

RADIO SCANS LIFEHOUSE

DECONSTRUCTING K MAX

**CCM**

MUSIC TO CHANGE your WORLD

The Education of  
**RELIANT K**

**BRICK**

**BY**

**MICHAEL W. SMITH**

**BRICK**

MIXES PAST AND PRESENT  
AS PRAISE & WORSHIP MUSIC  
TURNS ANOTHER CORNER

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The mission of CCM MAGAZINE is to rock your world with the transforming power of the gospel as seen through the lives and music of today's best Christian artists.

## What Language Shall We Borrow?

Since the last time we met, much has happened, including a July *Newsweek* cover story on Christian music. The genre in that bright spotlight always creates a buzz among fans and critics, including *Christianity Today's* Ted Olsen, who appropriately and pointedly wrote, "*Newsweek* Discovers Christian Music About Six Years Late." Our sage columnist John Fischer mines a more theological slant as he weighs in on the subject on page 94.

We're excited to reintroduce some old friends in this issue, like pop duo Out of the Grey, and new ones, like Gotee recording artist Relient K. And we've got news on two movies coming out this month you may want to catch (toss in some popcorn and M&Ms for good measure).

It's the modern praise & worship movement, perhaps the most impressive and unique trend going on in Christian music today, that returns to our cover. Explored mostly through the personal experiences of Michael W. Smith, Dallas-based writer Beau Black also invited insightful comments from notable folks like Louie Giglio, Don Moen, Lisa Kimmey and Shaun Groves.

With Smith's record *Worship*, the praise & worship movement rises to a new level of credibility. Not that it really needed the boost—plenty of pastors and musicians have trod the aisles of storefront churches, gymnasiums and sanctuaries before Smith. But Michael has created a package and named the bundle *Worship*, fostering in affect a chance to make worship more tangible. Through his

popularity, Smith advances the mainstreaming of contemporary worship and its musical element, modern praise & worship.

The story naturally raises some difficult-to-answer questions. Have we gone too far? Has culture infested finding God? Is commerce sitting in the pew next to us?

A *New Yorker* cartoon recently pictured a man and woman staring into a starry night's sky when one commented, "Look, a shooting star—let's critique it!" Our human impetus for evaluating everything, down to the natural beauty of even shooting stars, can be aggravating. Yet there is good reason to evaluate our worship, as much as it may be the shooting star of our lives. On the Record

guest columnist Dave Perkins, a music industry veteran and graduate student at Vanderbilt Divinity School, reminds us our worship must make us do more than raise our hands in song.

It has been said a definition of worship can be summed in the words of the great 12<sup>th</sup> century hymn "O Sacred Head." The words attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, a monk and theologian, present a striking image of Christ on the cross, the sentence for humanity's wandering from God: "*What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest Friend, for this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end? O make me Thine forever; and should I fainting be, O let me never, never out live my love to Thee.*"

Whatever worship is, it's exciting that so many people are discovering—or re-discovering—this holy act.

Finally, we bid good wishes to Design Director Denise Rosser as she begins a new adventure. Her stay with us was not nearly long enough. Nevertheless, Denise impacted these pages in significant ways, not the least of which included her impressive redesign you've been enjoying since the May issue. Denise, clearly, you rock. Thank you.

It's another September, and I fear no amount of worship songs will lift my Cleveland Indians over Seattle's Mariners. With ESPN flickering in the background, I'll throw on a CD, crank the stereo to 11 and read again what I hope you will find to be another enjoyable issue of CCM MAGAZINE.




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## THE TRUTH ABOUT CECE

I really, really wanted to thank you for having CeCe Winans on the cover of the July issue. I am a huge fan of CCM and consider CeCe to be my favorite artist of all time. I have found myself in the past trying to explain to people that although CeCe had songs go mainstream, she never lost her faith or intended to be a crossover artist. Her heart is for people coming to Christ. Just as CCM MAGAZINE so eloquently pointed out, her mission is to “reach people she hasn’t reached before.” Thanks so much for spotlighting this humble and awesome Christian artist and letting the truth be told about what CeCe Winans wants.

Christian Rich  
Clinton, MD

## REVIEWER HITS SOUR NOTE

Just wanted to comment on the review of the Plus One/Stacie Orrico/Rachael Lampa concert. First of all, I agree with one thing: It rocked! I didn’t appreciate how you called Plus One a “boy band on a budget.” That thought never occurred to me as I watched the show. Also, I don’t agree with the fact that you said Rachael Lampa had more vocal maturity than Stacie Orrico. Rachael has a more powerful voice, but both Stacie and Rachael have incredible vocal maturity. And Jason’s message was not charismatic or whatever. It really touched my life and the lives of many others. And the way you depicted the Plus One guys kneeling in front of plastic chairs made it sound as if you thought it was cheesy. I thought it was beautiful. But I do agree that the concert was well worth the money.

Mabel T. Macaden  
Stafford, TX

## REVIEWER HITS RIGHT NOTE

I would like to thank Beau Black for his review of CeCe Winans’ new album [July 2001]. I sort of thought “Say a Prayer” sounded like a song I had heard



at an Avalon concert. He reaffirmed this by the remark he made in his review.

Susan D. Swaney  
Dyess AFB, TX

## JOBS WELL DONE

I recently subscribed to your magazine because my friend

showed me hers and I fell in love with it. Please put more Jaci Velasquez, Plus One, Rachael Lampa and Stacie Orrico in your magazine. They are my favorites. And I would just like to see more of them in your magazine. Keep up the good work!

Leann Stankiewicz  
Montrose, MI

I have been reading CCM MAGAZINE for years, but only recently opted to buy my own subscription. Unfortunately, there was some sort of mix-up in the billing process, but within a week of my finding that there was a problem, I already had a letter in the mail informing me that the situation had been rectified. I just wanted to comment to everyone on the staff there that you are all doing a great job. I thoroughly enjoy the interviews and really try to keep up with those on tour. Thanks again!

Erin McCawley  
Porum, OK

## MISSING MESSAGE BOARDS

I wanted to write a short note to tell you that I love your magazine as well as your Web site. I especially enjoy reading the reviews and I love the new ratings system. I do have one minor complaint about your Web site though. I really, really miss the message boards! I’m sure

other people do too. And I was wondering if there was any way you could put them back on your Web site.

Jessica Gates  
via e-mail

*With our friends at OnePlace.com, we’re always working to enhance your online experience of CCM MAGAZINE. We are pleased to let you know messages boards should be returning when we redesign our site this fall. Until then, we hope you’ll continue to enjoy the many other unique features provided at CCMmagazine.com.*

## TOBY—STILL GOING...

I just got done reading your article on Toby McKeehan and am waiting with joy to see what he will produce for his solo project. I think he has gotten the least amount of recent exposure due to the eccentric personality of Kevin and the vocal range of Michael. But to be quite honest, I enjoyed Toby’s *Solo* tunes just as much or more than those from K Max and Tait.

Aaron Baffuto  
Bozeman, MT



We welcome your comments. Address letters to Feedback, CCM MAGAZINE, 104 Woodmont Blvd., Third Floor, Nashville, TN 37205; fax 615/385-4112, attn: Feedback. Or e-mail [feedback@ccmmagazine.com](mailto:feedback@ccmmagazine.com). Always include your full name, address and phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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# all access

CHRISTIAN MUSIC NEWS & HAPPENINGS

## TOTALLY RADICAL!

EXPERIENCING GOD GOES  
'EXTREME' IN NEW INDIE FILM

Cassidy Rae, a 25-year-old Hollywood actress with titles such as “Hyperion Bay” and “Models, Inc.” on her résumé, was at the end of her professional rope.

“I’d been kind of discouraged with the parts coming my way. Everything was so anti-family, anti-values. There was nothing I wanted to do,” explained Rae, a Christian, on the phone from her Los Angeles home. “I was in a quandary. So I spent a week praying and fasting, wondering if acting was something to be in anymore. I thought, ‘Maybe this isn’t for me. Maybe I should move on to something else.’”

Then *Extreme Days* came along, a less than \$2 million, bare-bones flick about four young 20-something buddies who take a West Coast road trip in a makeshift jalopy in search of extreme sports adventures—and who get “nudged” by God along the way.

The script reflects a slightly different “Christian movie” tack, according to the film’s director, Eric Hannah. Debuting in theaters nationwide Sept. 28, there aren’t four spiritual laws spliced into the dialogue, and there’s

no sermon during the closing credits in *Extreme Days*. And that’s exactly how Hannah and his crew wanted it.

“Whatever came back, we didn’t want to call it a ‘Christian film,’” Hannah said. “Instead we wanted to talk about things on God’s heart and hopefully stir up conversations.”

In making the buzz-worthy indie flick, the 33-year-old director had a different professional dilemma from that of Cassidy Rae’s. “We were worried no actors would take the script. And then, before we knew it, every agency is sending actors.” Hannah found the actors to play the four male friends in the movie, but he was to commence shooting in a matter of days and, after auditioning more than 600 actresses for a key, leading role, no one sparked his interest.

“I wanted the person playing Jessie to be a believer, since she speaks about God the most, but a believer in an authentic way. A woman that girls could look up to,” Hannah told CCM MAGAZINE. “Then Cassidy walked in. I said, ‘That’s her!’ I had her read a little bit, and we took a walk. I said, ‘You’re the one. But there’s one condition: You need to pray every single day during production.’”



Prayer, according to those involved, became a big part of making this movie run as smoothly as possible. “We were on the editing room floor for two to three hours a day praying. We were against seemingly insurmountable odds,” Hannah said of challenges like a small budget and tight production schedule and the aforementioned alternative approach to marrying

faith and film.

“A lot of movies have agendas we don’t believe in,” Hannah continued, “but we walk away absorbed in that agenda whether we want to or not. With *Extreme Days*, I wanted to remind people about who God is, about His character, about forgiveness and grace—things the world so desperately searches for.”

Scenes from *Extreme Days*



Richard Schirmer, a former Disney exec

and the new vice president of marketing for Providence Entertainment (the distributor of *Extreme Days*), had a similar vision. "We wanted to make a movie that kids can be excited about, that they can bring their friends to," Schirmer said. "I've been involved with Young Life for 12 years, and we're constantly searching for ways to reach out. And when a lot of folks go to the movies, they walk away and talk about it. We think there's a real opportunity to impact culture for Christ."

thought it was funny and edgy, and the extreme sports scenes kept kids' attention," said Debbie Bresina, vice president for Dare 2 Share Ministries, which puts on evangelism training conferences for students across the country. "It's definitely a teenage movie—and something Christian kids can take non-believing kids to, then follow up."

With the movie's subtle approach and its hip soundtrack, released by ForeFront back in February, and featuring Christian artists like Toby Mac and PAX217 (who even makes a cameo appearance in the movie), it would seem that *Extreme Days* has a shot at reaching the teen population with its message. But whatever transpires with

## Follow-up to *The Omega Code* Hits Theaters

Also coming to theaters this month is Gener8xion Entertainment's follow-up to 1999's indie film *The Omega Code*. In *Megiddo* (Hebrew for "the place called Armageddon"), Michael York reprises his role as Stone Alexander (a.k.a. the Antichrist) with this film tracing his life before and after the events in *The Omega Code*, beginning with his childhood and ending at Armageddon.



Those who missed *Omega Code* don't necessarily need to get caught up before seeing this end-times interpretation. "*Megiddo* was written as a story independent of *The Omega Code*. With the exception of Michael York, it's an all new cast, and a brand new story," said Gener8xion Entertainment's Marketing Coordinator, Roosevelt B. Joshua. Boasting a \$20 million budget and 300 special effects, the movie is scheduled to open Sept. 21 in more than 300 theaters nationwide.

—Sarah Aldridge McNiece

"I saw an early version of *Extreme Days*, and I

audiences after the turnstiles begin revolving later this month, Hannah says he's seen plenty of miracles already. "The idea was to do everything within a year," he explained. "Writing, pre-production, shooting, editing and getting it ready for theaters. Everything! I mean, my co-writer, Craig Detweiler, and I wrote 114 pages in three weeks! Even the film's Hollywood crew dubbed *Extreme Days* a 'miracle' because it only took us 14 days to shoot, which is half the time a film like this usually takes."

For Rae, her *Extreme Days* miracle is that it showed her that acting is indeed what she's meant to be doing right now. "I'm not saying I won't doubt again," she noted. "Life can always take a turn. I am in the right place, and I feel God has been directing me day by day."

—Dave Urbanski

## SURFTHIS WEB SITES TO EXPLORE

### [www.toothandnail.com](http://www.toothandnail.com)

Simple navigation makes this official site fun. Read about the people behind the scenes, link to individual band sites, download MP3s of favorite artists, order Tooth & Nail products, check out tour dates and listen to streaming radio. And if that's not enough to make your mouse click, the animation of the tooth with a nail through its head is really cool, too.



### [www.trivia.crossdaily.com/millionquestion.php3](http://www.trivia.crossdaily.com/millionquestion.php3)

Who wants to be a saintly millionaire? Play Crossdaily.com's Bible trivia version of the popular TV game show, complete with lifelines and a "final answer" button. The only things missing are Regis and, of course, the big cash payoff. No matter: Bible scholars who can answer the million-dollar question would store up treasure in heaven anyway.



### [www.christianecards.com](http://www.christianecards.com)

In today's hi-tech world, encouragement can come from many sources, including e-mail. That's where Christianecards.com steps in, delivering online greeting cards to friends, family and co-workers, all at the click of a button. The site offers a variety of choices, including birthday, get well, thinking of you and more. Best of all, it's free.

—Adam Woodroof



# TEN QUESTIONS

WITH KIRK FRANKLIN

**1. If you could have any other profession, what would it be?** Being Billy Graham. I think it'd be cool to be Billy Graham.

**2. What's currently in your CD player?** A young lady by the name of India Arie. She's good. Jill Scott, Rebecca St. James, the *WoW Worship* album, the Donnie McClurkin album.

**3. When you get to heaven, what's the first thing you want God to say to you?** "Told ya you was gonna make it!"

**4. What was your first job, and what did you learn from it?** My first job was a minister of music at a church when I was 11. And what I learned from it is they had no business putting an 11-year-old in the position of minister of music. I was teaching senior choirs and youth choirs.... Can you imagine at 11 years old telling a 65-year-old woman she's singing wrong?

**5. If you're ever a grandparent, what do you want your grandchildren to call you?** Sweetdaddy.

**6. What's your favorite Bible story and why?**

I like Job's story because of how God broke him down, and there were times that he probably didn't even know if he was gonna get out of that struggle. It was crazy, what he had to go through, but to still be able to bless God and to be able to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." To have that kind of mentality, I think that's awesome.

**7. If you were president for a day, what would you do first?** I'd tell the truth. I

would tell what's really going on behind closed doors. Let's get it out. I think people get the smoke blown so much that it's kind of hard in our society to tell what's real and what's false.

**8. If you could have dinner with any three people in all of history, living or dead, who would they be and why?** Martin Luther King, because of what he stood for, probably David in the Bible and Denzel Washington just because of this inner strength that you see on screen.

**9. What's the most meaningful present you've ever received?** My oldest daughter, she's not biologically mine, I adopted her, and one day for Father's Day she gave me, in a frame, her adoption papers. Stuff like that, you know, kind of deep stuff....

