

CCM

MERCYME HAS ARRIVED...AGAIN

NEWBIES



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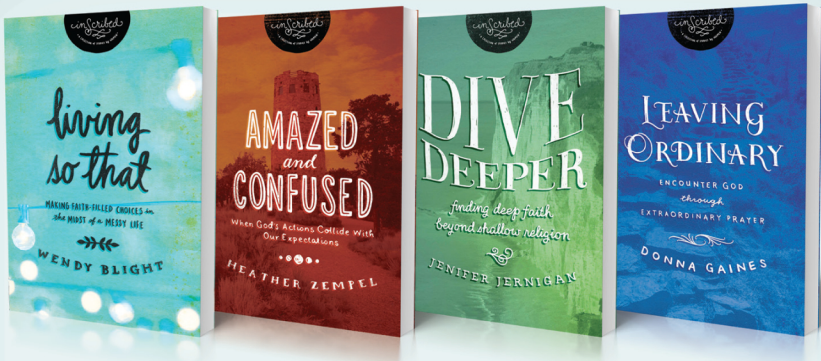
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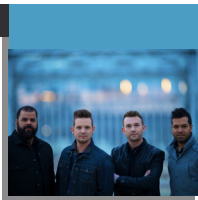


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**Unspoken**

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**Satellites and Sirens**

Bringing it all together



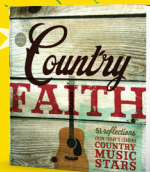
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Kari Jobe

OUT AND ABOUT

Pix of your favorite Christian artists on the road, off the road and everywhere in between

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There's something both provocative and terrifying about the concept of "new." On one hand, the latest, greatest, most original, most creative, fresh, hip thing is markedly alluring. On the other, stepping outside of a box, leaving what's familiar, trusting the unknown can be unnerving and even debilitating.

Jesus made all things new. His great sacrifice enabled us to become new creations—fresh, clean, the greatest version of ourselves we could never achieve without Him. Of course, in order to allow Him to do His great work, we have to leap. We have to trust that a future of surrender to Him is better than the control we pretend to have without Him.

It's not easy. It's not automatic. But it's worth it.

MercyMe has enjoyed one of the most successful careers of any band in Christian music. It would have been easy for them to trust a formula of songwriting and style, but for them, that road doesn't allow God to mature them. Formulas are rigid and leave no room for experimentation. Trusting in God is freeing and creative and beautifully chaotic, which they learned, perhaps more viscerally than ever, with their latest project, aptly called *Welcome to the New*.

What's new in your life? What's old? Where do you need to be challenged? Where do you need to learn to trust?

My list goes on and on...and I fail at my resolves daily. However, I know that every day, His mercies are new. And as scary as it is to relinquish whatever grip I think I have on life, love and the rest, I've learned enough to know that the risk is worth it.

With Spring at our doorstep, what better moment to take that leap?

Release the old, embrace the new and never let your eyes stray from His.



Caroline Lusk

Caroline Lusk
Editor, CCM Digital



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STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

Just two nights into her tour supporting the brand-new project *Majestic* (Capitol CMG), Grammy-nominated/ Dove Award-winning praise artist Kari Jobe was already on a roll, not only captivating a near-capacity crowd with her inviting stage presence but stirring revival and encouragement within the body of Christ.

Besides debuting vertically-framed new tunes such as, "Only Your Love," "I Am Not Alone" and "How Majestic," the evening was stocked with equally emotive favorites such as "Revelation Song," "Love Came Down" and "Forever," all of which found Jobe magnifying the Lord with unceasing passion and equipping her fellow worshippers for the rousing journey.



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Support act Rend Collective Experiment also brought a worshipful tone to the tour but from the perspective of Celtic-flavored folk/indie rock, giving mainstream heavyweights Mumford & Sons or The Lumineers some serious competition with tunes such as “My Lighthouse” and “Burn Like A Star” off the just-released *The Art Of Celebration* (Integrity), which was featured in the previous issue of *CCM*.

Opener Warren Barfield took a more straightforward guy-with-a-guitar approach with tunes from his latest self-released record, *Redbird*, while also giving a personal plea for marriage restoration with his *Fireproof* soundtrack single, “Love Is Not A Fight,” during a short, but significant, warm-up set. *CCM*



COMPILED BY
ANDY ARGYRAKIS

1 (Left to right) Cheri Keaggy, Jason Crabb, Phil Keaggy and Jason Bare hang out together at a taping of TBN's long-running show *Praise The Lord* in Nashville.



2 New artist Eva Kroon Pike (right), a featured performer at Winter Jam in Atlanta, visits backstage with Newsboys' Michael Tait (left).

3 Clay Crosse (left) and wife Renee Crosse (right) chat with Steven Curtis Chapman (center) following Chapman's concert at First Baptist Church of Bentonville, where Crosse is the new worship pastor.

4 Worship artist David Glenn (left) stopped by the internationally-syndicated TV program, "Babbie's House," to tape an upcoming episode with host/gospel music legend Babbie Mason (right).

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CARROLLTON

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Five years ago, when they were playing worship services at small churches, they caught the writing bug and started recording their own music. When their indie album landed on the doorstep of Centricity Records, they got the very rare record deal. Since releasing their debut album, their songs have rocketed to the top of the charts. Not bad for the band that took its name from the small town in Kentucky they used as their gathering grounds for rehearsals, writing and all the band stuff that bands do.

CCM got to chat with lead singer Justin Mosteller to find out just how fast their heads have been spinning and what we can expect from them in the future.

4.1.2014

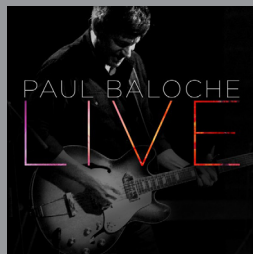


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PAUL BALOCHE
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CCM: You began as worship leaders...how did you make the transition to a band beyond the confines of the worship genre?

