

VANESE THOMAS



Born in Memphis, Tennessee, Vaneese is the daughter of Rufus Thomas, whose legendary career as a musician and entertainer began in Vaudeville and spanned more than half a century in rhythm-and-blues recording and radio. Her older siblings are the hit recording artist “Memphis Queen” Carla Thomas and the highly respected keyboardist and producer, Marvell Thomas.

Embracing this remarkable musical legacy, Vaneese carries forward the rich heritage of Memphis soul and R&B, a music that has touched several generations and crossed many divides. At the same time she has combined all the influences of her background and experience — R & B, gospel, blues, and jazz – to cultivate a soul-stirring style that’s all her own.

Highly regarded within the music industry, Vaneese’s talents as a singer, songwriter, producer, and actor have made her a sought-after solo performer as well as a first-call vocalist for projects by other top-name artists. She has worked with the renowned recording producer Phil Ramone and has sung with an astonishing array of internationally known performers including Luciano Pavarotti, Sting, Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Celine Dion, Eric Clapton, Dr. John and numerous others.

Vaneese’s vocal career has taken her to concerts and festivals around the world. She has sung with the Baltimore and Colorado Symphonies in “Too Hot to Handel” under the baton of Marin Alsop and at:

- several Pavarotti & Friends concerts in Modena, Italy
- the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland
- the Michael Jackson & Friends concerts with Luther Vandross in Seoul, Korea, and Munich, Germany
- and soul music festivals in Porretta, Narni, and Perugia, Italy.

Geffen Records released Vaneese’s first major recording in 1987. The self-titled album included the Top Ten R & B hit “Let’s Talk it Over.” In 1999 Vaneese used her own Peaceful Waters Music label to release *When My Back’s Against The Wall*, a gospel crossover hailed by *Billboard* Magazine as “a small label masterpiece that begs for attention from savvy majors.” Following a few years later was *A Woman’s Love*, which combined R & B and silky, smooth-jazz vocals. Vaneese then released *Soul Sister Vol. One*, a collection of seminal soul classics. The CD, and the live show Vaneese has created from it, both pay tribute to some of the original soul sisters and honor the historical value of this irrepressible music.

Vaneese’s current release *Blues For My Father* has taken the Blues world by storm! Ranking #1 for September 2014 in France, #7 in the US for 2014 and garnering 2 BMA award nominations for 2014.

In addition to concerts and recordings, Vaneese has worked extensively in film and television. She was the voice of Grace the Bass on the PBS series “Shining Time Station” and Clio the Muse, Goddess of History, in Disney’s *Hercules*. She has sung on numerous film soundtracks including *Anastasia*, *Mighty Aphrodite* and *The First Wives Club*. TV appearances include “The Late Show with David Letterman,” “Late Night with Conan O’Brien,” and “NBC’s Today.”

Vaneese has also produced recordings, created vocal arrangements, and written songs for Patti Austin, Freddie Jackson, Bob James, Larry Coryell, Melba Moore, and Diana Ross, who scored a Top Ten hit in the United Kingdom with Vaneese’s “One Shining Moment.” She helped found the Swarthmore College Gospel Choir and continues to direct the Alumni Gospel Choir.

Vaneese lives in Westchester County, New York, with her husband and producing partner Wayne Warnecke. Her songs are available on iTunes and Amazon and at select retail stores.