**10. What's the most relied-upon spiritual truth in your life?** That Christ is my life. Not music, not people's opinions, not record sales, not imaging, but my life is in God's hands. That I am because of Christ, and it is no longer me anymore but it's Him doing it all in me.

—Brad England and Adam Woodroof

# Squint Entertainment Faces Change

## Fate of new Sixpence and L.A. Symphony albums uncertain

Word Entertainment announced July 18 the restructuring of its label, Squint Entertainment. Word Records' marketing arm will assume the day-to-day marketing of Squint's artists and projects, including Sixpence None the Richer, L.A. Symphony, PFR, Waterdeep and an upcoming Squint Christmas album.

The announcement came nearly a week after Word reportedly laid off Squint's staff, excluding Squint President Steve Taylor. Taylor will continue to oversee all A&R efforts for the Squint roster, according to a press statement.

The move is an effort to "further refine and concentrate marketing focus," Loren Balman, president of the Word Entertainment label group, told THE CCM UPDATE, sister publication to CCM MAGAZINE. "The plan is for Squint to continue and for that artist roster to be supported by Word. What I know right now is that for the most part we will stay on track with virtually every release...."

However, at press time, release dates were not available for anticipated albums from Sixpence and L.A. Symphony, both of which had been previously scheduled, then rescheduled to release this fall.

Talk of ownership change—and hence the decision-making authority needed to release a record to consumers—has surrounded the Squint label for months, with industry insiders suggesting that VeggieTales creators Big Idea Entertainment was negotiating to buy Squint and partner with Taylor. Taylor even hinted at that possibility when he addressed Christian music retailers at an annual meeting in April. Negotiations ended without a deal.

The Squint team released its debut album, Sixpence's self-titled disc, in November 1997. "I want our music division to be a home for artists who live what they believe, who make great music and whose lyrics transcend the superficial with depth, insight and integrity," Taylor told CCM MAGAZINE in a December 1997 cover story.

—Debra Akins with additional reporting by Sarah Aldridge McNeece



Matt Slocum, Leigh Nash (Sixpence) and Taylor

# ON THE RECORD

OPINIONS FROM EDITORS, INSIDERS & FANS

What is worship? No textbook definition or sentimental experience can say for sure. What is certain is that any act confined to the four walls of our churches or our praise & worship songs are not the sum total of our worship to God. For Christians, worship is, ultimately, a lifestyle. It is the beginning and the end of Christian practice. It is the foundation for theology and the church. It endures beyond the expected shortcomings of intellect and institutions as our deepest expression of the relationship between God, human beings and the world God created and called good. Worship declares our radical

**“More than singing praises, worship is a way of being in the world.”**

dependence on God whom precedes us, envelops us, and supports us.

In worship, we offer praise, adoration and thanksgiving to God for His grace, glory, healing and redemption in the world. While private,

personal devotion is true worship, it is corporate worship (believers worshipping together) that most clearly shapes our understanding of what worship is. Christian worship, from the beginning, has been a community affair, reflected most clearly in traditions like the Lord's Supper within the life of faith. Further, one of the oldest practices of Christian devotion, that of giving to the poor and needy, invokes the vision of a greater community—the one of humankind. Good worship empowers a Christian community to join in the God-business of seeing where evil is at work, and meeting brokenness and despair with acts of redemption.

There is a traditional understanding of worship that is somewhat impoverished. Good worship honors God—not only behind closed doors, but also with acts of creativity and redemption in the world. Worship promotes a grand vision of how we, as God's people, should live. It embraces God's aim of well-being for all of creation. Good worship uplifts us to taste and see that God's perfect will of love is to redeem, not condemn. Hence, worship inspires us to believe that the world can be changed or, perhaps, that we can change it for one person. More than singing praises, worship is a way of being in the world. It is a lifestyle of the highest kind. For Christians it all comes together in worship—time and eternity, spirit and flesh—because it all comes together in the God in whom we “live, breathe and have our being.”

—Dave Perkins



Perkins is a Nashville-based writer, producer and musician. Share your opinion online at [CCMmagazine.com](http://CCMmagazine.com) or write us at Feedback, CCM MAGAZINE, 104 Woodmont Blvd., Third Floor, Nashville, TN 37205.

## Lifehouse Cracks Christian Radio

After more than six months on *Billboard's* Hot 100 Airplay chart, “Hanging by a Moment,” from general market band Lifehouse [CCM, February 2001], began making its way onto some Christian radio stations starting in May.

*“Desperate for changing, starving for truth/Closer to where I started chasing after you/I'm falling even more in love with you/Letting go of all I've held onto/I'm standing here until you make me move/I'm hanging by a moment here with you.”*



It's unusual for general market artists like Lifehouse to be heard on Christian radio. However, a handful of programmers felt the song's spiritual lyrics, penned by frontman Jason Wade, worked. But “none of us got serviced on the CD or single,” said Dave Masters, a programmer at KTSI-FM/Spokane, Wash., of Christian radio. “Any [Christian] station thinking about playing Lifehouse has to pursue it on their own.” Unlike a Christian label single where radio stations would be provided with music and information about the new artist's life from the outset, the Lifehouse single required more legwork. “We broke down the lyrics, took a look at lifestyle, and looked at the ‘Hanging by a Moment’ video, making sure there were no sexual overtones,” said Steve Strout, program director for WHMX-FM/Bangor, Maine. “After spending a lot of time with the complete CD we were pretty convinced.”



Wade

“We researched the band and read several interviews they'd done and talked to certain people and found out they went to church,” WCFL-FM/Chicago's Brian McIntyre commented. “I think Bob Briner's book *Roaring Lambs* probably inspired a lot of people to not go down the Christian artist route. Once we do the research and figure out where the artist stands, we want to highlight their music, especially with a song that's definitely Christian lyrics.”

—Sarah Aldridge McNeece

## Truth Begins Final Chapter

Roger Breland, founder and director of Christian vocal group Truth, recently announced a decision to make this the group's final year, closing the book on a history that began in 1971.

“For the past year my family and I have been praying about our future,” Breland said. “We believe this final chapter will complete the vision that God launched 30 years ago.”

More than 400 participants have passed through Truth's ranks over the years, with over 100 now serving as pastors, youth ministers, music directors or recording artists, including the members of 4HIM, Steve Green, Russ Lee, Natalie Grant, and Avalon's Jody McBrayer and Jana Long.

In the past 30 years, Truth has recorded 60 albums and performed more than 9,000 concerts, averaging more than 300 shows a year. “When I first started, there was not really anything to compare us to,” Breland said. “In the early 1970s, to take a group with drums and a guitar into the church was unheard of. The response from young people was great.”

The last few years have been difficult for artists who travel within the church circuit, Breland noted. “The whole music scene has moved to arenas, so we see the trends turning, and it's a new generation. It's tough to find people these days who have a missionary spirit and who are willing to make as little money as we do.”

Truth is currently in the studio recording its latest album. The group will embark on its “Farewell Tour” this month, with the group's final performance in Franklin, Tenn., on June 16, 2002.

Breland and Truth were inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame last year.



Breland



—Debra Akins



# Spin control

**CAUTION: MAN AT WORK** He's nothing if not enigmatic, at least in person. In print—as displayed in his upcoming book *Unfinished Work* (Thomas Nelson)—**Kevin Max** is amazingly clear. In what he calls “not your average rock autobiography,” K Max goes to great lengths to explain himself, his personality, his past, his philosophy of life and his “rock star” image. We skimmed through an advance version, and our collective eyebrow was considerably raised. Then again, what's new, especially from a guy whose rhinestone bejeweled cell phone screen reads, “I am K Max.” “I'm a bit more haunted than most, a restless spirit in many ways,” Max told CCM MAGAZINE, “...but I took this opportunity to take a stand, to explain where I'm coming from.” K Max's first solo album, *Stereotype Be* (ForeFront), landed in bookstores in late August.

## UPDATE DAVIS WAIVES RIGHT TO PRELIMINARY HEARING

Ja'Marc Davis, founder of hip-hop group Raze, waived his right to a preliminary hearing on July 2, and at press time was scheduled for a district court arraignment on Aug. 27.

Davis, 26, faces molestation charges that stem from an alleged sexual relationship with a former backup



Davis

dancer for the group starting in 1998 when she was 13 and he was 22 [CCM MAGAZINE, April 2001].

According to the Associated Press, defense attorney Robert Nigh said Davis decided against a preliminary hearing because he did not want the alleged victim to have to testify. Davis was arrested March 1 in Tulsa, Okla., his hometown, immediately following the first concert of Raze's “Amazing Pop Invasion” tour. He pleaded not guilty to all charges on March 7.

—Adam Woodroof

## WHALUM'S INDIE RECORD NOW AVAILABLE

Can't find the Grammy-nominated project *In the Garden* from noted jazz saxophonist **Kirk Whalum**? Here is some good news. The project, which was originally released on Kirk's own Top Drawer Records, has been picked up for distribution by Warner Jazz. Also on the horizon this fall is a Christmas CD from Whalum, which will feature a special guest appearance by **Natalie Cole**.

**WHERE'S HADDEN?** Many gospel fans have asked and asked and asked, “What's up with **Deitrick Hadden**?” Well, here's the 411: Deitrick has just released a new album on the Tyscot label called *Supernatural*. The urban jam features Deitrick, along with the **V.O.U. All-Stars**, including **Clarita Haddon, Sean Hardin, Tammi Haddon, Tony Jackson** and **Melody Armstrong**, the latter being the daughter of gospel diva **Vanessa Bell Armstrong**.

**SOUTHERN BRITTANY** Georgia's **Vigilantes of Love** has finally released its newest, titled *Summershine* (Compass), the band's 13<sup>th</sup> album. It marks a bit of a departure from form for this doggedly determined band. “We've strayed from the whole Americana/alt-country realm and are exploring our British pop influences,” founder and core member **Bill Mallonee** explained at this summer's Cornerstone Festival. Elements of *Pet Sounds*-era Beach Boys, early Beatles, The Who and other '60s pop sounds blend with Vol's trademark twang to make *Summershine* the band's most accessible project to date. Tours of the United States and Europe are scheduled to keep Mallonee, bass player **Jake Bradley** and drummer **Kevin Heuer** busy well into 2002.



Mallonee

**CREED FRONTMAN WANTS 'POSITIVE' AFFECT** The groundbreaking *Human Clay* record from **Creed** was recently certified diamond-status by the Recording Industry Association of America (signifying sales of more than 10 million copies). With that rare honor looming, expectations are high for the band's upcoming record due Nov. 20 on Wind Up Records. On the band's Web site, lead vocalist **Scott Stapp** promised the new record will have everything the band is known for, but will be a bit darker, along the lines of its debut, *My Own Prison*. In a recent online chat, Stapp expressed a commitment to using the platform the group has earned to be a positive voice: “If you care about more than just yourself in this world, then you will feel the responsibility,” Stapp said. “Be responsible, realize the impact that your words and music will have on people's lives. If you're going to do anything in this world then it might as well be positive.”

**IN PERFECT HARMONY** The popular harmonic blend of sextet **Take 6** will soon be heard on a new project. The group's much-anticipated release, *Beautiful World*, will be hitting the streets sometime this month. If early reports are correct, you can expect a more mainstream jazz sound this time around.

BY MELISSA RIDDLE (POP), TIM A. SMITH (URBAN) AND JOHN J. THOMPSON (ROCK)



**HITTING THE ROAD** One concert tour you should definitely purchase front-row seats for is the upcoming musical union of **CeCe Winans** and **Donnie McClurkin**. The duo will be hitting the road this fall, beginning in October and running through December. You don't want to miss this one! Speaking of CeCe, she has shot a video for her current radio hit, "More Than What I Wanted," from her self-titled project. **Fatima Robinson**, who was the choreographer for the movie *Save the Last Dance*, as well as having worked with award-winning R&B vocalist Jill Scott, directed the video.



Winans

**77s ARE BACK!** The **77s** launches its "Genuine" tour this month in support of its release, *A Golden Field of Radioactive Crows* (Galaxy 21). **Jacobstone** will be the opening act for the entire tour, which is being sponsored by World Vision. For specific dates visit [www.77s.com](http://www.77s.com). Hard music fans will no doubt dig the "Third Degree" tour featuring **Beanbag**, **Thousand Foot Krutch** and **Hangnail**, which will be running rampant all across the States from Oct. 1 through Nov. 18. The tour will hit a variety of venues from churches to coffeehouses. For more information visit [www.thirddegremusic.com](http://www.thirddegremusic.com).

**REMEMBERING GENE** Marathon Records has released a two-disc live recording of last year's celebrated **Gene Eugene** tribute concert in Ontario, California. The release features **The Prayer Chain**, **Violet Burning**, **Michael Knott**, **Dead Artist Syndrome**, **Riki Michele**, **Altar Boys**, **Starflyer 59** and **Steve Hindalong** performing originals and Eugene's compositions. All proceeds from the sale of the project will benefit the Gene Eugene Memorial Fund and will help his studio, The Green Room, which continues to serve the Southern California music scene. For more information or to order discs visit [www.marathonrecords.com](http://www.marathonrecords.com). Eugene, founder of the groundbreaking alternative band **Adam Again** and member of **Lost Dogs**, was one of the most active producers and engineers in the Christian rock scene. He died of a brain aneurysm in March 2000, at the age of 39.

**THE MISCHIEF OF MARK SCHULTZ** We recently sat down for a little lunch with piano man **Mark Schultz** to get the latest on his upcoming album, *Song Cinema*, and got more than we bargained for. It seems Mark's innocent, good guy face is a bit deceiving. He enjoys a little living on the edge. The album cover image is a good example. He's seen standing on top of an old upright piano on a busy sidewalk in Los Angeles, looking just a little too satisfied. What you don't see—and you heard it here first—is the police car nearby and the non-existent permit in nobody's pocket. That's right: photography on the lamb. It seems Mark has a tendency to be places he doesn't necessarily have permission to be. He finished one of the songs on the album ("Time of My Life") in the middle of the night on a grand piano at Vanderbilt University's music school, crawling in through a window he'd left open for himself earlier in the day. He was caught at dawn, not by campus security, but by a music professor who assumed Mark was a student preparing for an exam. As for what to expect on *Song Cinema*, Mark says, "It's a lot like the last album, with more strings... but there's no death."

**COUNTRY/GOSPEL ARTIST PLAYS THE HITS** *Launch* reports **Randy Travis** will release *Randy Travis Live: It Was Just a Matter of Time* not only on disc but also on DVD and VHS. The project will feature 25 songs, including hits like "Forever and Ever Amen," "On the Other Hand" and "Matter of Time." The event was filmed on Dec. 14, 2000 at the Sun Theater in Anaheim, California. This is Travis' first live record. He is currently touring throughout the U.S. through November.

## MUSIC THAT MATTERS

Ten years ago, our family was able to go to a Twila Paris concert. One of the songs included that evening was "Do I Trust You?" which is a favorite of mine.

