

# U2

FAITH in the

2004



# AVALON:

## FOR THE RECORD

YOUR  
FAVORITE  
GROUP  
SETS THE  
STORY  
STRAIGHT



**GINNY OWENS'**  
BEAUTY SECRETS

**SARA GROVES:**  
AGAINST THE ROPES

**20**

THINGS YOU  
PROBABLY DIDN'T  
KNOW ABOUT  
**KIRK FRANKLIN**



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Fans have testified to love the pop prowess of **AVALON** for the past nine years. But with its brand new disc, *The Creed*, it wasn't just business as usual. With recent bouts of pain, devastating loss and lineup changes, the group poured more of itself into the new setlist and contemplated what's *really* important as it continues to serve God through music. **BY THOM GRANGER**

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Beauty may be in the "eye of the beholder," as the old adage goes, but **GINNY OWENS** has only recently begun to grasp the concept of what true beauty is all about as she's learning more about the intricacies of God and His creation. **BY LIZZA CONNOR**



For those whose lives are strengthened through faith-informed music, CCM Magazine goes behind the scenes to celebrate the artistry of Christian music.

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## The Secret of Time

Peacock circa 1990

Is timing everything? I had hoped to wait much longer before telling you my favorite artist-related story. But this month's commemoration of Charlie Peacock's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary (See page 42) indicates it's time to get this out of my system once and for all.

This is a story about dreams coming true. In fact, it's about reality surpassing the small-minded dreams of a teenager. As that teenager I didn't go out and make my dreams happen. Most of my life they've seemed to show up on my front door. And that leaves only one explanation—God.

To set the stage let's go back almost 20 years. I'm a high schooler who recently moved to the San Francisco Bay area from the rural South. I have three favorite artists—Charlie Peacock, Steve Taylor and U2. Understand, there's not even a close fourth. And while I occasionally purchase magazines like *The Sporting News* or *Sports Illustrated*, there's only one publication I actually subscribe to: *CCM Magazine*.

Skip ahead three years. I'm a college student having the summer break of my life. While working at Mount Hermon, a Christian camp in northern California, I meet several incredible people—many of whom I still know as friends today. Two of them, Jenny Evans and Shannon Hammitt, make the "mistake" of telling me they attend the Warehouse, the Sacramento church where Charlie Peacock leads worship. *Dude, I am so there!*

Through the network of friendship, I eventually find myself helping Peacock's band set up for a Thanksgiving weekend concert in 1988. It marks the beginning of a friendly acquaintanceship.

Several months later Peacock relocates to Nashville, and I don't see him again until the spring of '91. He's surprised to run into me during an in-store appearance in Wheaton, Ill. I explain I'm in graduate school at the college a mile away, and we proceed to talk for a good 20 minutes or so. The conversation is wonderful, and I file away my treasured memory of what will—no doubt—be the fan highlight of my year. Or so I think.

Later that night I catch Charlie's concert at a nearby venue. Following his performance I decide to leave without saying good-bye. After all, I'd had a "dream conversation" with him earlier in the day. How significant would a "P.S." of three or four minutes be? As I'm approaching the door on my way out, I spontaneously change my mind. (To this day, I don't know why.) I go back and spend that three or four minutes with Charlie after all. The exchange is just as I'd expected, except for about 30 seconds that would change my life forever.

**Charlie:** Hey, you should come down to Nashville to visit us.

**Jay:** (in disbelief) What?

**Charlie:** Why don't you come down to Nashville and visit us?

**Jay:** Be careful what you ask for, Charlie, I just *may* do that!

**Charlie:** I'm serious. What are you doing this summer?

**Jay:** (trying not to faint) I'm planning on an internship with the BBC in the [United Kingdom].

**Charlie:** Oh, OK.

**Jay:** (seeing his life pass before his eyes) But why do you ask?

**Charlie:** It's looking like I may need a summer intern.

**Jay:** Well, that BBC thing isn't set in stone, and I'd *definitely* be interested in being your intern.

With that Charlie told me to call his manager to set things up, and we hugged each other good-bye. And that's how I became Charlie Peacock's first intern.

After serving that summer at Charlie's Kaleidoscope Sound studio and at the Art House, I eventually made the long-term relocation to Nashville. Three years later I had the privilege of being a part of the familial team that launched Charlie's re:think label with Sarah Masen's debut.

While our professional paths have crisscrossed in different ways since then, our friendship has been a constant. Indeed, Charlie and Andi, his wonderful soulmate, are in many ways my "Nashville parents." (And did I mention that I'm like Charlie's boss now, since he writes a monthly column for CCM? "Um...let's not get carried away.")

Peacock, Steve Taylor, U2, *CCM Magazine* and the dreams of a teenager. That young music nerd who befriended Peacock later enjoyed four years with Taylor and his Squint label. Are you already doing the math? A couple years ago the kid and Peacock wrote a letter to U2's Bono asking him to come to Nashville to meet with Christian artists. The Irishman came on behalf of Africa. And as much as the kid loved the rock star, he soon found himself far more captivated by Africa's emergency.

And now there's *CCM Magazine*. I've got to be kidding.

I'm not. God is good.

Jay Swartzendruber  
Jay@ccmcom.com



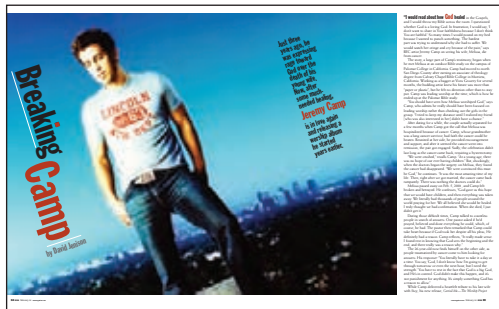
I was particularly annoyed with her advice to Mel to make a "prequel" that doesn't focus on Christ's bloody crucifixion because "there is so much violence in the world." Ms. Brasher's thoughts remind me that the image of the cross will always offend man's softer sensibilities.  
—Rev. John Stange, via e-mail



## Y.O.U.R.E. W.E.L.C.O.M.E.

Thanks for putting Out of Eden on the cover of your February issue ["Hip Pop"]. These girls have paved the way for many of the acts that have embarked upon the Christian scene with soulful music. Out of Eden's music moves your feet as well as your heart. These girls are truly anointed with something special. The article was great as well as the pictures. Keep us informed about Out of Eden during the course of their career. With a new album out and a much-anticipated tour, Out of Eden is going to surely be one of this year's most-watched acts.

—Derrick Thomas, Shreveport, LA



## I STILL BELIEVE IN CAMP

I think it would be awesome for you guys to feature Jeremy Camp on the cover of CCM. I think he is doing extremely well, and he deserves it. I was happy with the article about Jeremy in the February issue ["Breaking Camp"]. I think he's an awesome guy.

—Anonymous, via e-mail

## EAVESDROPPING

I really have enjoyed the new "Listening In" articles that have appeared in the January and February CCMs. Steven Curtis Chapman is

one of my favorite Christian artists. In fact, the first Christian album I ever bought was *The Great Adventure* [Sparrow]. I have also heard of Philip Yancey but had never thought to read any of his books. It was neat to see how much his books influenced SCC's music, and now I am going to check out some of Yancey's books. If it weren't for this column, I may have never checked into Yancey's work. I am looking forward to the next "Listening In."

