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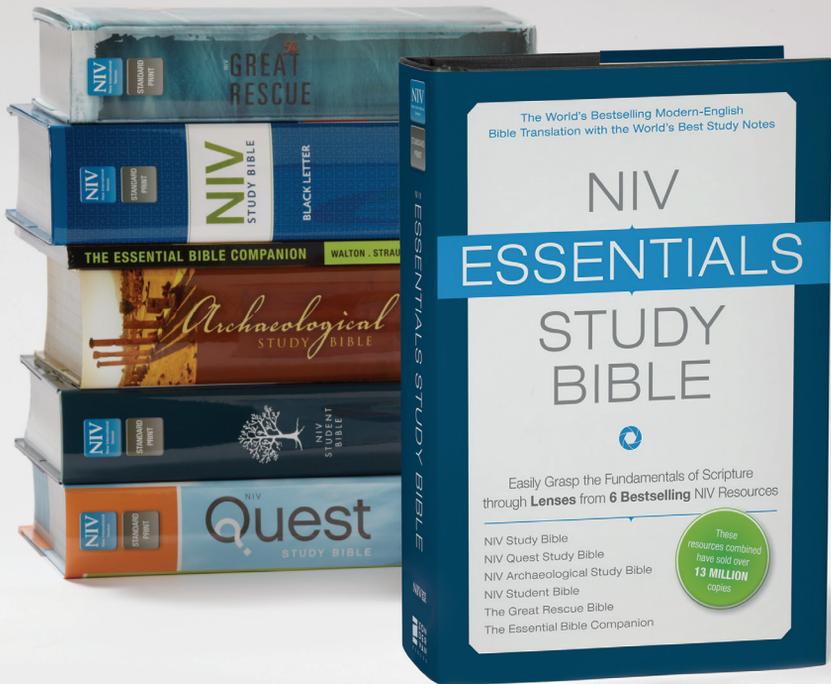
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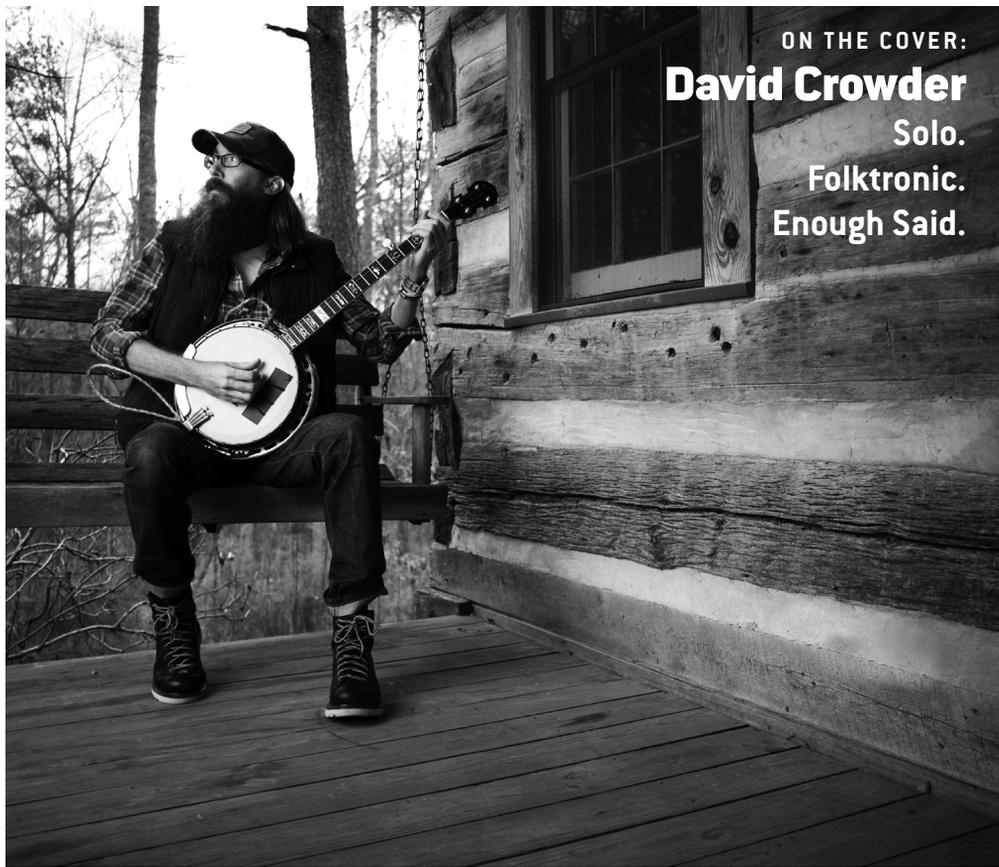
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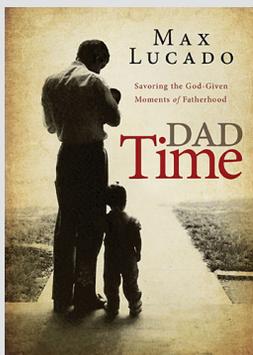
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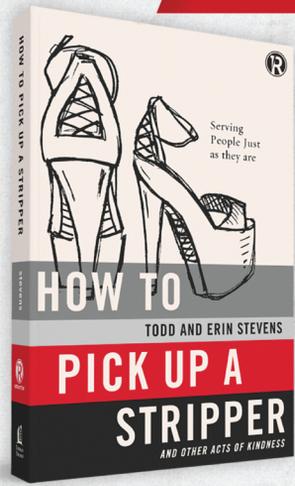
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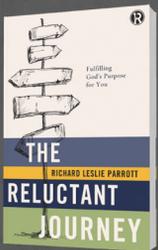
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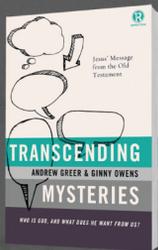
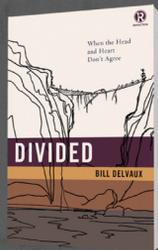
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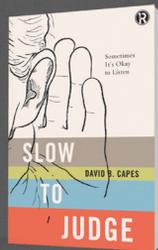
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When it comes to worn-out phrases, “God’s plan, not mine,” ranks near the top. It’s easy to say. It’s a whole lot harder to mean it or even genuinely desire it.

Perhaps it’s our natural instinct to want to control situations and circumstances. Handing them over is terrifying and requires what many of us hope to have but often are without—surrender.