A few weeks later, I ended up in an operating room with a life-threatening condition. In fact, my physician told my husband he didn't think I would survive. Lying on the

operating room table, receiving a blood transfusion in preparation for surgery, Twila's song played over and over in my mind. As the words "Do I trust You Lord?" questioned my own faith, I realized now was the time to answer the question. During those minutes, the final chorus "I will trust You

**"Twila's song played over and over in my mind. As the words 'Do I trust You Lord?' questioned my own faith, I realized now was the time to answer this question."**

*Lord 'til the day I die/I will trust You Lord when I'm blind with pain/You were God before and You'll never change/I will trust You"* became real in my life.

Believing I could trust God whether I lived or died, I came out of surgery renewed and strengthened. God tested and proved the powerful words in Christian music to be true in my life, changing my world.

Lynette Kittle  
Jupiter, FL



What's your story? How has Christian music changed your world? E-mail us at [tellccm@ccmmagazine.com](mailto:tellccm@ccmmagazine.com) with a letter (300 words or less) that tells how a song, an album or an artist has impacted your life. Submissions must include your full name, address and phone number to be considered for publication.

## THE PIG OF THE DESERT RETURNS

The experimental and eclectic folk/jazz/country/swing band **Havalina Rail Company** has re-signed with its original label Tooth & Nail after several projects on band leader **Matt Wignall's** own Jackson Rubio imprint. The band is scheduled to release *The Bullfighter's Guide to Space and Love* in 2002. Four Door Entertainment released a limited-edition sneak peek EP at festivals this summer. The band is also currently creating a "mock-umentary" about its storied career called *Havalina and the Creaky Old Bridge*. For more information visit [www.havalinaland.com](http://www.havalinaland.com).

## ROAD RULES: PETERSON STYLE

At the Christian booksellers convention in Atlanta, **Andrew Peterson's** quirky-yet-valuable "Loose Change" (a.k.a. "The Penny Song") brought the crowd to its feet. Unlike most songs about coins, this one is a keeper. We ran into Andrew signing autographs, and he shared with us a tale about his summer adventure living in an RV. It seems the Peterson family has been living where the rubber meets the road this summer, awaiting the completion of a new house. And with the exception of emptying the septic tank (which he described to us in detail and commented, "It's the grossest thing in the world"), life is good, Peterson says. Of course, while he was talking, he managed to sign an autograph for Greg, a bookstore staffer from Indiana, that read "To Andy, From Andy" and didn't have a clue until it was pointed out to him. Peterson's new album, *Clear to Venus* (Essential), hits shelves Sept. 11.



By the Tree

**MOVE OVER DOROTHY** Have you seen or heard the new band **By the Tree**? If so, you'll know what I mean when I say the bald guy has killer red shoes. We've been trying to catch up with rap-meister **Kevin Rhoads** (above, right) for a month or two now to discuss his personal fashion sense (think Goodwill with a twist), and we're getting close. So tune in next issue, and we'll give you the details... ooh, and maybe even a photo of those Technicolor shoes.

**N•SOUL 'N ACTION!** This just in from the N•Soul Records dance floor. **Dance in Motion** is in the studio mastering its upcoming N•Soul release. And **Prophetica** has signed a long-term deal with N•Soul. His first project, *Icons* will be dropping in September.

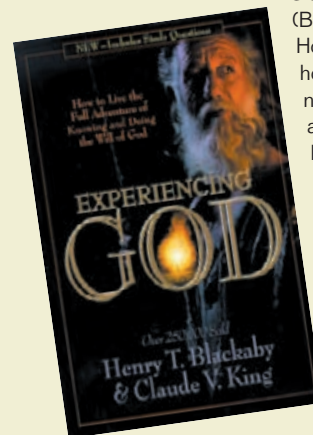
**A LEGEND RETURNS** Those from the contemporary gospel old skool will no doubt remember the name **Tramaine Hawkins**. A noted member of the famed Hawkins family during the '70s and early '80s, as well as singing with **Andraé Crouch & the Disciples** during her teenage years, Hawkins is making her way back to the musical forefront. She recently performed before a packed house with such names as **CeCe Winans, Beverly Crawford, Darwin Hobbs** and **LeJuene Thompson** during an urban gospel showcase at Atlanta's New Birth Cathedral. She has also released her debut Gospo Centric project, fittingly titled *Still Tramaine*. And on Sept. 23 she'll be in Washington D.C. for the Symphony With the Divas, a Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts production.

**NEVER SAY DIE** Grammy Award-winning veteran rock act **Petra** will release a new praise & worship album this fall. *Revival*, to be released on Inpop, will carry on Petra's decade-long interest in praise & worship music and will feature longtime members **Bob Hartman, John Schlitt** and **Louie Weaver** exclusively. Look for a tour later this year.

# PAGETURNERS

## WHAT YOUR FAVORITE ARTISTS ARE READING

I like reading fiction or fantasy, but right now I am getting into some books that will enlighten my brain a little, such as *Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God* by Henry T. Blackaby and

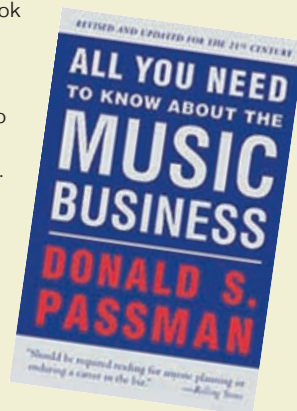


Claude V. King (Broadman & Holman). To be honest, I have never finished a "Christian" book, probably because, growing up, Christian books were all over my house, and I wanted to stretch beyond

what I could reach. But I hear this book changes lives, and I trust the people who recommended it. As I am reading *Experiencing God*, I feel like I am coming to know Christ more fully. I understand things that I never understood before.

Another book that I'm reading is called *All You Need to Know About the Music Business* by Donald S. Passman (Simon & Schuster). I'm reading this book in hopes of challenging someone who thinks I have no idea about the business I'm in. It's funny how us "kids" are viewed as not knowing about much more than pre-algebra or after-school craziness. I believe this book has allowed me to improve my conversations with others in the music business. If anyone is considering the music industry, strap this book to your back!

—Katy Hudson



Hudson released her debut album in March and is touring with Bebo Norman this fall.



# STORY BEHIND THE SONG

RUSS TAFF: "WE WILL STAND"

In the early '80s, Russ Taff was enjoying a new solo career, having recently left The Imperials. But he found himself troubled by evidence of racism in the church. He was particularly influenced by a story he had heard several years earlier, shared by black gospel singer Archie Dennis, Jr. As Taff remembers the story, Archie had been invited to sing at a church in Alabama, but the church leaders did not realize he was black. On the agreed-upon Sunday, Archie went to the church to set up, where he was met by a very surprised pastor.

Taff recalls, "The pastor came to him and very apologetically said, 'This is not gonna work here.'" He then explained to Archie that a black gospel singer would not be welcomed at his all-white church and asked him to leave.

"Archie said that as he was walking out, he was crying and he said, 'You know, Jesus, You saved me. You've brought me to You. Why won't a lot of the churches in America let me in?' And the Lord spoke to him and said, 'Archie, they won't let Me in, either.'"

Late one night, still haunted by this story, Taff found himself sitting at his kitchen table, unable to sleep.

"At about two o'clock I just started writing; at four o'clock I pretty much had the first verse and chorus together. I ran in and woke my wife Tori up and said, 'Honey, look at this!' And she looked at it and said, 'That's really good,' and rolled over and went back to sleep! I think the next day we got together and finished it, and James Hollihan, my guitar player, put some music to it."



Taff

*"You're my brother, you're my sister/So take me by the hand/Together we will work until He comes/There's no foe that can defeat us/When we're walking side by side/And as long as there is love/We will stand."*

Today "We Will Stand" is a classic, and its message is as vital as it was two decades ago.

"The song accomplished in a degree what I wanted," Taff says, "and that is bringing people together and letting go of labels. There's still this huge line, I feel, between blacks and whites and Hispanics, and every once

in awhile you come across a church that has really reached out to the community at large. All I know is, the song had an effect on me, and after all these years it's still singable and still sung, and the message is still relevant."

"We can change the world forever," Taff says confidently, "if we'll all stand together."

—Shari MacDonald



Hodian and Williams

## THE BEST OF INDIES INDEPENDENT MUSIC BY JERRY CHAMBERLAIN

The resurgence of folk music in the last decade has had a measurable influence on today's popular music.

Classically-trained pianist and documentary film soundtrack composer, **John Hodian**, and four-octave singer/songwriter and folk-rock artist, **Bet Williams**, have been combining their talents since 1992. *Epiphany Project* is their latest eclectic indie creation, as well as their collaborative moniker. This general market release comes out of the oven a mix of classical art song/tone poem, folk, world and pop—a true hybrid.

Williams' voice adapts to its surroundings and is an amalgam itself, taking on at times dreamy characteristics of other vocalists (i.e. Sarah McLachlan and Máire Brennan) without sounding derivative. Hodian's musical backdrops extend the classical/folk equation, winding piano, orchestration, percussion and other instruments around Williams' haunting, angelic vocals.

New York-based **Epiphany Project's** first nationally-released CD embodies music that reflects the mystery of God. Songs include a broad translation of the Bible's Beatitudes that is sung in Aramaic ("Tubwahun"), while another tune sung in Latin features Williams' best Gothic monk choir impersonation ("Goth"). Order *Epiphany Project* at [www.epiphanyrecords.com](http://www.epiphanyrecords.com) or send \$13.99 (plus \$2.00 domestic shipping) to: Epiphany Records, P.O. Box 272, Woodstock, NY 12498.

Another example of a hybridized folk mixture is **Traveling Mercies**, from Salt Lake City, Utah. Combining '60s and '70s-flavored folk, country and rock, *Directions Home* offers a melodic uplifting, accented by rhythm guitarist **Mary Goldring's** warm lead vocals that refresh like a welcome breeze or an old friend. Kicking off the album with a wonderful golden-age-of-folk cover of Todd Snider's "Somebody's Coming," the album brims with songs of hope and music for the journey.

Click on [www.travelingmercies.com](http://www.travelingmercies.com) to get *Directions Home* or mail \$13.50 (plus \$2.50 shipping in the U.S. and Canada) to: Pig's Snout Music, Oinc., P.O. Box 521993, Salt Lake City, UT 84152-1993.

Jerry Chamberlain is a freelance writer/musician/poet, co-founder of Daniel Amos and Boy-O-Boy, and a member of Swirling Eddies.



Superchick

# OPENINGACTS

## Get to know Superchick

**band 411** Sisters Tricia (lead vocals) and Melissa Brock (guitar, vocals), from Dillsboro, Ind.; Max Hsu (keyboards, guitar, turntables, from Gurnee, Ill.); brothers Matt Dally (bass, vocals) and Ben Dally (drums), from Tinley Park, Ill.; Justin Sharbono (lead guitar, from Cambridge, Minnesota). Hsu says the "Superchick collective" includes more artists, plus support personnel. "Whoever's in the van when we leave is in Superchick." **current digs** Gurnee, Ill., a Chicago suburb, serves as band headquarters. **new album** *Karaoke Superstars* (Inpop) released May 22. **favorite cut** "Karaoke Superstars," says Melissa. "The whole concept is about being in your car and playing the music loud, and then you notice somebody's looking at you and you get all embarrassed—but then you just keep on singing and you really don't care. It's about getting to that place where you're comfortable with God enough that it doesn't matter what everybody else around you thinks." **what's different?** The band deftly fuses rock, pop, funk and hip-hop with lyrics on issues important to kids, such as peer pressure. "A lot of what we're trying to say is you should get off your couch and go do more than you think you can do because it's possible," Hsu says. **backstory** Hsu, a member of the now-defunct Church of Rhythm, found it hard to address issues that arose among girls in the audience, and he saw a need for a female-fronted band that could. He met the Brock sisters at a gig where they gave an impromptu audition. "I'm perpetually collecting people to collaborate with," he says. **on the road** A slot on the "Festival con Dios" tour continues throughout this month. **lessons learned** "Just realizing that God has actually given me the ability to do things," says Melissa. **goal** "Our main thing," she says, "is just wanting to get the youth of today to rally behind us and start taking a stand—and change the world."

—Anthony DeBarros

# GLORI EXCEL

MICHAEL W. SMITH  
AND FELLOW SOJOURNERS WEIGH IN ON  
WHY TODAY'S PRAISE & WORSHIP MUSIC  
CAN RISE ABOVE TRENDS TO  
BRING GLORY TO GOD.

B Y B E A U B L A C K

# A I N S I S





s the rising wave of modern praise & worship washes over churches nationwide, and worship recordings by

Britain's Delirious, Australia's Darlene Zschech and the Passion conference's worship band fly off shelves, the Christian music industry has rushed to respond to the demand for worship music—and, in many cases, to cash in on it.

Just as entering into worship is often a struggle to shake free of the daily rat race and come into God's presence, so, too, are parts of

Don Finto, a pastor of Belmont Church in Nashville and longtime mentor to Smith, says he thinks "Michael just has a sovereign call of God on his life" to make music that draws people to God.

Still, Smith says the decision to make this record now did not come easily. "There were a lot of other worship projects coming out, and it just didn't feel like that was what I was supposed to do," he says, explaining that he didn't want to be exploiting—or seem to be exploiting—the current popularity of all things praise-related.

Ultimately, though, he decided his resistance was for the wrong reasons. "I was worried about what people would think: 'He's trying to catch the next wave.' You know what? I couldn't care less about the next wave. I really felt like the Lord just confirmed in my heart 'You're supposed to do it.'"

Smith explains that what he's seen happen of late at New River Fellowship (the church he and wife Debbie helped start in Franklin),

through his recent shows and an appearance at The Call, an evangelical youth gathering in Washington D.C., all charged his passion to do a praise & worship record.

"I was seeing things happen I'd never seen happen before," he says. "People are getting passionate about their faith, and music is a big part of that. This didn't happen 10 years ago. You didn't see 8-year-old kids raising their hands and weeping. It just takes your breath away. It's a real move of the Holy Spirit; it almost reminds me of the Jesus Movement. Then there was something sweeping across America, and I can sense that happening now. I just thought 'I wish we could capture this live.'"

## WITH BODY, MIND, HEART

Artists and churches have been recording their praise & worship music for decades. Why is it such a big deal now?

Don Finto offers a theory. He references the parable of the weeds in Matthew 13:24-30, which he

says relates to the coarsening of today's culture. "Wickedness is growing, and it's going to get worse and worse, but the wheat is maturing. There's a greater hunger for God, a greater passion that's working its way out in worship," Finto says.

Passion conference leader Louie Giglio says, "I think people want to experience God." He notes the influence of Henry Blackaby's *Experiencing God* to "opening people's eyes up to the activity of God and challenging them to be a part of that—a whole body/mind/heart connection to God. There's now more room in church for mind to work and soul to respond. The kind of worship music that's growing right now is meeting people at that level," he says.

"I think there's something pure about it," says Smith. "Obviously there are some people doing records for the wrong reasons. But I think God's stirring people's hearts and showing people who He is, and you're finding people who want to figure out how to really worship God."

Originally, Smith had envisioned a worship trilogy, consisting of the *Exodus* project (the 1998 various artist, modern praise & worship album Smith conceived and produced), his long-planned but yet-to-be-made psalms he describes as "Tommy meets *Messiah*—a lot like a rock opera") and an album of original songs that would have been *Worship*. But he says he ultimately decided that his new songs "didn't compete with the other songs" that he ended up including on the live album.

