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CASTING CROWNS

TIME TO THRIVE

DAVE BARNES
THE GOLDEN BOY

TOBYMAC
ON TOUR

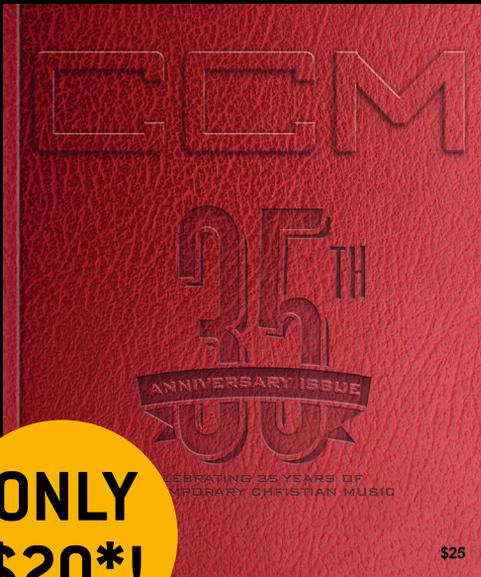


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ON THE COVER:

Casting Crowns

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tobyMac



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YOUR WORLD

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GEAR GUIDE

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ONE LAST LOOK

Passion 2014 Atlanta

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Thriving.

The word makes me think of gardens and flowers and other things I don't have time for.

I'm a mom of two with a full-time job, plus some. I'm a wife, a daughter, a sister...

I am surrounded by people and things that need me; and at the end of the day, I barely have enough time or energy to survive—let alone thrive.

Right? Or...maybe that's all wrong.

Perhaps it's just me staying busy—too busy to get to know myself or to let anyone else know me. As long as I have a task to complete or a responsibility of which to boast, I have a purpose.

That's a lie I've told myself for more than half my life.

Why? Because I'm much more comfortable looking at a computer screen than a mirror. I'm human. I have made mistakes and committed great sin in my life. And while I know I'm forgiven and changed, I haven't yet learned how to let go of shame—only how to numb it.

But being numb isn't being fully alive. And if you're not alive, you can't thrive. God wants us to have life to the full—to thrive. Perhaps 2014 is the year to step back and regroup.

We were made to believe and trust and love and seek. We were made to thrive by the One who is the only true source of life.

Let's put down all these burdens we've given ourselves and start believing that being the person God made us to be is enough.

Let's stop doing until we collapse. Instead, let's start bowing and surrendering and reaching to the Cross, to our Savior, to the One who created life...the One who knows our potential and calls to us each day to drop the distractions, plant our feet, feed on His Word and look to His Son so that we're not merely surviving...we're thriving.



Caroline Lusk

Caroline Lusk
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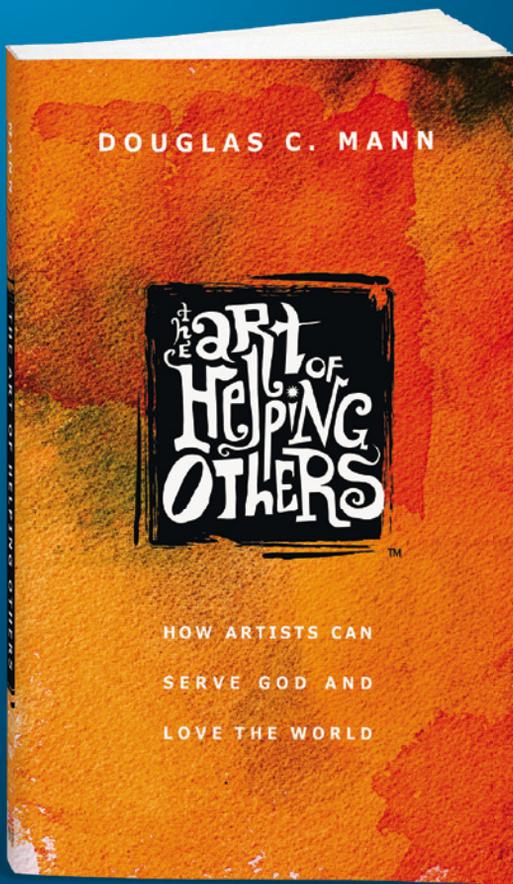


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—**Ben Arment**, creator of Dream Year and the STORY Conference

Douglas Mann is a published songwriter, and a former music business and book-publishing executive. He is an accomplished visual artist whose art can be found in collections throughout the world. He divides his time between Colorado and Ukraine.



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MANDISA, JAMIE GRACE,
COLTON DIXON, CHRIS AUGUST
AND CAPITAL KINGS

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

TobyMac may have been the headliner on the “Hits Deep” Tour, but the expansive evening was just as much about showcasing a multi-genre pool of talent as it was supporting his latest No. 1 *Billboard* album, *Eye On It* (Forefront).

While the multi-platinum superstar made sure to roll out many danceable mega-hits (“Tonight,” “Speak Life,” “Boomin’”) alongside the always well-oiled Diverse City Band, the night will probably best be remembered for its once-in-a-lifetime collaborations.



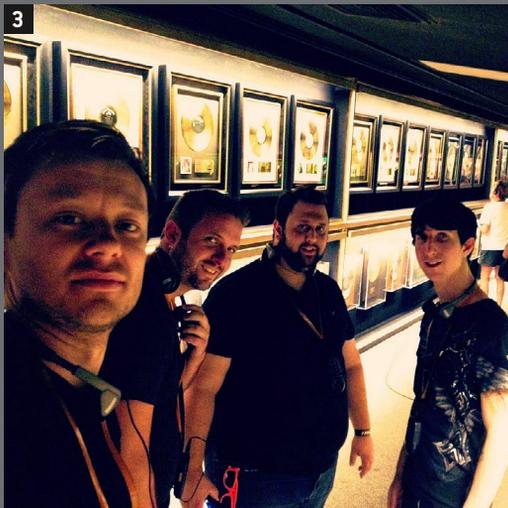
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TOUR SPOTLIGHT

Support acts as varied as singer/songwriter Brandon Heath and soul-star Mandisa could just as comfortably tag-team with one another as piano-rocker Colton Dixon and acoustic-popper Jamie Grace, trading boundaries of style and culture for joyful musical fellowship.

Mac breathed new life into some of his classics as he shared the stage with troubadour Chris August on the unplugged classic "In The Light," electro-hip hop protégés Capital Kings for the jam "Get Back Up" and the full cast on "Me Without You," the funky, confetti-adorned finale that capped off the communal party. **CCM**





1 Actor Gavin MacLeod and his wife, Patty, became Cheri Keaggy fans after hearing the Dove Award-winner perform at Victory Christian Center in Rancho Mirage, California. Pictured from left to right: Patty MacLeod, Mike Anderson (Keaggy's father), Cheri Keaggy and Gavin MacLeod.

2 Twelve-year-old Christopher Duffley (center), who recently released his debut CD, *Eyes Of My Heart*, visits with singer Kelly Rowland (back, right) following the Winter Autism Ball at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Rowland, along with Michael Bolton, was part of the choir that sang background vocals when Christopher, who is blind and has autism, performed "Lean On Me."