JUSTIN: Actually, I'm still a worship pastor, and three of us have been worship leaders at our respective churches. But along the way, we connected with Michael Joy. He's an amazing drummer with a heart for worship. After a showcase in Nashville, we realized that we loved our friendship and decided to commit to a band. I don't think we had any idea what it meant.

CCM: So what did it mean?

JUSTIN: For us, we had begun writing songs that weren't necessarily vertical songs to use with a congregation on Sunday morning. We all made the decision to trust God with the songs He had given us and see where it would take us. Three months later, the indie album was done...it made its way to Centricity, and we got an offer.

CCM: How has it been to create under the guise of such a seasoned, supportive and creative label?

JUSTIN: We wrote for 16 to 18 months, including several writing sessions with different co-writers in Nashville. We had never really had someone else involved. It was such a blessing to get other people involved. We ended up writing more than 55 songs and got to work with producer Paul Moak (Third Day, Matt Maher, Rhett Walker Band). It was an organic process and feels very honest. Centricity has been such a great example and support.

CCM: So tell us what we're going to hear. Did any themes emerge, sonically or lyrically?

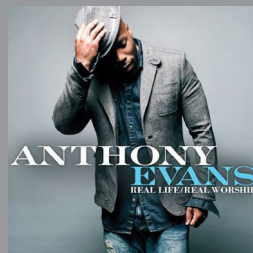
JUSTIN: Sonically, we're a rock n' roll band with a little pop and a little southern. Thematically, the idea is that of breathing in deeply, taking life in, letting go of worry for tomorrow or yesterday. It's important that comes across because this is a real ministry for us; it's not a hobby. Our wives and families have made sacrifices, but we all believe that we are doing the work of bringing the Kingdom of God here in love and through our music.

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NEWBIES



MEET MERCYME...AGAIN

BY CAROLINE LUSK

From the very beginning, the members of MercyMe have worn their hearts on their sleeves. They have been transparently human, and in so doing, have impacted countless lives.

When they delivered the epic, "I Can Only Imagine," the church suddenly had permission to grieve and not hide feelings of sadness or doubt.

Their previous album, *The Hurt & The Healer* (2012) was a cornerstone in a long line of albums that never shied away from pain and didn't apologize for doubt. *All That is Within Me* (2007), *Undone* (2004) and *Spoken For* (2002) resonated, track after track, with ... with truth. Not just "church talk," but truth.

In 2014, on the heels of *The Hurt & The Healer*, they're doing it again. This time, however, there's something different. Something lighter. Something...new.

"The last album was about needing a full-blown collision with the healer when my family was hanging on by a thread. My cousin who was a firefighter died, and I wrote the title song in ten minutes in a concert arena, in tears," recalls lead singer and songwriter, Bart Millard. "I was thinking, 'Why do we go through this mess, this junk in our lives? Is there any chance that what I'm going through is not in vain?' *Welcome to the New* is the answer to that question. It's where we landed after the collision. And we didn't go through it in vain. I feel like the Gospel has come to life for the first time."

And he isn't alone. Everyone in the band seems to have removed a veil. They are more vibrant and awake than ever. Much of that

began with Bart, who had reached a point in his life of nearly overwhelming difficulty and struggle. He had lost family members, his health was in jeopardy and the lingering shadows of his childhood loomed large.

"I grew up with a legalistic background, and even though it was all about grace, there were always three more things you could do to make life better," says Bart. "But of course, I'd do ten. I was an overachiever. That's why I started a band, feeling like I had to do more. I believed that if we weren't giving God our best, He wasn't happy with us.

His efforts not only proved to be in vain, but threatened the very life of the band

"THERE IS NOTHING IN OUR LIFE TO MAKE CHRIST LOVE US ANY MORE THAN HE DOES. AND I THOUGHT THAT WAS A NOVEL CONCEPT, BUT I DIDN'T BUY IT. I HAVE A WRETCHED HEART, AND I'M NOTHING WITHOUT GOD."

as well as his relationships with God and other people. Just as he was ready to walk away from it all, an old friend emerged with a message that was as poignant as it was unexpected.

"'There is nothing in our life to make Christ love us any more than He does.' And I thought that was a novel concept, but I didn't buy it. I have a wretched heart, and I'm nothing without God," shares Bart. "But then my friend said, 'Because of the cross you are a brand new creation. You can't worry about the heart that can't be trusted. You have a brand new heart and mind in Christ.' And I thought, 'Wow, that's something I never heard growing up. There's no way I can sabotage this.'"



As Bart allowed that truth to seep from his consciousness all the way into his heart, God began revealing a new kind of freedom unlike any he had ever known. At the same time, a call from his doctor with news of high blood pressure and a myriad of potential health problems led to an operation. Bart underwent gastric bypass surgery and is now healthier than ever.

New look, new freedom, new music—*Welcome to the New* is a celebration of what God does in all of our lives if we let Him: redemption, sanctification, transformation.

"If there was one song that musically and spiritually represents the place where we

are—the grace message of joy—'Greater' is it," Millard notes. *"Bring your doubts, bring your fears / Bring your hurt, bring your tears / There'll be no condemnation here / You are holy, righteous and redeemed."*

Redeemed and ready to celebrate, the single "Shake" is a party from beginning to end—as is the video. Imagine Bart and company leading an impromptu flash mob all around a quaint, fun town, throwing down moves that are as infectious as they are really good... (Who knew?)

"We thought it was a great way to kick off the record," Millard says. "It's a little bit of a departure from what we do." Actually, it was

a big departure for Millard when it came to showing off his moves for the music video. "I grew up Southern Baptist, which means I would be banished if I were to learn how to dance," he says, laughing. "But we figured that everyone has at least a good shimmy in them. Even my grandmother, she can shake it." And the theme of rebirth shows MercyMe putting its best foot forward: *"Brand-new looks so good on you / So shake like you are changed."*

Ever the modest ones, the band members profusely credit producers David Garcia and Ben Glover for helping them achieve the "new" sound, look and feel.