"We have a lot of bad worship songs—I'll just go out on a limb and say it. It's all justified in the name of God—'Hey, it's right out of the Psalms'—but musically it's only half there," Smith explains. "So I picked out the songs that draw me to the heart of God."

(continued on page 30)

The song list includes



SMITH IN LAKELAND

this musical movement, simultaneously seeking the face of God and calculating what will sell. Are all worship recordings truly worship? In an age of *Prayer of Jabez* oven mitts and dish towels and Christians hooked on fish-embazoned trinkets, applying a little skepticism to the making of modern praise & worship seems wise.

It is appropriate for an artist to do some soul searching before adding his or her own project to the rising number of releases. And that's what veteran musician Michael W. Smith did before embarking on the making of his 15<sup>th</sup> album, simply titled *Worship* (Reunion). The live record is, he says, the result of his being obedient to his calling.

"I feel like one of my gifts is to lead worship," says Smith in his Franklin, Tenn., studio. "I've been a worship leader for 20 years. I started out at Belmont Church in '81. We had a lot of people who led worship, and I was one of them. I was there for 10 or 11 years. I'd written 'Great Is the Lord,' and that was on the first album, and I'd done worship songs, two or three or four, on different projects."



(continued from page 28)

oft-sung choruses like “Open the Eyes of My Heart” and “The Heart of Worship,” along with newer ones like “Breathe” and “Forever.”

Having picked the songs, he had to find a place to hold the event, ultimately settling on the Carpenter’s Home Church in Lakeland, Florida. Aside from it being well equipped to accommodate a large number of people, Smith already had a date booked there.

He had planned on using a choir from the area to back him—until he led worship at the opening night of Gospel Music 2001 (Christian music’s annual spring convention) with 45 other artists, a night he says was “incredible. When I finished that night, I thought that’s what I needed to do in Lakeland.” And though it was scheduled for a Friday night, many of the artists he wanted there, 21 in all, including Amy Grant, Mark Schultz, Ginny Owens and Chris Rice as well as Phillips, Craig & Dean and members of Plus One, worked it out to come.

“The fellowship and what happened the day of was just as important as what happened during the concert,” Michael says. “It was a great thing of laying aside their agendas, and people came in humility,” a feat in any segment of the entertainment industry—Christian music not excepted.

Lisa Kimmey, there with her sisters in Out of Eden, agrees. “Honestly, without trying to sound cheesy, it was remarkable—that you could bring in artists from different genres and races and different levels of success and come together and forget about who we are in the industry and remember who we are in Christ in humility.”

And rather than just showing up to rehearse, the artists spent the majority of their time that day preparing not musically but spiritually, according to new singer/songwriter Shaun Groves. “We got together and talked about what worship is beforehand and prayed for that night. We talked about sin and the ability that has to kill worship and then spent time in confession and getting our hearts right,” he says. “It was awesome because I felt we were very spiritually prepared. Actually, we didn’t spend that much time on musical preparation—we ran through the songs like once and then just got up there and worshiped.”

Trying to conduct

“I’M PAST THE  
POINT OF  
WORRYING  
ABOUT WHAT  
PEOPLE THINK  
ABOUT ME.  
I’VE GOT  
TO FOLLOW  
MY HEART.”

—MICHAEL W. SMITH



worship with a choir of well-known singers presented other problems, though, with the celebrity aura of many of those involved creating a potential distraction to some in the audience—an audience, though, that arguably may have had a right to some freedoms, given the admission fee charged for the Lakeland event.

“Probably some people were there for Michael and not to worship; some whooped and screamed ‘I love you, Michael’ between songs,” says Groves. “Out of 10,000 people there, that was maybe 10. There probably were people there focusing on their favorite artist, but in the service on Sunday, people are focused on their kids misbehaving, on bills they have to pay. For the most part I felt like people were able to get past that.”

For his part, Smith says he knew that would be a challenge and tried to work around it. “I think that once we got into the second or third song people realized this was not a concert. I tried my best at the beginning, when I went out by myself, to explain what this was: ‘You’re not going to hear ‘Friends.’ Sorry. I’ve got some people here with me.’ And they went nuts. I said, ‘I know you love them, give ’em a big hand, but once we start, it’s all about Him.’”

Says Kimmey, “We were on stage like 30 extra minutes because they didn’t want to

leave—not because they wanted to see Plus One or Amy, but because they wanted to worship God.”

Longtime Integrity label executive and worship leader Don Moen is optimistic about the fruit the movement will bear, regardless of the motives of those who advance it. “I think anyone involved in the Christian music industry would have to be blind not to recognize that something big is happening. Only it’s bigger than any record label, bigger than any one denomination, bigger than any one culture,” he says. “Maybe there are some who want to pursue this because it’s a ‘hot market,’ but you can’t be exposed to the presence of God and remain the same.”

That growing popularity’s been evidenced in huge sales of the Time Life *Songs 4 Worship* series, success that’s led to its sponsorship of an October tour focusing on worship songs and featuring Smith and Moen, along with Nicole C. Mullen, Caedmon’s Call, Watermark and Darlene Zschech. Smith looks at the 12-date tour as a challenge to weave a consistent thread through sets by very different artists.

It’s also, in part, a chance to duplicate what Smith, the artists and audience experienced in Lakeland. “I thought they were gonna have to carry me out on a stretcher. I thought ‘The roof is coming off and the Lord is coming

(continued on page 32)



## WORSHIP IS LIFE, EVEN OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

With this project finished, the biggest challenge for Smith is balancing all of his roles—being a husband and a father to five children, an artist with a rigorous schedule of recording and touring, the founder of a successful record label and a leader of a fledgling church congregation.

“You know, I’m involved in too many things, and something’s gotta give. I don’t know what those things are, but I’ve got to simplify my life. It’s hard when you get calls to do benefit things—they’re all great causes. It’s hard to say no; it’s not my personality. I say ‘I’m there, I’m there’—and all of a sudden you’re out of fuel.

“I don’t really want to go anywhere—I just want to be with my kids. I need to turn off my cell phone more. My priorities have so changed,” says Smith.

And while ministering to the church with *Worship* is one of those

priorities, so is re-engaging popular culture with his music. Saying that he wants to be an “ambassador,” Michael’s currently planning a pop album for Reunion Records’ parent company, Jive—home to Britney Spears and ‘N Sync.

“It would be much easier for me to stay down here and do my thing. But I refuse, even if it costs me my career, to stay within the walls of this subculture we’ve built. I refuse,” he says emphatically. “And if it all crumbles and falls and I have to sell my farm, we’ll figure out a way to make a living. I think a lot of people are wondering ‘Hey, why’s he doing a worship record.’ I felt called to do that. And if it means I feel a call to go over there and try to make a pop record again, I’m past the point of worrying about what people think about me. I’ve got to follow my heart.

“I could care less about being a star. I’ve been there, I’ve won the awards, I’ve had the adoration. It doesn’t bring any peace. Hopefully, it’s a little bit of wisdom. You grow up and figure out what in life is really

important,” he says. “It’s making sure my kids are God lovers. That’s where most of my concentrated effort goes—into my family. My wife and I celebrate 20 years of marriage in September. I’m in a totally different zone.”

He’s called on Finto to help him navigate through the options before him. “Recently I’ve been going for walks with him because he’s having so much coming at him, trying to prioritize, to figure out the call on his life,” Finto says. “There’s a line from *Chariots of Fire* where Eric Liddell says, ‘When I run, I feel His pleasure.’ I asked Michael what those things were for him. He said some things related to family; [another] one was leading worship. That’s what he’s trying to do. I think at the core of Michael’s being, this [worship project] is who he is far more than any pop song he’s ever written.”

As Michael W. Smith tries to live a life true to his calling, the church and the Christian music industry will continue to wrestle with just what true worship entails. According to Giglio, one often reduces that to apply only to music and that “in our culture, our phraseology often becomes our theology.” It is, instead, something that “encompasses every fiber of our lives,” he says.

“Worship is life—that’s the clearest way to shrink that idea down. Worship is not music, is not songs, is not even corporately gathering together,” Giglio explains. “It’s a whole life response to the greatness of God. Wherever you are in your life, at work or at school, do what you do to the glory of God.” **ccm**

(continued from page 30)

back.’ It’s one of those moments that don’t happen very often, and we captured it on tape. And I don’t think there’s anything about the night that was conjured up.”

The sound of the *Worship* album and its simple, direct arrangements are designed to capture the energy of that experience. That meant using as little correction—and as much of the sound of the audience—as possible. Says Smith, “There are a couple of times when I’m singing and then I’m not there because I was crying—and we left it.”

He says some special moments on the record include “Above All,” which he sang at President Bush’s inaugural ceremonies. “It’s a classic—it’ll last a lifetime.” Other highlights include a dramatic remaking of “Agnus Dei” and Smith’s new song “Purify,” which builds to an orchestral and choral climax, tapping into the same sonic power that he and Cindy Morgan nailed with “Make Us One” on *Exodus*. Two other songs, “Awesome God” and “More Love, More Power,” were added at the last minute when the service ran longer than expected.

## DISCOGRAPHY

- 2001 *Worship*
  - 2000 *Freedom*
  - 1999 *This Is Your Time*
  - 1998 *Live the Life*
  - 1997 *Live the Life* (enhanced maxi-single)
  - 1995 *I’ll Lead You Home*
  - 1993 *The First Decade* (1983–1993) (best of)
  - 1993 *The Wonder Years* (best of box set)
  - 1993 *Change Your World Live* (video)
  - 1992 *Change Your World*
  - 1990 *Go West Young Man*
  - 1989 *Michael W. Smith Christmas*
  - 1988 *i 2* (Eye)
  - 1987 *The Live Set*
  - 1987 *The Big Picture Tour* (video)
  - 1986 *The Big Picture*
  - 1985 *Michael W. Smith in Concert* (video)
  - 1984 *Michael W. Smith 2*
  - 1983 *Michael W. Smith Project*
- All releases on Reunion Records



Theissen, Hoopes,  
Pittman and Douglas (l-r)

# College Boys

The world is a college campus for musicians like

Relient K. But keeping it real isn't

always easy.

By Andy Argyrakis

It's time to pack up the bedroom and move out to college for many teenagers and young adults. That means hitting the books big time, and if you're fortunate, it also means some time for fun. Although 20-year-olds Matt Theissen, Matt Hoopes and Brian Pittman, as well as 21-year-old Dave Douglas, are getting ready to move from their homes for another semester of lessons, their current occupations don't revolve around writing papers and bland cafeteria food.

This is Relient K, a Canton, Ohio, bred pop/punk foursome that's hitting the road with Five Iron Frenzy on the fall leg of the "Electric Youth" tour.

"We're doing exactly the same thing as going to college, minus the classes," chuckles Theissen, the group's vocalist. "A tour is a couple of months long, and we pack up all our clothes to live away from home. We all go back home to live with our folks on breaks and always take a long Christmas vacation."

It was only three years ago that these young men graduated high school and were faced with the same choices as most in their age group: Should they find a college and pursue a major or head straight into the real world and get a job? The guys formed Relient K during high school and always dreamt of following in the footsteps

of groups like Five Iron, The Supertones and dc talk. But instead of going on college visits and getting recommendations from guidance counselors, they recorded a demo CD after graduation. It landed in the hands of veteran producer, guitarist and fellow Ohioan Mark Townsend (dc talk, Jennifer Knapp), who loved it. He was drawn to the group's raw yet passionate sound, so much so that Townsend convinced Gotee Records CEO and dc talk member Toby McKeehan to give the project a spin.

"The band was developing, but I loved the fact that they were more complex and layered than the typical sound of the pop/punk genre," says McKeehan. "These guys just had a fusion between sounds."

That was exactly the letter of acceptance the men needed.

But before McKeehan and Townsend got the group into the studio to give it a whirl, the two offered sage advice, making sure the guys' parents were completely supportive and that ground rules were set. "When we first started talking about signing Relient K, I got them and their parents together and told them the reality of what they were getting themselves into," recalls Townsend. "I told them they would not get rich off being rock stars and that fame should not be a means of sustaining them. I didn't have unrealistic expectations for the guys, just that they would seize every opportunity with a humble heart to share what God's done in their lives."

Like most parents, those of the group members hoped their sons would leave the option of school open, at least as something to fall back on. They were fully aware of the temptations and trials that the music industry could hold but then realized many of the same temptations could come with college life. "In our family, higher education has always been an important thing," says Marva Hoopes, Matt's mother. "But Toby and Mark were clear that this could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the boys and as with any season in life, we [the parents] had to be ready for the next stage. We decided our best way to support the boys would be to

sometimes we're itching to get back out on the road."

The guys say they have formed their own family on the road to hold them accountable in all aspects of their spiritual and personal growth. "We've become best friends that see each other more than we see our parents," says guitarist Hoopes. "These are the brothers I can be myself with because we've spent so much time together, and [we're] all going through the same thing."

The group strives to be genuine with everyone they meet along the way. The fact that their fan base is made up of their peers allows them not only to connect on a musical level, but also as people growing up and maturing in their walk of faith. "We strive to be real with them and not hide some of the struggles we are going through," says Pittman. "If something is bothering me one day, I'll let my guard down and just be myself without hiding behind some persona."

That's difficult to do with Relient K's growing list of career opportunities—not the least of which was the 50-date "Dance Party U.S.A." tour with The Supertones and Switchfoot. And don't forget the group's well-earned accolades, including a *Billboard* Music Video Award for "My Girlfriend" off Relient K's self-titled debut and a Dove Award nomination for Best Short Form Music Video. Combine the Blink 182/MxPx/New Found Glory-inspired sound on *The Anatomy of the Tongue in Cheek*, Relient K's latest record, with the hit single "Pressing On" and the stint with Five Iron Frenzy and it's obvious things can only get better.

Despite the dean's list of achievements, the guys have a solid base of mentors around them to keep their attention centered on God instead of fame and their hectic schedule. "These are the same guys I signed a couple of years ago in the fact that they haven't let any of their success go to their heads," assures McKeehan. "They're guys who love God and are passionate about the music and the issues they sing about, even more so on the new disc. They're on the right track about staying humble and not getting puffed up from worldly gain." **ccm**

*"The band was developing, but I loved the fact that they were more complex and layered than the typical sound of the pop/punk genre. These guys just had a fusion between sounds."*  
—Toby McKeehan

continually pray over every aspect of what they do."

There was one more hurdle to clear. The group wanted to show their folks this career choice was something to which they were genuinely committed. "It was kind of weird because in the beginning our parents were like 'aw, isn't that cute,' because we were not that good," laughs bassist Pittman. "It took some time to show how committed we were and prove it was more than just a phase we were going through."

