



**"I was so strongly drawn to gospel music because I felt it was what God wanted me to do."
– Mahalia Jackson**

THE MAHALIA JACKSON STORY

**The inspiring rags-to-riches story of
the world's great gospel singer and Civil Rights champion**

A MOTION PICTURE PROPOSAL

**Presented By Joyful Noise, LLC
1000 Lake Shore Plaza, Chicago 60611
Phone, 312/274-9980**

**Presented by Joyful Noise, LLC
1000 Lake Shore Plaza, Chicago, IL 60611 * Phone, 312/274-9980
Email: Ruth@reelchicago.com**

EXECUTIVE STATEMENT: THE MAHALIA JACKSON MOVIE

“If there were ever a movie that meets my criteria to inspire instead of exploit, to uplift and not denigrate, it is this proposed movie about my dear friend, the late, great Mahalia Jackson” -- Rev. Jesse Jackson.



In the Mahalia Jackson Story the singer battles poverty, Jim Crow, crooked record executives and disappointment in the men she loves before finding her true calling -- amplifying Dr. King’s vision with her music, as they fight to bring equality to their people.

Producers’ goal. Chicago-based Joyful Noise, LLC plans to produce a high quality, dramatic music biopic for an estimated \$15 million budget.

Working with the best Hollywood and Chicago film professionals, we are confident in our ability to generate a higher cost-to-return ratio based on the mainstream and faith-based appeal of the world’s most famous gospel singer.

Directed Bill Duke, acclaimed producer, writer and actor, *Mahalia* will be filmed in Chicago, the singer’s home of 45 years, and supported by the mayor, city officials, business and church leaders and the Chicago Media and Entertainment industry.

Box office potential. An estimated worldwide gross sales of \$75-\$125 million from domestic and foreign distribution is based on sales of similar films and the combination of:

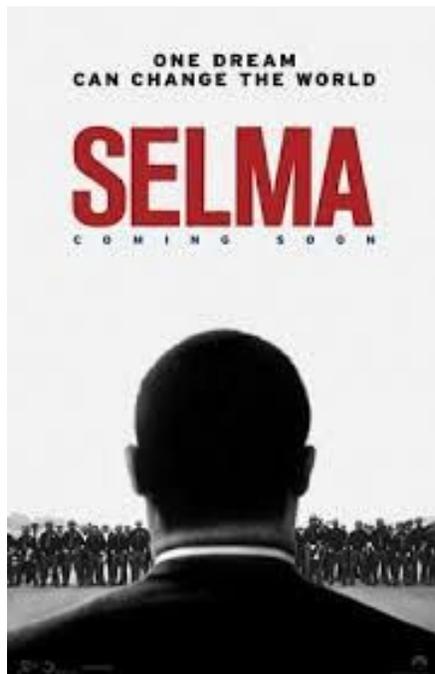
- Hollywood’s frenzy for biopics, especially about Black music artists
- Expansion of inspirational, faith-based films
- A Black story and cast of Black actors
- A medium-budget that assures a profitable ROI
- Innovative and efficient distribution and marketing strategies
- The worldwide appeal of gospel music, updated for the digital market
- Ancillary sales, such as TV licensing, CDs and transmedia distribution.

Investor incentives. Joyful Noise LLC offers film investors the benefits of **Section 181** U.S. Tax Code tax, which allows up to a 100% write-off of their investment. (See P. 5). *Plus* Illinois provides a 30% filmmakers tax credit and an additional 15% for following certain minority hiring guidelines.

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WHY MAHALIA IS ON TOP OF THE CURRENT SUCCESS CURVE

1. A broad-based audience. Mahalia's story will appeal to a trans-generational, trans-cultural audience of all ethnicities; to the vast Christian market, fans of gospel music and people who love a good story, as Rev. Jackson says, "is inspiring and does not denigrate."

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) estimates more than 170 million African-Americans went to the movies in 2013, a 13% gain from 2012.

They see movies 21% more often than the general market and are 22% more likely to have multiple repeat dealings of a movie," according to BET.