"This was our first time working with them, and fitting along the vein of being new, we tried it and just loved it," Millard says. "It's like they're an extension of MercyMe now. When you're in a band this long, it gets to the point where you get in the room with the guys and the same stuff comes out. We just wanted someone to stretch us."

From beginning to end, it's more than obvious that stretching has occurred. You might go so far as to say an outright demolition and rebuild has gone on. However, one thing has not changed. They always have, MercyMe, MercyMe continues to show their heart and extend an invitation for us to do the same.

To be sure, this isn't a band that went from a sad record to a happy record. This is a band that has done the work of faith. They have faced their questions, fears and doubts. They got messy. It hurt. But they did the work.

Welcome to the New is the outcome. Brimming with life, resonating with confidence, this is an album of godly men on an epic journey

through this thing we call life. And for this season, they're scaling a mountain. Life is still messy and hard. There are still questions. But for the first time, their exposed, vulnerable hearts are allowing them to enjoy the view, enjoy their God and invite us to do the same. CCM



UNPLANNED



UNSPOKEN NEVER CHASED MUSIC— THEY SIMPLY CHASED GOD

BY CAROLINE LUSK



You might say Unspoken is the latest five-year overnight success story in the CCM world. Their first two singles shot straight to the top of the charts, leaving fans clamoring for more. Fortunately, for said fans, more is on the way.

The band releases its self-titled debut on April 1 with Centricity Records. The two singles already circulating are evidence enough that this band is special; but dig a little deeper and their story adds texture, depth and humanity to the music.

Perhaps it's the fact that these guys didn't pursue music because they wanted to make it in the music industry. Rather, they found music in a desperate hour.

Chad Mattson, lead vocalist, grew up in a fairly stable household. But as he left his teen years, he entered into a self-defeating cycle of addiction and dead ends.

"In my early 20s, I walked away from the Lord completely," says Chad. "I got into using drugs and all that stuff. It was pretty dark and grim for three years."

At 24, Chad had to face facts. He hadn't gone the college route. He had no plan.

"I had no education, and my life was a wreck," he says. "I felt a little hopeless. But it's just like the Lord to come in and show us He is able to do more than we even ask. His Spirit is at work within us."

Chad began to feel the nudge of the Holy Spirit to make some decisions. He knew some missionaries who were headed to the Dominican Republic, and he asked if he could join.

"I was this drug addict asking these missionaries if I could go with them," he recalls. "I went for two months. I read my Bible and prayed every day. I hung out with Jesus."

As Chad's heart, body and mind were renewed, God brought another surprise into his life—a bandmate.

"I met a guy there from the Dominican Republic who had been a musician all his life and had just gotten saved a few months before. God gave us this mutual passion for music," says Chad.

Mike Gomez, a guitarist, followed Chad back to his home state, Maine. There, they played in the subway, on random street corners, at nursing homes, anywhere...

"That's how it started. Four or five years ago, we moved to Nashville," says Chad. "We were following the Lord and looking to make this a reasonable way to make a living."

After a few deals fell through, Centricity Records "felt like home, like a family," Chad says.

Among the many reasons the label was a good fit, the folks at Centricity valued what the guys brought to the table that was unlike anyone else—their story.

"People can relate to the story. It was the one thing we had going for us," says Chad. "We could be transparent. God could use it, and people could relate to it. I definitely praise God for what I've been through. We're all recovering from something. God's always continuing to work and change us."

With the kind of melodies and production that make their songs stay with you, Unspoken has essentially documented that change process on the new record.

"The album has so much in it," says Chad. "There's the hope that reminds us that we can change. He can flip our entire situation on its head. Our joy is to surrender to God."

Thoughtful craftsmen, the band carefully pulled together each element that would end up on the record with a clear objective: "God puts the fire in us. It's our job to keep it burning. We can become complacent and feel unsatisfied, but God wants to stir up that fire and keep the gracious gift of Himself burning.

"I heard Jason Gray once say, 'We tend to write the songs we need to hear,'" Chad continues. "These songs speak into a lot of different areas that need to be spoken into. I think it's a really well-rounded piece of work."

Their purpose is unequivocal.

Their passion is undeterred.

Their path is, as yet, uncharted—by human hands, anyway.

"We didn't set out to start a career in music. We set out to follow God," says Chad. "We don't follow the Lord because of where He might take us. We follow out of gratitude because we're compelled to tell His story. We'll follow the Lord until He moves us in another direction."

For now, the band that is one of the most diverse bands in Christian music right now—a Puerto Rican, a Dominican Republic native and two guys from Maine—is also one of the most focused bands in any genre anywhere.

Their eyes are set on their Savior. Their words ring with His truth and their lives reflect the joy of surrender. **CCM**



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UNITE

A LITTLE WORSHIP, A LITTLE ROCK, A LITTLE POP, **SATELLITES & SIRENS** BRINGS IT ALL TOGETHER

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Satellites & Sirens took the music scene by storm with their self-titled debut in 2010. Garnering two Dove nominations and a featured spot on MTV, they quickly distinguished themselves as a band to watch. However, in 2011, due to some industry shake-ups, they were released from their label. Determined to maintain the momentum and fan base already in place, they worked even harder, releasing two records (*Frequency*; *The Covers*) in 2012 alone.

2014 finds the band with a new label (DREAM Records) and with a sound more fully realized than ever. An infectious blend of rock, worship and pop, *One Noise* is a sonic kaleidoscope from a band that has weathered the storm, dared to examine every aspect of their craft and finally surrendered the whole thing to the God they sing about. CCM got to ask the band a few questions about their latest release and what they hope the future will bring.