It wasn't easy. During their freshman year of touring, the members of Relient K had some of the same emotions to deal with as did their peers leaving home for the first time—being homesick, adjusting to new people and customs. But now at junior-level road status, they've sorted out some of those feelings. "There are things that you really miss about your family and friends back home, but you know that once you leave, you'll experience a lot that will allow you to grow beyond what you would have by just staying back," admits Theissen. "When you get back home, it's nice to see everyone," he says. But, like his college friends, home becomes a nice place to visit. "Our town can get boring and

# DISRUPTION UNTO CONSOLATION

**AFTER A  
SEASON OF  
DOUBT,  
OUT OF  
THE GREY  
EMERGES  
TO LIVE AND  
MAKE MUSIC  
JOYFULLY.**

Scott and Christine Dent relax in patio chairs overlooking the green foliage outlining the backyard of their home just outside of Nashville. They sip coffee and share wide smiles. Aware that Mom and Dad are beginning an interview, the three Dent children—Julian, Carina and Chloe—step over to politely ask a question, and whispers are exchanged. There's a certain tangible peacefulness in all of this, a gentle breeze at just the right moment. The sweet calm *after* the winds of change have come and gone.

That being the case, Christine says, it is only because they've learned a fundamental truth about life that transcends the business of music, even music itself. She speaks with confidence, getting to the heart of it in short order: "If I've been

entrusted with the information and promises I say I believe in, how can I possibly live a small, frightened life?" she says. "Come on! If we know our future and what's waiting for us, how can we live but with joy and freedom?"

*(continued on page 71)*





(continued from page 68)

It's a sentiment she got to express on "What's It Gonna Be," a song on *6.1* (Rocketown), Out of the Grey's current album: "...Lift your eyes above/Get a better view/If you're in but just not off/Then what have you to lose?/Faith has changed the boundaries...."

This renewed vision has been three rough years in the making for the acoustic pop duo. Having recorded five albums for Sparrow Records since the group's debut in 1991, they were quietly dropped from the label's roster in 1999, leaving them with questions about their own motives and abilities.

"We want to be clear and say we know it's not necessarily the end of the world for a recording artist to lose their record deal," Scott says of the fate most artists face at some point, "but it's the equivalent of losing your job and losing your confidence. It's like having a message sent that says, 'What you do really doesn't do anything for us anymore.' It was definitely a crossroads for our family. A recording artist without a place to record is not a recording artist anymore. We were a leaky boat."

Scott admits that, much like anyone who loses a job, his emotions ranged from anger to confusion. "I definitely lost my compass a little bit. I was a little mad at myself because somehow I thought maybe I should have seen this coming. I have this family to take care of and now what were we going to do? I didn't sleep real well for a little while. I had all these friends around me saying, 'Man, this is the best thing that could have happened to you guys!' But it sure didn't feel that way to me lying in bed at night."

Christine is reminded of a phrase used by their pastor, Scotty Smith. "He calls it 'disruption unto consolation.' The disruption is awful; it feels terrible. But it's headed somewhere, even though you can't see it when you're in it. But you're forced to examine so many different things."

With their professional future uncertain, Scott and Christine took a hard look at what they were doing and began asking some important questions. Did they still love singing? Were they still good at it? And was it OK to still pursue it? Was God telling them it was the end of this chapter and it was time to move on and serve Him in another way?

Christine began to think about what it would be like without the pressure of living up to the expectations of a record label. She loved being a mom, a wife, a gardener and a home-school teacher. The thought of doing those things and nothing else certainly appealed to her.

"But at the same time, she was writing some *great* songs," Scott says.

"I loved having a platform on which I could share with and encourage women," Christine adds. "Married people are encouraged by our comments. I love being able to share my passion about home schooling. And on top of all of that, I love to sing. Can you believe it? I get to go out there and do something I really love to do!"

As she and Scott were wrestling with these big questions, songs began to take shape. "Waiting," an up-tempo song on the new

stepping out when we can't see anything."

So perhaps the Dentés have found that "disruption" can bring about a fearless attitude toward life, a bravery and faithfulness that is mirrored in their music.

Scott and Christine discovered a life lesson that transcends record deals. Then, in late 2000, the duo joined the family of artists at Rocketown Records and say they have now found a new freedom to pursue an honesty and creativity in their music.

"Sometimes there's a pressure [in Christian music] that narrows art," Christine says. "Different people are attracted to different kinds of art, and the kind we are attracted to is a lyric that doesn't spell everything out. We can't pretend problems don't exist. We all know they do. If our music can at least reflect the struggle, then that's the beginning of people being able to talk to each other and

say, 'Hey, I'm a Christian, but I'm really having a problem here.'"

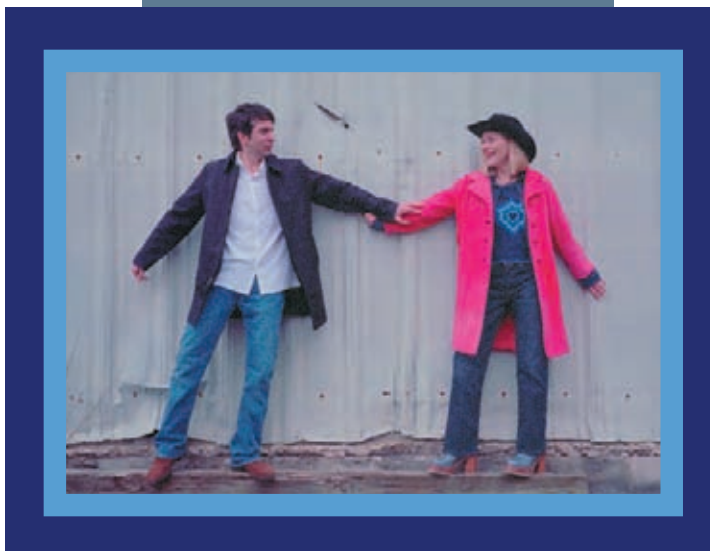
Scott adds, "We pitched some songs to a Christian group a few years ago to see if they'd want to record them, and the label person looked through the lyrics very quickly and went right down the list saying, 'No... no... no... no...'. It just wasn't shiny enough for them, I guess. It didn't solve the problem quickly enough—it wasn't all wrapped up by the bridge."

"This time around, we were told to forget about the mentality of trying to write a certain way," Scott comments. "It's been a long time since we've been able to let go and feel the freedom to do what we like and be what we want to be."

"In our songs, we don't always have the answers or the solutions," Christine adds. "Sometimes we're still trying to figure those things out ourselves, and songwriting allows you the freedom to express that."

Christine refers to the song "Tell Your Story," from *6.1*: "Everybody's got a secret sadness/That they cannot keep/Inside forever, let its strength dispel/Tell your story."

"It came out of a prayer group I meet with each week. We are committed to tell each other whatever secret sadness we may have, whether it's a confession or that we've been a victim. We're committed to let go and share. It really does take away some of the strength that thing has over your life. If more Christians could admit some of those struggles, even Christian artists, we would be so much better off." **ccm**



album, is a testament to their turmoil: "I've been waiting for a signal/Waiting for a sign.../To take me out of limbo/Maybe this could be the time/We've been trying to find..."

"In the midst of trying to figure out what we're doing," Christine explains, "you come to a point where you're tired of looking for signs in the heavens, throwing your fleece out there waiting for God to write a note on the wall. This song says we're not going to wait for these signals any more because I know that God is with us no matter what we're doing. So we're going to step out there and live life instead of waiting for something to make perfect sense."

"I think a lot of Christians have a tendency to do that," she continues. "We think everything has to be written out before we step out there. But we forget that faith is

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by Kent Morris

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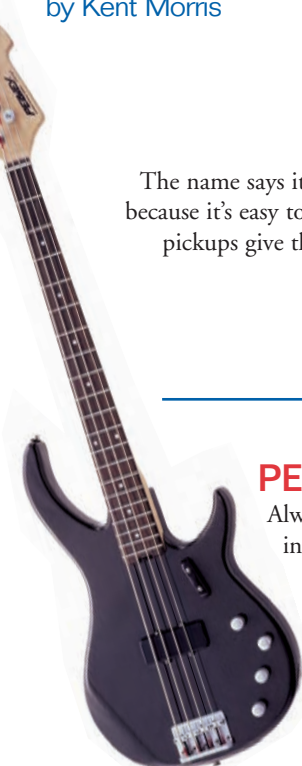


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## One to Watch



### Stereotype Be

Kevin Max (ForeFront)

Textured, complex and at times darkly obscure, *Stereotype Be* is precisely the album one would expect of Kevin Max, long regarded as the free spirit of dc talk. On his own—in the second of three solo albums to be released by the group's members—he indulges the artistic tendencies only hinted at by his spoken-word poems on the last two dc talk releases. And what an eclectic trip it is, expanding Max's vision to include Brit-pop and quasi-progressive rock in a way that demands repeated listenings to unearth all its jewels.

From the start, when the Middle Eastern-style intro of "Return of the Singer" gives way to rolling drums and Max's silky vibrato, the album makes clear its intent to be regarded as fine art. For every hummable, soaring chorus, especially the anthemic "Angel With No Wings" and the soulful "Dead End Moon," there's a quirky little confection that veers around a left curve. One example is "Alycen and the Secret Circle." In the space of four minutes it manages to invoke both the symphonic experimentation of *Sgt. Pepper's*-era Beatles and the foreboding melancholy of The Smashing Pumpkins. In all this drama, Max has plenty to say. He takes on relationships, fashion icons, temptation and, in "I Don't Belong," his place in the music business. (Those with the ingenuity to find and decode a hidden message will learn whose "deranged world" he wants a break from.)

Overall, lyrics and music serve each other particularly well, with the words' poetic leanings matched by a rich sonic backdrop that ranges from reverb-drenched slide guitar to a warbling theremin.

Credit not only Max and producer/guitarist Adrian Belew, but also the session vets they've rounded up, particularly progressive rock bassist Tony Levin and drummer Matt Chamberlin. Though Max's vocal style can be an acquired taste—at times he lets his voice quiver like a mountain of Jell-O in an earthquake—the bass and drum grooves keep the proceedings solid as bedrock.

Some downsides: In places, Max and Belew let



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## INreview

their Beatles fixation float too near the surface, as in the horns on "Shaping Space." Elsewhere, the arrangements too closely mimic territory already mined by British rock sophisticates, such as the very Peter Gabriel-esque piano intro to "Existence." But that's largely forgivable. *Stereotype Be* ultimately stands on its own, ample proof that Max can as well.

—Anthony DeBarros

## Talk About It

Nicole C. Mullen (Word)



Earlier this year, Nicole C. Mullen hauled in an armful of Dove Awards, most notably 2001 Song and Songwriter of the Year honors for mega-hit "Redeemer."

*Talk About It*, the dynamic follow-up to her self-titled Word debut, appears poised for comparable acclaim.

On *Talk About It*, Mullen returns with a satisfying blend of urban-inflected pop and worshipful ballads. Having written or co-written each song for this effort, she once again taps veterans Justin Niebank and David Mullen to assist with production. The result? A no-nonsense collection of soul-stomping grooves sure to give your woofers and tweeters a rigorous workout.

As evidenced on her last release, Mullen seems just as comfortable singing up- or down-tempo. That said, she shines most impressively here when belting out high-spirited tunes. Nowhere is this more apparent than on the disc's title track, a pulsating dance number that all but redefines the term "rhythm." Equally rambunctious is "Baby Girl," an R&B-style ditty spiced with hip-hop verve and thumping bass lines (crank up the volume for full effect).

Although they aren't likely to eclipse the loftiness of "Redeemer," several ballads do strike firm chords. To wit, radio-ready standouts like the resplendent "Call on Jesus" and "Come Unto Me" remain majestic yet unpretentious. It's during these high points that Mullen's spine-tingling vocals and poignant lyrics are most evident.

Also endearing is the project's theme of fleshing out God's truth with boldness and grace (hence the title *Talk About It*, referring to the gospel's message). For instance, the funkified cut "Witness" issues the challenge: "I believe God is calling you my friend/To shake your world upside down and back again." Moreover, the triumphant closer "When Heaven Calls" reminds us that we must be ready for Christ's return.

Make more room on the trophy shelf, Ms. Mullen. This one's also a winner.

—David McCreary

## Have I Ever Told You

FFH (Essential)



FFH is one of those vocal groups that kind of sprang up in a fertile field somewhere and flowered naturally until eventually its straight-up, youth-group friendly pop tunes took root

everywhere. From there the group has delivered harmony-packed, adult contemporary fare, topped off with the anthemic "Big Fish," from its debut album, *I Want to Be Like You*, a cut rivaling Audio Adrenaline's "Big House" for its sing-along fun.

But with the group's third label release, *Have I Ever Told You*, FFH jumps to the next level, delivering solid, accessible and at times innovative pop. From the PFR-meets-The Beatles, piano-driven opener "Watching Over Me," to the heart-wrenching closing ballad "On My Cross," this group shows definite signs of artistic growth within its genre.

Pristinely produced by Scott Williamson and David Hamilton, *Have I Ever Told You* prominently displays FFH's harmonic abilities and surrounds those skills with sonic nuances that enhance both lyrical and vocal style. The beat is up-tempo for most of the project, which is a nice change.

The songs themselves are somewhat predictable, exploring important topics but not breaking any new ground. There are more songs about God's grace ("I'm Amazed"), as well as more about prayer ("Before It Was Said" and "Jesus Speak to Me"), praise ("We Sing Alleluia" and "You Write the Words") and God's plan for our lives ("Millionaire"). Largely singable, *Have I Ever Told You* possesses a lot of energy and excitement and will undoubtedly find open arms and airplay on Christian radio.

FFH's challenger to "Big Fish" is "Astronaut," a fluffy but oh-so-fun sing-along that we'll be hearing a lot in concert. Here's a preview, so you can practice: "I don't know that much about astronauts/But I know that Jesus cares an awful lot/He made the stars/He made the moon/Just think of how much more He loves you/Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah...."

—Melissa Riddell

## Raw Material

Mars III (Uprok/Deep Space 5)

Mars III delivers back-to-basics, old school hip-hop, with DJ Dust and Soulheir the Manchillo (a.k.a. Nate Corrona and Greg Owens) delivering the goods—strong rhymes over stronger



(continued on page 79)

beats meticulously produced by DJ Dust on the turntables. Stripped down to the true essence of the art form, without all the hype and the "somebody scream" chanting, Mars III, put simply, has got skills. The men serve up thoughtful metaphors aided by rich vocabularies that, if nothing else, leave listeners thinking.

On "Monotone," Manchild views art, media business, music and life outside of God's grace as just that—monotone. On "Love's Not," instead of clogging a track with sappy, sentimental expressions of God's love, the group chooses to engage the culture that surrounds them by observing instead what love is not.

*Raw Material* is a thinking person's hip-hop album lyrically, but Mars III doesn't neglect detail when laying down beats and vinyl scratches. Tending toward a slower beat, the musical beds prove surprisingly sophisticated and creative. Featuring guest appearances from L.A. Symphony and other groups, Mars III is the real deal, a smart Christian hip-hop group that pushes the envelope by dealing honestly and realistically with the larger culture.

—Brian Quincy Newcomb

## 6.1

### Out of the Grey (Rocketown)



It's been three years since the husband-wife duo of Scott and Christine Denté recorded any songs, and during the hiatus the duo briefly considered calling it quits musically as Out of

the Grey. It's a good thing they didn't because on 6.1 the Dentés give listeners a taste of the creative dynamic that makes them one of Christian music's bright spots.