When David Crowder initially walked away from the band he started years ago, there was no plan. There was little more than a calling to move on to an unknown. The calling required surrender.

When Tedashii’s one-year-old son passed away, the devastation reached a place no one should have to experience. But with faith enough to hold on to God, to believe and claim His truths, he eventually came to a place of surrender—surrendering his son to heaven and his grief to God.

Surrendering isn’t natural; it’s a means of survival.

We can’t walk this road of life alone—at least not for long. Perhaps sooner than later, we can all realize that that’s okay.

And no matter how uncomfortable, painful and terrifying the unknown plan—God’s plan—may be, it’s a road worthy of our travel.



Caroline Lusk

Caroline Lusk
Editor, *CCM Digital*



Andy Argyrakis is a Chicago-based entertainment writer/photographer who appears in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Illinois Entertainer*, *Hear/Say Magazine*, *Concert Livewire* and more.



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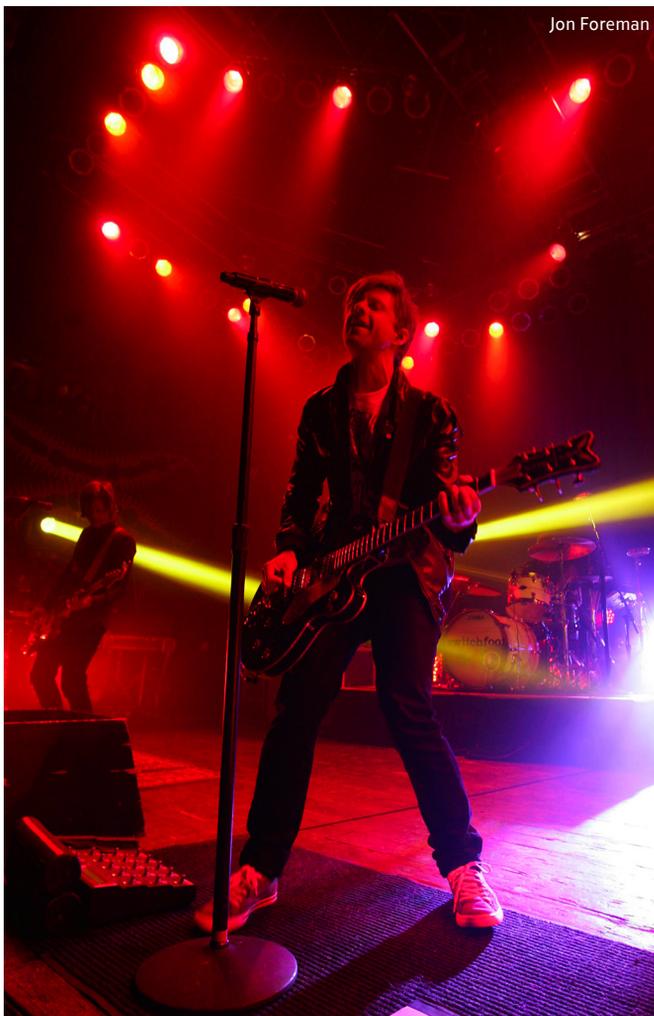
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TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

When Switchfoot hit the touring trails last year, the San Diego rockers split the evening between a screening of the ambitious *Fading West* film, accompanied by a short but sweet concert of past rarities, plus previews of a then-forthcoming album.

Though it was certainly an enjoyable excursion, the band is back to making the most of the traditional touring circuit, dedicating plenty of time to the album portion of the new *Fading West* (lowercase people/ Atlantic), alongside a trip down multi-platinum memory lane throughout ninety dynamic minutes (enhanced by a killer light show).

Usual suspects such as “Stars,” “Gone” and “This Is Your Life” intersected with the charging current cut, “Say It Like You Mean It,” an acoustic treatment of the oldie “Learning To Breathe” and a completely rearranged “Meant To Live” (centered unexpectedly around an accordion).



Tim Foreman



Jon Foreman



Besides verbally suggesting Switchfoot's music is a communal experience, front man Jon Foreman also executed that concept literally by taking several laps around the audience during "When We Come Alive," which played a very close second to the complacency-shaking finale, "Dare You To Move" to bring the sing-a-long show full circle.

Jon Foreman



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COMPILED BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

1 Rend Collective members lead acoustic performances of “My Lighthouse” and “Build Your Kingdom Here” on the set of Nashville’s WSMV-TV’s (NBC) *More At Middyay*.

2 Planetshakers Band leads worship during Planetshakers’ *Awakening 2014* at Hisense Arena in Melbourne, Australia, with more than 8,000 people in attendance.



3 & **4** Montell Jordan and his family embark on a mission trip to Nicaragua through Life Link International. (From left to right: Kennar, Montell’s wife Kristin, Montell and Jose). In other Jordan news, the singer/songwriter/producer and Ross King collaborate in Atlanta on an upcoming project from Montell and Victory World Music.

6.17.2014



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Few artists have shaped the Christian music industry as significantly as David Crowder. With his band, he blazed a trail for a new approach to worship. As an author, he has shared his heart and challenged the rest of us. Today, as a solo artist, Crowder is once again blazing a trail. His debut solo release, *Neon Steeple*, dropped May 27. And while we could tell you all about it, it's probably best to hear from David himself about the music, his faith and his new normal. In his own words...

DAVID CROWDER

BELIEVER

BY DAVID CROWDER

I WAS BORN HALF-BAPTIST (the East Texas, King James-carrying, pipe organ, hymnal-singing, Southern-type Baptist) and half-Pentecostal (the Holy Ghost, jumpin' and shoutin', hand-waving, prophesying, Southern-type Pentecostal). Later, I was born again.

The son of an insurance salesman and a social worker, fructifying in the piney woods of Texarkana, I was as muddled as the name of my town. We drove a light-blue Ford Thunderbird; not the old, classic kind, but a brand-new one that had a sticker on it. The one with the electric windows and mirrors and the headlamp covers that flipped open when you turned on the headlights and an in-dash eight-track player. My dad and mom both used Aqua Net hair spray. He parted it on the right side and always carried a comb. She got permanents and had curlers that heated up every Saturday night while we all watched *The Lawrence Welk Show* and *Hee-Haw*.

The eight-tracks in rotation were Elvis, Willie Nelson, Olivia Newton John and Bill Gaither. Everything I've ever done musically can be traced back to there—that Ford Thunderbird, those sounds, the view out of those windows and my brother punching me in the arm on the way to Sunday morning church.