CCM: *This project is a seamless blend of the styles you're known for: worship, rock and pop. How did you achieve the sound you delivered?*

S&S: We purposely wanted to do something different with this record. We have spent so much time in the worship realm over the last couple years that we wanted to show that side of us. We wrote for over a year for this record—worship songs and stuff about where we were currently in our lives and walks with Christ. I think you can see all those sides on this record. Sonically we have been listening a ton to the latest Paper Route record as well as One Republic and Hillsong United's *Zion* record. We wanted to take elements of all that and make it our own to end up with a record that could fit sonically anywhere. Grant Craig, the producer we worked with, did an amazing job helping us achieve that. We took each song one day at a time and really just dove into it, making sure that every note and lyric was what we wanted it to be. It was my favorite music-making experience to date.

CCM: *You've been through so much transition in the last few years. Who is Satellites & Sirens in 2014?*

S&S: I think as a band we have finally figured ourselves out. I think we have nailed down our sound and know what our ministry is and I think we now know how to move forward with more intention. The next five years will bring more music and more ministry. We have some specific ideas that I hope will come together over the next few years.



CCM: *How has God been leading you, teaching you and challenging you lately?*

S&S: He is teaching us how to trust. He's showing us that He is in control and we need to just learn to trust Him. No expectations—just to let go and let Him work. We so desperately want to keep our hands on everything and dictate where and when things should happen, but sometimes we just need to take our hands off and follow.

CCM: *It's been a dramatic few years, but surely there have been some funny moments along the way. Care to share?*

S&S: Well, we are touring in a Toyota Prius!!! Haha! Our van is currently out of commission and since we are using Hawk Nelson's gear for this tour (props to those amazing guys), we have been packing our guitars into the Prius. Pretty funny sight having the tour busses parked behind the venue alongside our Prius!

CCM: *The single "Jump Start My Heart" is absolutely soaring at radio. Where did that song come from? Do you have other favorite songs on the record?*

S&S: "Jump Start" is the first time we took submissions from writers outside of the band. Jon Steingard from Hawk Nelson produced a couple songs on the record, so when I was pitched this song and Steingard was a writer on it along with Sam Tinnesz, and then just how hooky and amazing it was, I just knew it needed to be a Satellites tune. We took it into the studio and made it sound like us and now here we are! I honestly love the record, but my favorites are "Keep Running" and "Teach Me How To Love."

CCM: *It's certainly worth noting that your fan base played a huge part in this album through Kickstarter. Any words you'd like to say to them?*

S&S: Thank you to everyone that helped us reach our goal on Kickstarter. We have the best fans and family out there. We love keeping up with everyone on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram...so keep it up! Let us know what you're up to! CCM



**CHECK OUT MORE AT
SATELLITESANDSIRENS.COM**

A promotional photograph of three men. The man on the left has long dark curly hair and a mustache, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt and orange cargo pants. The man in the center is wearing a black leather vest over a black t-shirt, black tactical pants with a star-patterned belt, and red sneakers. He is wearing black sunglasses and has his mouth open in a shout, with both hands raised in a 'rock on' gesture. The man on the right is wearing a red and black plaid jacket over a black t-shirt, black pants, and black sneakers. He is wearing white-rimmed glasses and holding a pair of black headphones. The background is a vibrant pink with white, cloud-like or smoke-like patterns. The title 'RAPTURE RUCKUS' is overlaid in a stylized, blocky font with a blue and yellow gradient and a black outline.

RAPTURE RUCKUS

When heaven invades

BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS



ne of New Zealand's hottest rock/hip-hop amalgamations continues to pick up steam in America with the release of its first project in three years. On *Invader Volume I* (BEC Recordings), Rapture Ruckus more than makes up for lost time with an even more explosive outpouring of individual material, plus red-hot collaborations with Family Force 5's Soul Glow Activatur and buzz worthy pop-star Shuree. Front man Brad Dring not only updates *CCM* on the band's musical whereabouts, but also talks about the guys' upbringing overseas and how their lyrics evolved alongside a rapidly maturing faith.

CCM: *What was the Christian music scene, if any, like for you growing up in New Zealand?*

Brad Dring: The only Christian music I really heard growing up in New Zealand was worship music, [like when] my mum would sometimes play Hillsong albums. We mainly just listened to mainstream music, and when we started out, we weren't really aware of any Christian music scene. We were just really excited about our newly found faith in Jesus and wanted to share it with people through music. It's been great over the past ten years discovering so many amazing people making music and sharing their faith.

CCM: *How has your songwriting grown from when you started up to *Invader Volume 1*?*

Brad: When we first started Rapture Ruckus, we were very young in our faith and pretty much none of our friends we grew up with were Christians. So I think we really felt like we needed to be super bold, staunch and in your face about our faith all the time, as a way to defend our beliefs or something. I think God's really worked on our hearts and approach over the years, although we are still a very overtly bold Christian band. I like to think we come from much more of a place of compassion and love. We care a lot less about what people think about us and a lot more about encouraging people and pointing them to the Jesus we've come to know—the God of love, grace, compassion, creativity and joy.

CCM: *To what extent is the new material rock, rap and electro?*

Brad: Our sound is a bit of a mishmash of different genres. We don't really have any rules in Rapture Ruckus about what sounds or styles we can use, so it's kind of anything goes. We've got the big '80s Ruckus synths in there. We definitely draw a lot from electro and hip-hop. We gravitate towards making things simple and punchy, as that's what works best at live shows through big sound systems...I always imagine that person way in the back of the audience with their arms crossed standing dead still. How do we connect with that person? Get them smiling, maybe even dancing. *CCM*



THE PROJECT: MARTYRS PRAYERS

HONORING THE PAST, INFORMING THE FUTURE

BY MATT CONNER

Few creative projects are as theologically rich and meaningfully experienced as a new release that brings together important figures from Christian music history with author Duane W.H. Arnold and artist Michael Glen Bell. *The Project: Martyrs Prayers* is an album that brings historic prayers to life through the voices of legends such as Randy Stonehill, Margaret Becker, Phil Keaggy and Jennifer

Knapp. We recently caught up with Duane and Michael to find out more about the project's formation.