From the feet-shuffling-through-gravel percussion loop that rounds out "With All My Heart" to the Eurythmics-meets-The Sundays swell of "What's It Gonna Be," this Monroe Jones-produced disc is full of engaging sounds that serve up well-crafted pop songs. Among the best on 6.1 are the funky and murky "Waiting," the Phil Keaggy-esque "Out of the Ordinary" (which features a cameo lead vocal by Scott) and the haunting hymn "Grace, Mercy and Peace" that closes the album. Constants throughout are Scott's amazing, dexterous guitar work and Christine's singing, equally comfortable whether framed by keyboard and drum loops or acoustic guitar.

About the only shortcoming on 6.1 concerns the album's lyrics—which, though disarmingly lucid, often fall short of the poetic majesty this record deserves. An exception is "Tell Your Story," a poised, pretty ballad that begins with this striking image: "Round and round the thoughts keep coming/Through your head like water running/Til the sink begins to overflow." And from the overflow of their hearts, the

# mercyme. almost there.



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When you hear the passion and intensity in Jason's worship, you'll be stirred to praise Jesus as deeply and exuberantly as he does. Jason approaches God's throne with power, humility, and sincerity... and I believe he is intent on taking everyone in worshiping range along with him!

*Melody Green*

Author, Songwriter, Speaker

jason upton **faith**  
IN STORES NOW



**IN**review

Dentés have yielded an album of fresh, inviting music that proves adult pop fare needn't be meek-as-lambs tame.

—Lou Carlozo

**The Anatomy of the Tongue in Cheek**

**Relient K** (Gotee)



Listen to Relient K's sophomore release, and you'll hear overtones of other high-energy Christian alt-rock acts such as Switchfoot or The Supertones. Not only has

Relient K performed live with those bands, the group also shares a certain comic sensibility alluded to in the title. So, alongside straightforward songs such as "Pressing On" (which captures the exuberance of newfound belief), you also get numbers like "Sadie Hawkins Dance" (a delightfully quirky song about impressing the girls) and "May the Horse Be With You" (a nonsensical ode to the joys of being, yes, a horse). Relient K works best in this lighthearted mode.

While earnest about expressing its faith, the group's spiritual meditations produce mixed results. "Maybe It's Maybeline" successfully highlights the evils of finger-pointing, but "My Way or the Highway..." preaches the salvation-damnation question from a bully pulpit. Play this song for a wayward-but-earnest seeker, and such a person might just be taken rightfully aback by the zealous kicker, "If it scares you to death, may that be your lesson." If putting the proverbial gun to a person's head is no way to win his heart for God, then it's no way to address an intelligent listener either.

—Lou Carlozo

**Elementary**

**Cindy Morgan** (Word)



Cindy Morgan explores just about every genre but pop on her sixth studio release. There's techno, Gershwin-like jazz, lush orchestral

balladry, a Latin-flavored samba, some guitar-based rock and gentle piano-based tunes. All the songs are catchy, well produced and often employ inventive orchestration and time signatures.

The surprising weakness of *Elementary* is the lyrics, most of which lean toward predictability—quite atypical for Morgan, a

universally acknowledged standout songwriter. But when she does shine in this department, the light is devastating, deep and complex. "Walk in the Rain" delivers an unusual marriage between words and melody, as the sad protagonist seems determined to live in a depressed state despite all the beauty God provides, yet this emotion is undergirded by an infinitely happy melody. Morgan's voice is superb and full-ranged here, as she croons softly and yelps like Janis Joplin. "Sunshine" provides a very detailed, insightful lyric that brings you right into Morgan's homespun tale. "Love Can" and "Love Is Waiting" are both subtle and deep.

**EDITOR'S PICK**

**State of Grace**

**Pierce Pettis** (Compass)



Successful projects like the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* soundtrack suggest that folk music is a safe place in today's popular culture to express gospel spirituality. Lucinda Williams can tell

people to "Get Right With God" on her latest album *Essence*, but let Amy Grant try that and watch the insurrection.

Pierce Pettis mines a similar place on his sixth disc, singing of a life under God's grace. Following a rousing version of the late Mark Heard's "Rise From the Ruins" (which, thanks to the fiery fiddle of Stuart Duncan, is better than the original), Pettis introduces the title track with a gentle instrumental of the "Doxology," giving grace a name.

In subtle language throughout the disc, Pettis writes eloquent, personal songs of life's real joys and struggles, his Southern accent adding a credible sentimentality to the work. "Long Way Back Home," co-written with Gordon Kennedy, describes the way the world drains a soul: "The only difference 'tween the pilgrim and a prodigal son/Is the difference 'tween the dream you begin and the thing you become."

In artful lyrics, Pettis differentiates what's meaningful from what's mere distraction, whether unpacking our incomplete attempts at communication ("Nothing But the Truth"), waiting for answers to our prayers ("All in Good Time") or naming a place for the grief that finds us all ("Crying Ground"). Likewise, the simple acoustic music is eloquent in its honesty. The album's second cover is a solid rendering of Bob Dylan's "Down in the Flood," but the best track is Pettis proclaiming "I've Got a Hope" that's "not of this world."

—Brian Quincey Newcomb

But *Elementary's* home-run song is "In These Rooms," a powerful piano ballad in which Morgan mines the depths of her childhood pain, revealing struggles and hurts that will touch and move most listeners.  
—Dave Urbanski

## Press On

Selah (Curb)



The Dove Award-winning group Selah has etched itself a nice niche in inspirational music by skillfully regenerating sacred and timeless songs, many of which

remain intricately woven into the church's foundational fabric.

*Press On*, the group's second album, features an assortment of 12 hymns and other selections, including traditional classics such as "Amazing Grace" and "How Great Thou Art." Selah has also ventured into rekindling pop classics with its rendition of The Beatles' "In My Life." These new arrangements bear the Selah trademark of soulful and emotional vocal harmonies. Also among the cuts are two original compositions, "Timeless" and "Yesu Azali Awa," written by Selah's Todd and Nicol Smith as a tribute of time spent with their missionary parents in Africa.

For some, *Press On* is a way to get re-acquainted with their Christian musical heritage, but for others it's an introduction to several sacred musical gems from the past. All of which encompass a creative and unique quality created by this fine group.

—Happy Medina

## Alien Youth

Skillset (Ardent)



Skillset's John Cooper likes to keep an ear on what's happening in the street. On *Alien Youth*, the band's fourth studio release, it's obvious that he's been picking up

the vibes outside Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson concerts.

Still entrenched in the industrial pop vein of *Invincible*, Cooper takes his band in a heavier, somewhat darker direction, thanks to 17-year-old guitar prodigy Ben Kasica. Skillset interpolates popular hooks and trendy sounds into a kinder, gentler youth-leader friendly version. *Alien Youth* is all dressed up to minister to the Christian siblings, to the Goth

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## INreview

children of modern suburbia's indulgent night. Skillet fails to deliver anything original here, but that's no more derivative than dozens of other Trent Reznor wannabes. And yet Cooper smartly makes the connection between the teenage nihilism that drives the NIN crowd with the profound biblical despair of Ecclesiastes on songs like "Vapor" and "Kill Me Heal Me." "Earth Invasion" and the title track create anthems that, while too eager to please, end up taking over where dc talk's "Jesus Freak" left off. More realistic and palatable are "One Real Thing," containing the best hook on the disc, plus "You Are My Hope" and "Thirst Is Taking Over." These songs simply feel honest, and the message is to the point.

—Brian Quincy Newcomb

## Virtuosity!

Virtue (Verity)



In this age of bombastic, hard-edged urban sounds, some fans will drink Virtue's third release like a tall, cool glass of lemonade. Eager fans of not only Virtue but also

Trinitee 5:7 and Mary Mary are going to find this album a harmonic treat. The glossy but light-handed production style of *Virtuosity* isn't heard too often.

*Virtuosity* is a hip, mature venture that features the fierce harmonies of this newly streamlined, three-member group (Negelle Sumpter recently departed). Relying on the subtlety of smoothed out Latin-flavored acoustic flares for "Something About That Way" and '70s R&B slow jam-influenced "You Are My Everything," Virtue lights up a number of midtempo, urban pop tracks. Though a few tracks almost turn into the midtempo filler or sappy ballads that dilute many urban gospel releases, Virtue actually shines most brightly in its slower moments. This plays out as breathtaking harmonies and a *cappella* interludes, reminiscent of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of Acts, ride bold orchestral swells on "Till You Believe." At its most aggressive, Virtue flexes on inventive tracks like "I Am God," featuring the influence of Missy Elliot's stutter beats, only to loosen up later with the straight-up, good-time dance floor funk of "He's Been Good." Raising the standard with its subtle yet commanding vocal prowess and versatility, Virtue should have named this disc *Stellar* because the ladies will probably win a bunch of the gospel music awards with this one.

—Anthony Barr-Jeffrey



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## Objects of His Affection: Coming Alive to the Compelling Love of God

Scotty Smith (Howard Publishing)



Reading the latest offering by pastor and author Scotty Smith, this critic had trouble maintaining emotionless objectivity. Smith's story of continuing to grapple with his mother's death after 39 years colors this tome with a brokenness as moving as breaking dawn. To read this study

guide is to begin a spiritual journey that should beckon every reader off the sidelines.

Smith's thesis is both timeless and radical, that God "calls us to develop a 'delightful' relationship with Him." But this is no feel-good, bumper-sticker Christianity; "Please do not get the idea that this book will help you enter a state of spiritual bliss," he writes. "To the contrary, God's love takes us into the chaos of a broken world and messy relationships."

What gives those words wrecking-ball weight is that Smith invites us into his weeping heart. Not only had he never visited his mother's grave as an adult, he had buried his tears in a busy life. Coming to grips with this, Smith is growing closer to his earthly dad and discovers the relentless love of his heavenly Father. As Smith relates his story, he teaches us how to approach Jesus at the altar of grace—with humility, heart and all the bliss of a bridegroom about to tie the knot.

—Lou Carlozo

## The Dance of Heaven: Swept Away Into the Arms of God

Compiled by Becky Sowers (Multnomah)



This pint-sized collection features Rebecca St. James, Ashley Cleveland, Michelle Tumes, Margaret Becker, Nichole Nordeman, Kim Hill and Bonnie Keen pondering passages from the Psalms and reflecting on such

universal topics as longing, hope, strength and trust. But lingering just below the surface are the real stories, personal and often heartrending tales of divorce, poverty, addiction and hurt that are sure to strike a chord. And while this may sound like pretty heavy reading, these honest

accounts, woven together with journal entries, song lyrics and Scripture, are oddly inspirational. You won't find easy answers, but these artists-turned-authors provide something better: a portrait of deep faith, something only found when you've been forced to let go of everything else.

—Wendy Lee Nentwig

## I Will Be Your Friend: The Value of Friendship for a Lifetime

Michael W. Smith with Gary Thomas

(Thomas Nelson)



Ardent fans of Michael W. Smith will appreciate a personal glimpse into one of this artist's most fulfilling life endeavors, that of cultivating and maintaining quality friendships. A quick look back to Smith's musical repertoire speaks clearly of the passion he feels

about the eternal value of solid relationships. Within this 10 chapter text, readers are challenged through their Christian faith to tough it out with friends during difficulties, to use wisdom in selecting friends, to mend broken relationships and intentionally nurture existing friendships. Smith shares numerous personal experiences with great candor, but much of the advice has been written before, weakening his heartfelt message.

—Michele Howe

## Footprints of a Pilgrim: The Life and Loves of Ruth Bell Graham

Ruth Bell Graham (Word)



*Footprints of a Pilgrim* is a beautifully designed "scrapbook" of Ruth Bell Graham's life, told through her own poignant stories, poems and journal entries. Scattered throughout the pages are real

photos and stories that capture Graham's journey growing up as a child of missionaries in China, her courtship and marriage to the Rev. Billy Graham, and her memories of motherhood. Additional vignettes are added throughout the book by Graham's children, husband and friends like Patricia Cornwell and former First Lady Barbara Bush.

Graham's real-life accounts are told with a surprising honesty and humor as she shares openly about the loneliness she experienced in the early years of her marriage, and the sometimes hilarious moments experienced in bringing up a young, rebellious Franklin Graham.

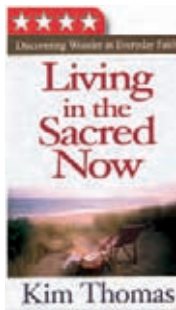
Throughout, Graham shows her true spunk and charm, allowing the honest moments captured on these pages to bring her own journey to life. It's an inside look at the strength, vulnerability and wisdom of a special woman.

—Debra Akins **CCM**

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Living in the Sacred Now: Discovering Wonder in Everyday Faith

Kim Thomas (Harvest House)



Most of our lives are spent trying to get out of the here and now and on to the there and some day. But the reality is that most of the real living happens in the long stretches between the two. Kim Thomas—singer, songwriter, author and accomplished painter—is one woman who wrestles

with this truth more than most of us do. And fortunately for us, she pins it down beautifully in *Living in the Sacred Now*, an "up front and on

the plate" book of personal stories, Scriptural truths and wisdom for the ages.

In earthy, imaginative language, Thomas leads a guided tour of her own journey: her fear of bridges, her love of squeegees, her disdain for the middle seat on airplanes and her incessant, internal homing mechanism. Along the way, she speaks to larger struggles with self-worth, high expectations—spiritual and human—regret, doubt, sadness, what happens when dreams aren't big enough and of all the waiting in between. Best of all, she doesn't offer pat answers as is common in Christian literature (and don't let the book's cover fool you; this is not your typical fare). This artist chooses instead to tell stories and ask big questions that help readers see through the forest and focus on the complicated beauty of one tree.

A short read, *Living in the Sacred Now* is a tall and essential truth.

—Melissa Riddle

# Iona One Festival at Shelby Farms Memphis, Tennessee

by Beau Black

If nothing else, Iona's headlining set at Memphis' first-ever One Festival proved to a number of music fans why this Celtic rock band has been a critics' favorite for the last 10 years. Sticking around after performances by Waterdeep and Caedmon's Call, most in the audience had probably never heard of these European imports who rarely perform stateside. They were in for a surprise.

The band's songs deal largely with two themes: seeing God through nature and exploring historical Celtic Christianity. The five-piece outfit cast off with the instrumental "Woven Cord," its airy synth-and-guitar intro giving way to a pounding beat. They forged a unique sound between electric guitar and Uilleann pipes, adding a Celtic flair to Iona's swirling mix of classic rock, world and jazz.

About 10 minutes into the show, "Treasure" brought the evening's first vocals from Joanne Hogg. The song, perhaps the band's most familiar, also found most of its members switching instruments, one of the most impressive features of Iona's artistry. Vocalist Hogg plays both acoustic guitar and keyboards, lead guitarist/producer Dave Bainbridge also plays keyboards, Troy Donockley plays the pipes, various whistles and guitar, and drummer Frank Van Essen plays the violin. Phil Barker *only* plays various incarnations of the bass.

For "Wave After Wave," Van Essen stepped out from behind his drums to play a sweet violin solo, backed by Donockley on the mandolin. From this lush beginning, the band built to a crescendo of crashing drums and stabs of guitar that held the audience in rapt attention.

