

THE MUSIC SETTLEMENT
IDEA COMMITTEE



CELEBRATING
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

JANUARY 2022



The Music Settlement
OHIO CITY · UNIVERSITY CIRCLE

DID YOU KNOW MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ...

- ❖ was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, [Georgia](#), the second child of Martin Luther King Sr., a pastor, and Alberta Williams King, a former schoolteacher
- ❖ was a social activist and Baptist minister who played a key role in the American civil rights movement from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968
- ❖ was the driving force behind watershed events such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the 1963 March on Washington, which helped bring about such landmark legislation as the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act
- ❖ was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964
- ❖ has an older sister Christine and younger brother Alfred Daniel Williams
- ❖ grew up in the city's Sweet Auburn neighborhood, then home to some of the most prominent and prosperous African Americans in the country
- ❖ was a gifted student and attended segregated public schools and at the age of 15 was admitted to [Morehouse College](#), the alma mater of both his father and maternal grandfather, where he studied medicine and law, graduating in 1948
- ❖ entered Crozer Theological Seminary in [Pennsylvania](#), after graduation, where he earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree, won a prestigious fellowship and was elected president of his predominantly white senior class
- ❖ enrolled in a graduate program at [Boston University](#), completing his coursework in 1953 and earning a doctorate in systematic theology two years later.
- ❖ met Coretta Scott, a young singer from [Alabama](#) who was studying at the [New England Conservatory of Music](#).
- ❖ married in 1953 and settled in Montgomery, Alabama, where he became pastor of the [Dexter Avenue Baptist Church](#).
- ❖ had four children: Yolanda Denise King, Martin Luther King III, Dexter Scott King and Bernice Albertine King.
- ❖ AND did you know the final section of Martin Luther King Jr.'s eloquent and iconic "I Have a Dream" speech is believed to have been largely improvised.

DID YOU KNOW MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ...



- ❖ was chosen as the protest's leader and official spokesman by activists in connection with the Montgomery bus boycott
- ❖ became a target for white supremacists, who firebombed his family home in January 1957
- ❖ was stabbed in the chest with a knife on September 20, 1958, by Izola Ware Curry in a Harlem department store where he was signing books
- ❖ along with other civil rights activists, in 1957 founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a group committed to achieving full equality for African Americans through nonviolent protesting
- ❖ when arrested for his involvement on April 12, during the Birmingham campaign of 1963, King penned the civil rights manifesto known as the "Letter from Birmingham Jail," an eloquent defense of civil disobedience addressed to a group of white clergymen who had criticized his tactics
- ❖ worked with a number of civil rights and religious groups to organize the March on Washington which was held on August 28, 1963, and attended by some 200,000 to 300,000 participants, and is widely regarded as a watershed moment in the history of the American civil rights movement and a factor in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- ❖ gave his most famous, known as the "I Have a Dream" speech, at the culmination of The March on Washington, which was a spirited call for peace and equality
- ❖ was named "Man of the Year" by TIME magazine in 1963 and in 1964 became, at the time, the youngest person ever awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
- ❖ in the spring of 1965, supported by President Lyndon B. Johnson, he led the Selma to Montgomery march
- ❖ and the SCLC, in 1967, embarked on an ambitious program known as the Poor People's Campaign, which was to include a massive march on the capital to address issues such as the Vietnam War and poverty among Americans of all races
- ❖ was assassinated on the evening of April 4, 1968, fatally shot while standing on the balcony of a motel in Memphis, where he had traveled to support a sanitation workers' strike.
- ❖ was assassinated by James Earl Ray, an escaped convict and known racist, who pleaded guilty to the murder and was sentenced to 99 years in prison

HAVE YOU HEARD THESE 10 BEST SONGS ABOUT MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR....

Nina Simone: Why (The King Of Love Is Dead) (1968)

“We want to do a tune written for today, for this hour, for Dr. Martin Luther King. This tune is written about him and for him,” said Nina Simone as she introduced one of the best Martin Luther King songs in history, “Why (The King Of Love Is Dead),” to the audience at The Westbury Music Fair in Long Island, New York, just three days after King was murdered. The song, honoring the courage and compassion of “this great man,” was written by Simone’s bassist Gene Taylor. Even quicker to emerge was the tribute from Otis Spann. On the day after King’s assassination, the blues pianist, a member of Muddy Waters’ band, performed two newly composed blues for the fallen civil-rights leader: “Blues For Martin Luther King” and “Hotel Lorraine.”