CCM: *I'm assuming the meaningful connection to Christianity's ancient roots has proved beneficial for you. Can you give an example of the beauty of that connection personally?*

DUANE: I'm a church historian by training, so there is an intellectual side to all of this. On a personal

level, however, it reinforces a sense of humility. We are not the first followers of Christ. Others have gone before us. C.S. Lewis considered a prejudice against the past to be the worst form of pride and snobbery!

CCM: *How did you select the artists that you did to work with?*

MICHAEL: Most of them were musicians we had worked with or become acquainted with somehow

Michael Glen Bell



MICHAEL: That the stories of not only the martyrs but of all the saints of the church would be rediscovered and kept alive. I also hope that earlier CCM artists would be rediscovered and honored. The forerunners in CCM, I think, have been shamefully treated by the industry. They deserve great honor. Presently, it seems to me, that they are not receiving it; and they should. We don't just need worship albums. We need great singer/songwriters, poets and musicians on the cutting edge.

Duane W.H. Arnold



DUANE: When I mentioned to Wayne Berry that we were dedicating the album to Larry Norman and Robert Webber, he said, "That makes perfect sense—Larry told you that you could rock 'n roll, and Bob told you to love the Church." This album, in the end, is really all about that—love for the music, love for the Church, love of friends—all of it being a reflection of our love of God and His love for us. **CCM**

years ago. We had lost touch and decided to reconnect through an invitation to be on the album. Others were people whose music we admire; we heard their voices or instrument on a specific song, and we specifically asked them to play that part.

short "study guide" on the martyr whose prayer we were recording and sent it off to all the musicians involved. When we hit the studio, we started with a discussion of the martyr in which everyone participated. We all felt the weight of responsibility to do something musically significant with the prayers.

CCM: *Did you feel the others involved really connected in the same way?*

DUANE: Before every session in the studio, I prepared a

CCM: *If you could encapsulate your hope for the project, what would that be?*



**LEARN MORE AT
THEMARTYRSPROJECT.COM**

JOSHUA ROGERS

THE YOUNG BUCK WITH BIG DREAMS

BY ANDREW GREER

Two years ago, Joshua Rogers was attending classes as a senior in high school. Today, he is touring the world as gospel music's favorite new sensation. Affectionately called "young buck" in season five of BET's wildly successful *Sunday Best* television talent competition, the nineteen-year-old vocal champ secured the series' crown as the youngest and first male winner before topping *Billboard's* gospel chart with his inaugural EP in 2012. His first full-length record, *Unconditional* (Music World Gospel), bowed at No. 2 last fall. Catching up with the seasoned youth, *CCM* asks Rogers about newfound fame and how to stay grounded.

CCM: As a new member of a genre full of celebrity veterans, do you feel pressure to prove and secure your place at the party?

JOSHUA: I don't feel pressure as much as I feel honored

to stand on the shoulders of artists I have grown up listening to and admiring. To stand next to them on a national platform is a dream come true for a young guy like me from a small town in South Carolina. My "dad in the gospel," Donnie McClurkin, my mentor on the show and "mother in ministry," Kim Burrell, along with the entire Clark Family, have especially opened up their hearts and homes to welcome me with such amazing love and guidance.

CCM: Jet magazine, BET specials and salutes, sharing stages with gospel music veterans—how have you kept the focus on the music and message in the middle of such broad-based attention?

JOSHUA: To maintain focus, I minister. I stay in the face of God. I focus on what He tells me to do. The Bible says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of these other things will be added unto you." So

I focus on loving God and serving Him, realizing that just as He has given me this amazing opportunity, He can take it away. My gift is to Him and Him alone.

CCM: Do you have other dreams and aspirations aside from your music career?

JOSHUA: Yes. I desire to act. I would really enjoy doing some plays and movies. I also want to start my own clothing and shoe line. I want to start a youth foundation for fatherless children, helping children who need positive role models to encourage them to go after their dreams. I want to be a well-rounded artist.

CCM: At the end of the day, why sing?

JOSHUA: I believe this is the ministry God has assigned to me. And I love singing more than anything. Singing is my expression in life. I'm not big on expressing how I feel a lot of the time, but when I sing I feel at peace and free. Music has been my best friend and hobby. It is one of God's greatest inventions. I just love music! *CCM*



FOLLOW JOSHUA ON TWITTER.



GETTING STARTED PART 1 OF 3

BY KEITH MOHR

I've worked with thousands of independent Christian artists over the years and frequently run into the same questions over and over again. Some artists are throwing darts at an unknown target in a dark room. Others think they have all the answers and end up making poor decisions based on incomplete information.

My philosophy is: the more you know, the more you'll grow. This is the first in a three-part series of responses to some of the most frequently asked questions I've received. Open your mind, pray over the advice you find here and be blessed on your journey.

QUESTION #1: HOW DO I GET STARTED IN MY MUSIC MISSION?

So many artists begin their musical odyssey truly believing that with a small amount of talent and a huge amount of encouragement (pastor, mom, friends), they can achieve an *American Idol*-esque fast track to stardom. While optimism is good, most of these artists have no real plan in place.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Before the music even comes into play, you must determine that this is, indeed, God's will for you. Sometimes we confuse talent with a calling. You must explore the mission you are called to separate from the music you create. Only when a calling is confirmed and your mission is defined should you begin applying your music.

Andy Stanley coined a brilliant phrase in regard to this topic—"the principle of the

path." You must know where you want to go with your music and ministry, otherwise you'll work yourself into the ground, deplete your creative reserves and, at the end of the day, have little to show for it.

Once you pinpoint your direction, commit the journey to prayer like you've never prayed before. The entertainment industry—Christian or secular—can be a brutal place for artists. Rejection is part of the whole package, as is the fact that no one else will likely take your mission as seriously as you do.