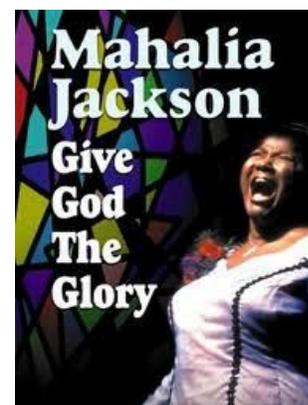
The African American market by itself is very large. . Black consumers spend more than \$1.1 billion annually on movie tickets.

2. Hollywood's frenzy for biopics is the biggest trend in movie history! "The Great Music Biopic Boom of 2015" is what this year is being called, an unprecedented number of lives of musicians and artists are heading for a screen near you. They include: Amy Winehouse, Miles Davis, Hank Williams, Nina Simone, Aaliyah, Tupac Shakur, Chet Baker, Yo-Yo Ma, Keith Richards, The Ramones, Elton John, Peggy Lee, Miles Davis, Josephine Baker, Master P, Jimi Hendrix and four announced Marvin Gaye projects.

3. Positioned as faith-based, *Mahalia* will appeal to the estimated **91 million US Christian movie-goers**. Darren Aronofsky's *Noah* grossed \$359 million worldwide and Mark Burnett's *Son of God* grossed \$68 million worldwide. The 15 faith and biblically-based movies that were set for 2015 release are more than in *all* of the past decade.

4. Gospel has worldwide appeal. Soundtrack CD and Mahalia Tribute Album sales will significantly add to the movie's gross revenue. *Consider:*

- Christian music sold 63 million albums in 2013.
- More than 1,400 radio stations play Christian/gospel music for 80 million listeners; 73% listeners are 25-54 year olds who account for more than 50% of all record sales.



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- Gospel has exploded in Japan, where Mahalia introduced gospel over 55 years ago and despite the population is only 1% Christian. .

FAITH-BASED MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIES

- ***There is a demand.*** “Faith-based films are proving there’s a business here and that’s what Hollywood is seeing,” said Columbia executive DeVon Franklin. He added, “There is a crossover and a mainstream audience for material that is faith-inspired.”

He proved his case with *Heaven is for Real*, coproduced by Bishop T.D. Jakes, which grossed \$62 million on a \$12 million budget.

- ***The market is profitable.*** Movies with very strong Christian, redemptive worldviews reflecting traditional moral values earned *four times as much money* on average as movies with very strong non-Christian, anti-Christian or mixed worldviews: \$90.78 million vs. \$20.22 million, states the 2014 Annual Movieguide Report to the Entertainment Industry.

At the core: Mel Gibson’s grass roots, faith-based marketing strategy for *Passion of the Christ*, produced for \$35 million, stunned Hollywood by generating \$612 million worldwide. A few years later, *The Chronicle of Narnia*, using the same grass roots strategy, surpassed *Passion* at \$737 million.

These same basic, unailing strategies will be employed for our movie, beginning with the start of preproduction and continuing heavily throughout pre-release.

How Mahalia will connect with such faith-based resources as:

- **Urban Ministries, Inc.** the largest US publisher of African American church materials, to its database of 40,000 churches, reaching 80% of all African American churches.
- **The biggest African American denominations** to reach *29 million black church-goers are:* The Southern Baptist Convention, Church of God in Christ, National Baptist Convention, and lesser AME and CME denominations.
- **National Council of Churches, USA**, a partnership of 36 Christian faith groups reaching 100,000 local congregations and 45 million adherents.
- **Grace Hill Media**, highlighting entertainment through its database of 155,000 ministry professionals, 1 million-plus consumers, and Christian media outlets including an online community of ministry professionals.

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- **Gospel music outlets**, including the 4,000-member Gospel Music Association (the Dove Awards); the Gospel Heritage Foundation, with an estimated 2,500 gospel museums and hundreds of dedicated gospel websites.

INVESTORS' ESTIMATED ROI AND TAX SAVINGS **Investors' ROI:** The funder's investment of all, or any percentage of the final budget, will be repaid from proceeds of revenues from box office receipts and sales of ancillary products, such as DVDs and CDs and other ventures.

- 1) Investors will receive 120% of their initial investment: their initial investment returned plus 20%. Investors are paid first, after costs of distribution and advertising (roughly equal to the cost of production) have been recouped.
- 2) The remaining Producers Net Profits will be split 50/50 between investors and the production entity for as long as income is derived from the investment.