3 & **4** During Hardie Avenue's media tour, the modern rockers stopped by Elvis Presley's Graceland in Memphis, Tennessee, to appear on Sirius/XM's Elvis Radio and take a tour of its highly decorated halls. In other Hardie Avenue news, front man Yuri Mayba (right) connects with KJ-52 backstage after performing at Rock the River in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

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JASON BARE
LOVE IS ALIVE
INDIE

CARROLLTON
TBD
CENTRICITY RECORDS/CAPITOL

2.18.2014

BRIAN WEAVER
TBD
VSR/CAPITOL

TASHA MASITHA
TASHA MASITHA
DREAM RECORDS/CAPITOL

LOFTLAND
I DON'T WANT TO DANCE
DREAM RECORDS/CAPITOL

THE OVERSEER
TBD
SOLID STATE RECORDINGS/
NEW DAY

BRIAN FREE & ASSURANCE
UNASHAMED
DAYWIND/NEW DAY

2.25.2014

RAPTURE RUCKUS
IN THIS TOGETHER
TOOTH & NAIL/NEW DAY

ANBERLIN BIDS ADIEU

BY MATT CONNER



The announcement of Anberlin's first LP in two years is ironic, as is the title. *The Return of Anberlin* releases this summer to the joy of many fans around the world. However, the title is slightly misleading given that it will be their final album.

Stephen Christian and company have enjoyed a successful crossover career that few bands ever approximate, which makes it no surprise that their retirement is also a bit left of center. Typically artists say goodbye when things start going south. Not so in this case. Still a critical and commercial favorite, they have headlined shows on multiple continents and opened for bands like Smashing Pumpkins and 30 Seconds to Mars. Without question, their 10-year tenure has been a chart-topping, high-profile anomaly.

For the forthcoming release, the band is joining forces with former label Tooth & Nail Records, the ideal way to commemorate their career.

"We are honored to welcome Anberlin back to the Tooth & Nail family, and we're

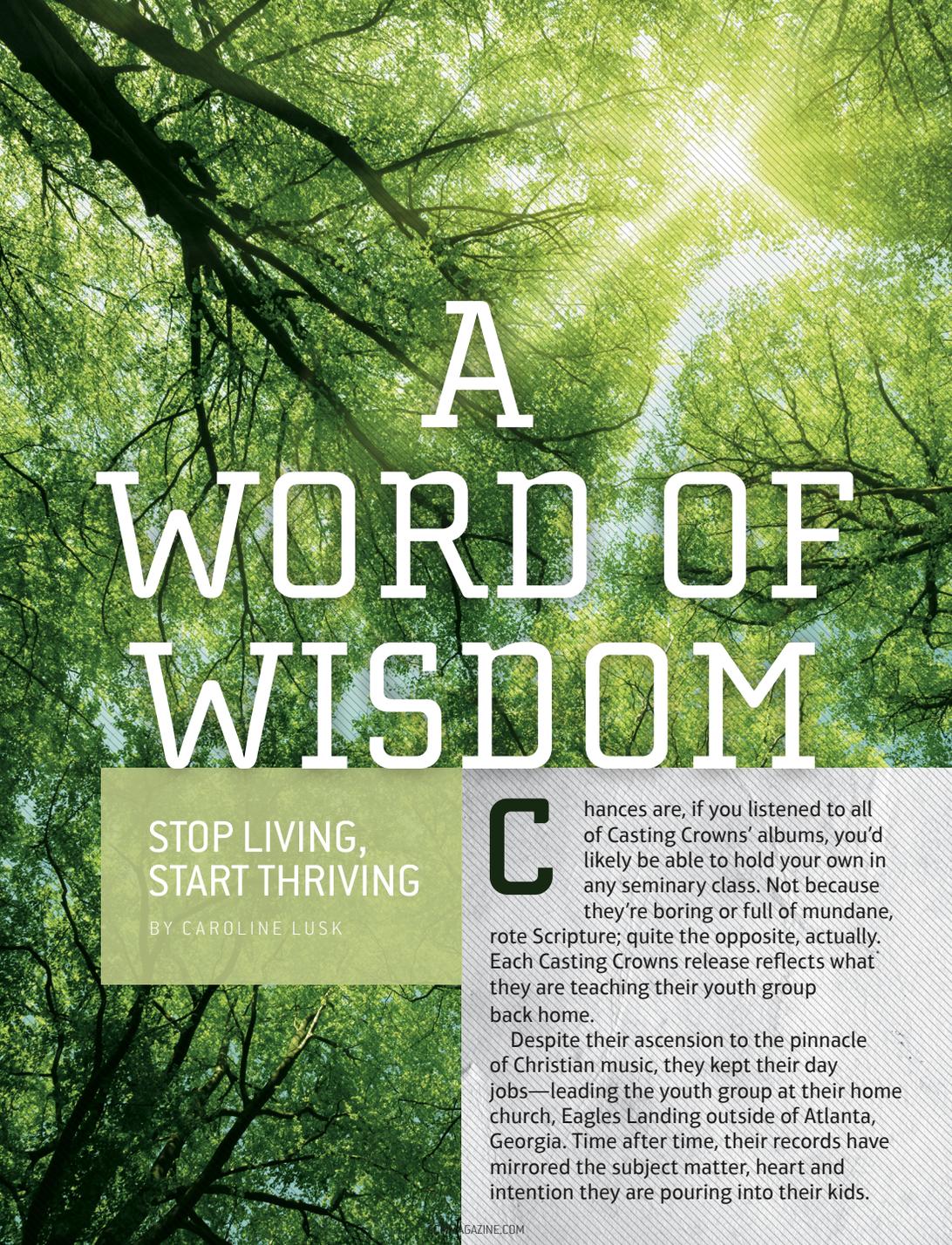
humbled that they've chosen to work with us for the final chapter in their storied career," says Brandon Ebel, President, Tooth & Nail Records. "Anberlin is among a few select bands that come to mind when thinking about the legacy of Tooth & Nail Records. We look forward to making Anberlin's final year memorable for everyone!"

Summer 2014 will find the band taking the new album to North and South America, Europe and Asia. And while many of us wish the "return" of the band would last longer than one touring season, Anberlin is determined to make it a tour no one will soon forget.

"We're asking you to join us as friends, as fans, as family for one last year in 2014. ...We want to make sure we see every single person that has ever given anything to this band."

—Anberlin's farewell announcement

[+ CLICK HERE FOR ENTIRE ANNOUNCEMENT.](#)



A WORD OF WISDOM

STOP LIVING,
START THRIVING

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Chances are, if you listened to all of Casting Crowns' albums, you'd likely be able to hold your own in any seminary class. Not because they're boring or full of mundane, rote Scripture; quite the opposite, actually. Each Casting Crowns release reflects what they are teaching their youth group back home.