—Will Fitzmaurice, Sacramento, CA

## A PASSIONATE RESPONSE

I was happy to see Joan Brasher ["The Reel," February] and Charlie Peacock's ["Everything That's on My Mind," February] articles on *The Passion of The Christ*. As Christians, I believe it is very important to support Christian movies.

—Jonathan Frantz, via e-mail

I just finished reading Joan Brasher's commentary on Mel Gibson's *The Passion of The Christ*. I enjoyed her comments up until the final paragraph, where she summarizes her thoughts. Ms. Brasher misses the point of Mr. Gibson's project. While she may wish he had concentrated more on the 33 years that lead up to the crucifixion, Gibson chose to give us a vivid portrayal of Christ's "passion" [Latin for "suffering"].

I was particularly annoyed with her advice to Mel to make a "prequel" that doesn't focus on Christ's bloody crucifixion because "there is so much violence in the world." Ms. Brasher's thoughts remind me that the image of the cross will always offend man's softer sensibilities.

—Rev. John Stange, via e-mail

## JAR-RING OPPOSITION

While Michael Paul is certainly entitled to his opinion of Jars of Clay ["Feedback," February], I am entitled to my opinion that Paul is dead wrong in his assertions. He says

"mediocrity is their calling card" and that they are the reason the Christian music industry is in a "state of mediocrity."

I know many people who believe this is one of the best bands out there—Christian or secular. I, personally, think they are the best Christian band out there. They are able to craft intelligent, thoughtful songs that are "catchy" and melodic, without using the clichés many others use.

Hearing the band's self-titled debut (along with dc talk's *Jesus Freak*) is what really got me into Christian music in the first place. Mr. Paul might want to back up his assertions a little better next time if he wants make such profound claims.

—Todd Elliott, Traverse City, MI

Michael Paul says Jars of Clay is "the same overrated band they've always been," and then he continues to impugn the "mediocrity" they've apparently perpetuated throughout the contemporary Christian music industry. Overrated? On what basis? Are they making only a mediocre effort to reach people for Jesus? Jars is reaching people Mr. Paul could never hope to reach. There is nothing mediocre in the impact for Christ they have had on the music industry and on its fans. Time to get our priorities straight.

—Anthony Toohey, King City, CA

## PRAISING PATTY

What a fitting tribute to Sandi Patty ["Hall of Fame," February]. We should take a moment and thank God for her incredible, anointed voice. Sandi's new CD [*Take Hold of Christ*] has raised the bar; she is brilliantly taking the music back to the church. I think Sandi's best days are yet to come. Who else can sing like her? No one!

—Joyce Walker, Houston, TX

You know, Joyce, we decided to take you up on your "who else can sing like Sandi Patty" challenge and thought we had a really strong candidate in 21-year-old Palmyra Smith of Roanoke, Arkansas. But it turned out she couldn't sing like Sandi Patty, either; that's when the whole

thing fell apart. Sandi's definitely one of a kind.

I would just like to thank you for featuring Sandi Patty in such a positive way in your magazine. Your magazine is a class act indeed.

—Denise Toomey, via e-mail

You're right, Denise, we ARE a class act. (And twice as humble as any other magazine.)

## ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER VIEW

Michael Ciani's synopsis of Sandi Patty's career was quite accurate, except for one very important omission: Sandi divorced her first husband. We often see that outside the church, but we don't expect it from ministers within the body. It severely cripples our witness to the non-Christian community when they see us stooping to what they know are the fallen standards in the world. They can identify us as hypocrites and blow off the church as a whole.

—William White, via e-mail



## TOUR DATING SERVICE?

Hey, I was wondering why you guys don't put the tour dates in the back of your magazine anymore. I used to love to highlight the ones in my city and convince my youth group leader to take us. Just wondering.

—Morgan Ryerson, via e-mail

Good question, Morgan. Each month in our concert reviews section ["Standing Room Only"] we now direct our readers to CCMmagazine.com's searchable tour database to get that information. This way we can give you current concert listings that can be updated even a day or two before an actual show. We invite you to copy and print the tour information off our Web site to keep your youth leader in the loop.



**Jennifer Love Hewitt** and **Fiona Apple** as they chose one-of-a-kind pieces and clothes from designer lines like Tommy Hilfiger, Fendi, Royal Order jewelry, Medium shoes and J. Lindeburg suits that won't debut until next year (They got to keep them!).

Saturday, Robert Randolph said he visited the Staples Center "gift room" (where performers get to pick out gifts and gift certificates from new mattresses to complete vacations) and went home with thousands of dollars in free merchandise ("It was awesome," Randolph told me later).

That night, we were off to the Grammy nominee party at the California Science Center. This wasn't part of my prize, but nominees **Third Day** (looking very snazzy in new 'dos and duds in preparation for their upcoming May release, *Wire*) made sure we got to experience the fun. Nominees received their awards, stood in line for signed Grammy posters from this year's artist **Charles Fazzini** and mingled among buffet tables. Third Day chatted with NARAS President **Neil Portnoy**, while Jars of Clay and **Newsboys** caught up with each other. **Donnie McClurkin** was on hand, along with too many mainstream artists to count.

On Sunday morning, we donned our formal wear and headed over to the Los Angeles Convention Center for the pre-show awards and party. **Vickie Winans** and Jars walked the red carpet (for the pre-show, it was actually red), then we entered with **Stacie Orrico** and her family. We sat in front of **Relient K**, Stacie and Grammy winners-to-be and performers **Sean Paul**, **Richard Marx** and **Vince Gill**.

Donnie McClurkin thanked "Jesus Christ" as he picked up his Grammy for "Best Contemporary Soul Gospel Album" and asked the audience to "make some noise" if they were Christians. (We did.) In the "Pop/Contemporary Gospel" and "Rock Gospel" categories, **Michael W. Smith** and **Audio Adrenaline** won. Neither attended to receive their awards.

After the gospel categories were announced, we headed out the door with Jars of Clay to "work" the very chaotic green carpet where all the big media outlets were stationed. Jars lead singer **Dan Haseltine** plugged the band's Blood:Water ministry that helps fight AIDS in Africa by wearing his Blood:Water t-shirt and talking to the media about it. Jars, Third Day and all the stars were juggled between "Entertainment Tonight," "Access Hollywood," "Extra," "The Tonight Show," E!, MTV, CBS "Early Show," CNN, VH1, Fox News, "Inside Edition" and more. At the end of the carpet, we walked in between **Evanescence**, (Cont. on 10)

Clockwise L-R: Stacie Orrico, Third Day with Donnie McClurkin, Jars of Clay with Amber Tamblyn of "Joan of Arcadia"

## WELCOME TO LA LA LAND!

**NATALIE NICHOLS GILLESPIE PROVIDES THE FIRST-PERSON DISH ON MUSIC'S BIGGEST NIGHT THAT ALSO FEATURED SOME OF CHRISTIAN MUSIC'S FINEST STARS.**

When I bought the first two-liter bottle of 7UP, I had no idea what I was in for. We opened it, and my 8-year-old son, Josh, asked what the code was inside the cap. All I knew was it was some sort of Internet promotion that my 12-year-old daughter, Jessica, asked me to check out. And that's where it all started—and how I ended up winning a trip to the 46<sup>th</sup> annual Grammy Awards and witnessing firsthand what some of my favorite Christian bands experienced as Grammy nominees.