We offer tax deductions under Section 181 of the US Tax Code. Productions with budgets up to \$20 million and which have at least 75% of its production completed within the US, qualify under Section 181. An investor, either an individual or business, may deduct up to 100% of their film production investment from passive income earned in the same year.

Investor benefits of Illinois filmmakers tax incentives:

- *Illinois* offers a **30% tax credit** on money spent for labor and supplies on films produced within the state.
- An additional **15% tax credit, or 45%**, will be gained by the production hiring minorities according to certain Illinois guidelines.
- *The final tax credit* can be applied against Illinois tax liability, sold or transferred to someone with an Illinois tax liability.



Projected revenues: *\$75-\$125 million*, based on average gross sales of similar movies, derived from average domestic/foreign theatre ticket sales.

Ancillary sales: Estimated at *\$50 million* from product placement, merchandising tie-ins with international retailers; DVDs, CDs, the Mahalia Tribute Album; TV broadcast and cable

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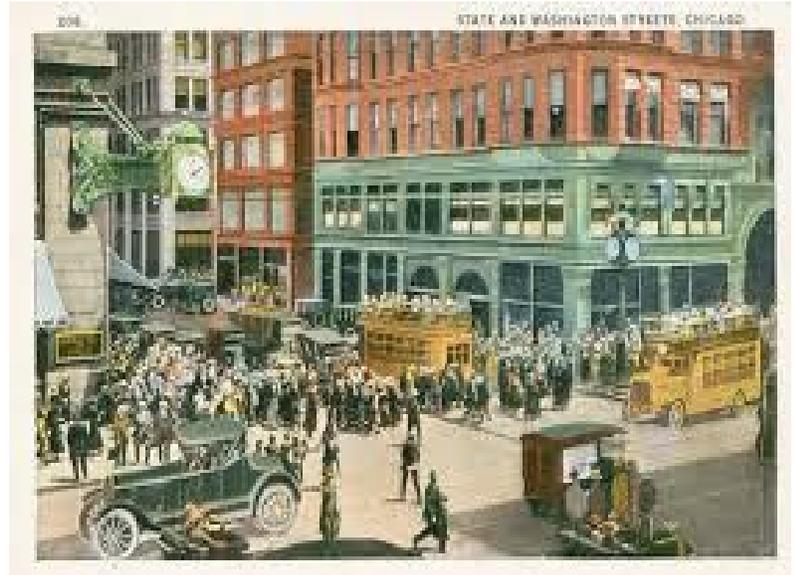
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licensing and; non-theatrical release (airplanes, military bases); gospel concerts; a sponsored documentary for schools and exhibits in Black Heritage and Gospel Heritage museums.

FILMING IN CHICAGO

Mahalia Jackson, a girl of 16, got off the train from New Orleans in 1927 bundled in sweaters against the icy winds off the lake, and was welcomed into the brawny arms of the city that would be her home for the next 45 years.

Special cost savings are available to *Mahalia* through Cinespace Studios, which is providing free stage and office rental, and favored rates from vendors and labor and the support of the city, civic, church, labor and film industry leaders.



Many locations of Mahalia’s time still exist – the big churches and storefronts, her former homes, the neighborhoods – further lowering costs and giving the film an authenticity and vibrancy that can’t be duplicated or manufactured elsewhere.

Casting. Hiring a Hollywood casting director would be our first order of business, so that we may attach the most appropriate stars and performers to the film.

Our wish list includes Jennifer Hudson, Amber Riley, Keke Palmer, Octavia Spencer, Viola Davis, Harry Lennix, Terrence Howard, David Oyelowo, Joan Cusack, Whoopee Goldberg, Ryan Gosling, Daniel Sunjata, Nate Parker, Anthony Mackie, Sidney Poitier, James Earl Jones, Morgan Freeman.

Estimated production schedule. Approximately 24-28 weeks from receipt of investment funds to completion of deliverables. Preproduction, 4-6 weeks; principal photography, 6-8 weeks and postproduction, 12 weeks.

Special month film release dates. Appropriate release dates would coincide with celebrations of Dr. King’s January birthday; February’s Black History month; March’s Women’s History Month and June’s Black Music Month.