"Open Sky" couldn't have had a better setting with the clear, starry evening sky above the green, rolling hills of Shelby Farms, the song's soft airy first verse again preceding an intense track of booming bass drums and electric guitars. As the fellows played, Hogg sang about a "tree in my garden" that "...dances in the breeze/And it sways in the storm/But its hold is



## set list:

"Woven Cord"  
"Treasure"  
"Wave After Wave"  
"Open Sky"  
"Jigs"  
"Encircling"  
"Angel of God"  
"Irish Day"  
"Revelation"  
"Heaven's Bright Sun"  
"Star Spangled Banner"  
"Castlerigg"/"Reels"

strong," comparing it to "...the hope/That's come my way.../The gift of life."

The band invited the audience to dance to a set of jigs driven by Donockley's nimble piping, and many broke into Riverdance-style cavorting. "Encircling" was introduced as one of Iona's big instrumental numbers, a 13-minute saga derived from the words of St. Patrick. Hogg softly sang, "The Mighty Three, my protection be.../You are around my life, my home/Encircling me," the song's quiet moments broken by eruptions of guitars, whistles and drums.

While Iona's set list excluded some of its better songs—"Chi Rho," "Wisdom" and "Iona," written about the tiny Scottish island that supplies the band's name, among them—the show was hardly a disappointment. The anthemic cry for "Revelation" from *The Book of Kells* and a surprising Uilleann-piped interpretation of the "Star-Spangled Banner" still set the tone as some of the evening's highlights. "Irish Day," an ebullient ode to Joanne Hogg's home, elicited more dancing from the audience, as did "Castlerigg" and the traditional "Reels" that closed the show.

The band had to cancel its planned Cornerstone appearance because of the stress the trip may have caused with Hogg's pregnancy, making this dazzling show an even rarer chance to see Christian music's most creative and musically distinctive band. **ccm**



**Jeffrey Dear**  
Birmingham, AL  
"Tight" is how I'd describe it. They're very talented. I saw them about four years ago—they were a lot better than I'd remembered them."



**DeDe McCallie**  
Birmingham, AL  
"I'd describe it as 'mystical worship.' The 'Open Sky' song really put it in context for me. Out here in the open with the stars, that really brought out their creative kind of worship."



**Ken West**  
Rogue River, OR  
"Totally awesome! It was just incredible. I would say if you didn't see any other show this whole event, and you saw this one, it would be worth it."



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22—Richmond, VA  
24—Augusta, GA

25—Greenville, SC  
28—Orlando, FL  
29—West Palm Beach, FL  
30—Jacksonville, FL  
Oct 2—Memphis, TN  
3—Tulsa, OK  
4—Kansas City, MO  
5—Des Moines, IA  
6—Minneapolis, MN  
7—Naperville, IL  
925/827-4688

## FORTY DAYS

Sept 1—Naples, FL  
2—Orlando, FL  
8—Sioux Center, IA  
15—Carson City, NV  
19—Fort Worth, TX  
21—Many, LA  
Oct 6—Wichita Falls, TX  
19—Bluefield, VA  
21—Del City, OK  
27—Pueblo, CO  
615/777-2227

## KIRK FRANKLIN

Sept 23—Santa Cruz, CA  
Oct 20—Moline, IL  
615/963-3000

## GAITHER VOCAL BAND

Sept 7—Rochester, NY  
8—East Rutherford, NJ  
15—Pittsburgh, PA  
27—Oklahoma City, OK  
28—Lubbock, TX  
29—Houston, TX  
864/801-9266

## GLAD

Sept 7—Lebanon, OR  
14—Kalamazoo, MI  
15—Berne, IN  
22—Wilmington, NC  
23—Fuquay-Varina, NC  
30—Montgomery, AL  
540/338-2017

## BEN GLOVER

Oct 27—Alpharetta, GA  
615/790-5540

## NATALIE GRANT

Sept 8—Oakdale, CA  
9—Sacramento, CA  
Oct 20—Oceanside, CA  
[www.jeffroberts.com](http://www.jeffroberts.com)

## STEVE GREEN

Sept 6—Fayetteville, NC  
7—Raleigh, NC  
9—Hilton Head, SC  
14—Whiting, NJ  
15—Lancaster, PA  
23—Wheaton, IL  
28—Louisville, KY  
29—Grove City, OH  
[www.stevegreenministries.org](http://www.stevegreenministries.org)

## GRITS

Sept 8—Pine Bluff, AR  
615/370-2980

## SARA GROVES

Sept 14—Wexford, PA  
15—Dallas, TX  
20—Gurnee, IL  
Oct 4—Menasha, WI  
7—Elmbrook, WI  
25—Anderson, SC  
28—Raleigh, NC  
615/383-8787

**KIM HILL**

Sept 21-Denver, CO  
22-Starkville, MS  
Oct 2-Memphis, TN  
14-Pontotoc, MS  
615/777-2227

**KATY HUDSON**

Sept 8-Fort Worth, TX  
615/963-3000

**JAKE**

Sept 19-Florence, KY  
29-Champaign, IL  
www.jeffroberts.com

**JARS OF CLAY**

Sept 7-Lake Buena Vista, FL  
615/383-8787

**JUSTIFIDE**

(see Skillet listing)  
www.jeffroberts.com

**THE KATINAS**

Sept 7-Fayetteville, AR  
14-Kannapolis, NC  
16-Riverside, CA  
21-Sacramento, CA  
27-Conyers, GA

28-Phoenix, AZ  
29-Houston, TX  
Oct 11-Indianapolis, IN  
27-Hershey, PA  
615/963-3000

**CHERI KEAGGY**

Sept 15-Grand Rapids, MI  
28-Watseka, IL  
29-Bloomington, IL  
Oct 13-Pearland, TX  
27-Amarillo, TX  
www.jeffroberts.com

**PHIL KEAGGY**

Sept 7-Detroit, MI  
8-Trexlerstown, PA  
14-Pendleton, IN  
15-Greensboro, NC  
16-Berghooz, OH  
219/269-3413

**WES KING**

Oct 12-Fort Myers, FL  
219/269-3413

**JENNIFER KNAPP**

Sept 1-Nashville, TN  
2-Tipton, PA

10-Hutchinson, KS  
21-Sacramento, CA  
29-Greensboro, NC  
615/383-8787

**KNOWDAVERBS**

Oct 6-Villa Rica, GA  
615/254-7700

**SCOTT KRIPPAYNE**

Sept 7-Norfolk, VA  
8-Crossville, TN  
16-Miami, FL  
19-Bothell, WA  
21-Harrisburg, NC  
22-Arnold, CA  
23-Elk Grove, CA  
30-Cherry Hill, NJ  
615/777-2227

**RACHAEL LAMPA**

Sept 7-Lake Buena Vista, FL  
10-Allegan, MI  
14-Miami, FL  
15-Greensboro, NC  
21-Valencia, CA  
23-Metairie, LA  
Oct 13-Columbia, SC  
615/383-8787

**L.A. SYMPHONY**

Sept 1-Albuquerque, NM  
2-Greenwood Village, CO  
8-Sacramento, CA  
25-Spokane, WA  
615/254-7700

**LaRUE**

Sept 2-Sioux Falls, SD  
7-Ocean City, NJ  
15-Hershey, PA  
16-Grand Island, NY  
19-Lawton, OK  
22-Mt. Gilead, OH  
30-Huntsville, AL  
Oct 13-Columbia, TN  
20-North Manchester, IN  
26-Portsmouth, NH  
www.jeffroberts.com

**NIKKI LEONTI**

Sept 2-Albuquerque, NM  
615/777-2211

**CRYSTAL LEWIS**

Sept 1-Jackson, NJ  
24-Santa Cruz, CA  
22-Corvallis, OR  
Oct 16-Miami, FL  
615/383-8787

**GREG LONG**

Sept 1-Jackson, NJ  
15-Marion, IN  
28-St. Paul, MN  
Oct 13-Fergus Falls, MN  
615/963-3000

**LUNA HALO**

(see Newsboys listing)  
615/297-2021

**MARK LOWRY**

(see Gaither Vocal Band listing) 864/801-9266

**THE MARTINS**

Sept 1-Jackson, TN  
2-Tuskahoma, OK  
3-Brandon, MS  
10-Louisville, KY

16-Hamilton, OH  
28-Suffolk, VA  
29-Winston-Salem, NC  
615/851-4500

**DONNIE McCLURKIN**

Sept 1-Colorado Springs, CO  
15-Newark, NJ  
29-Pennsauken, NJ  
615/822-5308

**JUSTIN McROBERTS**

Sept 7-St. Louis, MO  
14-Lake Forest, IL  
Oct 10-Grove City, PA  
615/297-2021

**MITCH McVICKER**

Sept 2-Williamsport, PA  
4-Bellefonte, PA  
8-Winona Lake, IN  
14-Wichita, KS  
19-20-Macomb, IL  
21-Lincoln, IL  
22-Carbondale, IL  
23-Cecilia, KY  
30-Medina, ND  
785/232-4189

**MERCYME**

Sept 18-Hattiesburg, MS  
615/297-2021

**KELLY MINTER**

Sept 19-Amarillo, TX  
22-Orange City, IA  
29-Lancaster, PA  
30-Paoli, PA  
615/790-5540

**CINDY MORGAN**

Sept 8-Fort Worth, TX  
615/963-3000

**GEOFF MOORE**

Sept 7-Fairmont, VA  
8-Huntington, WV  
9-Wilkes-Barre, PA  
15-Apex, NC  
21-Estes, CO  
23-River Park, ND  
28-Carolina Beach, NC  
615/790-5540

**NICOLE C. MULLEN**

Sept 8-Orlando, FL  
15-Cuyahoga Falls, OH  
615/790-7820

**NEWSBOYS**

Sept 13-Canton, OH  
14-Indianapolis, IN  
15-Grandville, MI  
16-Lisle, IL  
19-Boise, ID  
20-Portland, OR  
21-Medford, OR  
22-Visalia, CA  
23-Irvine, CA  
27-Midland, TX  
28-Dallas, TX  
29-Houston, TX  
30-San Antonio, TX  
770/736-5363

**NEWSONG**

Sept 2-Albuquerque, NM  
14-Greensboro, GA

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YEARS  
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SONGWRITER  
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15-Xenia, OH  
17-Hamilton, OH  
**Oct 14**-Pasadena, TX  
20-Mansfield, OH  
615/859-7040

#### NICHOLE NORDEMAN

**Sept 2**-Atlanta, GA  
9-Hattiesburg, MS  
15-Peoria, IL  
**Oct 6**-Aliso Viejo, CA  
19-Bluefield, VA  
615/777-2227

#### BEBO NORMAN

**Sept 6**-Sherman, TX  
8-Fort Worth, TX  
9-Austin, TX  
11-Wichita Falls, TX  
13-College Station, TX  
14-Norman, OK  
28-Grove City, PA  
29-Grantham, PA  
**Oct 3**-Malibu, CA  
6-Deerfield, IL  
13-Wilmore, KY  
18-Bloomington, IN  
19-Dubuque, IA  
20-New Brighton, MN  
21-Milwaukee, WI  
22-New Brighton, MN  
23-Sioux Falls, SD  
26-Boulder, CO  
27-Denver, CO  
28-Buena Vista, CO  
615/297-2021

#### THE NORMALS

**Sept 8**-Fort Worth, TX  
615/297-2021

#### ERIN O'DONNELL

**Sept 8**-Greenwood, SC  
**Oct 27**-Alpharetta, GA  
www.jeffroberts.com

#### FERNANDO ORTEGA

**Sept 21**-Minneapolis, MN  
**Oct 13**-Laguna Hills, CA  
25-Marco Island, FL  
219/269-3413

#### PETE ORTA

**Sept 25**-Lubbock, TX  
**Oct 5**-Irmo, SC  
615/963-3000

#### STACIE ORRICO

**Sept 7**-Lake Buena Vista, FL  
10-Allegan, MI  
21-Valencia, CA  
615/383-8787

#### OUT OF EDEN

**Sept 27**-Conyers, GA  
**Oct 5**-Niagara Falls, NY  
6-Myrtle Beach, SC  
19-Miami, FL  
26-Ladson, SC  
615/963-3000

#### OUT OF THE GREY

**Oct 4**-Elkhart, IN  
26-Tacoma, WA  
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#### GINNY OWENS

**Sept 1**-Jefferson City, TN  
7-Bloomington, IL  
8-Jackson, MS  
14-Seattle, WA  
22-Bangor, ME  
28-Huntsville, AL  
**Oct 2**-Winston-Salem, NC  
6-Myrtle Beach, SC  
615/963-3000

#### PAIGE

**Sept 1**-Altoona, IA  
23-Sterling, CO  
25-Lubbock, TX  
615/963-3000

#### TWILA PARIS

**Oct 4**-Elkhart, IN  
5-Westerville, OH  
6-Grand Rapids, MI  
11-Overland Park, KS  
14-Salina, KS  
18-Phoenix, AZ  
19-Tucson, AZ  
26-Tacoma, WA  
615/963-3000

#### SANDI PATTY

**Sept 15**-Nashville, TN  
16-McAllen, TX  
26-Washington, D.C.  
29-Silver Springs, FL  
615/963-3000

#### PAX217

(see Newsboys listing)  
615/297-2021

#### ANDREW PETERSON

**Sept 15**-Dallas, TX  
615/297-2021

#### KENDALL PAYNE

**Sept 8**-Sacramento, CA  
615/297-2021

#### JILL PHILLIPS

**Sept 24**-Bluefield, VA  
615/777-2227

#### PHILLIPS, CRAIG & DEAN

**Sept 2**-Atlanta, GA  
13-Waterloo, IA  
14-Knoxville, TN  
28-Phoenix, AZ  
615/777-2227

#### CHONDA PIERCE

**Sept 6**-Cedar Rapids, IA  
7-Bellefonte, IL  
8-Champaign, IL  
14-Seattle, WA  
18-Meridian, MS  
20-Huntsville, AL  
21-East Lansing, MI  
22-Wilmington, NC  
27-Montgomery, AL  
28-Birmingham, AL  
29-Lima, OH  
615/377-3647

#### JONATHAN PIERCE

**Sept 1-2**-Baton Rouge, LA  
23-Auburn, CA  
30-Avon, IN  
615/777-2227

#### PILLAR

**Sept 2**-Albuquerque, NM  
9-Spring Lake, MI  
11-Burlington, IA  
12-Colorado Springs, CO  
13-Minneapolis, MN  
14-Mankato, MN  
15-Wichita, KS  
16-Burlington, KS  
19-Lakewood, CO  
20-Salt Lake City, UT  
23-Bakersfield, CA  
28-Vacaville, CA  
29-Greensboro, NC  
877/7-PILLAR

#### PLUS ONE

**Sept 2**-Greenwood Village, CO  
7-Lake Buena Vista, FL  
19-Puyallup, WA  
21-Valencia, CA  
23-Santa Cruz, CA  
28-Huntsville, AL  
**Oct 13**-Columbia, SC  
615/963-3000

#### POINT OF GRACE

**Sept 22**-Charlotte, NC  
23-Akron, OH  
24-Woodbridge, VA  
25-Fayetteville, NC  
27-Memphis, TN  
28-Johnson City, TN  
29-Birmingham, AL  
**Oct 1**-Salem, VA  
2-Fort Wayne, IN  
4-Pittsburgh, PA  
5-Detroit, MI  
6-Lisle, IL  
7-Minneapolis, MN  
615/963-3000