Online, I found that I could bid on a trip for two with airfare, two nights in a deluxe hotel, ground transportation, tickets to the Grammys and \$600 in travelers checks. All I had to do was accumulate points by typing in the codes from 7UP product bottle caps and 12-pack cartons. Then, I started buying soda. Twelve packs filled the back of my 12-passenger van repeatedly, and the whole family helped me lug them into my computer room. I cleaned out Racetracs and Circle K stores, typed in the codes and hauled the cartons and bottles into our garage.

On Dec. 15 at 3:50 a.m., I won—for 132,300 points—or about \$1200 in soda. Friends and family were divided on whether I was a genius or crazy—maybe a little of both. Some were skeptical, but it was the real deal. On Friday, Feb. 6, my husband, Adam, and I flew to L.A.—where we were shuttled to the Hyatt Regency. After a quick lunch, we hopped on a bus bound for the Staples Center for a backstage tour. We watched the **Foo Fighters** rehearse and saw the contractors laying the red (well, this year it was green) carpet. We walked the media room, where stars were mingling and radio stations were getting the inside scoop. Grammy performer and nominee **Robert Randolph and the Family Band** came in and rehearsed its part of the "tribute to funk" for four hours that night.

Across town, **Jars of Clay** spent the morning at its management office, Netwerk, conducting interviews for outlets, including *Highwire Daze* and *Launch*. The band then hopped over to Ocean Way Studios to attend a Grammy Awards fitting by several stylists. The Jars guys hung out with





Top-bottom: Newsboys and wives, Vickie Winans with husband Joe McLemore, Jars heats up the red carpet

(Cont. from p. 8) Jennifer Love Hewitt and **Hugh Hefner** with his girlfriends. It's not exactly the Dove Awards crowd but definitely interesting to see.

The show itself was tame in light of the Super Bowl snafu, which Grammy winner **Justin Timberlake** apologized for once again. Highlights included the opening number with **Prince**, Foo Fighters with **Chick Corea** and definitely Robert Randolph, who wailed on the pedal steel guitar during the funk tribute.

At the end of the show, everyone received a *2004 Grammy Nominees* double CD, then boarded buses to head for the post-show party at the Biltmore Hotel. We visited with **Jordanaire Ray Walker** and walked yet another red carpet.

As the stars filed in, Third Day, Jars of Clay, **Martina McBride**, Foo Fighters, **Ruben Studdard**, **Christina Aguilera** and **Dave Matthews** stopped first at their BMG label party, where they received gift bags of jewelry, spa treatments and other goodies valued at several thousand dollars. While the artists rocked the night away, Grammy weekend for me was over; Adam and I headed back to the Hyatt. But, oh, what a good time this Cinderella had at the ball.



(L-R): TOBYMAC, GMA PRESIDENT JOHN STYLL, CHAPMAN

## WHEN DOVES FLY

**TOBYMAC AND STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THE LIST OF NOMINEES, AND NOW CCM MAGAZINE'S OWN MICHAEL CIANI AND YOURS TRULY PROVIDE A LITTLE "HE SAID, SHE SAID" COMMENTARY ON WHO THEY THINK WILL WIN BIG AT THIS YEAR'S DOVE AWARDS.**

Sure, there may not be a red carpet or snobby fashion commentary on El from Joan Rivers, but what the Dove Awards do provide is plenty of great music and this year, probably a new crop of artists in the winner's circle.

Diversity reigned supreme at the nominations for the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Dove Awards at Gaylord Entertainment Center in Nashville as the likes of **Stacie Orrico**, **Switchfoot**, **Jeremy Camp** and **Randy Travis** joined perennial Dove Award faves such as **Steven Curtis Chapman**, **CeCe Winans** and **Third Day** with multiple nominations in significant categories.

For the complete list of nominees from rock to country and everything in between, be sure to check out CCMmagazine.com, where we'll also be featuring exclusive online coverage from Christian music's biggest night on April 28.

### "SONG OF THE YEAR"

[Nominees "All About Love," "Child of Mine," "Everything to Me," "Great Light of the World," "He Reigns," "If We Are The Body," "Lord Have Mercy," "Meant to Live," "Three Wooden Crosses," "Word of God Speak"]



**SHE SAYS:** Every year there's usually that one buzzworthy song that sits perched at the top of the charts and is clearly the winner, like Nichole Nordeman's "Holy" last year or MercyMe's "I Can Only Imagine." This year, there's a bundle of serious contenders that could easily claim the bird. But I think it comes down to "He Reigns" by Newsboys vs. MercyMe's **"Word of God Speak."** And with the band's "it" status of the moment, I'll give the slight edge to MercyMe. Switchfoot could easily sneak in there, too, with "Meant to Live"; but I don't see a rock anthem being chosen as "Song of the Year" any time soon.



**HE SAYS:** I actually think there *is* that "one buzzworthy song" this year that is clearly the winner. Casting Crown's **"If We Are the Body"** catapulted a brand new, unknown artist from obscurity to sales approaching 200,000 units in less than six months. Sure, it doesn't hurt that megawatt star Steven Curtis Chapman helped produce its album, but people are buying Casting Crowns for more than just its producer. It's all about the song, as they say in the industry.



Top-bottom: T-Bone performs, Out of Eden lights up the crowd, OOE with Plus One, Sk8R Boy

## WE WANT OUR JC-TV!

**AS THE TBN-AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION GOT THE PARTY STARTED WITH A BIG BASH CELEBRATING ITS ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY, OUT OF EDEN'S ANDREA KIMMEY BACA GRACIOUSLY SERVED AS OUR ROVING REPORTER AND HAS ALL THE FUN DETAILS.**

Celebrating one year of providing music videos, reality TV programming, comedy and extreme sports to an audience ages 13 to 25, JC-TV chose a Vans skate park as the venue for a three-hour extravaganza. Time literally seemed to fly by because of all the music, guest emcees and interviews. **T-Bone** (rapper, actor and host of "Real Videos") brought tremendous energy to the show, as did **Audio Adrenaline's Mark Stuart** and actor **Stephen Baldwin**, who made cameos as well.

Throughout the show you could hear the sound of skaters performing their tricks in the background. And while the event was in a skate park, there was an intimate vibe going on as tons of kids huddled around the stage and on top of any prop they could find to get a better glimpse of the action.

The performances by **Apologetix**, **Plus One**, **T-Bone**, **Dogwood** and yours truly, **Out of Eden**, kept with the feel of the show. Everyone brought so much energy that it left the audience wanting more. In between performances JC-TV showed highlights of its programming and special events, making me want to call my cable company to see when it's on!