These months are also appropriate for encore television presentations of “The Mahalia Jackson Story.”

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ABOUT JOYFUL NOISE, LLC

RUTH L RATNY, SCREENWRITER/PRODUCER is managing partner of Joyful Noise, LLC, the movie's production entity, a lifelong Chicago film careerist and film industry leader. Called "Chicago's first lady of film," she was named the first Chicago Legend by the Chicago International Film Festival in 2010..



During her lengthy research of Mahalia's life, she conducted many interviews among Mahalia's family members, friends and associates, including her former accompanists. The never-before told stories about Mahalia's rags-to-riches life are included in the screenplay.

A former writer/producer with multiple awards, including an Emmy, many Clios, Tellys and a Golden Eagle, Ms. Ratny has long been the chronicler of Chicago's film industry. Her current online daily ReelChicago.com, reaching 50,000 film professionals monthly, is the successor to her original, weekly print Screen Magazine, which forged a community where none existed before.

Ms. Ratny's longtime professional relationships assure the highest quality Chicago production, with the best people, and vendors offering the most advantageous rates. As an example of the generosity being extended, Cinespace Studios has offered free office and stage rental for her productions.

"After all the years that Ruth worked so tirelessly to promote Chicago, she will be universally met with the same enthusiasm from the entire production community for her film," assures Wayne Kubacki, partner/VP, Essanay Studio & Lighting, one of many local supporting vendors.



BILL DUKE, DIRECTOR whose distinguished directing, producing, writing and acting career spans three decades, accepted the offer to direct "Mahalia" without hesitation on the spot.

"It's personal passion project of mine and I have wanted to make her story for years," he said.

His directorial career began with the TV movie, "The Killing Floor," set and filmed in Chicago, and moved including hit features ("Sister Act 2, Back in the Habit," "Car Wash," "Menace to Society," "Hoodlum"), in many TV series ("The Outsiders,"), documentaries ("Dark Girls") and TV series and videos.

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As an esteemed actor he also has appeared in more than 60 additional films, TV shows and docs. As a writer, Mr. Duke and Danny Glover created a book of photo essays, "Black Light: The African-American Hero." He also directed "A Town Hall Meeting: Creating a Sense of Community" for the Los Angeles-based Artists Against Homelessness. He is also a mentor for young African-Americans aspiring for the performance arts.

THOMAS D. ADELMAN, PRODUCER is an LA-based award-winning producer, who helms his own Storytime Films producing company and TDA Pictures, a development, packaging and financing company. He has worked on many features. ("Planet 51," "The Usual Suspects," Arthur Miller's, "Focus"), television movies and series, ("Eloise At Christmastime, "Eloise At The Plaza," "Me; Eloise," an animated series) .



He has produced and/or directed many music films, such as Taylor Hackford's "Hail, Hail, Rock 'n Roll with Keith Richards;" "A Rockabilly Session Starring George Harrison, Eric Clapton, Carl Perkins and Ringo Starr," "A Black & White Night with Roy Orbison & Friends," "Let the Good Times Roll" and "Grand Duet," among others.

Mr. Adelman has been EVP of Development and Feature Production for eight years at Handmade Films, and President of Development and Production for Cineville, where he worked on more than 10 award-winning independent films.

He also had been an executive producer on film and TV projects at major film studios including Paramount and TV networks ABC, USA Network and others. He's been nominated for a directing Emmy and has won numerous other international film awards for producing and directing.

Joyful Noise production/liaison team: *Producer, Valerie Gobos*, who has worked on hundreds of visual media projects and with noted directors. *Associate producer Lorraine Render*, an Emmy award-winning producer of gospel and Christian television programs. *Musical directors:* Choir minister **Gregory Gay**, whose musical family was closely associated with Mahalia, and composer/arranger **Paul David Wilson**. *Church liaison:* Veteran gospel TV/radio broadcaster, **Al Beard**, who knows national clergy and politicians on a first-name basis -- including President Obama. *Consultant:* Mahalia's former accompanist **Dr. Charles Clency**, professor at Lake County College and director of choirs.