That is all metaphor and all true.

I didn't mean to write and sing songs for a living. Doesn't seem like much of a thing to get paid for. I'd guess the odds are about the same as winning the lottery or getting struck by lightning. Given my nepotistic hookup, my assumption was that I would move back home after college to sell insurance for my dad and eventually take over the family practice. Who doesn't love a good actuary table?

And yet, one late October night, on an apartment balcony in Waco, Texas, just off of the Baylor University campus where I was student, a friend spun yarns that fell on me

like a blanket; and the course of my life was altered. He was an itinerant pastor of a rural church just outside of town.

“So, I get a call at two in the morning,” he says. “It’s Carl Reeves on the phone, ‘Pastor. We need you. You gotta get out here, now.’ And so I go. I get in my truck, and I go,” he says. “It turns out Carl has a cow that has taken sick, and he wants me to pray for it. To get in the mud, put my hands on this cow and pray for divine intervention on behalf of this bovine beast... And so, there I am. In the mud, chasing this cow around, trying to get my hands on the thing long enough to spit out a prayer.”

Right then, I was being rescued. I had left the church, and this was the beginning of my way back. As it goes with hypocrisy, judgment, dogmatism, and all the rest of it that Jesus put to death, it’s hard to see in yourself what you readily see in others. And into my cynicism and anger my friend began to dream aloud, “What if church really was like family? What if we pretended the ‘brother and sister, son and daughter’ stuff was real? What if relationships were thought to be rare and valuable things? What if it was just a bunch of people who loved each other and were simply trying their best to follow this Jesus we read of in Scripture? What if we pretended the ‘love your neighbor as yourself’ thing was a better way to live? What if we got in the mud for each other at two in the morning? What if the cow dies and it’s okay because we are there, in it together? What if we pretended we are all sinners? What if we pretended grace is real? What if the word ‘pretend’ felt less powerful than the word ‘believe’ because we did actually believe? What if...”

In the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and ninety-five, we started a church. It was my task to collect sounds and words that would give expression to our communal experience there in Waco, Texas; and a year or so into our endeavor I began to write original compositions, organic things with the

stuff of our local soil in them. In the year two thousand, at the dawn of a new millennium, the devastation of Y2K upon us, with great hope, The David Crowder*Band was formed. We recorded six full-length albums reflecting our colloquial journey as a community; and we carried the songs of our journey back and forth, as delicately as we could, across the United States of America and around the world. It was miraculous. To find myself in such exotic locales as Tokyo, Japan, or Omaha, Nebraska, standing on stage, the son of an insurance salesman, discovering that these little songs with Heart-Of-Texas roots had gotten there before I had. It is amazing what The Divine can do with a little tiny thing when you stop pretending and start believing.

I was sitting in the front of a tour bus, in the “jump seat,” right next to the driver, watching the white lines of the interstate stop reflecting the light of the headlamps and start reflecting the light of the sunshine. You’d find me there most mornings. It was the last tour of The David Crowder*Band, and I had no idea what was coming next. I just knew there was a period, a full stop at the end of that sentence. We were topping a hill while the sun was breaking over treetops on a tiny West Virginian coal town. It was cinematic. Quaint. The dominant architectural feature, bathed in sunlight, pointed to the sky determined and defiant, was a steeple.

We don’t build churches like this anymore. Now they look like office complexes. Now we ensure there is approachability, a commonality, a familiarity. Here, in the early morning sunshine, I imagined a harder time, where life and death lived closer together. When a simple structure in the middle of a town could point to something higher, more transcendent, a thing coming that would make it right. A thing so overt that it couldn’t be missed...

When everything in earth is groaning, “There must be something more,” there is an answer—a monument to the dream of God,



a thing unmistakable, sitting in the middle of town. In that moment, topping a hill in rural West Virginia, with new sunshine in the early morning air, I knew I wasn't done making music; and I knew I wanted whatever I made next to feel like that—a thing pointing up in the middle of all this.

Neon Steeple is a collection of songs and sounds looking forward to the past and counting the present as sacred. It is a longing for belonging, a search for home. It is a collection of choruses that believe that this is not all there is. There is more. There must be.

It is the sound of the Appalachians and Ibiza. Folk music and EDM. The music of the People. Folktronica. Digital and Analog. The Ones and Zeros and the Handshake. The Banjo and the 808.

Neon is an inert noble gas that is obtained from the distillation of liquid air, what we breathe in and out to stay alive, just thicker. You can drown in it. This is metaphor.

Neon, a stereotype, a thought that may be adopted about specific types of individuals or certain ways of doing things that may or may not reflect reality. Its utilitarian function is usually selling some product or way of life that distracts a human from the thickness, the weight, the heaviness of the here and now.

Neon Steeple is both a critique and a hope. The meta-narrative of Scripture is about innocence lost. It is about displacement, about things not being right and a search for belonging and home and forgiveness and reconciliation, the tension of death and life, what it means to be alive. The story is not about making bad people good; it is about making dead people alive. The story sold is rarely that.

What if we started believing? 

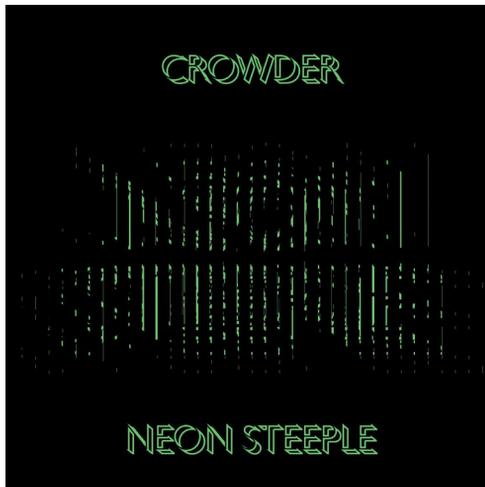


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NEON STEEPLE

BY ANDREW GREER

GO INSIDE THE PASSION, POSTURE AND PRODUCTION THAT DELIVERED CROWDER'S NEON STEEPLE.