Marvin Gaye: Abraham, Martin And John (1968)

“It seems the good, they die young” is just one of the memorable lines of Dick Holler’s song about assassinations in America, prompted by the deaths of Presidents Lincoln and Kennedy, and Martin Luther King. This moving song was first recorded by Dion and subsequently covered by dozens of artists, including Smokey Robinson, Ray Charles, Emmylou Harris, and even Star Trek’s Leonard Nimoy. Arguably the finest version is Marvin Gaye’s 1970 single, which was a Top 10 hit in the UK. A year later, jazz star Oliver Nelson dedicated a whole album, *Black, Brown And Beautiful*, to King.

Neil Diamond: Dry Your Eyes (1976)

Neil Diamond and Robbie Robertson of The Band wrote “Dry Your Eyes” for the album *Beautiful Noise*. Robertson said the song was inspired by “how many people felt after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.” In 2017, Diamond began performing it again on his world tour – a song he had not performed live since showcasing it for Martin Scorsese’s film *The Last Waltz*. Diamond said, “It’s been relegated to the attic. I think it’s due to come out after 40 years.”

Stevie Wonder: Happy Birthday (1981)

Stevie Wonder met King when he was a teenage singing sensation. Wonder remembers crying at the news of the assassination, which he heard on a car radio as he was being driven home from Michigan School For The Blind. In 1980, Wonder joined with the members of the Congressional Black Caucus in the US Congress to speak out for the need to honor the day King was born. He went on a nationwide tour – along with Gil Scott-Heron – performing “Happy Birthday,” a song that was instrumental in helping to establish the national holiday commemorating King’s birth, for which reason it will forever remain one of the best Martin Luther King songs. Above soaring keyboard synthesizers, Wonder sings, “There ought to be a time/That we can set aside/To show just how much we love you.”

HAVE YOU HEARD THESE 10 BEST SONGS ABOUT MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR....

U2: Pride (In The Name Of Love) (1984)

Bono was inspired to write “Pride (In The Name of Love)” after reading Stephen B Oates’ biography of King, *Let The Trumpet Sound*. Not only one of the best Martin Luther King songs, U2’s hit is one of the iconic rock songs of the 80s, on which Chrissie Hynde of Pretenders sings backing vocals. The lyrics contain one factual error. Bono wrote, “Early morning, April four/Shot rings out in the Memphis sky,” though the assassination actually took place at 6.01pm.

Queen: One Vision (1985)

First released as a single in November 1985, and then included on the bestselling album *A Kind Of Magic*, “One Vision” is a high-energy rock song that Roger Taylor later admitted was “sort of half nicked off Martin Luther King’s famous speech.” Freddie Mercury later added some less serious lyrics about shrimps, prawns, and chicken.

Public Enemy: By The Time I Get To Arizona (1991)

Public Enemy are one of hip-hop’s defining acts, and their polemic song “By the Time I Get to Arizona” – and its even more controversial video – was designed to criticize former Arizona governor Evan Mecham, one of only two governors in the US to refuse to recognize King’s birthday as a national holiday. Asked in 2011 why he chose that title, Chuck D said, “I’m a big Isaac Hayes fan and his version of ‘By The Time I Get to Phoenix,’ the Jim Webb, Glen Campbell song. The title came first. I always like to work from titles.”

James Taylor: Shed A Little Light (1991)

James Taylor’s gentle and stirring tribute to King was inspired by his desire to honor a 20th-century titan. Taylor said: “To me, King is really one of the central heroes, you know, just in our time, a real exceptional, rare person who contributed the right things at the right time. You know, I think my parents, they led me into an awareness of what was going on. You know, they felt amazingly strongly about the civil rights struggle, and I guess it stayed with me. It always stayed with me. So it came out in a song.”

Patty Griffin: Up To The Mountain (MLK Song) (2007)

One of the finest country music tributes to King is Patty Griffin’s “Up To The Mountain,” from the album *Children Running Through*. Griffin takes the title from King’s 1968 “I’ve been to the mountaintop” speech, delivered the day before he was killed. It is a moving and soulful 21st-century tribute from the singer-songwriter, who was only four when King was assassinated.