Chain of title. Joyful Noise LLC owns the screenplay and has the option on the singer's seminal biography. Music licensing is available. First Amendment rights prevail.

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Legal. *Thomas Leavens, Leavens, Strand & Glover LLC, intellectual property and music experts, Chicago. Phone, 312/488-4170; Email; tleavens@lsglegal.com*

MAYOR EMANUEL AND OTHERS SUPPORT MAHALIA

Rahm Emanuel, Mayor, City of Chicago: I am writing to express my support of the movie project that will highlight the life and legacy of Mahalia Jackson. We are thankful that that you have decided to film this movie here in Chicago. We applaud your efforts to honor one of the greatest gospel singers ever.



Rich Moskal, Director, Chicago Film Office: Count on our full support of this film being made in Chicago. As a locally produced feature and provider of countless jobs and opportunities for Chicago's creative community, your project is a prime example of why the City of Chicago is so committed to the continued growth and prosperity of our film industry. There is no better city for Mahalia Jackson's story to be put to film than Chicago. We are ready to assist you in making that possible.

Alex Pissios, President, Cinespace Studios: Cinespace Studios is pleased to help make your Mahalia Jackson feature the success we know it will be by offering you stages and production offices without cost, whenever you are ready to begin production. We will make every effort to cooperate to help provide whatever you might need during this period.

Your movie is very important to the future growth of the Chicago film industry by showing how expertly and economically films can be made in Chicago, from start to finish.

Mark Hogan, Business Manager, IATSE Motion Picture Studio Mechanics: Our membership looks forward to providing below-the-line labor component on the long-awaited production of Ruth L Ratny's feature about Mahalia Jackson, to be filmed in Chicago.

Jeff Wright, President & CEO, Urban Ministries, Inc. We look forward to working with you in this project as we believe it is perfectly targeted to our audience and has all the earmarks of a successful feature that will appeal to the community that we serve. We also see the potential for this movie to reinforce many elements of the ongoing business and ministry initiatives that are already undertaking with the 40,000 churches in our network.

Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr., Rainbow PUSH Coalition: I am personally committed to supporting your efforts to produce the first-ever movie about one of the greatest African

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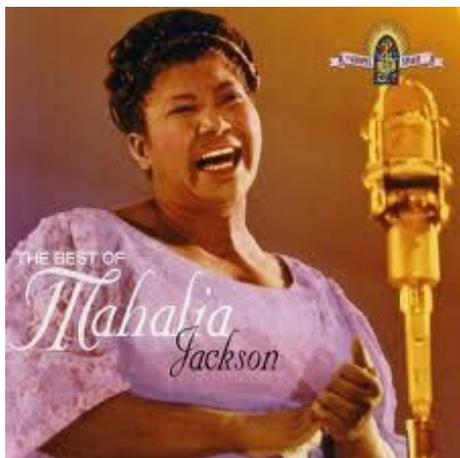
Americans in history. To this date, Mahalia continues to make an impact on the world with her messages of hope, faith and courage.

Bishop Robert R. Sanders, Illinois Third Church of God in Christ. On behalf of the Third I share the sentiments of many who feel that such a cultural production would have tremendous value in educating and encouraging our youth and adults. You have my wholehearted support and I look forward to working with you on this project.

Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Pastor Emeritus, Trinity United Church of Christ: At precisely the right time, Joyful Noise, LLC is producing a movie about the life of Mahalia Jackson, one of the most influential American religious leaders in the 20th century. She put gospel music “on the map” of all Americans who appreciate music of every genre.

It was because of Mahalia Jackson that Martin Luther King, Jr. was inspired as one of the primary leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. The movie about her life will let the world know how important she was. I support (the producers’) efforts and I urge you to consider them a worthwhile venture for funding.

Angelo “Skip” Saviano, State Representative, 5th District: Please know that you can count on my support in whatever our office can do to help in your endeavors. You have been a driving force in the film industry for many years and I look forward to your latest achievement.



Synopsis

THE MAHALIA JACKSON STORY

Born in Jim Crow New Orleans, motherless Mahalia (1911-1972), the granddaughter of slaves, was raised by a strict Baptist aunt in a shack on the bayou, surrounded by the jubilant Sanctified music of the Holiness churches.