Album Title: *Neon Steeple*

Label: sixsteps records / Capitol CMG

Release Date: May 27, 2014

Producers: David Crowder, Gabe Scott, Christopher Stevens, Solomon Olds, Will Hunt, Ed Cash, Christian Paschall and Jared Fox

Number of Songs: 14 (17 on the Deluxe Edition)

FINDING HOME: I went into this new musical journey compelled to make something that honestly reflected the contradictions in us—being displaced, exiled, the longing for the promised land—and had the proper musical vehicle to reflect the tension and release of that incredibly common narrative. What I love is that this exploration of such a theme is an honest time capsule of my last few years post-The DC*B. I feel I have succeeded in finding the proper musical setting to tell this personal journey that is actually the story of us all. The folk instrumentation, the many people involved and the electronic instruments already have a story in them. A banjo on a stage next to a drum machine already says something about this theme because the vehicle communicates and brings with it history and context and societal systems that have agitated and suggested there must be rescue. I couldn't be happier with how the content and themes merge on this album.

—David Crowder

CO-WRITING COMMUNION: I have fallen in love with the collaborative process. What I loved best about writing with multiple people I had not written with before was the art of communion. To get beyond what you protect and wish to posture is the opportunity for something very transformative. To believe that our understanding of Jesus is grander when we exist in community brings relief and excitement to the co-writing process. I'm not sure if there is something more fun in the creation of music than the moment when the air in the room changes and there it is, that thing that just presents itself and the elation of revelation. —D.C.

DIVERSE CITY: This thing is a very different animal than previous projects. It is a blend of porch music and computer music. I have been

referring to it as Folktronic—the sound of the Appalachians and Ibiza. Folk and EDM. Digital and Analog. The Ones and Zeros and the Handshake. The Banjo and the 808. —D.C.

COLLECTIVE COMPOSITION: We did quite a bit of file sharing. I would send song files to different people, they would reimagine the song and then I would combine elements and spit it back out to folks. I love that you can play to everyone's strengths in the process. If someone had a side chain bass line that was killing it, you could grab that thing, throw it in and it could change the whole sonic landscape of the song. Solomon Olds and Gabe Scott were the two I worked with most closely to get to the textures that were in my head. They just killed it. —D.C.

+ FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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Emmylou Harris



Phil Madeira, Emmylou Harris and David Crowder.

TEDASHII PARADISE FOUND

BY CAROLINE LUSK

The art of restoration is a delicate one; the creation of harmony amidst the dissonance of life, a precarious endeavor. Tedashii knows this heart-wrenching process as well as anyone and much more than most people want to, as is chronicled in his latest project, *Below Paradise*.

"*Below Paradise* is intended to be taken at face value," he says. "Life on earth is life that is lived beneath Paradise. I want to share the idea that life exists in a world that is sub-par, but we still have hope."

Hope is an easy word to throw around. It easily dissolves into the milieu of similar religious catchphrases, such as, "God is in control" or "God can never lie."

"I can't let those things be high and lofty truths," Tedashii shares. "They must be near and dear truths I hold and find comfort in."

Comfort has been a desperate need for Tedashii and his family over the last year.

"I lost my one-year-old son last March," he explains quietly. "That was the first moment of direct tragedy for me. A year later, the pain is still there and is immediate, but I have had a few months to gather other truths. One of those truths is that despite me being sad and emotionally haywire, I know God is loving."

Charged with the daily task of survival among this unspeakable loss, Tedashii has

integrated reconciliation into his personal mission. And he has allowed music to be a vehicle by which to achieve it—though not at first.

"Initially, everything outside of the studio wanted me to be a dad who lost a son," he says. "The studio was a place I could be without it. I don't think I wrote to distract, but it felt like I was lying. Eventually, writing became a way I could express my feelings. At that point, writing became freeing and, over time, therapeutic."

Not only a means of processing, Tedashii's music, this time around, showcases a new sonic landscape, previously unexplored. While always eclectic, Tedashii has generally allowed his albums to meander through various styles, each sound serving a different type of music or serving a particular song. *Below Paradise* is a different sonic experience.

"With other albums, I've liked the idea of being scatter-brained," he shares. "I grew up loving soul, pop, country, hip-hop, even classical. When I started making music, I would put it all on one album."

"This album, though, the goal was to show my heart, my burden," he continues. "I wanted songs that capture the listener and not lose the point. The songs are more mature."



1:18



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ACRYLICK

THE MESSAGE IS THE CONCEPT
SINCE 2003



There are not a lot of dance or party songs, but the album isn't filled with melancholy, somber tracks. I did one song with Britt Nicole. The subject matter is dark, but the music has major chords and bright strings."

The juxtaposition of lighter sounds with darker subtext succeeds in making the bright seem brighter and the dark seem darker—an effect Tedashii also strives for beyond music.

"There are so many people who get hit with news of tragedy; it's often ignored, just a side conversation to the main conversation that everything's good," he says. "I want to see a happy medium. There needs to be an awareness that things may be great today, but it's still a hard day. There has to be an awareness of that. If you sweep the hard stuff under the rug, the goodness gets robbed. You have to see the bad to see what's been overcome."

For Tedashii and his family, the road has been rocky, but they haven't traveled alone.

"Our church has been amazing," he says. "They've brought meals, babysat our kids, helped us financially and have prayed for us."

Since the loss of their son, the family has found comfort not only in community but also in new life.

"We have a four-year-old and a four-month-old," he says. "That part of the story has been a huge help in the therapy and sanity of it. We both go to counseling and talk regularly with our pastor. Overall, it's been a year of seeing people love on us."

Tedashii also credits Scripture with his capacity to accept loss and tragedy.

"In John 3, John the Baptist's people are jealous of Jesus. And John responds with, 'I must decrease so He must increase.' John was a guy who loved God and was loved and used by God. The way he died seems unfair, but the unfairness is eclipsed by God's

love. That's the goal. When I decrease, He increases. I have nothing that anyone needs. He's the one you need and hopefully is the one you'll get from me."

To say that the circumstances have been difficult is a painful understatement. Yet, despite facing the greatest loss many humans can ever imagine, Tedashii has had the strength and courage to be real, to be

hurt, to be broken, to be held.

As the pain of life and the glory of God have intersected, day by day, harmony has started to emerge. And Tedashii's own words have rung true—this world is harsh. God's love is good. Day by day, prayer by prayer, the reconciliation has begun. CCM



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ALL THESE YEARS LATER, THE VISION REMAINS THE SAME

BY MATT CONNER

Since 1994, Gotee Records has cultivated dynamic new talent and curated an impressive artist roster that has pushed the envelope for a full two decades. The successes are many. So are the lessons learned. Through it all, however, Joey Elwood and Toby McKeehan (TobyMac) have remained passionately committed to shape and share the artists they believe in.