Paul Simon: So Beautiful Or So What (2011)

Paul Simon is one of the master songwriters of the modern age, and in “So Beautiful Or So What” he tackles the subject of despair and the “sirens’ long melody” after the killing of King. The song was hailed as one of the best Martin Luther King songs by Elvis Costello, who said that Simon’s song “rejects the allure of fashionable darkness” and instead “celebrates the endurance of the spirit and the persistence of love.”

HAVE YOU READ ANY OF THESE BOOKS BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR....

- ❖ **Strength to Love.** New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963. This is a collection of Dr. King's most requested sermons.
- ❖ **Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story.** New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1958. Dr. King's first book; the story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the beginning of the Nonviolent Civil Rights Movement.
- ❖ **The Trumpet of Conscience.** New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968. (Foreword by Coretta Scott King.) This book is taken from the 1967 Massey Lectures which King gave through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. King addresses issues including the Vietnam War, youth and civil disobedience and concludes with the "Christmas Sermon for Peace."
- ❖ **Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?** New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967. An assessment of America's priorities and a warning that they need to be re-ordered.
- ❖ **Why We Can't Wait.** New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963. The essential writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., James M. Washington, ed.



HAVE YOU READ ANY OF THESE BOOKS ABOUT MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR....

- ❖ Ansbro, John J. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Nonviolent Strategies and Taxtics for Social Change. Madison Books
- ❖ Baldwin, Lewis. Never to Leave Us Alone: The Prayer Life of Martin Luther King Jr. 2010 Fortress Press
- ❖ Baldwin, Lewis. There is a Balm in Gilead. 1991. Fortress Press
- ❖ Baldwin, Lewis. To Make the Wounded Whole. 1992. Fortress Press.
- ❖ King, Coretta Scott. My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1969. Revised edition copyright 1993 by Coretta Scott King.
- ❖ Harding, Vincent. Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero. Orbis Books.
- ❖ Jackson, Thomas F. From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Struggle for Economic Justice (Politics and Culture in Modern America). University of Pennsylvania Press
- ❖ Moses, Greg. Revolution of Conscience: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Philosophy of Nonviolence. The Guilford Press
- ❖ Pepper, William F. Orders to Kill: The Truth Behind the Murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. New York: IPM in Association with Warner Books, 1995 by Dr. William Pepper.
- ❖ Philips, Donald T. Martin Luther King, Jr. On Leadership. New York: Warner Books, 1999.
- ❖ Bennett, Lerone, Jr. What Manner of Man. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., Book Division, 1964. An in-depth biography of Dr. King by the senior editor of Ebony magazine, who was a college classmate of Dr. King's.
- ❖ Oates, Stephen B. Let The Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr. New York: Harper & Row, 1982. An extensive and well-researched biography of Dr. King which allows the reader to experience the life of Dr. King and the times in which he lived.
- ❖ Schulke, Flip, ed. Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Documentary, Montgomery to Memphis. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1976. A pictorial biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- ❖ Witherspoon, Wm. Roger. Martin Luther King, Jr.: To the Mountaintop. Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1985 An extensively illustrated biography of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement.

HAVE YOU READ ANY OF THESE BOOKS BY FAMILY MEMBERS OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR....

- ❖ Farris, Christine King. Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Life and Dream. Lexington: Silver, Burdette and Ginn, Inc., 1986. Teaching guide for grades K-12.
- ❖ King, Rev. Bernice A. Hard Questions, Heart Answers: Three Rivers Press
- ❖ King, Coretta Scott. My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1969. Mrs. King writes of her experiences as the wife of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- ❖ King, Dexter Scott. Growing Up King: An Intimate Memoir: Grand Central Publishing
- ❖ King, Rev. Martin Luther, Sr. Daddy King: An Autobiography. New York: William Morrow & Co. Inc., 1980. Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. tells the poignant aspects of his life.
- ❖ King, Yolanda Denise; Elodia Tate. Open My Eyes, Open My Soul : Celebrating Our Common Humanity
- ❖ Watkins, Angela Farris. My Uncle Martin's Big Heart: Abrams Books for Young Readers