One of the best aspects of this particular event was that ministry was the obvious focal point. **Nate Cole** from Plus One said, "Kids ears are numb to preaching these days. It's refreshing to see a group of people reaching out through arts and entertainment." **ANDREA KIMMEY BACA**

### ARTIST OF THE YEAR

[Nominees MercyMe, Michael W. Smith, Randy Travis, Stacie Orrico, Switchfoot]



**SHE SAYS:** Like SCC, you can always count on your "friend" Smitty to win a trophy in a category like this. But I think this year has "**MercyMe**" written all over it. Look for Bart & Co. to add the evening's biggest honor to its flock of accomplishments.



**HE SAYS:** Smitty has had his turn already, and, at this point, Stacie, Switchfoot and Randy are known more for their mainstream successes than for their Christian base. I think this is the easiest category to call: **MercyMe** takes the prize.

### GROUP OF THE YEAR

[Nominees Jars of Clay, MercyMe, Newsboys, Switchfoot, Third Day]



**SHE SAYS:** What a tough, tough category! Any of these bands could easily win as they all have plenty of clout to spare. But I think it's mainstream breakthroughs MercyMe and Switchfoot that really have the best shot of taking the Dove home this year. Since I have to commit, I'll really stick my foot out there and vote **Switchfoot**. After all, for as many times as I've heard "Gone" and "Meant to Live" on the radio, that has to count for something.



**HE SAYS:** I think strictly from a momentum standpoint (especially since Third Day has won three years in a row), it is either MercyMe or Switchfoot this year. **MercyMe** has had broader Christian radio acceptance, so I think this band will land the bird.

### MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

[Nominees Bart Millard, David Phelps, Jeremy Camp, Mark Schultz, Steven Curtis Chapman]



**SHE SAYS:** You can never ever count Steven Curtis Chapman out. Like Sheryl Crow or Coldplay at the Grammy Awards, he's invincible. But I really think that **Bart Millard** and Jeremy Camp could give him a run for his money. Since it's been MercyMe's year all year, I'm going out on a limb and saying Bart will win.



**HE SAYS:** The GMA voters do seem to like awarding lead singers of bands (read: Mac Powell) in this category, but my gut is going with **Jeremy Camp**. Steven Curtis Chapman is well-loved in just about every part of this industry, but I feel people are ready for new faces to shine, and Jeremy is just the man for the job.

### FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

[Nominees CeCe Winans, Joy Williams, Nichole Nordeman, Rebecca St. James, Stacie Orrico]



**SHE SAYS:** In terms of visibility this past year, this should be a shoo-in for Stacie Orrico. But I'm not sure that will happen, so I'm going to say that new mom **Nichole Nordeman** should repeat as the sweetest voice in Christian music.



## Independent Artist Spotlight



### Karli Bonné

What do you get when you take a rock & roll princess from New York and introduce her to Jesus Christ? Give up? You get a transformed artist who has decided to dedicate all her talents to the Lord. You get **Karli Bonné!**

Karli never imagined that after years of performing in Russian restaurants and at open rock jams with the likes of Ace Freeley and Joe Lynn Turner, her life would be turned upside down and all her talents would show where her transformed heart could take her.

After the tragedies of Sept. 11, 2001, Karli felt the need to write her first EP, *The Promise of My Lord*. Proceeds from sales of the project went to the Mayor's Sept. 11 aid fund. Many of the tracks are now being performed at Upper Room Christian World Center, her home church in Dix Hills, for the Making Sense of Life audiences. Her song "Witness" has been used for the prison ministry services at Rikers Island. The single "Our Nation Under God" was sent to Iraq for the troops, and President Bush sent Karli two thank-you letters!

Today, Karli is busy promoting her latest album, *Angel Without Wings*. Paul Crowley Music Marketing is introducing the single "My Serenade" to radio, and Chris Pati of Modern Voices Entertainment has just finished her second video for the same song.

There is no stopping this artist with a full heart and God's grace and wisdom backing her up. This woman is a writing/singing testimony of the power of Jesus! Look for Karli on tour and on your favorite video and radio shows in 2004.

For more info on Karli go to <http://www.karlibonne.biz> or email [karlibonne11501@msn.com](mailto:karlibonne11501@msn.com).

Indieheaven.com is dedicated to bringing together independent Christian artists from around the globe and providing them a platform where they can be heard, seen and supported. Indieheaven offers solutions that enable, equip, affirm and empower independent artists to fulfill God's call on their lives.

### FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR



**HE SAYS:** First off, where is Jaci Velasquez in this category? Amy Grant? Both had solid new albums and media visibility this past year. Nichole Nordeman is wonderful; no one is disputing that. But she didn't put an album of new material out this year and neither did Rebecca St. James or Joy Williams. CeCe Winans did, but it was a low-key worship album that doesn't scream "Female Vocalist" to me. My money is on **Stacie**. (Speaking metaphorically, of course. Don't send me letters because I'm not actually betting on the Doves!)

### NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

[Nominees Across the Sky, Casting Crowns, Jeremy Camp, Kristy Starling, Todd Agnew]

**SHE SAYS:** Casting Crowns has made a considerable impression on Christian radio and retail over the past few months, but I think Tooth & Nail will finally earn its first Dove Award when **Jeremy Camp's** name is called.

**HE SAYS:** This is clearly a race between Casting Crowns and Jeremy Camp; we've known that for months. It's a shame they can't tie because this is a year that two artists seem equally deserving of the "New Artist of the Year" title. But I think **Jeremy** has the edge; he has had longer success at radio and retail, has won fans everywhere by touring relentlessly and is a more recognizable face than Casting Crowns. (P.S. Where in the world is Warren Barfield in this category?)

## STORY BEHIND THE SONG: Jars of Clay's "Show You Love"



Back in the day The Beatles declared "All You Need Is Love," while more recently Steven Curtis Chapman reminded us it's "All About Love." And from a spiritual perspective, Kathy Troccoli helped ground us with the realization that "Love Has a Name." Out of all Christ's commandments, the greatest is love; but, beyond gaining inspiration from those hits, how can we put that action into practice?

"True worship looks like love and demonstrates love to all those around us," says Jars of Clay frontman Dan Haseltine, who sings about that very goal on the band's new single, "Show You Love."

"The song was actually written as a response to the worship music movement. To be truly effective with worship, we need to live with love and transform culture through community."

Coming from the group's pensive and earthy CD, *Who We Are Instead* (Essential), the cut reveals many scenarios and situations where we can extend a loving attitude to those around us. Whether interacting with other believers or sharing our faith with the unchurched, the band uses a first-person perspective on how love is an essential ingredient in our overall demeanor: "Love—love like the world we know is over in a day/I'm gonna show you love in every language."

The song also relates Christ's saving sacrifice on the cross as being the ultimate example of love and a model of selflessness to follow. "As I look at love, I look at sacrifice, to think outside ourselves," notes Haseltine. "It needs to be less about us and more in service to those around us. To know people is to truly love them." **ANDY ARGYRAKIS**





## 5 QUESTIONS WITH MARK HALL of Casting Crowns

### 1. If you could trade responsibilities with someone for a day, who would that person be, what would the job be, and why would you choose to do it?

I would trade places with a middle-school student. I would go to school and take in all the different messages that are shot at him/her through media, music, movies, parents, coaches, teachers and friends. I would see that, rather than another assignment, he/she needs to see a hope and a future and that he/she doesn't have to go it alone. Then I could probably love him/her like Jesus.