Despite their ascension to the pinnacle of Christian music, they kept their day jobs—leading the youth group at their home church, Eagles Landing outside of Atlanta, Georgia. Time after time, their records have mirrored the subject matter, heart and intention they are pouring into their kids.



Whereas this routine could easily make a lesser band boring and predictable, it's what makes Casting Crowns great and is the reason their songs have touched countless people around the world.

Why? Quite simply, the songs are not about them. Their albums are not about chasing the latest sonic trend or radio appeal.

The songs are about truth, love, grace, mercy, forgiveness and what it means to live—to thrive—in the fullness of Christ.

"It seems like everyone's just trying to get to Friday or the next semester or the next vacation," says Mark Hall, lead writer and vocalist. "Everyone's just surviving. No one's thriving."

As they have so often done, Crowns aligned the notion of thriving with an image—a tree with roots running deep and branches reaching high.

"It's all about the root system," Mark says, "who you are and who God is. You've got to remember Him to know Him.

"Some believers are all reach," he continues. "They're running, saving, rescuing, helping, trying to be everything to everyone; and then the storm of life hits them. They want control and to make things work, but maybe there's no reason for it. You don't need to be awesome. He's already awesome."

No strangers to storms themselves, Mark and the rest of the gang write, speak, sing

and live from a place of endurance and faith.

Just prior to the release of the new project, one of the band member's babies had a stroke. The baby's health has been touch and go since.

When Mark and his wife, Melanie, expanded their family through adoption, they jumped on a terrifying roller coaster of the baby's digestive illnesses and conditions. The first several months of her life were spent in and out of hospitals.

Despite the pain and fear, the men and women in Crowns, along with their families,

others with whom they interface around the world. They also see the aftermath—divorce, depression, defeat and shame. Moms and dads, husbands and wives who had such promising beginnings and upright intentions, fall away. Somewhere, somehow, those intentions fade. The things we believe in the most—our marriages, our children, our health—soon become casualties of dashed expectations. Mark approached this concept by looking at one of the greatest friendships that suffered because of humanity.

Many have heard the story of Peter's

introduction to Jesus.

He was fishing—unsuccessfully—when this stranger advised him to cast his nets on the other side. Of course, the divine advice paid off with the largest catch Peter had ever made.

“Peter met Jesus on the biggest payday of his life,” Mark says. “But he left it all—his gear, his boat, his life. He was the first one to lead with his mouth, telling Jesus he wouldn't let anyone hurt Him. He was hard-core. And then he bailed when Jesus needed him most. Three days later, Peter was told to cast his nets on the other side again.

He swam about a football-field-length to get to shore, and there was Jesus—sitting there making him breakfast. That needs to speak to you and me. Jesus is saying, ‘I'm not leaving you or letting you go. You're still mine.’ This is now. The church lives in this.”

True to form—if the church is living in it, Crowns is singing about it through songs like, “All You've Ever Wanted,” which goes out to those plagued by self-doubt and insecurity.

have been able to use their pain to reach others in pain.

“The enemy is coming against ‘family’ from all sides,” Mark says. “The song ‘Broken Together’ is all about walking a family through that destruction. The son, daughter, everyone is being attacked and trapped in their own world.”

It's a scenario the band encounters far too often through the youth in their church and

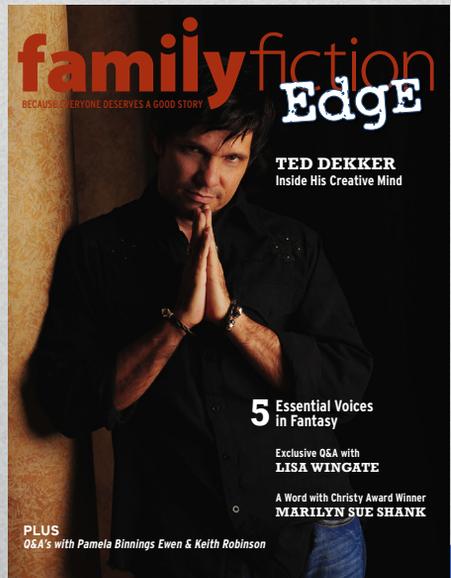


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"Often, we feel like we're not being or going to be good enough, as if God loaned us something and we owe Him," Mark says. "When we fail, we rush to try to make things right and earn His trust. We sing louder, read more, serve better. But He made us His because of Jesus—not because of us. When we see that and can look at the world the way Jesus looks at the world, fruit happens. Not fruit of Mark Hall—fruit of the spirit," says Mark. "It's hard to let go of control, but we've got to stop hopping around and be held."

Time after time, many resist that embrace and refuge. Too proud to ask for help or too lost to begin looking, that resistance can turn a family into rubble and faith into fragments, leaving us ill-equipped to face the maelstrom of life.

That's why the message in *Thrive* is so critical. It prompts a paradigm shift in our minds and hearts. Rather than dwell on the immediacy of problems in daily life, the words in this album remind us of the eternal master plan.

"I'm seeing in several lives that we get into marriages and other relationships and start seeing that the other person has more to him or her than you knew," says Mark. "Then hurt, baggage and scars emerge, and things fall and crash. While we want to just go back to the beginning and be that person we used to be, we can't. And maybe we were never meant to. Instead of talking about what should have been, we need to talk about what is. Then, we can be broken together."

Complacency has no claim on our relationship with Christ and others, despite perhaps a lifetime of disappointment or hurt. The same God who gave living water at the well is the God who desires more. He came so we may live life to the full. His love and Holy Spirit can prune, protect and nourish our souls. All we must do is say yes.

Yes to love. Yes to grace.