As a little girl she worked in white homes tending children and doing laundry. She could iron a man’s shirt in four minutes. At age eight she was singing in Baptist churches.

Stifled by her aunt’s constraints, Mahalia left New Orleans at age 16 in 1927 during the Great Migration to live with her Aunt Hannah in comparatively free Chicago. When the Great Depression descended, she worked as a scrubwoman and laundress in white homes. Mahalia’s homesickness was eased at Salem Baptist church where she quickly became choir soloist. The Johnson Brothers Gospel Singers, America’s first organized gospel group, brought her into their fold to sing at well-paying “society” Baptist churches. Those jobs

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abruptly ended when Mahalia “caught the spirit” and sang in jubilant Sanctified style and the pastor banished the singers from his church.

With the Depression raging and the Singers banned from good-paying churches, they were reduced to singing for small change at poor storefront churches. There, newly-arrived black migrants from the South welcomed them, calling Mahalia’s singing “a postcard from home.”

One night, singing in a storefront, Mahalia met Richard J. Daley, an ambitious young Democrat politician. He paid her to sing at South Side rallies to bring in the black vote. She and Daley, paradoxically, became lifelong friends. As mayor, Daley reigned over North America’s most racially segregated city while Mahalia tirelessly fought for equality.

Mahalia’s unfaltering vow to sing only for the glory of God



Mahalia’s life path was set when her beloved grandfather Paul Clark, Papa, a freed slave, visited his Chicago family during a summer heat wave. Over her family’s objections, they went to a photo studio where Papa suffered a stroke and fell into a coma. She would never be forgiven if Papa died, her aunts said. Suffused with guilt and remorse, Mahalia prayed. If the Lord saved Papa, she would sing only for “the glory of God,” she vowed, and never in a place where whiskey was served. Papa recovered nine days later.

Mahalia was 23 when she married Isaac “Ike” Hockenhull, her first husband. He was an educated chemist and addicted gambler. He demeaned her for “hollering for the Lord” for pennies when she could sing on the concert stage. Mahalia refused to break her vow. Eventually, too many differences and disappointments ended their 10-year marriage.

Mahalia and her entourage climbed into a big car and took off for the “gospel circuit” where crooked promoters were legendary. Her career changed in 1946 when she performed at Harlem’s famous Golden Gate Auditorium and was discovered by Bess Berman, the feisty owner of Apollo Records and the music industry’s first gospel record label.

Mahalia’s first three Apollo recordings were flops and Bess Berman was going to drop her. But her next song struck gold. “Move on Up” became the biggest selling gospel record of all time. It was followed by more hit records and concert dates across the country, to which the entourage drove as Negroes were unwelcome, along with “dogs and Jews” from hotels. Mahalia’s music crossed over from church halls into the mainstream when Studs Terkel, a liberal Chicago radio host, had her on his show, to a mixed reaction from his white audience. They also became lifelong friends and he also was a champion of integration in the ‘60s.

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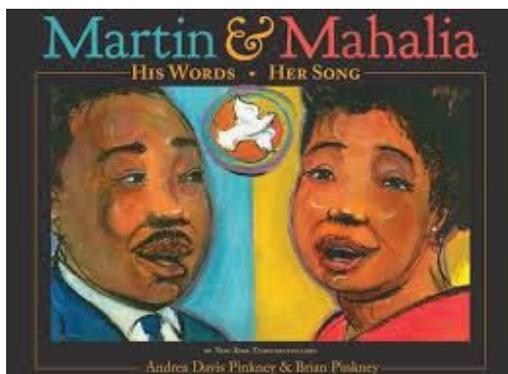
Mahalia becomes an “overnight success” at 38

At age 38, Mahalia became a national “overnight sensation.” In 1950, after months of persuasion, she reluctantly agreed to be the first gospel artist to sing at Carnegie Hall to breath-taking critical acclaim. She became rich and famous beyond her dreams.

So it was no surprise when Columbia Records’ A&R director Mitch Miller wooed Mahalia away from Apollo. She would be promoted as “the world’s greatest gospel singer,” earn huge royalties and be Columbia’s exclusive black artist. After many prayers and restless nights, she signed.