Given that most artists tend to be more sensitive, perhaps, than others, it is imperative that you know what you're supposed to be doing and have faith that God will bless your efforts. Pray and work on developing a thick skin. Not everyone will like or "get" what you do. So get over it, or it will get over you.

Trust that God will bring the right people your way when you are ready. Pay close attention to people He brings into your world. Pray for good people to come into your world. Do not pray for open doors; pray for doors to knock on.

Keith Mohr is founder/president of *Indieheaven.com*, an organization for independent Christian musicians, songwriters and artists.

Follow Keith on twitter.com/indieheaven, facebook.com/keithmohr, facebook.com/indieheaven.

 **FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [INDIEHEAVEN.COM](https://indieheaven.com).**

XOTIC EFFECTS BB PREAMP OVERDRIVE PEDAL

BY JASON AHLBRANDT

There are literally hundreds of overdrive pedals on the market. Many are great and have their own distinct qualities and strengths. Some claim to be truly transparent. That is, they overdrive the sound of the guitar without changing the characteristics of your guitar's tone. Whether they do or don't doesn't matter nearly as much as the sonic quality of the end result.

Xotic Effects BB Preamp is an overdrive pedal with a great sound and flexible options. It can be used as a clean boost with the gain all the way down. This effectively "preamps" your guitar, adds volume and sparkle. With the $\pm 15\text{dB}$ two-band active EQ, you can dial in just the right sound.

If the gain is pushed up a bit, the overdrive is clean and clear. At higher gain levels the overdrive is tight, compressed and has a Marshall overdrive-type quality. The compressed high gain levels are great for solo lead lines or crunchy chord tones.

I've had this pedal on my pedal board for a few years now, and it won't be leaving anytime soon. I go back to it again and again in the studio for guitar solo tracking. Pick one of these up. You won't be disappointed. **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 ($\pm 15\text{dB}$ two-band active EQ)
- Can act as a 30dB+ clean boost

CONS

- I can't think of any. This is a pretty simple, functional pedal with great options.

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$168.00

“HOPE FOR TOMORROW”

ARTIST: JEREMY ROSADO

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Be it Simon, Paula, JLo or Harry Connick Jr. in the judging seats, there's one thing that can be said for sure about *American Idol*—it finds the goods.

Jeremy Rosado is, most definitely, the goods. A top-12 finalist on Season 11, Jeremy describes his time on the show as life-changing.

“It literally transformed my life,” he says. “To get to live out my dream and my calling is a crazy experience.”

In the two years since his successful run on the show, he has kept the momentum alive, securing a record deal and working on his first full-length album, due out later this year.

But before the album even drops, Jeremy is already doing something meaningful and creating positive change in the world with his platform, starting with some fans near and dear to his heart.

“While on the show, we got thousands of letters from fans in the Philippines and have built some relationships there,” he says. “When the tragedy happened, I was shattered.”

The tragedy, of course, is the typhoon that devastated the area in November. When the opportunity to record “Hope for Tomorrow” arose, Jeremy's label president suggested they partner with an organization that was already on the ground providing relief in the Philippines.

“That same day, we rushed into the studio and recorded a quick pass of the song,” Jeremy shares. “Project Hope loved the song, and the partnership between us has been one of the most fulfilling opportunities I've ever had. They are an organization that is in the country.

They stay after the media is gone. They leave doctors behind and give their lives every day in places all around the world. It really is an amazing organization.”

Idol launched Jeremy doing what it does best—finding the talent.

Jeremy stays at the top of his game by doing what he does best—entrusting the journey to God with the faith that his gifts will lead to the fruit for which they were bestowed.



**FOR MORE ON PROJECT HOPE, VISIT
PROJECTHOPE.ORG**

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THE LOVE RAIN BAND - loverainband.com

The Love Rain Band, a collective of artists with a mission for global reach, presents 'lyric focused' songs centered on unconditional love. Their upbeat music has a modern, albeit mature sound. The sophomore release "Faithful to Love" communicates relatable life stories to their audience. Their goal; Love in every song.



TERRI SHAMAR - terrishamar.com

Terri Shamar, singer/songwriter/musician, with a powerful testimony, determines to go where angels dare to tread. Fueled by the band's melodious rock edge, her songs captivate hearts for worship. Her new EP "SANCTUARY" will be released April 2014. She leads worship for Calvary Chapel Grants Pass, Oregon, various places, and abroad.



JC MASON & DOUG FARRIS - dougfarrismusic.com

Jc and Doug are both singer/songwriters and worship leaders in Fredericksburg, Virginia. They both bring different elements to the table, while combining their love for Christ as well as musical gifts. As you can hear in their latest single "Even Now", the vocal blend and hard hitting lyrics are what makes this duo special.



MATT STRZOK - youtube.com/channel/UCDDanIsdG-0AC5Eyw/videos

Matt is a passionate Christ follower, who shares his passion via instrumental acoustic guitar music. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Matt seeks to bring people joy and to strengthen their faith in Jesus as they listen to his music. To learn more, visit Matt's website.



KATE HURLEY - itunes.apple.com/us/album/sing-over-me/id716051180?uo=4

Kate Hurley is a critically acclaimed artist who is featured on Enter the Worship Circle and Absolute Worship. Kate's album Sing Over Me contains songs written from God's perspective based on scriptures where He is speaking. This allows the listener to rest in God's love as He sings over them.



NORMAN LEE SCHAFER - normanleesprayer.com

Singer, songwriter, entertainer, and Pastor of The Garden Worship Center in Belleview, Florida. From preaching to praising, Pastor Norman Lee's heart and soul is fully engaged! He loves without reserve and calls others to do the same. Norman is a pastor who can say and sing without reservation Follow me as I follow Christ.