"I don't think either one of us got into the business to make money," says Elwood. "That wasn't our goal. It really was because we just loved watching people create music. Being a part of that was always exciting for us."

The early days provided a steep learning curve for the pair, who founded the label, along with Todd Collins. Elwood doesn't recall much about the early years beyond the "album-to-album" survival mentality required of an independent, upstart record label.

"All I remember is that it was such an on-the-job training thing, and what was going on around me, the job itself, was survival," he explains. "It was a year-to-year thing and, honestly, the first two years it was an album-to-album kind of thing. It was like, 'Okay, we've got to do another one.'

"We were even designing our own software because we didn't know anything," he continues with a laugh. "Everything was just kind of by the seat of our pants, you know? I think Toby definitely had a clearer vision, but I don't think he ever really laid it out there for me. Otherwise it probably would have scared me."

According to McKeehan, the label's vision has

remained the same since the beginning—developing unique talent toward a greater audience. From Grits and Out of Eden in the label's early days to exciting new talent such as Capital Kings and Ryan Stevenson today, McKeehan says Gotee has stayed the course to that initial impulse.

"Although how we deliver music to people has changed drastically, the vision of Gotee has not changed that much," says McKeehan. "It's about finding artists who are unique, and who are passionate. We like to sign artists and walk through the development process with them and help them develop their artistry and watch them begin to bloom as artists. We try to help put some hands and feet on this vision God has given them for their artistry.

"We do better with unique artistry," he continues. "It's harder for us to compete with bigger labels at times. Like a rock band—which everybody has—it's real tough at times. We tend to move toward the more unique things just because it's easier for us to stand out in a marketing plan or a store



at iTunes or wherever, but it really is passion and a desire to find artists who have a desire to turn people's eyes to God."

The success stories are many for Gotee over the years—some expected and others unplanned. Elwood found it impossible to select just one story as a favorite, but the pioneering work of a sweet-singing trio of teenage girls called Out of Eden stood out most.

"You're talking about a 17-year-old, a 15-year-old and a 13-year-old girl, going into business with two guys who were just learning how to become men, really," says Elwood. "I don't think we had an understanding of what covering meant, so I don't know if we did the best job of covering those girls as a label. Even though our job wasn't to be the parents, I think we had some responsibilities that we didn't take as seriously as we should have; so I think it's a miracle that those girls came out of it unscathed."

Another early success for the label came from two of McKeehan's own dancers. Both Teron "Bonafide" Carter and Stacy "Coffee" Jones were dc Talk dancers before forming the formidable hip-hop duo Grits. Years later, they stand strong as pioneers in Christian music and part of the Gotee family.

"We laughed together, we cried together, disagreed at times, made music and history; but that's what family is, and celebrating twenty years together through this project is a beautiful thing," says Carter. "We still are and always will be family."

"For Grits to be a part of such an amazing legacy is an honor and a privilege," agrees Jones. "Never have I encountered such a level of integrity and sincerity in the music industry, but most of all, people I can, to this day, still call family."

"I remember the first record we made with Grits. It was an absolute labor of love," says McKeehan. "These two guys came up dancing with dc Talk, but you knew they were





so talented and had so much in them. And so many times, those people who support another artist never really get to the surface with their own art. We just had to get that first record out and watch people respond, and then just sort of follow that trail that Out of Eden had blazed just a few months before them. Then we began to get diversity in Christian music.”

That last line points to the importance of Gotee’s work over the last twenty years. The artist stable was and still is left-of-center of the typical Christian label’s roster. Yet their commitment to get behind diverse talents that didn’t fit the typical industry mold is what has helped shape the industry years later. Relient K is one such story.

“I loved Relient K the first time I heard their really bad demo,” says McKeehan. “There was something about the spirit in which they delivered their music and lyrics that met you right where you were, whether you were 40 or 15. It took you back to those years.

“We knew going in there was no way radio was going to embrace this band. Too pop for the rockers, and too rock for AC [Adult Contemporary],” laughs McKeehan. “So we knew we were in trouble. It took us years and years to get radio play, but the truth is they connected with the youth culture in a way that was unstoppable. They demanded it, and I think there’s something great about those stories when the people demand something. It’s not about the gatekeepers, but the people overwhelmingly demanded that this band would sell records no matter what. Those stories put the power in people’s hands.”

One of Gotee’s biggest accomplishments was a similar story of helping to usher a new genre into the Christian market. This time, however, there was no plan in place. Sonicflood, a band first known as Zilch, initially released a pop/rock album on Gotee and became TobyMac’s traveling band (after serving as the same for dc Talk). After a



shift in sound, the band joined others like Delirious in spawning an entire movement of worship releases.

"Sonicflood is the biggest example of us not knowing what we were getting into," says Elwood. "I just went and saw the band perform, and they were Toby's band. At the very end of their shows, they would do a worship set for like ten minutes, and I think all of us thought, 'You know what? Let's just make four or five songs like that, because that's where the crowd seems to react more than to any of the pop stuff.'"

"We didn't know what any of that meant. We knew what worship meant, but putting out a worship record was not something we had done at that point, and it just took off faster than we'd ever expected. It went from zero to sixty like a race car."

It's clear that Gotee is more than a business for its founders, even after all of these

years. Elwood remains grateful for their mission and ability to continue after twenty years in an ever-changing business. For McKeehan, Gotee is a calling that he's still passionate to pursue.

"It's weird," he explains. "You sign these artists and you think you're supposed to walk with them and inspire them as an A&R/mentor kind of guy; but so many times these artists end up inspiring me to write more deeply, to think more passionately, to dream bigger with my own artistry. So it's been very healthy for me, as an artist and as an executive, because these artists inspire me."

That calling to help develop the artists' ministry as well as music was a vital part of The Katinas platform. Not only did the literal band of brothers create hits for the label with their strong harmonies and songs like "Draw Me Close," but they also utilized their platform for ministry opportunities and relief work.

"Being a part of the Gotee family was one of the greatest blessings to our families and ministry," says James Katina. "It provided a foundation for us in the music industry that we will always be grateful for. Joey, Toby and the entire Gotee family taught us early in our career that a record deal did not define us. Still, they did everything they could to provide us with opportunities and help us get into doors that we are blessed to continue to be able to walk through today."

When asked whether there's another twenty years ahead of Gotee, both Elwood



and McKeehan express hope that God would allow the work to continue.