During her 25 years with Columbia, she recorded 1,000 songs. She smashed color barriers by having her own radio show and guest starring on all the big TV shows. She performed 200 concerts a year, traveling the world to sing before heads of state and royalty and collecting awards and accolades along the way.

Her epiphany in Montgomery in a terrible time in history



Mahalia was rehearsing a guest spot on her friend Dinah Shore’s TV show when she received a phone call from young Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Yes, she knew about the Montgomery bus boycott and yes, she would come down and sing. Her fee? “I don’t charge the walkin’ people,” she told him.

In Montgomery, Mahalia trembled from the hate spewing from white people as they walked to the church. Inside, she sang with an intensity that drowned out the ugly hatred outside. Later that evening, silently listening to Martin’s vision for racial equality, Mahalia had a life-changing epiphany. “Martin,” she declared, “you are the black Moses who will lead our people out of bondage and I will follow you.”

Whenever Martin was in trouble and called Mahalia, she was there for him, regardless of the mission. She led fund-raisers, like the \$50,000 from singing at Soldier Field used mostly for bail money. Her efforts got Martin released from the infamous Birmingham jail.

She opened doors for him in Northern cities like Chicago, where the clergy wanted more action and less preaching. She marched for housing segregation in Chicago’s Marquette Park, where Mayor Daley had ignored her pleas for police protection and Martin was struck with a stone. “Not even in Selma have I seen violence like this,” he said on TV.

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Their friendship and aspirations were so closely entwined that he didn't miss a beat when his prepared speech failed to catch fire and Mahalia called out to him, at the 1963 March on Washington -- "Martin, tell them the 'Dream!' Give the 'Dream' speech."

Martin, the third person in their marriage

Mahalia was an international, rich and famous singer, voted many times one of the most influential women in the world. But she was also lonely and vulnerable when she fell in love with Minters Galloway, a younger handsome musician. Despite her own reservations and her friends' suspicions about his motives, they married.



While happy together in many respects – they sincerely loved each other—and Minters was kind and attentive to her, their marriage became a mutually painful disappointment due to their unfulfilled expectations of each other.

Minters was jealous of Mahalia's relationship to Martin – calling him “the third person in our marriage.” An educated musician and a man, he felt diminished when she denied him a role in her professional life. To ease his frustration, he found solace in drink and women.

At the height of her fame, Mahalia fell seriously ill. All of her engagements were cancelled and she was confined to bed for months, Minters was impatient with her slow recovery and accused her of “getting sick only when you don't get paid.” Inevitably they divorced, bitterly.

While Mahalia's recovery was slow it didn't stop her for being available to Martin whenever he called. At a critical time in the Civil Rights Movement, Mahalia made an extra effort to produce a star-studded fund-raiser. Just before curtain time, she became critically ill and her doctor said she might perform.

Minters, who was in the audience, was summoned backstage to her side. He held her hand and comforted her as they admitted their love and mistakes and talked about reconciling.

The audience was disappointed when informed Mahalia would not sing that night. But at the very last moment, Mahalia walked onstage to a tumultuous ovation and sang with all her heart for Martin and the cause they believed in to the very end. #

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WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THE NEED FOR MAHALIA'S STORY



EDWARD ROBINSON, *Mahalia Jackson's Accompanist*

I played organ for Mahalia for 11 years, from 1958 until 1969 when she got sick and we quit working. I played with Mildred Falls (her pianist of 20 years) and Ralph Jones after Mildred left.

When Mahalia performed, it was in her contract that she has an organ along with a piano. She was the first gospel singer to sing with both a piano and an organ.

We went all over the country and all over the world. In Hollywood, she was a guest Red Foxx, The Telephone Hour, Dinah Shore and other top rated shows.

I was there with her when she sang in the movie, "Imitation of Life." People still talk about it. We were in Hollywood when she first met Minters Galloway (her second husband). He'd come to visit her while we were rehearsing for a TV show. Galloway was good looking and all, a short man, but I didn't especially like him. But he was good to Mahalia and she loved him and that's all that counted.

We went to Washington in 1960 where Mahalia sang for President Kennedy's inaugural celebration. We rode in a private railroad car as guests of Mayor Daley. I was there with her in 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial. She sang before Dr. King gave his speech. She told him to give the Dream Speech. Never heard anything like it. An airplane came and near drowned her out but Mahalia kept singing louder as though she was going to win out and she did.