**MERCY ME****Welcome to the New***(Fairtrade Services)*

FOR FANS OF: Casting Crowns, Steven Curtis Chapman, Sanctus Real
★★★★☆

When you've achieved success like Mercy Me, there's not much left to prove. Instead, they decided to have some fun. Along the way, wouldn't you know that they'd get even better! The band plows through jazz-influenced songs such as the title track, and Millard's voice finds a new soulful depth on "Wishful Thinking." With a lightness that has been absent from some of their more recent work, "The New" reflects a healthier, happier state for the band and for the guys as husbands and fathers. Their finest work to date.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "Wishful Thinking"

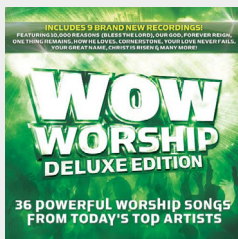
**DAVE BARNES****Golden Days***(50 Year Plan Records)*

FOR FANS OF: Josh Wilson, Matt Wertz, Jason Gray
★★★★☆

Thus far, Dave Barnes has yet to make a record that is not seamless, beautiful and perfectly crafted. *Golden Days* is no exception, showcasing even more range than he typically demonstrates. His voice is richer and more emotive. It delivers the lighthearted "Twenty Three" effortlessly, alongside his signature evocative ballads such as "All She Wants Is You." This is a treasure trove of songs and a memorable listen.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "Hotel Keys"

**VARIOUS ARTISTS****WOW Worship (Lime)**

(Capitol Christian Music Group/Provident Music Group/Word Entertainment)

FOR FANS OF: Casting Crowns, Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman
★★★★☆

Take thirty established worship tunes with a half-dozen new recordings, and this latest installment of the ongoing *WOW Worship* series paints a pretty comprehensive picture of the modern praise world. Practically no stone is left unturned as contributors include Matt Redman, Chris Tomlin, Casting Crowns, Francesca Battistelli, Tenth Avenue North, Building 429 and literally dozens more throughout this generous double-disc collection.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: Matt Redman's "10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)"

**REND COLLECTIVE****EXPERIMENT****The Art of Celebration***(Integrity)*

FOR FANS OF: Benjamin Dunn, Gungor
★★★★☆

After the stripped-down intimacy of *Campfire*, Rend Collective Experiment decided to throw a party on their latest, *The Art of Celebration*. The worship collective from Northern Ireland brings a vibrant energy with songs like such as "Joy" and "Burn Like A Star." Even slower songs such as "Immeasurably More" hold a spark of dynamism. Another passionate and powerful worship release from RCE.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Immeasurably More"

**RAPTURE RUCKUS**

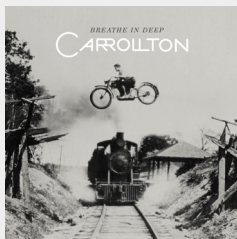
Invader Vol. 1 (BEC)
FOR FANS OF: Family Force 5

★★★★☆

Rapture Ruckus sits on the fence between a myriad of genres, providing a light amalgam of electro-pop, hip-hop and EDM for the last decade. The youthful appeal continues on *Invader Vol. 1*, a seven-track EP anchored by single "In Crowd," which features Family Force 5's Soul Glow Activatur. Nothing but high school anthems and youth group appeal here, but it's exactly where Brad Dring and company are aiming. To that end, they hit their exact target.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Invader (Part 1)"

**CARROLLTON**

Breathe In Deep

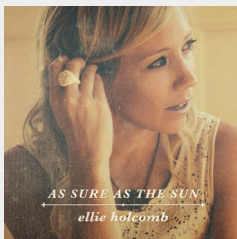
(Centricity Music)
FOR FANS OF: All Sons and Daughters, Josh Wilson

★★★★☆

Making their label debut, Carrollton stays safe on this one, though there are some notable moments. The pop/rock group hits the mark on "Death Has Lost Its Way," where the vocals and arrangement work beautifully. "You Are Faithful" falls a little flat with an odd mix of vocals on top of a lackluster arrangement. But, for a first effort, a promising start for the newcomers.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "Death Has Lost Its Way"

**ELLIE HOLCOMB**

As Sure As The Sun

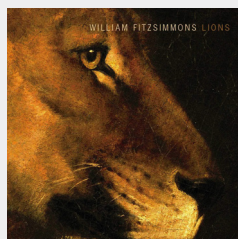
(Full Heart)
FOR FANS OF: Sara Groves, Madi Diaz

★★★★★

A bright hope streams in alongside the opening piano refrain of the title track on Ellie Holcomb's latest album, *As Sure As The Sun*. From there, it blooms joyfully into buoyant melodies of redemption ("Marvelous Light"), healing ("The Broken Beautiful) and love's power ("Love Broke Through"). *As Sure As The Sun* is a beautiful, triumphant album that will undoubtedly stand among this year's favorites.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "As Sure As The Sun"

**WILLIAM FITZSIMMONS**

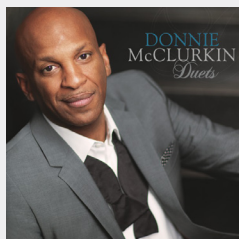
Lions (Nettwerk)
FOR FANS OF: Josh Radin, Peter Bradley Adams

★★★★☆

The tender, whispered vocal of William Fitzsimmons perfectly suits his vulnerable songs on sadly enchanting albums such as *Goodnight* and *Gold in the Shadow*. Fitzsimmons stays in his wheelhouse on *Lions*, an account of wrestling and reflection from the bearded songwriter. "Fortune" is more up-tempo than most and is the centerpiece of an album with a strong emotional resonance.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Fortune"



DONNIE MCCLURKIN
Duets (Arrow Records)

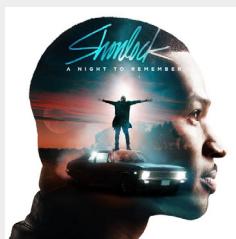
FOR FANS OF: William McDowell, Yolanda Adams, Marvin Sapp