"I'd be really upset if there wasn't," says McKeehan. "I love this. I am passionate. I am as un-jaded as someone can be when it comes to artistry. It's what I love to do, whether it's my own art or locking arms with a young, up-and-coming artist and helping them to find their way. The fulfilling side, for me, is writing songs and collaborating."

"I hope so," agrees Elwood. "I think it's a miracle that we made it this far, but that would be amazing. What would be a miracle is if one day one of our kids was running it, you know? That would be a blast to watch."

Regardless of the road ahead, Gotee Records has undoubtedly left an indelible fingerprint upon the Christian music industry. Boldly building bridges across cultural divides, while blazing trails in terms of worship, faith and the offering of, the men behind the label, the artists who have filled its roster and the many others who have been pivotal to Gotee's ministry have done a lot more than make great music. They've done kingdom work.

Here's to the next twenty. CCM



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT GOTEE.COM**

FAMILY FORCE 5

BY ANDREW GREER

Album Title: *Time Stands Still*

Label: Word

Release Date: August 5, 2014

Recording Studio: The Hitlab, Los Angeles, CA; Full Circle Music, Franklin, TN; The Atrium, Calabasas, CA

Producers: Riley Friesen and Seth Mosley

Number of Songs: 15 (plus one bonus song available through select outlets)

PUSH PLAY: Family Force 5 recording starts with A.D.D. The whole team watches a few hilarious videos on YouTube to get the blood flowing. Then, we blast party jams and dance for an hour. One time, Crouton legitimately danced so hard that he threw up. Once the band is sweaty, we're ready to hit "record."
 –Derek Mount (*Chap Stique*)

UP ON THE ROOFTOP: We have written songs by programming beats on our laptops, playing acoustic guitars, jamming out at sound check or sitting around a piano. A large portion of *Time Stands Still* was written on the rooftop of The Hitlab. Whenever writer's block struck, we would retreat to the fresh air and sing melodies into our phones overlooking the valley. Also, Riley (our producer) traveled with us on several tours; so we wrote and recorded in our tour bus, dressing rooms and hotel rooms. As a whole, we gravitate toward making the track and the song at the same time because the sounds play such a large role in shaping our music. –D.M. (C.S.)

MATURE MOVES: Sonically, we have diversified. This record blends trademark FF5 aggressive rock and dance-electro with

Seth Mosley, Producer and
Derek Mount "Chap Stique"



Jacob Olds "Crouton" and
Nathan Currin "Nadaddy"

shiny new production and massive drops. Our new-wave influence is very salient, and Crouton's amazing falsetto naturally lends itself to that style of pop. We jokingly call this new sound "Buttercream Versace" because it's smooth. Lyrically, we worked diligently to cultivate growth and development. Life has been full of moves, marriages, lineup changes, health problems, you name it... Perhaps the greatest transformation is that Fatty's mother-in-law passed away, leaving him and his wife as the legal guardians of four teenage girls. Therefore, *Time Stands Still* features more depth and maturity. However, the core of FF5 is to approach all trials with positivity and optimism. Despite the heavy nature of our changing lives, there is an overwhelming message of joy that resonates from this record. Ultimately, this is an incredibly fun album. -D.M. (C.S.)



Teddy Boldt "Hollywood"

SONIC FUEL: Seth's Bengal Spice Tea, Riley's Midwestern breakfast sandwiches, a pyramid of Red Bull (even though I don't drink it), a pull-up bar, a sweatshirt (because it gets FREEZING in the studio), and Fatty's famous stew. Without any of these things we are powerless. -D.M. (C.S.) CCM



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT FAMILYFORCES.COM.

PAUL COCHRANE TIMMY OVERDRIVE OVERDRIVE PEDAL

BY JASON AHLBRANDT

Most all overdrive pedals have a bit of a characteristic sound, one that shapes or colors the tone. It can be a good thing, as some pedals have unique and desirable qualities. However, sometimes I'm looking to increase the overdrive saturation of the amp without increasing the overall volume of the amp. The Timmy does just that. It adds a bit of crunch when you need it. When you kick it on, it's as if you've turned up the preamp gain stage of your tube amp. You can also use the bass and treble knobs to dial in the perfect flat EQ to match your amp. The bass and treble knobs are cut style controls, as you turn them clockwise they roll off the bass and treble frequencies.

A built-in setting in most overdrive pedals keeps the bass from being too muddy and the treble from being too harsh at high distortion levels. For this reason, the bass control is set pre-distortion to enable a clean-up at lower distortion levels. Similarly, the treble knob is set post-distortion to enable a clearer sound at lower distortion levels. There is also a three-way switch that controls clipping options. This is a very versatile pedal with a lot of options. It is a must-have on the pedal board. **CCM**

Jason Ahlbrandt is a guitar soloist and session musician. He currently travels with Guy Penrod and has two solo acoustic guitar albums. He lives in Nashville, Tenn., with his wife, Martina, and daughter, Alianna.

Follow Jason Ahlbrandt on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).



PROS

- True Bypass
- Treble and Bass Knobs
- Transparent Overdrive
- Versatility in both clean and overdriven tones

CONS

- Settings don't provide equal results across all guitar and amp types

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$129.00

DAD TIME

LOVING THE CHILD WHO DROPS THE BALL

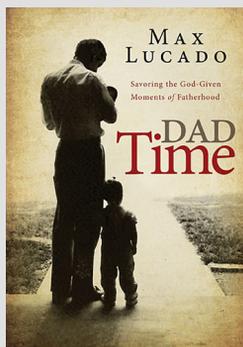
BY MAX LUCADO

Dropping a fly ball may not be a big deal to most people, but if you are thirteen years old and have aspirations of the big leagues, it is a big deal. Not only was it my second error of the game, it allowed the winning run to score.

I didn't even go back to the dugout. I turned around in the middle of left field and climbed over the fence. I was halfway home when my dad found me. He didn't say a word. Just pulled over to the side of the road, leaned across the seat, and opened the passenger door.

We didn't speak. We didn't need to. We both knew the world had come to an end. When we got home, I went straight to my room, and he went straight to the kitchen. Presently he appeared in front of me with cookies and milk. He took a seat on the bed, and we broke bread together.

Somewhere in the dunking of the cookies I began to realize that life and my father's love would go on. In the economy of male adolescence, if you love the guy who drops the ball, then you really love him. My skill as a baseball player didn't improve, but my confidence in Dad's love did. Dad never said a word. But he did show up. He did listen up. To bring out the best in others, do the same. **CCM**



Brimming with timeless stories and inspirational quotes, this book on fatherhood from Max Lucado is the perfect gift to show Dad how much he means to the family.