Once we do so, we will not merely survive. We will thrive. CCM





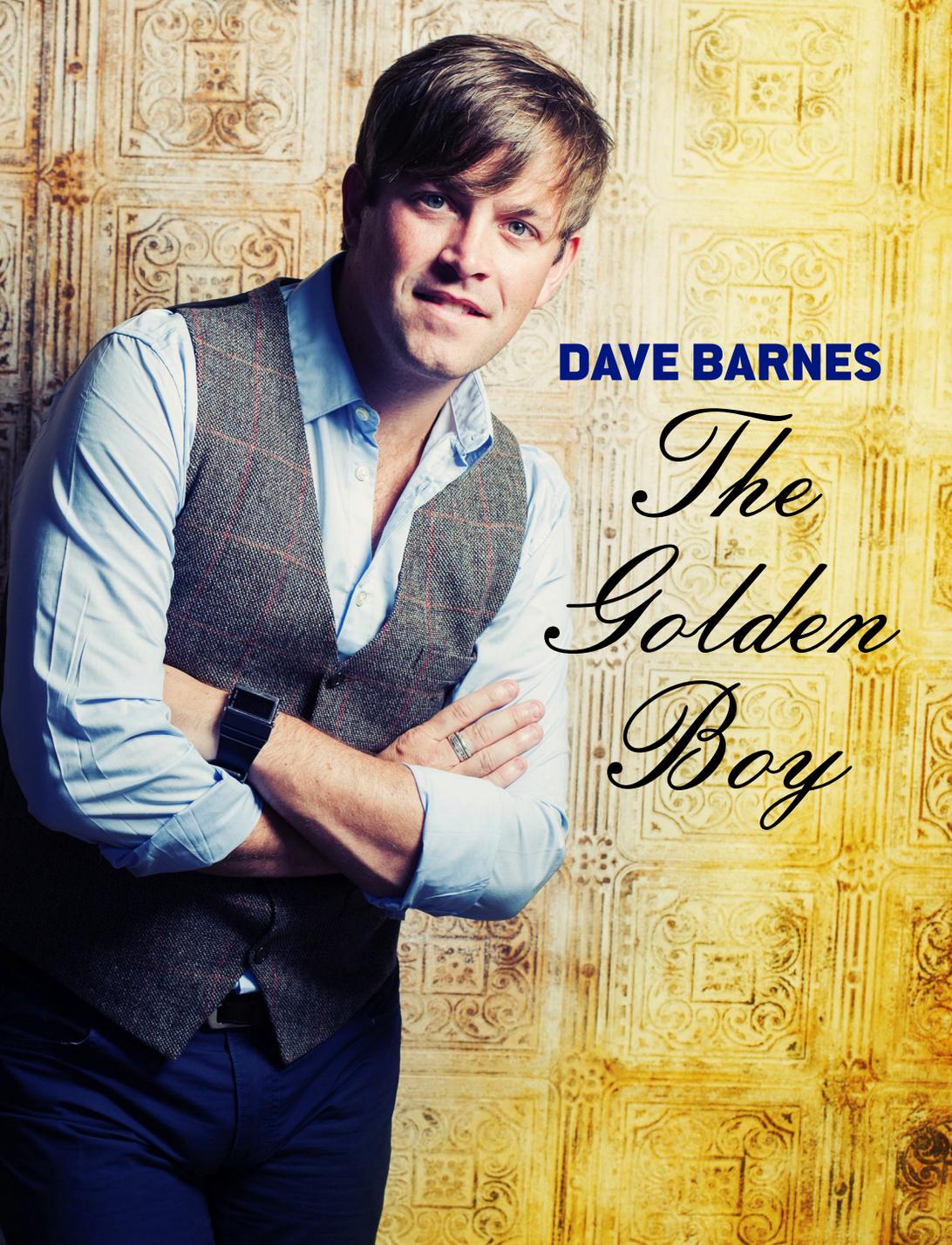
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DAVE BARNES

*The
Golden
Boy*

Whenever coined the phrase, “Silence is golden,” must have never had kids. Dave Barnes is learning that the fun way. Within the last year or so, the first-time father has gone from a relatively controlled and predictable life on the road, to a chaotic ruckus of baby cries and diapers; and he couldn’t be happier about it.

“I loved being a dad,” Dave says. “It’s a real calling. He’s really starting to watch me and everything I’m doing and saying. It’s like there’s a little sponge living in the house.”

That’s one lucky little sponge named Ben. Not only is he lucky enough to grow up surrounded by his daddy’s music, he gets to grow up surrounded by his daddy!

Formerly on Razor & Tie’s roster, Dave is independent once again. Of course that means a lot more work on his part; but it also allows him to dictate who, what, when and where.

“I enjoyed being there [at the label], but I am definitely excited to get back to being unsigned,” he says. “You can do things your way.”

For Dave, his way includes a schedule that allows him to be engaged at home and to appreciate the blessing his life has turned out to be.

“Sometimes I wake up and I can’t believe this is all real,” he says. “My wife and I are still in love. We have a home to live and share a life in.”

To hear more about the things that make Dave so appreciative, just take a listen through his latest record, *Golden Days*. Inspired by his awakening to the precious moments and people in his life, it’s uplifting and thoughtful and gives the listener pause to consider his or her own blessings. Much like his hooky melodies and catchy, charming lyrics, his optimism and gratitude are contagious.

The entire creative process behind this record is further evidence of a new chapter in Dave’s life. Recorded in a month and a half, while simultaneously recording a Christmas

project, *Golden* reflects an artist who has come into his own.

“This career looks different in the second decade,” Dave says. “And it should. Your story changes. You have different priorities. You have to figure out how you can be the most effective without taxing your family. There’s a lot more strategy involved than before.”

Part of his strategic redirect included a return to his roots. In his early career, he wrote with a range of different artists and songwriters—a luxury not always possible on a label. For this album, which beautifully chronicles the return to his creative roots, not only did Dave revisit his previous writing strategies, he also invited an old friend to join him again in the production process.

“I went back and worked with Ed Cash,” says Dave. “Ed and I did five records together. We’re getting back to the beginnings. I’ve always loved it when artists who are five or six records in go back to the person they started with.”

Fans are likely to jump into that same camp. Every bit of magic Dave and Ed created in the past manifests in this record, sure to become a new favorite. At least, that’s Dave’s hope.

“The most hysterical part about being on a label is that it’s easy to forget how much you need your fans,” says Dave. “When you’re on your own again, you realize the people who buy the records sustain your career. It’s a beautiful, symbiotic relationship. This has been a real reminder of how thankful I am and how much I appreciate and need them to buy it. When people buy a record it’s a big deal. I’m extremely thankful for that.”

There it is again—that golden thread of gratitude continues to be woven into the fabric of Dave’s world. And as that world continues to crank up the volume at home, online, on the radio and in the chaotic masterpiece that is life, Dave’s singing his own song—and it’s solid gold. [CCM](#)



**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
VISIT DAVEBARNES.COM.**



AARON SPRINKLE

BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

These days, he's most commonly credited as the producer for the likes of Anberlin, The Almost, Kutless and others; but lest we forget, Aaron Sprinkle is also one of the most influential artists of our time with a plethora of projects dating all the way back to 1990. First there was Poor Old Lu, then Rose Blossom Punch, followed by a fairly prolific solo career, the offshoot-act Fair and now a return to individual artistry for the first time in ages thanks to the release *Water & Guns* (Tooth & Nail). *CCM* scored a rare one-on-one interview with Sprinkle to find out how he keeps it

all going and what's next on his horizon.

CCM: How does your approach to solo records differ from a band project?

AARON SPRINKLE: With a band, I have the luxury of constant contribution and opinion. Doing a record like this takes a little more self-reflection, and I tend to be a bit more deliberate about where a song is headed. Going solo is way more vulnerable but also feels freer. I really enjoy both processes though. I feel like [*Water & Guns*] is just a true representation of where I am at in my life right now, both musically and in general.

CCM: Out of all the bands you've been in, what's been your favorite and what's been the one you wished had turned out differently?

AARON: Fair would be the answer to both questions. I feel like with Fair, I came the closest to what I'd always dreamed a band could be. I do wish I had started that band about 10 years earlier though!

CCM: How do you balance such a steady production career with your own art?

AARON: Twelve years between solo records pretty much answers that question. I'm not very good at it. I get so much satisfaction making songs with other people, I forget about my own material. Every once in awhile, I am blessed with the opportunity to make my own music, but it usually takes some serious effort. It took me more than two years to complete *Water & Guns*.

