

Xavier Oglesby  
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#### Biographical Information:

Born: October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1970 – Beckley, WV  
Currently residing in Beckley, WV

#### Artform Description:

Gospel music is usually thought of as Christian music with a beat. The spirituals that used to be sung in the fields were set to a up tempo beat and rhythm instruments were added. Whereas spirituals were expressions of hope for a people in bondage and sometimes containing secret codes that pointed the way to freedom; gospel music proclaimed the “good news” of Jesus Christ and an eternal afterlife walking on streets of gold.

The term gospel music has become a catch all phrase for any religious music that uses instruments other than piano. In this context, we are dealing with traditional black gospel music. Black gospel music is not only characterized by rhythm instruments, but also by many unwritten rules and traditions. These cultural differences have helped the music to evolve as an artform but may be the cause of many psychological and social issues that have arisen in the black community around this music. (Some of these issues will be discussed later)

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. I was raised in the church and was able to learn gospel music as a craft from my family.
2. I hosted a radio show called “545 Live” from 1997 to 2003 on WJLS in Beckley, WV. This show featured gospel music and local news regarding area churches and events.
3. My ministry has afforded me the opportunity to come in contact with many talented gospel singers.
4. My job as a corrections officer allows me the opportunity to minister in song at certain times, and it has positively impacted some of the inmates.
5. I got a lot of experience singing in front of different audiences when I was part of an R&B band from 1995-1997.
6. My time as an actor and singer at Theatre West Virginia from 1997 to 2002 was very influential in my performance life.

#### ARTIST STATEMENT

Some of my first memories were of singing in the kitchen with my mother and grandparents. We would sing gospel songs. Church and gospel music has been a way of life for me and I have been greatly influenced by my family, which has some wonderful singers and many older people in my community. It was these people who taught me how to carry a song and make the most impactful delivery with it. The music of the black church has deep roots and I find it an important responsibility to continue the tradition of this music. Young people today, even those who are still being raised in the church, are not fully aware of gospel tradition and I feel privileged to be an example.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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