★★★★☆

McClurkin's popular traditional-contemporary gospel mix has sold ten million records, earned three Grammys and satisfied a devoted fan base for decades. For *Duets*, the gospel singer shares the stage, conducting collaborations with musical giants such as Marvin Sapp and Tye Tribbet to span the gamut of gospel—R&B, urban, inspirational and choir-backed throwback—with a heralded guest list. And with Donnie at the helm, *Duets* is destined to become another modern gospel classic.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Let it Go"
(ft. Dorinda Clark Cole)



SHONLOCK
A Night to Remember (Arrow Records)

FOR FANS OF: Group 1 Crew, Akon, Lecrae

★★★★☆

Imbuing an expert hybrid of energetic dance, tight hip-hop and crystalline pop with deft vocal skills, Shonlock has transitioned from a TobyMac Diverse City road-show standout to a best-selling national act. And rightfully so. From edgy dance floor beats to radio-ready rock-pop to creative instrumentation (e.g., drumline break in "I Like to Win"), the artist sings his Christ-convicting testimony through a masterful mixtape. Shonlock is pure gold.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Kinfolk" (ft. Soul Glow Activator of Family Force 5)



JARS OF CLAY
Inlandia (Gray Matters)

FOR FANS OF: OneRepublic, Avicii, Ellie Goulding

★★★★☆

Last summer, Jars of Clay released its eleventh full-length album, *Inland*, to massive acclaim, picking up particular steam throughout the blogosphere. As a result, the group's keyboardist/multi-instrumentalist Charlie Lowell tracked down some mutual admirers from the burgeoning club community to rework seven tracks that more or less sound right in the center of today's EDM revival, even if it may take a while to grow on more acoustically-minded followers.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Age Of Immature Mistakes" (Kyle Rictor Remix)"



TRANSATLANTIC
Kaleidoscope (Inside Out Music)

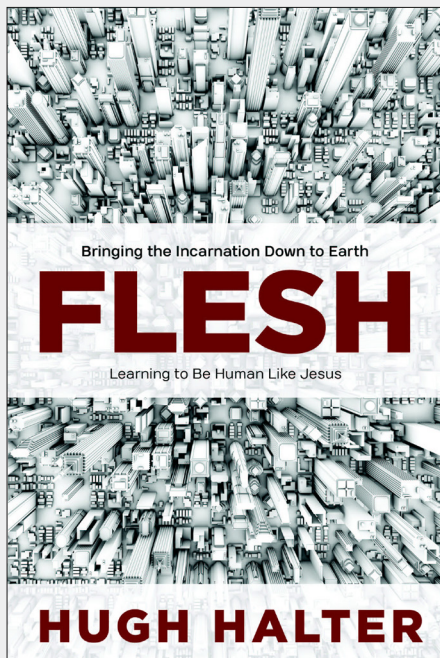
FOR FANS OF: Neal Morse, Dream Theater, Flower Kings

★★★★☆

An hour and 15 minutes of epic progressive rock by four masters of the genre: Neal Morse, Mike Portnoy, Roine Stolt and Pete Trewavas. The music is intricate and dazzlingly performed (the title track is almost 35 minutes long) with lyrics that artfully, if not always overtly, communicate a Christian worldview. *Kaleidoscope* might be their best work yet.

—Bert Saraco

WE LIKE: "Shine"

**FLESH**

Author: Hugh Halter

Hugh Halter is a church planter, pastor and author focused on helping the church become the incarnation of Jesus to the world. His latest book, *Flesh*, is a candid conversation on what the term *incarnation* really means and how that impacts the way we engage the world. As he explains, the need for the church to move beyond consumerism is the key. He talks a bit more about that process here.

CCM: *Flesh really starts with the doctrine of incarnation as a proper foundation. Do you believe the church has failed to put enough emphasis into understanding incarnation?*

Hugh Halter: I don't think the lack of emphasis is a lack of heart, but yes, we have missed the fullness of what this doctrine means. We have rel-

egated Christ's coming to earth as simply paying for the sins of humanity, while forgetting that He also came to teach us how to live. The atonement by itself is amazing, but the atonement was just the starting point for why Jesus came. His life was to be a model for our lives, and therein lies the beauty of the incarnation.

CCM: *Is this part of the reason why churches seem irrelevant to the unchurched?*

Hugh: Yes. The church has become irrelevant precisely because we do not live like Jesus. He was perfectly holy, without sin, but still did not come to condemn or judge people. But we who do sin seem to think it's our job to point out everyone else's sin. If Jesus was the least judgmental person that world had met, I wonder if the street cred of the Christian movement would go up a few notches if we simply followed His lead.

CCM: *Can you talk about how your own study and writing has impacted the way you approach organized church?*

Hugh: My writing actually comes out of planting two churches and pastoring for 25 years. This simple process is why two churches formed. But eventually as our churches grew, Christians from non-incarnational forms of church found us; and it is a real struggle to get them to live like Jesus, too. Again, they love to worship the God that came for them, but they seem unwilling or disoriented when we suggest they enter the lives of others in the way of Jesus. Consumer Christianity is simply a "non-incarnational" group of Christians, and that is killing the church. As a church planter I learned that living like Jesus is where Good News or the "Gospel" starts. We've never had a hard time getting people to want to be near us, in our home or around the table with a Bible. Because they respected us, they want to know what we think about their lives.

—Matt Conner




FOR MORE, VISIT HUGHHALTER.COM

WARR ACRES LIVE "HOPE WILL RISE"

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Before you go, check out this video from Warr Acres. Recorded at their home church, Victory Church in Oklahoma City, this live version of the title track, "Hope Will Rise," is powerful.



For more from Warr Records, along with Cindy Cruse Ratcliff, Darrell Evans and New Hope Oahu, **click here** to check out a worship sampler from DREAM Records, complete with 12 tracks you can try before you buy! 

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