#### RELIENT K

(see Five Iron Frenzy listing)  
615/254-7700

#### JOHN REUBEN

(see Five Iron Frenzy listing)  
615/254-7700

#### CHRIS RICE

**Sept 28**-Huntsville, AL  
29-Los Angeles, CA  
615/383-8787

#### REBECCA ST. JAMES

**Sept 2**-Jackson, NJ  
8-Orlando, FL  
14-Miami, FL  
23-Metairie, LA  
29-Ponca City, OK  
30-Waco, TX  
**Oct 12**-Indianapolis, IN  
www.jeffroberts.com

#### SALVADOR

**Sept 1**-Jackson, NJ  
2-Sioux Falls, SD  
7-Orlando, FL  
14-San Jose, CA  
19-Hamilton, OH  
22-San Angelo, TX  
23-Estes Park, CO  
29-Conyers, GA  
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#### SATELLITE SOUL

**Sept 8**-Matteson, IL  
16-Monroe City, IN  
219/269-3413

#### MARK SCHULTZ

**Sept 6**-Claremore, OK  
7-Warrensburg, MO  
8-Kinmundy, IL  
9-Mahomet, IL  
22-Charlotte, NC  
28-Gaylord, MI  
**Oct 7**-Zeeland, MI  
17-Kidron, OH  
18-Hudsonville, MI  
19-Lansing, IL  
20-St. Paul, MN  
21-Osh Kosh, WI  
25-Springfield, IL  
26-Kokomo, IN  
27-Alpharetta, GA  
30-Winona, MN  
615/790-5540

#### SELAH

**Sept 2**-Nappanee, IN  
16-Bristow, VA  
**Oct 6-7**-Silver Spring, MD  
11-Indianapolis, IN  
28-Largo, FL  
615/777-2227

#### SIERRA

**Sept 8-9**-Modesto, CA  
15-Darlington, SC  
16-Galesville, MD  
22-Madison, WI  
28-Minneapolis, MN  
29-Ham Lake, MN  
30-Ellisville, MO  
615/859-7040

#### SKILLET

**Sept 6**-Green Bay, WI  
7-Orlando, FL  
8-Fairfield, IL  
9-Spring Lake, MI  
11-Burlington, IA  
13-Minneapolis, MN  
14-Mankato, MN  
15-Brainerd, MN  
19-Lakewood, CO  
20-Salt Lake City, UT  
23-Santa Cruz, CA  
28-Vacaville, CA  
29-San Bernardino, CA  
615/297-2021

#### SMALLTOWN POETS

**Sept 8**-Pine Bluff, AR  
15-Trexlerstown, PA  
615/297-2021

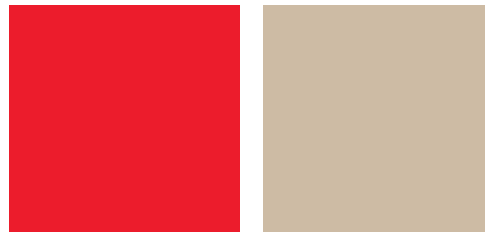
#### MICHAEL W. SMITH

**Sept 2**-Waseon, OH  
8-Lake Buena Vista, FL  
10-Allegan, MI  
23-Bloomsburg, PA  
28-Los Angeles, CA  
**Oct 5**-Columbia, SC  
615/383-8787

#### SONICFLOOD

**Sept 1**-Kansas City, MO  
2-Hendersonville, NC  
7-Orlando, FL  
9-Epworth Forest, IN  
15-Kannapolis, NC  
19-Amarillo, TX  
20-Grand Junction, CO  
21-Denver, CO  
22-Orange City, IA  
27-Hastings, NE  
28-Chicago, IL  
29-Lancaster, PA  
30-Paoli, PA  
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2—Clinton, IA  
9—Houston, TX  
22—Marysville, WA  
219/269-3413

**SUPERCHICK**

(see Newsboys listing)  
770/736-6363

**THE SUPERTONES**

(see Newsboys listing)  
615/254-7700

**SWITCHFOOT**

(see Newsboys listing)  
615/859-7040

**THIRD DAY**

Sept 8—Fairfield, IL  
14—Wexford, PA  
16—Lansing, MI  
30—Huntsville, AL  
29—Conyers, GA  
615/383-8787

**TREE63**

(see Newsboys listing)  
www.jeffroberts.com

**TAMMY TRENT**

Sept 15—Houlka, MS  
29—Phoenix, AZ  
Oct 20—Avon, IN  
615/370-4700

**KATHY TROCCOLI**

Sept 7—Anaheim, CA  
15—Nashville, TN  
28—Orlando, FL  
615/963-3000

**TRUTH**

Sept 2—Redmond, WA  
10—Rapid City, SD  
15—Lancaster, CA  
16—Phoenix, AZ  
22—Circleville, OH  
615/771-6010

**MICHELLE TUMES**

Sept 8—Canton, OH  
9—Dallas, TX  
615/790-5540

**JACI VELASQUEZ**

Sept 1—Jackson, NJ  
7—Lake Buena Vista, FL  
21—Austell, GA  
22—Dorwell, VA  
23—Santa Cruz, CA  
Oct 13—Cincinnati, OH  
615/963-3000

**V\*ENNA**

Sept 6—Milford, IN  
8—Akron, OH  
9—West Lebanon, IN  
15—Big Rapids, MI  
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**WATERDEEP**

Sept 8—Fort Worth, TX  
615/297-2021

**WAYNE WATSON**

Sept 8—McAllen, TX  
16—Tuscaloosa, AL  
22-23—Houston, TX  
28—Warsaw, IN  
29-30—Cabot, AR  
615/777-2227

**WHISPER LOUD**

Sept 8—Lake Buena Vista, FL  
22—Bethlehem, PA  
Oct 13—Birmingham, AL  
27—Cincinnati, OH  
615/777-2227

**JOY WILLIAMS**

Sept 9—Los Altos, CA  
16—Garden Grove, CA  
24—Owensboro, KY  
615/859-7040

**CECE WINANS**

Sept 21—East Lansing, MI  
28—Orlando, FL  
Oct 12—Charlotte, NC  
615/963-3000

**ZOEGIRL**

Sept 10—Tulare, CA  
13—Honolulu, HI  
615/383-8787

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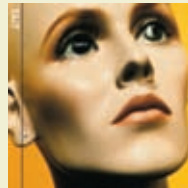
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# BY the NUMBERS

Position	Position Last Month	Title/Artist	Label
1	2	<b>SONGS 4 WORSHIP: SHOUT TO THE LORD</b> Various	Time Life
2	1	<b>LIVE IN LONDON AND MORE</b> Donnie McClurkin	Verity
3	9	<b>CECE WINANS</b> CeCe Winans	Wellspring
4	6	<b>SONGS 4 WORSHIP: BE GLORIFIED</b> Various	Time Life
5	3	<b>FREE TO FLY</b> Point of Grace	Word
6	4	<b>OXYGEN</b> Avalon	Sparrow
7	7	<b>WOW WORSHIP GREEN</b> Various	Integrity
8	10	<b>WOW 2001</b> Various	Sparrow
9	5	<b>SONGS 4 WORSHIP: HOLY GROUND</b> Various	Time Life
10	12	<b>OFFERINGS: A WORSHIP ALBUM</b> Third Day	Essential
11	11	<b>THE PROMISE</b> Plus One	Atlantic/143
12	14	<b>THANKFUL</b> Mary Mary	Myrrh/Columbia/C2
13	—	<b>EMPTY</b> Tait	ForeFront
14	13	<b>THE LIVE EXPERIENCE</b> Yolanda Adams	Elektra
15	19	<b>SONICPRAISE</b> Sonicflood	Gotee
16	17	<b>TRUE VIBE</b> True Vibe	Essential
17	16	<b>WOW GOSPEL 2001</b> Various	Verity
18	26	<b>MARK SCHULTZ</b> Mark Schultz	Word
19	25	<b>SHINE THE HITS</b> Newsboys	Sparrow
20	21	<b>I COULD SING OF YOUR LOVE FOREVER</b> Various	WorshipTogether
21	—	<b>OPEN UP THE SKY</b> Lindell Cooley	Integrity
22	29	<b>INTERMISSION</b> dc talk	ForeFront
23	8	<b>COME HEAL THIS LAND</b> Robin Mark	Hosanna!
24	—	<b>OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART</b> Various	Integrity
25	15	<b>KINGDOM COME MOVIE SOUNDTRACK</b> Various	Gospo Centric
26	22	<b>GENUINE</b> Stacie Orrico	ForeFront
27	24	<b>AWESOME WONDER</b> Kurt Carr Singers	Gospo Centric
28	23	<b>LET MY WORDS BE FEW</b> Phillips, Craig & Dean	Sparrow
29	20	<b>SOLO (EP)</b> dc talk	ForeFront
30	30	<b>DESTINY</b> The Katinas	Gotee
31	28	<b>ZOEGIRL</b> ZOEgirl	Sparrow
32	35	<b>TOP 25 PRAISE SONGS</b> Various	Maranatha!
33	32	<b>HIT PARADE</b> Audio Adrenaline	ForeFront
34	18	<b>THE STORM IS OVER</b> Bishop T.D. Jakes & the Potter's House Mass Choir	EMI Gospel
35	—	<b>DISAPPEAR</b> PFR	Squint
36	27	<b>MI CORAZÓN</b> Jaci Velasquez	Word
37	37	<b>WOW WORSHIP ORANGE</b> Various	Integrity
38	31	<b>MOUNTAIN HIGH... VALLEY LOW</b> Yolanda Adams	Elektra
39	—	<b>PRESS ON</b> Selah	Curb
40	—	<b>INVADE MY SOUL</b> By the Tree	Fervent

(— chart debut, \* chart re-entry)

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## EMPTY Tait

Even the familiar can take on new characteristics. New to you qualities. Maybe your favorite pizza is that much better because you're eating it with close friends. The sunset looks more peaceful after a hard day. A distinctive voice like Michael Tait's (dc talk) resonates similarly surrounded by a cadre of new players. Collectively known as Tait, a moniker Michael says is in honor of his late father, the group grabs this month's highest album debut. Not bad for a so-called new band, also including Pete Stewart, Chad Chapin and Lonnie Chapin, all veteran musicians. Radio stations are giving it all they've got spinning Tait's first single, "All You Got," and more is on the way. Look for Tait on the road this fall with dc talk rockers Kevin Max and Toby Mac.

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## ZOEGIRL ZOEgirl



Unfortunately, we don't have the video tape for blackmail, but ZOEgirl lands in one of those wry but usually innocuous music critic files known as "We Knew You When." Granted, what we can pull from our hand, like that first major performance one April 2000 evening in Nashville, is a two of spades compared to several trump cards this trio can lay out. ZOEgirl is slightly more than a year old and yet it remains in our Top 40 (we'd count the weeks on, but we ran out of fingers and toes). The label says the record is the best debut in Sparrow's history. And coming off a gazillion performances with Carman, Chrissy, Kristin and Alisa will tour with Avalon's "Oxygen" tour this fall. No doubt young girls have an alternative in ZOEgirl, and that's an ace in any hand.

## THIS MONTH ONE YEAR AGO

### Top Christian Albums

- 1 **MOUNTAIN HIGH... VALLEY LOW**  
Yolanda Adams Elektra
- 2 **THANKFUL**  
Mary Mary Myrrh/Columbia/C2
- 3 **THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF SOUTHTOWN**  
P.O.D. Atlantic
- 4 **OFFERINGS: A WORSHIP ALBUM**  
Third Day Essential
- 5 **WOW GOLD**  
Various Provident



George Bush was a governor and Al Gore a vice president. Summer's heat still sweltered under the pesky song-swapping Web site Napster, but like leaves to the ground song availability fell to the wayside as the courts eventually intervened. Praise & worship albums like *Offerings* and *City on a Hill* were only beginning to tap the frenzy they would stir, while Rachael Lampa and Stacie Orrico were just emerging on the Christian music scene. During the next 12 months they would quickly make up ground on those preceding them like ZOEgirl and Plus One. Funny how life turns out.

## Mankind Is Our Business, Not Business

Timed for release during the annual Christian booksellers national convention, the July 16, 2001 issue of *Newsweek* declared on the cover “Jesus Rocks! Christian Entertainment Makes a Joyful Noise.” I tried to get a copy at the newsstand in the Atlanta convention hall, but they were sold out. The clerk there informed me, “Our issues went like hotcakes.” With some 12,000 retailers of Christian products in the vicinity, I was not surprised. I had to wait to get mine at the airport.

The fact that “Christian entertainment,” as writer Lorraine Ali put it, had its own *Newsweek* cover story speaks volumes. The magazine called Christian entertainment—Christian music, books, movies and videos lumped together—a \$3 billion industry, including \$747 million this year for Christian music alone.

This report begs some sort of explanation. What does it mean? There was no conclusion about what impact these products might have on culture. There was no discussion on the spiritual implications of these sales, nothing much beyond how we as Christians have spent \$3 billion entertaining ourselves this year. What do we know from all this commercial success? Does it mean the gospel is getting out? Does it mean the kingdom of God is being expanded? Does it mean God’s will is being done on Earth as it is in heaven? These are more difficult questions to answer.

From the standpoint of *Newsweek*, the following are certain: 1) Business is great for Christian products; 2) Books and movies about end times are very popular; 3) Christians have a vote in culture by what they buy; 4) The rest of the world is paying attention to all this because it wants a piece of the economic action; and 5) Christian music is now among the hottest genres in the music industry. Bottom line? We now have “ours” which is safer than “theirs” and more importantly, just as good and almost as popular.

Ali, who has also written on grunge and Lilith Fair, wrote, “The largely evangelical industry has created its own parallel world anyway, a place where popular art and culture are filtered through a conservative Christian lens and infused with messages of faith.”

All of this begs a very big question: So what?

What is the impact on culture by Christians, given that we now have all this success? Does the world know anything more about Jesus? Is justice reigning down on our streets? Is mercy on

the rise? Are the hungry being fed? Are the poor being clothed?

Early in the ministry of Jesus, John the Baptist was hearing about a man who was creating no small stir around the countryside through his words and deeds. So John sent messengers to Jesus, saying, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” To which Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and

heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor” (Luke 7:20-23). Jesus answered the question of his identity with a statement of his miracle-working power, but also with concrete acts of kindness that made a big difference in people’s lives.

The validity of our Christian impact on society is not in the sales of our stuff, it’s in the difference we make in the lives of those closest to us. A lot of people think all this success in the Christian entertainment industry means more than it does. We live in a society that legitimizes itself with success. If something is successful, it must be right. If something is successful, it must be having an impact. But if we never think beyond the assumption of success, we are not seeing any more than the world sees. Just getting more Christian product out is no guarantee people’s lives are being altered in any significant way.

If the world came to the Christian subculture as an entity and asked, “Are you what I have been waiting for, or should I look somewhere else?” would we have anything concrete to offer that would identify us as being the bearers of Christ? Jesus offered the changed lives of people as proof of who He was. What do we have?

The business of Christian music has never been better, but there is more than business to be done, or at least a different kind of business than rings at the cash register. In the immortal words of Charles Dickens, if we want to talk about business, then we need to get a vision of mankind as our business.



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