### 2. When was the first moment you realized you wanted to pursue music for a living?

I never really saw myself in the music industry. I always saw myself in the church ministering to students. God is now giving me the opportunity to do both, and I'm having the time of my life.

### 3. Describe your most unforgettable date.

One day my girlfriend (now wife), Melanie, and I had been to the park for a picnic lunch. We pulled out of the parking lot and were waiting to turn at the light. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed some men in orange vests running around and waving like crazy. I had not seen the orange cones on the newly paved road I was on. And they started chasing after my car when I slung wet asphalt everywhere as I was trying to pull out when the light changed. Many "cool points" were lost that day.

### 4. What are you obsessive-compulsive about?

According to my wife, I'm obsessive-compulsive about my calendar. She says I have very neat handwriting and can't stand for anyone else to write anything on my calendar.

### 5. What characteristic of God has surprised you the most these days?

He has become the God of my schedule. I can get pretty busy, and, lately, I've looked at my week and realized I'm heading for a train wreck. God is giving me wisdom and foresight in helping me prioritize my day for time with Him, time with my family and then time in ministry.



## JUMP START YOUR YOUTH GROUP

CASTING CROWNS' MARK HALL OFFERS  
A NEW WAY TO DO YOUTH MINISTRY.

**M**ark Hall may be the lead singer of Casting Crowns, but he wants everyone to know that his heart is with a different band—namely, the band of youth at Eagles' Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Georgia. Although being a recording artist with a No. 1 hit single, impressive album sales and Dove Award nominations is a full-time job, Hall manages to juggle his busy schedule with duties as a full-time youth pastor at the church. This is usually accomplished by crisscrossing the nation during the week and making it back to Eagles' Landing in time for Sunday morning or Wednesday night services. In addition to his work with youth at Eagles' Landing, Hall and his teenagers are the leaders of a thriving youth ministry called JumpStart.

Hall's first experiences in youth leadership were not easy. With a church of 300-400 attendees, few young people and not enough mentors, Hall's approach to pastoring had to be creative and innovative. Through a series of what he deems "hits and misses... mostly misses," he succeeded in developing the group into a thriving community. After watching his own group grow, Hall felt led to minister to other struggling young youth leaders. He started creating worksheets he would share with others he knew. Hall and his group also created a drama team, using skits they had created for "Disciple Now" weekends. They would travel to other churches to teach these skits to their students. "I got the dream of training ministries," says Hall. It was through these experiences that JumpStart was born.

"You've got the vision; we've got the tools," is Hall's catchphrase. JumpStart Resources provides small youth group leaders with the tools and training to launch a healthy program in their own church. This includes topical Bible studies (including worksheets), advice columns on student ministry, ideas for student-led ministry teams, a "logo shop" for creating a personalized youth group name and logo tools for setting up an affordable, easy-to-maintain youth group Web site and more.

In addition, JumpStart offers personal training via weekend retreats. The JumpStart team from Eagles' Landing visits a church for a couple of days and during this time, various JumpStart student teams (drama, tech, band, etc.) teach the church's students, while the adults meet to develop the structure of the church's ministry. They can also train youth groups to form their own traveling JumpStart teams. "Instead of putting on a show, we leave it with them," says Mark. "So many gifted people try to take their talents elsewhere; we want to bring talent back to the church. We want to train everyone instead of shine for everyone." **JESSICA PHILLIPS**

For more information on JumpStart Resources, log onto [jumpstartresources.com](http://jumpstartresources.com).

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GO FISH



**GOTTA GO THROUGH: WHEN RELATIONSHIPS HIT THE ROUGH SPOTS**  
By Christine Denté

One-half of the highly acclaimed duo Out of the Grey, Christine Denté recently released her solo debut, *Becoming* (Rocketown), which includes the song "Gotta Go Through."

**Why'd it have to come to this?/Why'd I have to go through this?/Wouldn't it be easier to just get up and run?**

So much of the human experience tempts us to turn and run. We don't want to go through the pain of cleaning up the messes we've made. We would rather skirt the issues or sweep them under the rug for later. But "later" always comes and forces us to face the truth: To get through, we gotta go through.

**I guess I wasn't so smart/Didn't have a map of my own heart/I thought those old roads were just dead ends**

How many married men and women have damaged their relationships because they accepted the temporary counterfeit as an answer to a genuine need? After realizing their mistake, they cannot imagine building a bridge that could span the distance and chasm between them. The thought of digging up the dirt and excavating the barren stretches is unbearable.

**I don't wanna go through to get through this/I don't wanna face what it takes to break/I tried to get around but it comes back to/Gotta go through**

Thank God, the destructive after-effects of emotional and physical transgressions are not always devastating. Some couples do commit to working it through, believing they can come out better on the other side.

**Every day we take a chance/Learn a new step in the dance/Tripping together is better than falling apart**

My husband and I have been married for 16 years. Early in our marriage we learned to keep short accounts and offer lots of apologies. There have been moments of confusion and distance in our relationship. One of the bridges between us is our commitment to working it through.

We have toppled off the pedestals we had put each other on. Our stumbling becomes an opportunity for His grace. Here at our worst, we see Him at His best: the One who went through the unimaginable so that we could, by His grace, go through anything.

To keep love alive, Scott and I have refused to skirt issues and sweep trouble under the rug. And in that journey we have learned that...

**There's no getting around/Because it comes down to/We gotta go through.**

For more information, visit [eharmony.com](http://eharmony.com). Dedicated to helping people find the right partner for life long love and happiness, eharmony offers free personality profiles, a risk-free seven-day trial period and membership packages to help get you started on the path to finding the right mate for you.

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## TELL CCM

Two years into our marriage, my husband and I and two other good friends began to tour the United States, singing at churches and teen events. My husband was the lead singer and songwriter. At the age of 24, during the start of our spring tour, he fell and broke his neck, resulting in paralysis from the neck down. It was a very trying time for all of us, and we had to draw our short-lived career to a close.

I was seven months pregnant at the time and worked 10 hours a day to keep up with the hospital bills. He took the whole change very well and soon we moved from Tennessee to Arkansas, where we could be closer to his family and friends.

Just last month he was taken unexpectedly from me. I didn't even have the chance to say

goodbye. One night after his death, I sat at my desk listening to a song called "Piece of Heaven" from *Parade* by Go Fish. The words really caught my attention; they hit me so hard I began to cry.

This is what I heard: "He's gone, how can that be?/He was just here, it doesn't make sense to me/Yet I see you smiling, and I understand/You're living proof that his life had a plan." I suddenly felt a wonderful peace come upon me. Although I did not have much time here on Earth with my husband, I know God had a reason to take him from me. Someday I know we will be reunited, and we will walk the streets of gold together. —JEN D.



PROUD FATHER KALEL WITH KADEN

## BABY TALK

Recently, Pillar bassist Kalel and his wife, Stacie, welcomed their first child, Kaden, to the world. "My wife Stacie is amazing!" the proud father says. "This is something I could have never done, even if it was anatomically possible!" We're not exactly sure how to respond to that, but we're certainly happy for the couple! "We hope you will all say a little prayer for Kaden—that he grows up to be a kind, honest and God-fearing man who will do great things," says Kalel.