Mahalia dropped everything to play for Dr. King. She loved him dearly. Called him the Black Moses. She'd do anything for him. He needed money for some poor people or whatever, she was right there for him. Broke her heart when he was killed.

People need to know their roots. Black people should know about Mahalia and all the good she did, that she was a pioneer back when it was impossible for a black woman to be anything at all.

As for gospel, Mahalia was the first real, true, pioneer of gospel singing. Nobody will ever measure up to Mahalia Jackson. Nobody. Did you know that Aretha Franklin didn't go into gospel because she said she could never be as good as Mahalia?

STUDS TERKEL, *Author, friend and discoverer of Mahalia Jackson*

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Your screenplay accurately portrays Mahalia's story. Reading it brought back a lot of memories. Good luck with the movie.

REV. JESSE JACKSON, *Operation Rainbow Push and family friend*

If there were ever a movie that meets my criteria to inspire instead of exploit, to uplift and not denigrate, it is this proposed movie about my dear friend, the late, great Mahalia Jackson. She deserves her place in history as an icon, a strong black woman who achieved in spite of insurmountable odds during a terrible period in American history.

JULIEANNA RICHARDSON, *Founder/Executive Director, The HistoryMakers*

I remember what a looming figure she was, when she was known as "the world's greatest gospel singer." The sad part is, children today don't know about trailblazers like Mahalia Jackson and they should. Mahalia should be a tremendous inspiration to the present generation, reminding them of the struggle she went through for their ultimate benefit.

EARL CALLOWAY, *Fine Arts Editor, Chicago Daily Defender*

Mahalia was a pioneer, an icon, yet she was humble and grateful for her great gift. She clung to her ethnicity with great integrity. She made gospel music relevant with style, intelligence and real communication. By overcoming so many obstacles during her life, her story can show us that any young person with talent and faith has the same opportunity she had to succeed. Did you know it was Mahalia who told Dr. King to give the Dream Speech?

DON JACKSON, *Central City Executive Producer of gospel shows*

I think *Mahalia* is a great project. Dr. King relied heavily on gospel to motivate his troops and Mahalia was the one he called upon. Mahalia's inroads on radio and TV as a gospel singer were a groundbreaking first. She opened the doors for the acceptance of secular music, gospel music, into mainstream music.

STEPHANIE DUNN, *Writer/Producer, Crawford Broadcasting Co.*

Mahalia is like the rock of gospel, the foundation for gospel singing in America. Her music brought the races together, transcending cultures and times. The African American community today desperately needs uplifting, inspiring stories like Mahalia's. Gospel is motivational, positive, uplifts, teaches, inspires and it's needed today just as much as it was when Mahalia Jackson was alive and performing.

JERRY ("The Ice Man") BUTLER, *Cook County Commissioner, Rhythm & Blues Foundation Chairman, Singer/Songwriter*

Mahalia could stand in the pulpit and fill the church with that great contralto voice of hers. Gospel, which is so big today, owes a debt to her for bringing it to more than just black people. As for the Civil Rights movement, Mahalia was its spiritual voice.

GAIL BLACKBURN, *Community Leader and Mahalia's Chatham neighbor*

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Mahalia was ahead of her time and what she did should be meaningful for every generation. She loved children and her dream was to have a Temple of Music for children of all colors and races. When people know all the great things she did and what she went through, it should leave a great impression.

VICTOR ESKRIDGE, *Son of Mahalia's first lawyer*

My father used to rave about Mahalia – how she brought gospel music to everyone, her business acumen, her bravery and dedication to the Civil Rights movement at a time when the U.S. was in upheaval. There's so much negativity in the black community today, she would be a tremendous role model at a time when one is really needed.

BRENDA STEWART, *Partner, Joy Art Music Co.*

Mahalia was the Oprah Winfrey of her day. She was real, sincere, joyful, a woman of great integrity. She didn't try to be something she wasn't. I was so surprised and sad when I was in New Orleans, her home town, that the people there didn't know who she was. Her accomplishments were incredible for her time, and they'd be very inspirational today.

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