CCM: To what extent has your work in the production world changed with all of the recent advances in technology?

AARON: I am definitely someone who is always excited about advances in music production technology. It makes my world easier and more fun. Software just gets better and better every year. For me, it's all about shortening the length between conception and realization. **CCM**



MICAH STAMPLEY

BY ANDREW GREER

After a handful of independent albums and industry-wide successes, Micah Stampley is becoming one of gospel's premiere talents. And on *Love Never Fails*, his Motown Gospel debut, the young singer-songwriter issues a mix of original recordings and new takes on some of Christian music's most popular songs. Talking more about his latest project and his overall mission through music, Stampley offers readers this *CCM* exclusive interview.

CCM: *Love Never Fails* is a combo of original songs and covers. What inspired the mix?

MICAH STAMPLEY: There is a journey that God always takes me on in preparation for a new album. Prayer and consecration are key

elements in determining what He wants to say through me in that season. That is how I finalize my decision on song selection. There are certain songs that I immediately connect with that are not my own compositions. "Untitled Hymn," "You Raise Me Up" and "Let the Church Rise" are just a few of my favorites. Those songs fell in line with the message that God had given me for this time and this album.

CCM: *Despite the diverse track listing, is there a central theme running through this collection of songs?*

MICAH: There are several styles of music included on the album, from Irish-influenced songs like "Oh Give Thanks" to the Reggae-

style song, "Oh How He Loves Me." And there are lyrically intimate worship songs like "Love Never Fails." However, the central themes are God's love, forgiveness, mercy and grace.

CCM: *The first single is "Our God," an internationally known worship song. What compelled you to include and release this song considering its wide usage?*

MICAH: Chris Tomlin has been a huge inspiration in my life, and "Our God" is a song that has blessed me personally. My daughter was very ill for several months and ended up in a semi-coma back in July, 2013. This song lifted my wife and me out of a really dark place during that time. It is a personal testimony of who God has been in our lives. Our daughter is completely healed today!

CCM: *After all the promo, all the hype, what do you hope to communicate and achieve with this recording?*

MICAH: My ultimate goal in life and in my ministry is to lead people to the Cross. Promo tours and media outlets are just conduits to a much bigger picture to reveal the power of Jesus Christ to the masses. That's the ultimate goal. *CCM*



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
MICAHSTAMPLEY.ORG

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WORSHIP



MERCYME
Playlist: The Very Best Of MercyMe

(Sony Legacy)
FOR FANS OF: Casting Crowns, Steven Curtis Chapman, Matthew West
★★★★☆

Considering MercyMe amassed considerable secular success, it's only fitting for its mainstream label to issue this retrospective with obvious choices like, "I Can Only Imagine," and more collector-oriented treasures like the acoustic rendition of "Finally Home." While it's not as thorough as 2009's Christian industry CD/DVD set *10*, there's still plenty to enjoy, especially when it comes to the band's unabashedly spiritual songwriting over a blend of hooky pop melodies and lushly orchestrated ballads.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Here With Me"



JAMIE GRACE
Ready To Fly

(Gotee Records)
FOR FANS OF: TobyMac, Colbie Caillat, Britt Nicole

★★★★☆
Following the tremendous success of her first album, Jamie Grace's sophomore project shows continued growth. Her vocals shine on the upbeat "To Love You Back" and on the beautiful "Fighter." Nature trumps auto-tuner, however, on the less mature "My First Love" and "Always You." The songwriting wavers at times, and the track list lacks cohesion. Overall, a step forward on what is sure to be a long, successful ride to the top. Jamie Grace is just getting started.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "To Love You Back"



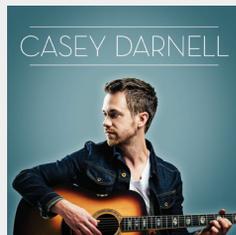
JAKE HAMILTON AND THE SOUND
Beautiful Rider

(Fuel Music Distribution)
FOR FANS OF: Jack White, Foo Fighters, Led Zeppelin

★★★★☆
Leave it to the incessantly innovative Jake Hamilton and the Sound to possibly be the first worship act to combine the rock 'n' roll sensibilities of Led Zeppelin and the Foo Fighters with poetic, praise-centered lyrics inspired by Bob Dylan. *Beautiful Rider* is truly a welcome anomaly across the board and is destined to propel the former Jesus Culture artist far beyond the church's walls without alienating core listeners.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Just Beyond the Breaking"



CASEY DARNELL
Casey Darnell

(North Point Music)
FOR FANS OF: Chris August, Chris Tomlin, Steven Curtis Chapman
★★★★☆

Vocally, the debut self-titled release from the North Point worship leader delivers. Darnell's smooth pop is consistent yet versatile, seamlessly vacillating between up-tempo tracks like "Strong Enough" to the emotive "Let My Soul Sing." The songwriting isn't quite on par with the delivery just yet, as evidenced on "Over and Over," but when it comes to a voice that warrants attention, Darnell has ours.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "Strong Enough"



THE HAWK IN PARIS *Freaks*

(Birds of Prey Records)
FOR FANS OF: Jars of Clay, Leagues

★★★★☆

After a couple quick takes, The Hawk in Paris finally gives fans a proper full-length with *Freaks*. While most hard-core fans probably have most of the tracks already, Dan Haseltine (Jars), Matt Bronleewe (producer) and Jeremy Bose (Leagues) have turned their side project into something more deserving of center-stage. A sweet synth delight with tinges of Human League, fans will appreciate this new side from familiar artists.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: “Between the World and You”



AUGUST BURNS RED *Rescue & Restore*

(Solid State)
FOR FANS OF: As I Lay Dying, The Devil Wears Prada

★★★★☆

August Burns Red promised fans they would push the boundaries on their sixth album, *Rescue & Restore*; and they made good with their latest chart-topping release. From fluid rhythmic changes to incredible technical guitar work, the band maintains the intensity through exploratory globally influenced soundscapes, capped off with ever-developing theatrics.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: “Treatment”



MATT WERTZ *Heatwave*

(Handwritten Records)
FOR FANS OF: Dave Barnes, Tyrone Wells, Jon McLaughlin

★★★★☆

Matt Wertz’s voice gets richer and better with each album, and *Heatwave* is a delight from start to finish. Ever the romantic, the cheery love songs here, such as “Whenever You Love Somebody,” have his optimistic signature all over them. “All I Ever Wanted” is a welcome sign of artistic growth, making this an ideal soundtrack for everything from a first dance to a road trip.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: “When It Feels Like This”