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>02</b> – Kirk Sullivan<br>(4 Him)    | <b>19</b> – Christine Denté<br>(solo artist and one-half of Out of the Grey) |
| <b>05</b> – Chrissy Conway<br>(ZOEgirl) | <b>22</b> – Ginny Owens  |
| <b>11</b> – Michael Card                | <b>26</b> – Danielle Young<br>(Caedmon's Call)                               |
| <b>17</b> – Alisa Girard<br>(ZOEgirl)   |  |





## THE GAME ACCORDING TO JOHN

2004 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that John Huie has served as the booking agent for Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith. As an agent/partner with Creative Artists Agency, Huie's further involved with orchestrating tours for Stacie Orrico, Steven Curtis Chapman, tobyMac, Third Day, Sara Groves, Jars Of Clay and ZOEgirl, among others. He also personally represents country superstars Alan Jackson, Faith Hill and Deana Carter. Huie began his career in 1978 as a booking agent based in Macon, Ga., where he worked with The Charlie Daniels Band and The Allman Brothers. He soon moved to New York City and helped Ian Copeland open Frontier Booking International (the agency that introduced new wave, punk and reggae to America). During the next five years Huie contributed to breaking new acts such as The Police, The GoGo's and Joan Jett. He then founded his own agency, H-1, where he first worked with Grant, Smith and other artists of faith. Huie's new company emphasized the previously untested approach of crossing over contemporary Christian artists to a mass market. Eventually Huie sold H-1 and worked out of Los Angeles with ICM before relocating to Nashville in 1993, where he helped open the only satellite office for the L.A.-based Creative Artists Agency. Since then his career highlights have included winning the 1999 Grammy Award in the "Country/Bluegrass/Gospel Album Of The Year" category as a co-producer of Robert Duvall's *The Apostle* soundtrack, and being selected *Pollstar Magazine's* "Third Coast Agent of the Year" for the third time in 2003.

### What are your responsibilities with CAA?

I'm involved with routing and negotiating each personal appearance that our artists perform at. The bigger the artist, the more complex the deal is and the more time negotiations take. My motto is, "If the job ever gets easy, you're not doing your job!"

### What drew you into this profession?

It's the only thing I ever wanted to do. When I was 9 years old, I went to see The Beatles for my first concert. I never had a fantasy about *being* a Beatle, but I did have one about being their tour manager.

### What's a moment that made you most proud to do what you do?

Three events in New York City come to mind—watching The Police go from playing for \$250 a night to selling out Madison Square Garden and then later selling out

Shea Stadium, all within seven years; Amy Grant selling out Radio City Music Hall with *no* Christian radio; selling out Madison Square Garden with Tim McGraw and Faith Hill when no one believed country could sell in New York.

### What are a couple of your favorite memories involving Michael W. Smith and Amy Grant?

When I signed Amy Grant, I flew out to see her show on Aug. 10, 1984, and was moved to tears by her performance. I was also knocked out by this new kid opening up for her, Michael W. Smith. The girls went nuts. It didn't take me long to ask if I could represent him, too. And April 5, 1985 stands out as well. The Michael W. Smith "Friends Tour" stopped at Davidson College (my alma mater)—Michael changed my life by quoting Psalm 139. Those close to me know the fruit from that. There is nothing more wonderful than seeing the Holy Spirit use someone, and there is nothing that drives me up the wall more than seeing a concert that is contrived or manipulated. Whenever I am at a show where a sense of the Holy Spirit is at work, I am in awe that God has me in the mix.

### What are some current trends you see impacting touring?

Creative Artists Agency has an affiliation with a research company. According to its findings, one's spiritual roots or identity is extremely important to youth, second only to freedom of sexual expression. I think that bodes well for Christian artists as long as the artistic expression is real and not full of "Christianese." Other things we're seeing is that in the Christian music circuit, more and more radio stations are promoting concerts; and the format continues to be defined by worship. People want to participate; but artists, please write some new stuff. What's with all the covers?

### What role does touring play in breaking a new artist?

Touring is essential—there is a loyal following for the format. Fans really want to know their artists.

### What would you like to say specifically to the readers of CCM?

Pray for the day when we are not defined by the sandbox we play in. Our God is bigger than that. I'd love to see more examples like MercyMe and P.O.D. that have a smash song at secular radio; and they still do what they do and are who they are. Pray for the day when we can worry more about helping a hurting world than climbing the charts. And be concerned as much with respect to our walk as we are for our art.

## AND THE BEAT GOES ON...

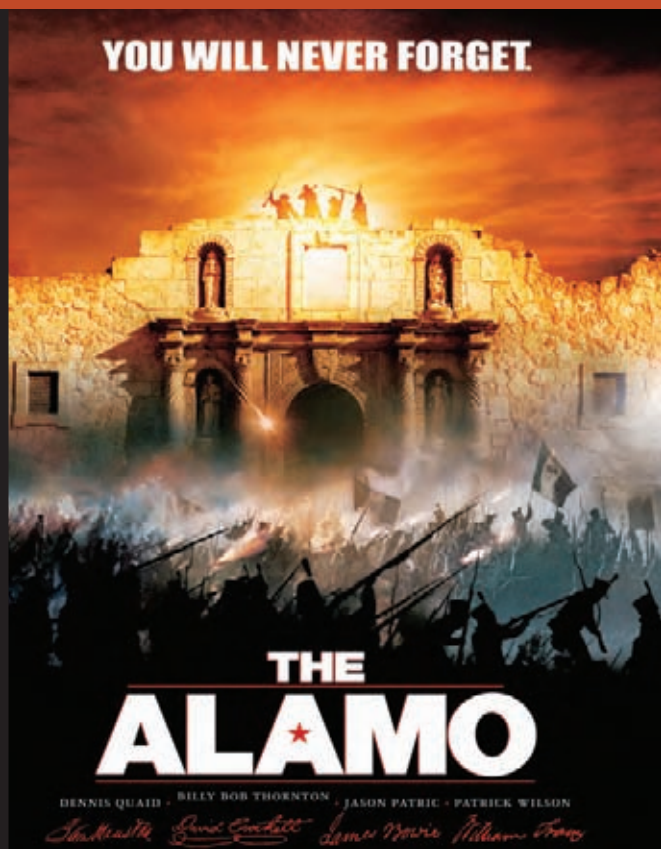
The world's largest Christian music company, **EMI Christian Music Group**, has merged all label functions of its two companies **ForeFront** and **Sparrow Records** into one new entity called **EMI CMG Label Group**.

**EMI CMG Marketing**, a newly created centralized marketing division serves the label group. Artists will remain on their respective label imprints and be served by the EMI CMG Label Group staff. The Sparrow and ForeFront rosters include Steven Curtis Chapman, Stacie Orrico, Switchfoot, tobyMac, Newsboys, Avalon, Nichole Nordeman, Rebecca St. James, ZOEgirl, Audio Adrenaline, Jump5 and Tait, among others. EMI Christian Music Publishing becomes **EMI CMG Publishing**. EMI CMG's Chordant Distribution Group has been renamed **EMI CMG Distribution**. Each division reports directly to **Bill Hearn**, president and CEO of EMI Christian Music Group.

