Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4182

Mead, Sister Janet

(1937 - 2022)

Born	19370815, Adelaide South Australia Australia
Died	20220126, Adelaide South Australia Australia
Occupation	Musician, Religious Sister

Summary

Sister Janet was a Roman Catholic nun who is best known for recording a rock version of *The Lord's Prayer*. Made in 1973, the recording became the first single to achieve gold record status in both Australia and the United States at the same time. It earned her a Grammy Award nomination in 1974.

Sister Janet continued to sing regularly at the Adelaide Rock Mass services. She was a part of the Romero Community in Adelaide, working for the relief of the poor and disadvantaged of that city. In 2004 she received the Yamaha Golden Gospel Award in recognition of her services to Australian Christian music at the Australian Gospel Music Awards in Canberra. In 2005 she was named South Australian of the Year in recognition of her deep commitment to social justice.

Details

Interested in musical performance from a young age, and with a strong Christian faith, Janet Mead combined the two interests with she formed a group when she was just 17. 'The Rock Band' provided music for the weekly mass at her local church. A musical child prodigy, she studied piano at the Adelaide Conservatorium and had a three octave vocal range with perfect pitch, she no doubt could have had commercial success as a musician, but never sought it for herself. Sensing a higher calling, she joined the Sisters of Mercy and became a music teacher at two local Catholic schools.

She began to explore the 'rock mass' concept in the early 1970s, wishing to make the Catholic church services more accessible to a younger audience. There was a broader context for this, given the success of rock operas based on Christian stories, such as *Jesus Christ, Superstar* and *Godspell.*

Events

1973 - 1973
The Lord's Prayer is recorded by Sister Janet Mead

1974 - 1974
The Lord's Prayer peaks at No. 4 on the American Billboard Singles' Charts

2005 - 2005
Sister Janet Mead is named South Australian of the Year

2004 - 2004
Sister Janet Mead receives the Yamaha Golden Gospel Award in recognition of her services to Australian Christian music

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Resource Section
Sister Janet Mead, 2006,
http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?c=824

Book
30 years of the Rock Mass, 1972-2002., 2002

Newspaper Article
Whatever happened to Sister Janet?: community life goes on for ex-hit maker, Phyland, Joan, 1982

Magazine article
Sister Janet sings to a new beat, Hayward, Rose, 1982

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Oral History Collection
Janet Mead interviewed by Susan Marsden in the Mortlock Library collection [sound recording]

Author Details
Nikki Henningham

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