CANDICE RUSSELL *So Much More*

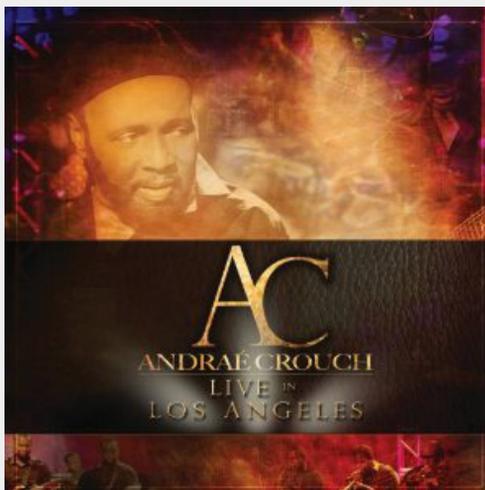
(Reflect Records)
FOR FANS OF: Kelly Clarkson, Taylor Swift, Colbie Caillat

★★★★☆

Fans of “American Idol” already know the name Candice Russell. For everyone else, *So Much More* is sure to make a good first impression. With pitch-perfect pipes, reflective songwriting and fresh pop arrangements, Candice’s crossover appeal and solid faith background give further justification for America’s fast track to fame.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: “So Much More”

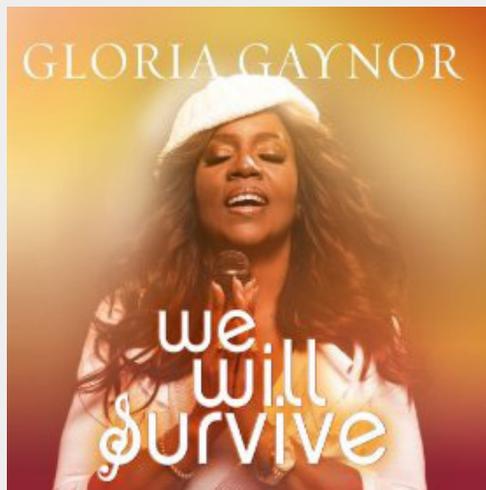
**ANDRAE CROUCH*****Live in Los Angeles****(Riverphlo Entertainment)**FOR FANS OF: Marvin Sapp, Fred Hammond, Donald Lawrence*

★★★★☆

Andrae Crouch's name is synonymous with gospel music. His internationally celebrated Christ-centric song catalog has bridged racial, generational and denominational gaps. To commemorate his nearly five-decade-deep hymnal, the Grammy-winning multi-talent releases 15 technically tight new recordings of Crouch classics ("We Are Not Ashamed," "Soon and Very Soon") in an intimate live environment. Supported by compelling musicians and powerful background vocals, Crouch's charisma is still magical.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Take Me Back"

**GLORIA GAYNOR*****We Will Survive (MRI)****FOR FANS OF: Donna Summer, Patti LaBelle*

★★★★☆

On this companion CD to her latest inspirational book of the same name, disco diva Gloria Gaynor paints a highly personal portrait of her faith journey. Those expecting the four-on-the-floor beats from her heyday may need to adjust their expectations (aside from a reworked "I Will Survive"), but they'll still hear some fairly rewarding gospel-grounded R&B.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "I Forgive"

INDIE CORNER



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AUGUSTUS - augustusmusic.com

augustus is a modern worship band from Indianapolis, IN. Frontman Andrew Michael Meador is a passionate songwriter and states, "[augustus] exalts Jesus Christ. Our music is an elaboration of the truth found in Scripture and pays tribute to Jesus' teachings." Having released an EP last year, they are now recording a full-length, completely original, corporate worship album called [Second to None].



KYLE GATTISON - kylegattison.com

Kyle is a worshipper of God who has dedicated his life to leading people into His presence. An artist and songwriter, his heart is to see his songs translate congregations into a lifestyle of Christ worship. He believes the church will rise to worship God in both spirit and truth, and that our lives are the greatest songs sung unto God!



GEORGE MICHAEL DILE - cdbaby.com/cd/georgemichaeldile

George released his 14 song "Heaven's Door" CD November 2013, that are based on his relationship with the Lord. "Heaven's Door" is dedicated to the One who opened George's eyes when he couldn't see, touched him when he couldn't feel, and loved him before he knew His Name. Pick up 2 CDs, one for yourself and one for a friend!



FIREBRAND - firebrandworship.com

FIREBRAND emerged out of the worship team at Lakeside Assembly in Eastman, GA. Seeing that something special was happening at Lakeside, FIREBRAND decided to move outside the 4 walls of the church! With passionate, original songs written from the heart of the move of God that was taking place at Lakeside, FIREBRAND brings something new and fresh to the worship world.



BRYAN PERDUE - bryanperduemusic.com

Bryan's goal is two-fold - to share his vision of music and the in-depth message within the song. He possesses a natural gift of establishing intimate atmosphere between his guitar and the listeners with the most honest emotions. His modern day hymns have been well received in churches around the world, providing a message that is charming and captivating while lending itself to quiet reflections.



THE BAND GUY FRANKLIN - myPPK.com/get/guyfranklin

Christian rock bands don't often find mainstream media outlets profiling them. The band Guy Franklin makes their mark by writing songs with bold lyrics about faith and life in a modern society where compromise is the norm. It's not only Christians who buy Guy Franklin's albums. The band has been able to attract non-believers as well. We introduce to you the band Guy Franklin.



UNSTOPPABLE KIRK CAMERON'S LATEST FILM ADDRESSES THE QUESTION OF THE AGES...

By Caroline Lusk

It's the question that has echoed from generation to generation throughout history. It's the question that keeps many away from Christ; and, as Kirk Cameron states, "It's the question that can turn Christians into atheists."

If God is a loving God, why do bad things happen to good people?

"I felt like our generation needed an answer that was both personal and artistic," he says.

Burdened by the plight of a seemingly faithless generation and shaken by the death of a close friend who was only 15 years old, Kirk set about discovering, crafting and delivering a response in the vernacular of 2014.

"I can go to a Bible professor and ask, 'Why does God let bad things happen?'" he says. "I might get an answer like, 'There really are no good people, and God works all things for good.'"

"All those things are true. But when you're a mom or dad and you're holding your son or daughter who is dying, I feel like you need more than an intellectual answer. I want to know the heart and character of God. I want to know that somehow He is up to something and has His hands firmly on the wheel."

That desire to understand the heart of God in the face of anguish inspired Cameron's latest film, *Unstoppable*. With striking visuals, piercing candidness and heart-wrenching stories, Kirk digs deeply into the reality of the love of our God.

"I thank God that my kids are healthy," the father of six shares. "But death is all around us. When the big boulder falls on my family, I want to be better prepared. Asking difficult questions is a great thing to do. It causes you to grow and grow."

The film takes the viewer on a journey from the Garden of Eden to the death of Abel at the hands of Cain to a modern-day funeral to Kirk's own living room. Shot in an organic, raw style, the minimal production allows the viewer to

interject his or her own experiences and reimagine the possibilities intrinsic to life and death, good and evil. Simultaneously, it allows for one's perception of God as ruler of all to expand.

"If you approach the problem of, 'God, where are You when I need You?' like a math problem, it doesn't add up. But He's not setting up the world like a math problem; He's writing a story," Kirk says. "If you love C.S. Lewis or Tolkein or other authors and they introduce things that are devastating, you don't slam the book shut at chapter three. God is the greatest author. When sin and pain are introduced in Genesis, you don't slam the book shut. You keep going and eventually begin to see that God uses every tragedy to produce faith, character, joy and, ultimately, the salvation of the world. It's going to be a nail-biter, but wow I wouldn't change a thing."