**EMI Gospel**, one of EMI CMG's wholly owned labels with artists including Smokie Norful, Kierra "KIKI" Sheard and Darwin Hobbs, will not make changes in this transition.

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Remember the Alamo? If you're as rusty on your American history as I am, never fear. **The Alamo** (Disney/Touchstone), which opens this month, is sure to jog your memory on the legendary 13-day siege in San Antonio in 1836. Holding down the fort (literally) are Billy Bob Thornton (*Sling Blade*, *Bandits*) as the legendary Davy Crockett, Jason Patric (*The Lost Boys*, *Sleepers*) as Col. James Bowie and Broadway actor Patrick Wilson as Col. William Travis. Dennis Quaid (*The Parent Trap*, *The Rookie*) plays the better-late-than-never General Sam Houston and Emilio Echevarria (*Y Tú Mama También*, *Amores Perros*) plays General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, commander of the opposing Mexican army. The battle at the Alamo, where hundreds of men on either side of the battle lines died, has become an enduring symbol of independence and freedom.

And speaking of epic battles, I don't plan to miss **Home on the Range** (Disney), an animated musical-comedy about the residents of the Patch of Heaven dairy farm, who sense trouble when the widow who runs the farm can't make her rent. Set in the Wild West, a trio of caustic cows, voiced by Judi Dench (*Chocolat*, *Shakespeare in Love*), Rosanne Barr ("Roseanne") and Jennifer Tilly (*Liar Liar*, *Monsters, Inc.*), fear they'll end up at the meat-packing plant if they don't find a solution fast. Things begin looking up when they hear about a bandit on the loose named Alameda Slim (Randy Quaid, *Christmas Vacation*) with a \$1,000 bounty on his head. Buck, a karate-kicking stallion voiced by Cuba Gooding Jr. (*Jerry Maguire*, *Fighting Temptations*), pitches in to help the bovine beauties save the farm. It might be my Midwest roots talking (or my fond memories of *Chicken Run*), but I think this *moo*-vie looks like it's going to be as much fun for adults as it is for the kiddos. Music fans will be pleased with the heart-warming score from award-winning composer Alan Menken (*The Little Mermaid*'s "Under the Sea") and songs performed by K.D. Lang, Bonnie Raitt and Tim McGraw.

The theatrical release of **Saved** (United Artists), produced by R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe, may cause a ruckus all its own this month. The sardonic, dark comedy follows the travails of a pregnant teenager named Mary (Jena Malone, *Life As a House*, *Stepmom*) and her best friend who's the school's most popular girl, Hilary Faye (Mandy Moore, *A Walk to Remember*, *Chasing Liberty*). In their senior year at American Christian High School, the revelation of Mary's pregnancy turns the school and her best friend against her, with a lesson about acceptance eventually revealing itself. I haven't seen this movie yet, but I spoke with the script's co-writer Michael Urban, who based much of the story on his own memories in a Southern Baptist home. He assured me that neither he nor co-writer Brian Dannelly, who grew up Catholic, intended for the film to come off mean-spirited. I'm told by a fellow critic, however, that some Christians may bristle at Moore's maniacal, hyper-critical portrayal of Hilary Faye, whose dream is to have her favorite Christian rock group, Godflight, perform at the senior prom (Rumor has it, The Elms were originally slated to play the part of the faux band but pulled out after reading the script). If you decide to check it out, keep the writers' comments in mind and be sure to bring your sense of humor.

On the small screen, CBS's popular drama "**Joan of Arcadia**" is getting a lot of attention from faith groups who appreciate the program's sensitive treatment of spiritual themes. Amber Tamblyn plays Joan, a teenager who is periodically contacted by God through a random stranger who gives her a task to perform. Sound like an odd premise? The show's matriarch, Mary Steenburgen (*Life As a House*, *I Am Sam*), agrees. She recently talked with me about the show and described it this way: "To be honest, it's a really hard show to tell people about in a way where they get how great it is. It sounds simplistic or silly, but they don't 'get' that it's funny and really smart." It's also a breath of fresh air in a sea of reality shows designed to humiliate and bring out the worst in humankind. I know I'll be sure to keep tuning in.





## Duvall

To Be or Not to Be... a Mainstream Band

Have you ever prayed for the salvation of the members in your favorite mainstream band? Well, keep praying. Duvall's Josh Caterer (guitar and vocals) is proof that God answers those prayers. During the '90s, Josh and his brother, Eli (Duvall's bass player), were part of Chicago's own Smoking Popes. The band developed a significant following, released two albums on Capitol Records and toured with such artists as Foo Fighters and Morrissey. Then Josh had a conversion experience in 1998 that brought "a complete change in my understanding of life." After finding that it just wasn't working to incorporate his faith into the Popes music, he left the band and spent some years growing in the church and playing music there before forming Duvall. The band's debut full-length album, *Volume & Density* (Asian Man), released in late 2003.

Many of the Popes' fans have followed the Caterer brothers to Duvall. Josh has been surprised to find that a lot of those fans are Christians, and some of them were praying with their friends for his salvation when he was in his former band.

**CCM:** *Where did the name Duvall come from?*

**JOSH:** *The Apostle* is my favorite movie. I wanted to name the band after Robert Duvall because of his performance in that film.

**CCM:** *How would you describe your music?*

**JOSH:** It's guitar-driven, melodic power pop.

**CCM:** *What's the biggest difference between Duvall and Smoking Popes?*

**JOSH:** The main difference is lyrical. As far as the sound and the style, I think we picked up right where the Popes left off. I didn't leave the Popes because I was unhappy with the sound. It was because I wanted to make music for the Lord.

**CCM:** *With regard to faith and music, how would you categorize Duvall?*

**JOSH:** I consider us a Christian band. The Christian content of our stuff is pretty obvious if you listen to it. We mention Christ but not in every song.

**CCM:** *Is there a song that you feel especially accomplishes or captures just what you want?*

**JOSH:** The last song on the album is called "Jesus Never Leaves Me." People who aren't Christians themselves find it moving. I've been really excited about that. That song seems to be something God has used to touch people in a particular way that I'm really grateful for.



## AARON Sprinkle

Producer vs. Artist

Aaron Sprinkle first made a name for himself in the '90s as a founding member of the band Poor Old Lu. Though his involvement with the group has continued over the years, most recently with the band's fifth album in 2002 (*The Waiting Room*), Sprinkle has also become a respected solo artist and producer, working with bands such as Kutless, Pedro the Lion and MxPx. His fourth solo album, *Lackluster* (Tooth & Nail), released in February.

**CCM:** *Was there anything unusual about your childhood?*

**AARON:** I lived on a little island with no bridges, a 16 by nine-mile island called Vashon [in Washington]. It was a hippie, artsy community. My parents were hippies, so I grew up around that.

