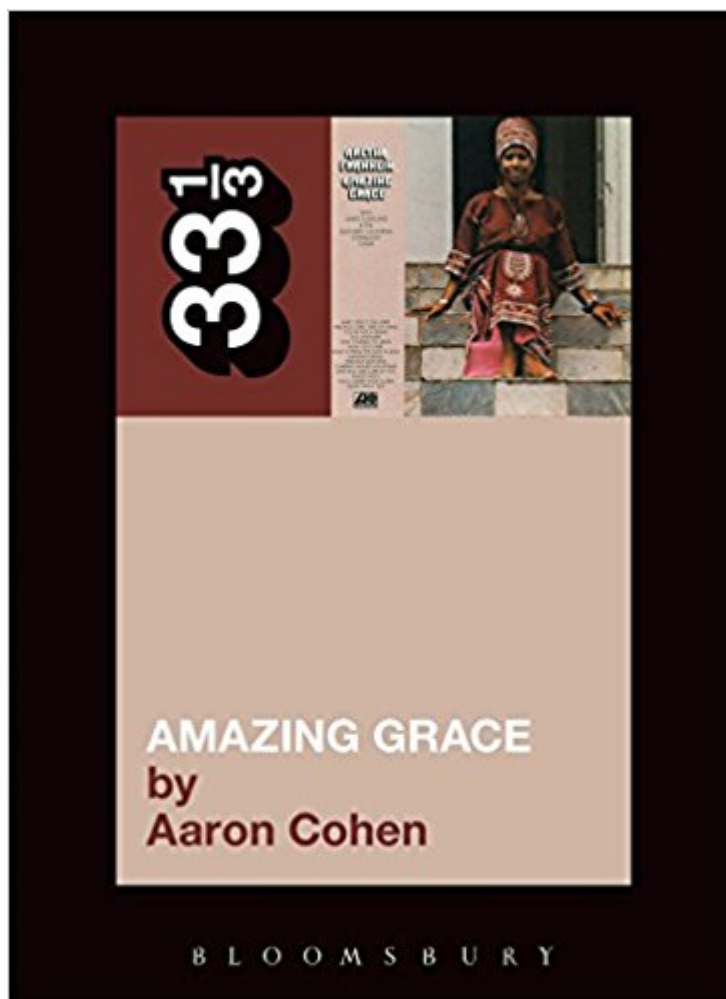


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# Aretha Franklin's Amazing Grace (33 1/3)



## Synopsis

For two days in January 1972, Aretha Franklin sang at the New Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles while tape recorders and film cameras rolled. Everyone there knew the event had the potential to be historic: five years after ascending to soul royalty and commercial success, Franklin was publicly returning to her religious roots. Her influential minister father stood by her on the pulpit. Her mentor, Clara Ward, sat in the pews. Franklin responded to the occasion with the performance of her life and the resulting double album became a multi-million seller-even without any trademark hit singles. But that was just one part of the story. Franklin's warm inimitable voice, virtuoso jazz-soul instrumental group and Rev. James Cleveland's inventive choral arrangements transformed the course of gospel. Through new interviews, musical and theological analyses as well as archival discoveries, this book sets the scene, traces the recording's traditional origins and pop infusions and describes the album's enduring impact.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Aaron Cohen's study of *Amazing Grace* is rich in intelligence, scholarship, and sensitivity. A great musical work has been put in context. Praise Aretha! Praise God!" - David Ritz, co-author of *Aretha: From These Roots and Brother Ray: Ray Charles* "When the church's prodigal daughter returned, she blessed it with the biggest-selling gospel album in history. Aaron Cohen captures the cultural and political implications of this astonishing event. He also pays homage to the musicians and

arrangers who supported Lady Soul. A joyful noise, indeed." • Anthony Heilbut, gospel producer and author of *The Gospel Sound: Good News In Bad Times* "When the church's prodigal daughter returned, she blessed it with the biggest-selling gospel album in history. Aaron Cohen captures the cultural and political implications of this astonishing event. He also pays homage to the musicians and arrangers who supported Lady Soul. A joyful noise, indeed." • Anthony Heilbut, gospel producer and author of *The Gospel Sound: Good News In Bad Times*

Aaron Cohen is associate editor of *DownBeat* magazine. His writing on gospel music has been featured extensively in the *Chicago Tribune*, and he lives in Chicago, IL. He recently won the 2011 ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for his article on Ray Charles in *Downbeat*.

I enjoy reading this book while listening to the album. I couldn't be happier. I feel like I am actually there. I bought this album in 1972. Somewhere along the way, I lost it. I bought it again (vinyl) at a used record store going out-of-business in 2009. The album was in good shape and, I felt like I had just found a treasure..... Guess what???..... I did. The album is GREAT. Fortunate for me, and those like myself, someone wrote a book about the making of this album.... I bought this book and once again,,,,,,,,,,,,, I found a treasure..... I can't quite describe the volume of enjoyment I get from experiencing the reading of this book while simultaneously listening to the album.

This book just gave me a bona fide history lesson. The author truly did his homework. I will re-read this book to catch anything I missed. It's has only solidified my love for Ms. Franklin. And I've fallen in love with the *Amazing Grace* album (both the original and the complete recordings) ALL OVER AGAIN. Well done sir!!!!

The importance of the *Amazing Grace* event in American musical history is emphasized through the eyes and ears of the great musicians who played on the album.

Bought one of these books for each of my family members and one for myself. Thus far all positive reviews.

I thought this was a joke when I received it in the mail A little tiny book I gave it to the Goodwill

I've long been a fan of this album, and maintain that there's not a single song on it that doesn't have

at the bare minimum ONE MOMENT that doesn't send shivers up and down your spine. Aaron Cohen has done a heckuva job tracking down all the principles in the story of this remarkable event that became an incomparable album... Except for one: Aretha herself. But the fact that she didn't cooperate by giving an interview is probably for the better. Cohen paints a vivid picture with the sources he doggedly tracked down and brings the stories to life. So we have had the album, and now we have the book. All that remains is the documentary footage! Really looking forward to that getting released...

One of the most recent entries in the series, and a very solid one at that. Not unlike Franklin's album that had her returning to her roots in the church, this volume is a throwback to the cleaner, more direct books of this series. It is even a return to the more traditional slim format, when most of the recent volumes have been trending towards a bit cumbersome in size. There are some details about the album that surprised me. I did not know the sessions were filmed (by Syndey Pollack) for an intended theatrical release that never materialized. Some of that footage of the second night of performances shows Charlie Watts and Mick Jagger in the congregation, taking a break from the overdub sessions for "Exile on Main Street" that brought them to L.A. Go figure that, although I recently developed a deep love for gospel funk, I have not heard this album. I was even aware of it, but just never thought to actually seek it out. Now I do want to hear it, only to discover all previous CD incarnations are way out of print and the album is not available digitally. I think it is a testament to this book that I will still be looking for this album months from now, if need be.

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