The film, which has also been adapted into curriculum and study guides for churches or other groups to use, ultimately shows the viewer how to bring questions to God and wrestle through the pain and doubt in life.

"When my kids get upset with me and scream and don't understand, I know they need to grow; and one day, they'll get it," he says. "It's okay to get angry. Go ahead and wrestle just like Jacob and Job. You'll be much better because of it."

Without condescension or patronization, the film ultimately presents a new paradigm of good and evil.

"We point fingers at God when things go wrong," Kirk says. "But then, we have millions of babies ripped out of the womb. We have so abandoned the God who made us. Why hasn't more tragedy come into the world? He's so gracious, patient and generous. And He's the same loving God who allows children and other loved ones to leave this earth and go home. We have to see the whole story. God does work all things together for His good, but we have to see that through eyes of faith."



UNSTOPPABLE WILL BE RELEASED ON DVD JANUARY 28TH. CURRICULUM AND OTHER MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE AT: UNSTOPPABLETHEMOVIE.COM

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L. B. COWMAN
EDITED BY JAMES REIMANN

Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live." The man took Jesus at His word and departed. (John 4:50)

"Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe." (Mark 11:24)

When you are confronted with a matter that requires immediate prayer, pray until you believe God—until with wholehearted sincerity you can thank Him for the answer. If you do not see the external answer immediately, do not pray for it in such a way that it is evident you are not definitely believing God for it. This type of prayer will be a hindrance instead of a help to you. And when you are finished praying, you will find that your faith has been weakened or has entirely gone. The urgency you felt to offer this kind of prayer is clearly from self and Satan. It may not be wrong to mention the matter to the Lord again, if He is keeping you waiting for His answer, but be sure to do so in a way that shows your faith.

Never pray in a way that diminishes your faith. You may tell Him you are waiting, still believing and therefore praising Him for the answer. There is nothing that so fully solidifies faith as being so sure of the answer that you can thank God for it. Prayers that empty us of faith deny both God's promises from His Word and the "Yes" that He whispered to our hearts. Such prayers are only the expression of the unrest of our hearts, and unrest implies unbelief that our prayers will be answered. "Now we who have believed enter that rest" (Heb. 4:3).

The type of prayer that empties us of faith frequently arises from focusing our thoughts on the difficulty rather than on God's promise. Abraham, "without weakening in his faith, ... faced the fact that his body was as good as dead. ... Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God" (Rom. 4:19-20). May we "watch and pray so that [we] will not fall into [the] temptation" (Matt. 26:41) of praying faith-diminishing prayers.

"Faith is not a sense, nor sight, nor reason, but simply taking God at His word."
-Christmas Evans

"The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety." -George Mueller

You will never learn faith in comfortable surroundings. God gives us His promises in a quiet hour, seals our covenants with great and gracious words, and then steps back, waiting to see how much we believe. He then allows the Tempter to come, and the ensuing test seems to contradict all that He has spoken. This is when faith wins its crown. This is the time to look up through the storm, and among the trembling, frightened sailors declare, "I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me" (Acts 27:25). **CCM**

*Since 1925, Streams in the Desert has sustained and replenished God's weary desert travelers. This updated edition promises to revive and refresh today's generation of believers. James Reimann, editor of the highly acclaimed and updated edition of My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers, again brings wisdom of the past in the language of today to this beloved classic. Capturing the timeless essence of the original devotional with fresh, contemporary wording and New International Version text, the timeless message flows unhindered. **Click here for more information.***





CITY HARBOR

CREATING A SANCTUARY,
ONE SONG AT A TIME

BY CAROLINE LUSK

City: any place people are gathered
Harbor: A sanctuary, a place of rest

"Our ministry is to be a place of rest in the middle of all the craziness," says Molly Reed, one-half of the new duo City Harbor.

"Our music comes from a real place for both of us. There is a human element to being a follower of Christ," she says.

That humanity is the guiding light of City Harbor's music, writing, and the way they approach their ministry.

At every concert, their merch table has the usual array of CDs, t-shirts and photos. And then there's the jewelry.

"One of our friends, Gracie, started a women's ministry called Miriam Designs," says Molly. "Miriam Designs helps give women re-

covering from life on the street a second chance by teaching them to design and sell handmade jewelry for income, giving them a reason to hold their heads a little higher each day."

"Just having a job gives these women such a sense of pride and value," says Robby. "We're excited to be spreading the word."

"When we see hurting people, struggling loved ones and injustice in the world, we're always thinking that somebody's gotta do something; but inside we know it has to start with us. All too often we miss the moment to share our faith or show love," Molly adds.

Driven by a sense of priority, if not urgency, City Harbor doesn't waste a single moment in their music to do just that—share faith and show love. It's a skill they've been honing for years.

"I'll brag for a second, if I may," Robby adds. "Molly has been a professional writer for a while now. She had cuts on Amy Grant's latest project, on Francesca's next project. She's established as a writer and has been sharpened."

"It's been a gift to have had the past five to seven years in a professional songwriting realm," says Molly. "We've been working at crafting songs that mean something and say something that's familiar and something you can connect with."

That connection is made in songs like "Come However You Are." While that theme has certainly been incorporated in other songs by other artists, their presentation is fresh and immediately accessible for this generation (think Crystal Lewis' "Come Just As You Are").



“All of us are trying to figure out what we have to become before we can approach God,” he says. “He just wants you now.” The words of their songs are accessible. The melodies stay with you. But it’s the humanity within that’s going to change lives.

Transparent, funny, authentic...City Harbor isn’t just another Christian duo. There’s something more here. There’s an integrity in the music and in their lives.

Unlike members of other Christian duos, such as FFH, Out of the Grey and Love & the Outcome, Molly and Robby are not married to each other.

“I married Mike Grayson [from MIKESCHAIR] about a year ago,” says Molly. “Robby has a serious girlfriend, but we’ve been very intentional about presenting those relationships. We know that it’s a male/female working together, so we set

boundaries. We never travel alone. We always have a third player with us. We have the necessary accountability in place.”

“On a deeper level,” Robby adds, “It’s not just Molly and me over here doing this thing. I know Mike really well; Molly knows my girlfriend and my family.”

“We want to be viewed as a band—as friends,” Molly adds. “We don’t ever want to lead anyone astray. The center of us and our songs is Jesus.”

From the integrity within their personal parameters and relationships to their commitment to their craft and musicianship to their heart for women who are rebuilding their lives one step at a time, City Harbor is just what the name suggests. The words they give and lives they live offer sanctuary for those who come near. **CCM**

HOW TO GET RICH AND FAMOUS IN CHRISTIAN MUSIC

BY KEITH MOHR

OK. What's up with this? Getting rich and famous in Christian music? We're not supposed to get rich and famous doing Christian music. Are you crazy?

