015 for “The Gift” and was also one of the 2009 Trailblazers of Gospel Music honorees.

**Kanye West** was named **Songwriter of the Year** forpenning three of the award-winning Gospel songs “Hands On,” “On God” and “Selah” from his highly celebrated ninth studio album *Jesus Is King*, which garnered top industry accolades from *Billboard* and the GRAMMYS. West collaborated with gospel great Fred Hammond for the crossover track “Hands On,” which landed on *Billboard*’sChristian, Gospel, R&B Hip-Hop and Hot 100 charts. The record’s single “Selah” broke into the top 20 on *Billboard*’sHot 100 and was nominated for Top Gospel Song at the 2020 *Billboard* Music Awards, competing against “On God” that same year. With this distinction, West earns his first three Trailblazer Awards, adding to his extensive collection of 38 BMI Awards from R&B/Hip-Hop, Pop, and London.

**Publisher of the Year** went to **Songs of Kobalt Music Publishing** for representing three of BMI’s 20 most-performed Gospel songs including “I Made It Out,” written and performed by Pastor John P. Kee, featuring Zacardi Cortez, “Keep The Faith,” written and performed by Charles Jenkins and “Won’t Let Go,” written and performed by Travis Greene.

In addition to the major award winners, BMI also paid homage to the **20 Most Performed Gospel Songs of the Year** (2020). This year’s talented group of songwriters includes 19 first-time Trailblazer Award winners including Zacardi Cortez, Cydel C. Young, Renee Spearman, Terrence “Pusha T” Thorton, Natalie Lauren Simms, Allison Jeffrey LaValley, and more.

For a complete list of winners, video messages and performances, go to <https://www.bmi.com/trailblazers2021>.
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