Max Lucado perfectly captures the heartfelt sentiments that millions of readers share on what it's like to be a dad. Filled with quotes and stories compiled from books by Max, this gift book is brimming with inspiring thoughts on fatherhood from one of America's favorite authors.



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AC

WORSHIP



MICHAEL BOGGS

More Like A Lion

(Stylos Records)

FOR FANS OF:

Matt Maher, FFH

★★★★☆

Formerly of FFH, Michael Boggs has been quietly lending his songwriting talents to other artists since he left the pop quartet. Here, he shows that he is also vocally adept, with brave songs like, “What Would Jesus Undo,” as well as a country-tinged re-imagining of Matt Maher’s hit “Turn Around,” which Boggs co-wrote. Overall, a well-written and sophisticated effort.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: “What Would Jesus Undo”



ERICA LANE

Take Your Burden

Down (Saylor's Brothers Entertainment)

FOR FANS OF: Colbie Caillat,

Carrie Underwood,

Kristin Chenoweth

★★★★☆

This former Miss Houston, Top 10 US Miss World and versatile actress is equally regarded as a singer/songwriter who brings her elegant blend of contemporary pop and beautiful balladry to this five-track EP. Produced by Bryan Lenox (Michael W. Smith, The Katinas, Enrique Iglesias), Lane shines with several relationship-centered songs that regularly take an encouraging turn and highlight her lifelong faith.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: “Burden”



MICHAEL W. SMITH

Hymns (Cracker Barrel)

FOR FANS OF:

Amy Grant, Steven

Curtis Chapman,

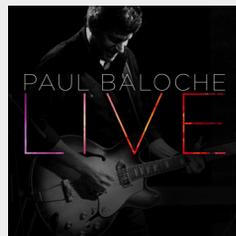
MercyMe

★★★★☆

Following an immensely successful streak in Christian pop, Michael W. Smith switched gears to the worship world, but across both career periods, never recorded an entire album of hymns. Nonetheless, this simple, understated affair feels just as natural for the lifelong churchgoer, who applies gentle vocals, organic instrumentation and understated production to several personal favorites and ageless anthems.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: “It Is Well”



PAUL BALOCHE

Live (Integrity Music)

FOR FANS OF:

Matt Redman,

Desperation Band,

Darrell Evans

★★★☆☆

As far as live albums go, this recent effort from veteran worship leader Paul Baloche is fairly solid, particularly on “Jesus Is My Savior,” with its innovative arrangement. He also shines on, “Hosanna (Praise Is Rising),” which lifts and soars in all the right places. “The Same Love” and “My Hope” are not as creative; but, overall, the project is uplifting and the recording is clear and well-arranged.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: “Jesus Be My Savior”



**KINGS
KALEIDOSCOPE**
Live in Color EP

(Bad Christian)
FOR FANS OF:
Freelance Whales
★★★★★

Few bands boast the charisma and chops of Kings Kaleidoscope, the former Mars Hill band now signed to Bad Christian, a label imprint from the guys in Emery. The ten-piece worship band breaks all expectations with their delivery that's more akin to Anathallo or Freelance Whales than any congregational release you might expect. The lyrics are honest, the instrumentation is spot-on and the melodies are inventive. This is one fantastic EP.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Felix Culpa"



RED
*Release the Panic:
Recalibrated*

(Sony)
FOR FANS OF:
Chevelle
★★★★☆

Longtime Red fans will love the "Recalibrated" tunes on the band's latest release. Just over a year after *Release the Panic* dropped in stores, the band's *Recalibrated* edition is available for those who longed for a more orchestral treatment of the extreme originals. The seven-song mix also includes one new track, "Run and Escape," with a driving intensity that fits nicely in the band's catalog.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE:
"Run and Escape"



SOLVEIG LEITHAUG
Finding Home

(Apple Cake Records)
FOR FANS OF:
Eva Cassidy, Shawn Colvin, Fernando Ortega
★★★★☆

With thirty years of internationally celebrated recordings in her musical register, including a pair of gold certifications, the Dove Award-winning, Norwegian-bred singer-songwriter births her first original English recording in nearly a decade. Gently engaging tough human topics like Alzheimer's as well as celebratory occasions with sheer vocals, tender musical bedding, a clarinet and a harmonica, plus Steve Hindalong's (The Choir, Sara Groves) graceful production, *Finding Home* is a perfect sample of one of gospel music's sweetest acoustic treasures.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE:
"Faraway Lullaby"



**WHAT GLORIOUS
THINGS**
Far and Fading EP

(Independent)
FOR FANS OF:
Fee, Lincoln Brewster
★★★★☆

For those looking for a fresh wind among worship releases, Jason Hansen, the man behind What Glorious Things, has a gift for you. *Far and Fading* is his latest EP, and the five songs within whet the appetite for much more with a solid breadth and intimacy. From the heartfelt piano ballad "Whisper," to a Further Seems Forever vibe on "Draw Near," Hansen displays both his range and heart on this promising introduction.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Draw Near"

**BECKAH SHAE****Champion***(Shae Shoc Records)*

FOR FANS OF:

Group 1 Crew, Rihanna,
Capital Kings

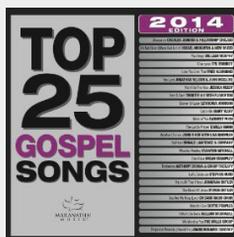
★★★★☆

Dove-nominated pop star Becca Shae doesn't just give Christian listeners plenty of reasons to groove on her latest long player, *Champion*, as she could easily compete with any electronic dance music act in the mainstream. Aside from being a powerhouse vocalist and sturdy songwriter, the project benefits from an astounding list of collaborators (Israel Houghton, Crystal Lewis, T-Bone, Eric Dawkins, Canon, Crystal Nicole, her producer/hubby Jack Shocklee). Make no mistake, though, the charismatic Shae is at the center of this masterpiece.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE:

"Incorruptible"

**VARIOUS ARTISTS****Top 25 Gospel Songs****2014***(Maranatha)*

FOR FANS OF:

