

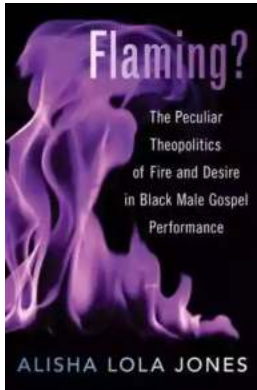
# The Peculiar Theopolitics Of Fire And Desire In Black Male Gospel Performance



Gospel music has long been a powerful force within the Black community, serving as a means of spiritual expression, cultural affirmation, and social change. Within the realm of gospel performance, black male artists have consistently played a significant role, bringing their unique blend of passion, faith, and creativity to the forefront.

One cannot discuss the significance of black male gospel performance without acknowledging the central themes of fire and desire that permeate these musical expressions. These themes not only underscore the emotional intensity of the music but also offer insights into the theopolitical dynamics at play.

**Flaming?: The Peculiar Theopolitics of Fire and Desire in Black Male Gospel Performance**



by Alisha Lola Jones(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
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Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
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## The Fire Within

Fire, both metaphorical and literal, has long held a powerful symbolic meaning within the African-American religious experience. It represents the divine presence, the Holy Spirit, and the transformative power of faith. When black male gospel artists take the stage, they embody this fire, allowing its heat and intensity to radiate through their voices and performances.

Fire serves as a catalyst for change and liberation, signaling a desire to break free from societal constraints and embrace a deeper connection with the divine. Black male gospel performers channel their desires for a more just and equitable world through their music, using the fiery energy of their performances to ignite the souls of their listeners.

## Desire for Change

Desire, in the context of black male gospel performance, goes beyond simply wanting or wishing for something. It encompasses a passionate longing for a world characterized by love, justice, and equality. Black male gospel artists use

their platform to express this desire, urging their audience to join them in working towards social transformation.

Their performances create a space where these desires can be acknowledged and celebrated. By tapping into their own personal experiences and struggles, black male gospel artists connect with their audience on a deep emotional level, fostering a sense of shared purpose and awakening a desire for change within the hearts of listeners.

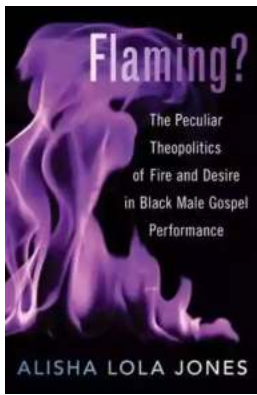
## **The Theopolitical Dimension**

Black male gospel performance is not only about the individual experiences of the artists or the emotions evoked in the audience. It holds a theopolitical dimension as well, engaging with theological and political realities that shape the Black community.

Through their music, black male gospel performers challenge societal norms, advocating for justice, confronting systemic racism, and critiquing oppressive structures. They expose the flaws within these systems and call for a more authentic living out of Christian principles in both the private and public spheres.

The peculiar theopolitics of fire and desire in black male gospel performance bring together a complex interplay of faith, emotion, and social transformation. These artists serve as spiritual guides, fanning the flames of passion and inspiring others to embrace their desires for change.

As we listen to their powerful voices and witness their fiery performances, let us not only be moved but also called to action. Let us join these black male gospel performers in the pursuit of a world where fire and desire fuel the fight for justice and equality.



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Male-centered theology, a dearth of men in the pews, and an overrepresentation of queer males in music ministry: these elements coexist within the spaces of historically black Protestant churches, creating an atmosphere where simultaneous heteropatriarchy and "real" masculinity anxieties, archetypes of the "alpha-male preacher", the "effeminate choir director" and homo-antagonism, are all in play. The "flamboyant" male vocalists formed in the black Pentecostal music ministry tradition, through their vocal styles, gestures, and attire in church services, display a spectrum of gender performances - from "hyper-masculine" to feminine masculine - to their fellow worshippers, subtly protesting and critiquing the otherwise heteronormative theology in which the service is entrenched. And while the performativity of these men is characterized by cynics as "flaming," a similar musicalized "fire" - that of the Holy Spirit - moves through the bodies of Pentecostal worshippers, endowing them religio-culturally, physically, and spiritually like "fire shut up in their bones".

Using the lenses of ethnomusicology, musicology, anthropology, men's studies, queer studies, and theology, *Flaming?: The Peculiar Theo-Politics of Fire and Desire in Black Male Gospel Performance* observes how male vocalists traverse their tightly-knit social networks and negotiate their identities through and beyond the worship experience. Author Alisha Jones ultimately addresses the ways in which gospel music and performance can afford African American men not only greater visibility, but also an affirmation of their fitness to minister through speech and song.



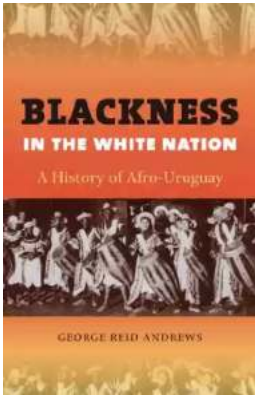
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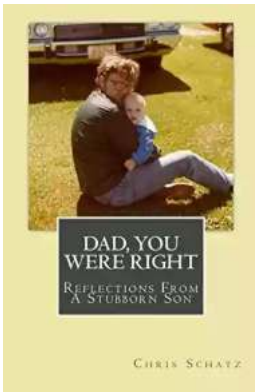
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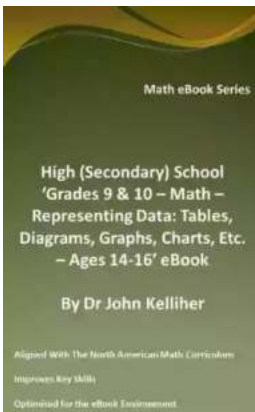
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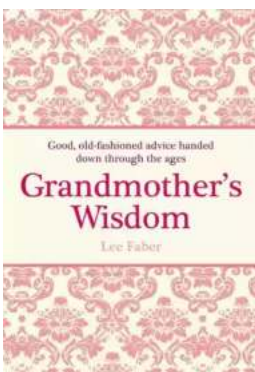
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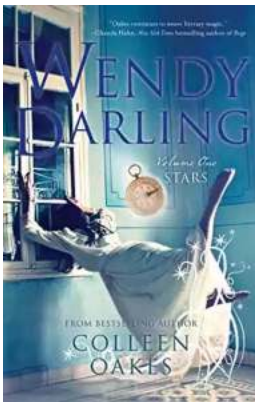
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