Alright, let me explain where I'm coming from. This isn't about making loads of money and being a household name; this is about the importance of creating rich content, which will naturally draw people to you.

You can then enrich their lives, which will cause them to tell others about your ministry, which will in turn bring more people to you

and the cycle continues. This is what we call viral marketing, and Jesus and His disciples were a great example of what happens when passion and excellence team up with commitment to the call.

There was no richer content than the message Jesus brought to this earth. There was no better street team than the disciples, who carried on the message of the Cross after Jesus was crucified. These guys did not give up, and they ultimately gave their lives for their mission.



Introducing the debut album by singer-songwriter, lead worshipper



RADIANT YOU • Produced by Marshall Altman

"Radiant You is a shimmering introduction for Rebekah Maddux El-Hakam. The project is a good blend of giddy pop numbers, thoughtful ballads, and inspired worship songs. In fact, the album is so well-balanced that it's difficult to name a favorite song. What ties it all together is an uplifting, encouraging tone focusing on the faithfulness of a loving God.

"Rebekah and Altman have created a dazzling, remarkable record with a wonderful purity of heart...it's a record that absolutely must be heard." ★★★★★ -NewReleaseTuesday

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"We are met with 11 honest and beautifully crafted melodies with rich lyrics describing the faithfulness and unending love of our Saviour Jesus Christ... a compelling and brilliant debut." -Christian Music Zine

"Rebekah Maddux El-Hakam is a ray of light." -NewReleaseTuesday



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You may be wondering what about this relates to the independent artist, musician and songwriter.

The short answer? Everything! Because we are to pattern what we do, why we are doing it, and how we are doing it after our example, Jesus. Everything Jesus did pointed outward and upward—never inward. His mission was to bring to this earth a message that changed everything for everyone. He gave His life fulfilling that mission.

If you feel God leading you to Christian music, you should do nothing less in your mission than what Jesus did in His. I see quite a few indie artists out there who are not fully committed to the mission God has for them. They dabble at it, they invest capfuls of work and thimblefuls of faith, and then wonder why God isn't "blowing them up!" From what I have read in the Word, God isn't much for dabblers.

So how can you avoid that trap?

1. Be very sure your music mission is something you have time to pursue. If your life is not aligned in a way where you can invest resources, time and your talent, my advice is to not pursue it full time.

If you have debt, a mortgage, obligations and burdens, my advice is to not pursue your calling until these issues are dealt with and resolved. If they aren't, you will experience many trials and much strife because you simply cannot devote what it takes. You need to be completely ready, willing and available.

2. If you are already creating content, ensure that it has value for others. Creative people often have difficulty with self-evaluation. That's magnified with Christian artists because they are attached emotionally to what they have created, as they should be. However, there are many artists who settle for mediocrity, believing God will make up for their lack of quality, or they simply don't realize their talent is not above average. Fellow Christians are notorious for telling artistic people they are "anointed" or great because they are afraid to discourage them with the truth. Seek honest feedback and pray for a spirit that can receive it.

3. Be passionate. Passion draws people to you as much as or maybe more than excellence. Don't be arrogant or think you are God's gift to humanity. There is a fine line between holy boldness and prideful arrogance. That line is called *passion*!

4. In everything you do, point outward and upward...never inward. This isn't about what you get. It's all about what you give! I say give to give and let the getting be up to God. God will provide for you as you invest in your vocation and strive for provision. **CCM**

Keith Mohr is founder/president of Indieheaven, an organization for independent Christian musicians, songwriters and artists. He has worked with more than 2500 indies since 1997, providing services, consulting, production and lots of free, money-back advice!



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT INDIEHEAVEN.COM.

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TOUCHDAW APP

WHEN THREE HANDS JUST WON'T DO

BY GLENN THOMAS

One of the great perks of having a project studio is convenience. If inspiration strikes at 2 a.m., and you just have to record a drum part that is pounding mercilessly in your head, you can sneak out of bed, head down to the shed, lay it down and play that funky music all night.

Or can you? Who is going to engineer for you in the control room while you are in the booth? You can't really call a friend in the middle of the night because, well, it's the middle of the night and it's not very polite.

It's a common scenario in most contemporary project studios—multi-talented individuals wearing too many hats, equipped with too few hands. So what's a Lone Ranger to do?

In a word, TouchDaw. The ease of grabbing a smartphone and arming tracks is as easy as opening the TouchDaw App, connecting via wi-fi and tapping a few icons.

Here's a real-life application. Tracking drums due to the thunderous noise in isolation makes life grand, but you can't track drums and be in the control room at the same time. I can't tell you how to set up preamps and mics for your situation because there are too many variables to consider. In my case, it is nearly impossible to set preamp and hit tom-toms at the same time. I hired a local drummer to come to my studio for a couple of hours so I could personally dial in my settings while he was hitting each drum. This setup is very valuable and will make tracking alone much easier in



the future. I won't have to guess settings and lose a perfect take because of low volume or worse, peaking the pres.

Now you're ready to get to work and make music. I suggest adding a two-bar metronome intro. Press the record button on the TouchDaw app, and you are tracking! With its various functions, TouchDaw puts you in total control.

Perks: The free app is user friendly and compatible with Apple and Android products. Full version available for \$7.

[+ CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO.](#)

Glenn Thomas owns itune audio, a production studio in Newfoundland, Canada. Glenn is making a name for himself by providing impeccable services for songwriters, artists and bands. Visit ituneaudio.com for more info.

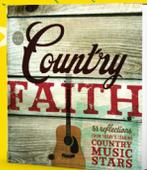
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HIGHLIGHTS FROM PASSION 2014 ATLANTA

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Passion 2014 Atlanta was an awe-inspiring, two-day event with more than 20,000 university students from all 50 states and 33 countries converging to celebrate and raise high the name of God.

Worship leaders Chris Tomlin and Matt Redman were joined by Crowder, Kristian Stanfill, Christy Nockels and other guest artists to lead the crowd in an anthem of praise.

A key initiative of the event focused on social justice and provided an opportunity for the students to act on their desire to see light reach the darkest corners of the world. Challenged to raise \$250,000 to take the Word of God to the nation of Iran, the students gave more than \$335,000, sending 33,500 Bibles to Iran.

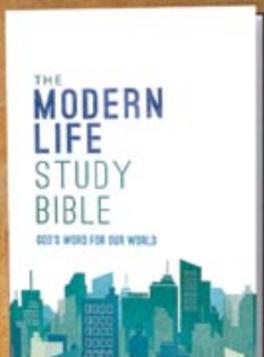
Powerful, inspiring and life-changing—Passion 2014 Atlanta is an experience these students won't soon forget. **CCM**



CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ABOUT PASSION 2014 ATLANTA.

WATCH CHRIS TOMLIN'S BRAND-NEW SONG, "DON'T EVER STOP," WHICH PREMIERED AT PASSION 2014 IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA.





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- **JAMIE GRACE TAKES FLIGHT**
- IN THE STUDIO WITH FRANCESCA BATTISTELLI
- KUTLESS: THIS IS HOW GLORY SOUNDS