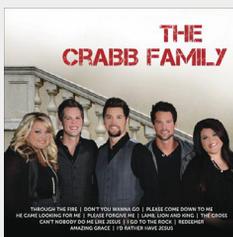
Black Gospel music

★★★★☆

A two-disc compilation of gospel's most prolific new and veteran artists, featuring impactful tracks from the recent past, *Top 25* is a potent display of the genre's wide ability. Traditional choir-backed tracks and modern urban outfits coexist easily, satisfying the gospel fan's most eclectic craving. The only oddity: several of the songs are more than a few years old, dating the set list.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Put it on the Altar" — Jessica Reedy

**THE CRABB FAMILY****Icon***(Gaither Music Group)*

FOR FANS OF: Karen

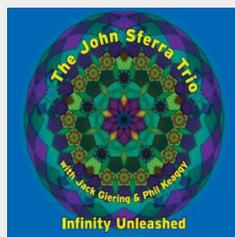
Peck and New River

★★★★☆

Longtime fans of The Crabb Family should already possess most of the tracks on the quintet's newest project, *Icon*. However, for those who are new to the group or haven't been following closely, the compilation project highlights some of their most beloved work. Nothing new here, but for a group as appreciated as The Crabb Family, a catch-up release is never a bad idea.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "He Came Looking For Me"

**THE JOHN SFERRA TRIO****Infinity Unleashed***(Strobic Records/**Golden Wave)*

FOR FANS OF:

Phil Keaggy, Koinonia,

Booker T & the MG's

★★★★☆

The third in a planned series of three "trio" albums featuring guitar legend Phil Keaggy, John Sferra and Jack Giering, *Unleashed* is the appropriate word. Guitars soar, keyboards get funky and textured and drums thunder appropriately—these brothers can jam! The jazz/soul/funk/blues/pop produced by these instrumental masters, along with guest appearances by bassist Daniel Pecchio and, on sax, the ubiquitous Mark Douthit, will leave you praying that *Infinity Unleashed* won't be their last project.

—Bert Saraco

WE LIKE: "Late Show"

LET GOD

Director: William Parker

The latest faith-based film to find a home with audiences and critics alike is *Let God*, the first feature from writer/director William Parker. The film recently took prizes at both the Attic Film Festival and Breckinridge Film Festival and earned the Dove “Family-Approved” seal. The survival story of a young woman during the nineteenth-century gold rush is one that resonates through time and finds a home with a modern audience.

CCM: You wrote and directed the film. Where did the story and setting first come to you?

William: The concept for the film was born on a camping trip to Zion National Park in Utah. I was on an epic hike to a summit overlooking Zion Canyon, one of the most unnecessarily beautiful sights I had ever seen. And, I realized some of the most spirit-filled moments I had experienced were when I was away from the distractions of everyday life, back in nature, left with only the basics. The story of *Let God* is inspired by the experiences of thousands of women who left everything to traverse across the country along The Oregon Trail with their husbands in pursuit of a better life. Many of them kept journals chronicling their journey, homesickness and struggles with faith.

The main message I hope to convey through the film is that God isn't relegated to that hour spent in church each Sunday. There is a fragility of faith when it is ritual-based, versus a deeper heart-based relationship. One of my favorite quotes is by Dr. Laurence J. Parker, and it sums up this concept quite candidly: “Going to church does not make you a Christian anymore than going to the garage makes you a car.”

CCM: Can you give us a bit of your own background? Did you grow up wanting to make movies?

William: Although I've been writing scripts



since high school, *Let God* is my first feature and my first attempt at filmmaking. I grew up in Southern California and quickly became enamored with Hollywood movies in my youth. My home church as a kid was very hip and technologically savvy. The pastor would kick off each sermon with clips from a movie that addressed the topic he was about to discuss. Even as a bored teenager, I found this method compelling and concordant to how people learn in our modern society. Media has become our modern-day language. I'm ecstatic to pursue my passion for filmmaking while providing audiences a forum to explore new topics and to discuss relevant issues.

CCM: Do you have a favorite response to the film so far?

William: Probably my favorite response to the film came after our first screening at the Gideon Film Festival. A young woman came up to me after and told me it was her favorite movie. But, she was unique because she was hearing-impaired. She told me that she loved movies but often missed out on a lot because she couldn't hear the dialogue. In *Let God*, much of the story is told through actions and emotions, allowing her to get the message without it being told explicitly through words.

—Matt Conner

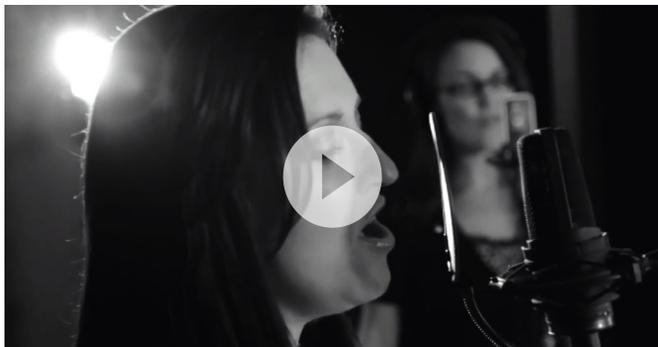


FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
LETGODMOVIE.COM.

NATASHA OWENS *THE CURE*

BY CAROLINE LUSK

The healing power of music is undeniable. When Natasha Owens' father passed away, it was music, ministry and faith that pulled her through. Her debut album, *I Made it Through*, drops in July. Filled with songs that have been healing to her and inspiring to others, the project is indicative of a fruitful ministry ahead. Already partnering with the likes of Michael W. Smith, Natasha brings a passion to her music that delivers hope so others may also find healing—not just to survive but to thrive. Watch the compelling story behind the album in the video below. [CCM](#)



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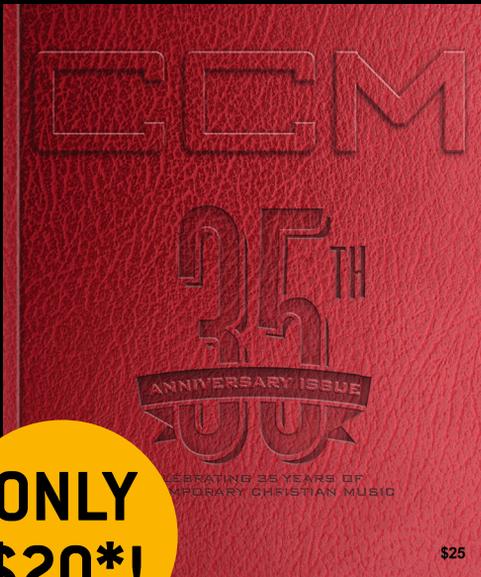


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