**CCM:** *How long have you been performing as a solo artist?*

**AARON:** I really first started doing it around 1999. It was really weird at first because I'd never done that.

**CCM:** *What do you enjoy about producing versus the artist side of things?*

**AARON:** I've been recording at home and in studios since I was 16. The process of making a record is something I enjoy and have a good grasp on. Taking other people's material and making a record is really rewarding, and being able to be in that environment and work with other Christians who are like-minded is a perfect situation for me personally. Knowing the records I'm doing are going to, God willing, touch people and bring them closer to God is really, really cool.

**CCM:** *So, what's behind the album title, Lackluster?*

**AARON:** It started out as a joke, honestly. One of the things I like to do is give people who review my records a chance to use the album title negatively in the review. I also like that word, how it sounds and looks, and it's kind of an inside joke with my friends. The meaning is that life can feel lackluster. Even the best day on Earth is lackluster compared to heaven.

**CCM:** *What's up with the fish on the album cover (see page 48)?*

**AARON:** I really like fishing. That's why my friend Ryan, who did the artwork, put a fish on the cover.







# NEVER GIVIN'

(L-R): Greg Long, Melissa Greene, Janna Long, Jody McBrayer





This year's  
**Readers' Choice**  
for "Favorite  
Group,"

## **AVALON**

has **19 No. 1**  
**radio singles**,  
almost **two**  
**million albums**  
sold and  
countless fans  
**worldwide** who  
love the music,  
yet their road  
**hasn't been the**  
**easiest** in the  
last two years.  
From an  
unexpected  
**death**, to **losing**  
**members** of its  
group, to feeling  
the weight of  
**criticism**, Avalon  
nearly **called it**  
**quits**. Find out  
how the  
foursome  
**survived** these  
hardships and  
**found new hope**  
and **purpose in**  
**their calling**.

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By Thom  
Granger



Folks who follow the world of pop music—Christian or otherwise—know that the release of a “greatest hits” album usually signifies the closing of some chapter in the artist’s life or career. It may be the last release on that particular label as the artist prepares to sign a new contract with another; or it may be the end of a particular endeavor, such as a band or vocal group.

For über-group Avalon, last year’s *Testify to Love: The Very Best of Avalon* did not mark the group’s final release for Sparrow Records, neither did it signify the end of the Avalon era. After all, the group’s sixth album of new material (and eighth release overall), *The Creed* (Sparrow), hit the shelves in late February. So why should anyone assume there might have been trouble in paradise? Unless, of course, it was true.

It’s been said that bad news comes in triplicate, and it’s often not that first blow that levels you or even the one-two punch of the second, but it’s that unexpected third sucker punch that scores the total knockout.

As original member Janna Long remembers it, “The moment, for me, came last summer. We had already been through so much two years ago and then to have Michael [Passons] leave last summer just basically had me throwing up my hands and saying, “OK, God, I’ve done this for nine years. It’s been great, but maybe it’s just time. Maybe this season of my life, this chapter of my life is just over; and I talked with Jody about that. When you’ve been beaten down, there’s always that final blow.”

The dark night of the soul for Avalon started in July 2001 with the most unexpected piece of news anyone could imagine. Sparrow Records Vice President of A&R Grant Cunningham, who helped form the group nine years

ago and had been an integral part of all of Avalon’s recordings, received a serious blow to the head during a soccer match and passed away shortly after falling into a coma due to swelling of the brain. To say the loss was devastating to the foursome was an understatement.

As Jody McBrayer explains it, “I don’t think the typical Avalon fan probably knew who Grant Cunningham was, unless they are just the type to really read the credits diligently. Even within the industry, I’m not sure how many knew how deeply this affected us. Grant signed Janna and me to Sparrow; and if [producer] George Martin was the ‘fifth Beatle,’ Grant was the ‘fifth Avalonian.’ There wasn’t a record that was made or a song that was sung or written that Grant didn’t have his fingerprints on. So to be sitting at his funeral was a very surreal time for us; and it just left us with a very hollow feeling, wondering what we were going to do.

“Cherie [Paliotta, now Adams] left shortly after that, which, although she was a newlywed and wanted to give her new life some attention, I do think her departure had a lot to do with the pressure we all were under, the sense of loss we felt. Cherie was a very emotional person, too. She felt things much deeper than most people, which made her fantastic at what she did; but it also sometimes added an extra burden for her.”

The loss of Grant and Cherie left Jody, Janna and Michael down but not out. After hiring fellow Truth alumnus Melissa Greene to replace Adams, the group recorded three new songs to accompany its greatest hits album, which released a year ago. It featured 12 former No. 1 songs. (Two of the three new songs climbed to the top of the Christian pop charts.) With the ever-present



support of its fans, a fair amount of touring and a live DVD release last year, things were looking up again for Avalon.

But bad news did, indeed, travel in triplicate. As Jody tells it, "We had a meeting at Michael [Passons]'s house one day, and he told us he was going to move on to other things. We sat and cried and felt like the rug had been pulled out from under us. Things had felt great with the new group, and Michael seemed to get along and blend vocally with Melissa really well. But Michael had been with us from the beginning and just felt it was time for him to do something else. It's weird, but, since his departure, it seems everyone is looking for some scandalous thing to have happened there. It makes me just want to say, 'Look, I'm sorry to disappoint you that we don't have some juicy gossip or 'Dynasty' episode happening here.'"

"The fact of the matter is Michael is a songwriter," adds Melissa, "and there were songs Michael brought to Avalon that we turned down because they sounded like personal, solo songs; we don't record songs like that."

"That's why I chose to make my solo record," continues Jody, who released *Who I Am* in September 2002, "There was this group of songs that I had either written or co-written that I knew would not work for Avalon. You can't force your vision on three other people. I think those kinds of issues contributed to Michael's decision to leave the group. But he is going on in a solo ministry, and we wish him the very best."

But best wishes aside, Michael's departure began a season of self-examination for the singers that, quite literally, brought the group to its respective knees. As new member Greg Long (who was only watching from the sidelines at the time as Janna's husband) tells it, "When Michael left Avalon, I can tell you even from a spouse's vantage point—as well as Jody's friend—Avalon almost *was not*. Melissa had just moved to Nashville and bought a home, and... things almost came to a halt right there."

## SEASON OF THEIR DISCONTENT

With circumstances as difficult as they were, the criticism Avalon continued receiving—and had felt for years—from the Christian industry couldn't be coming at a worse time. As is the case with pop counterparts such as the boy bands and "American Idol" winners, the public may love them to the tune of gold or platinum; but the critics just seem to love to... well, criticize. The same has seemed to be true for Avalon from its inception, according to its members. No matter that the group has now garnered 19 No. 1 songs, 20 Dove nominations and three Dove Awards as well as the American Music Award for its "Contemporary Inspirational Music" category, the fact is that critics—both Christian and mainstream—never seemed to warm up to superb, pop song stylists like these. They do, however, seem to gravitate (sometimes indiscriminately) to even the most mediocre singer/songwriter types.

Says Jody, "I think from day one we've had to live down [the criticism of] being 'manufactured' or put together. The concept of the group was not mine and Janna's; we were approached [and asked] if we would be interested in being part of something like this. For the first three or four years, that was a real cross to bear for us. Most Christian bands formed in college or in the garage or at their church; but, for us, it was really different. Now it's more commonplace; but, even so, we were always seen as the glossy picture and production style artists. That's something that, for us as individuals, is a part of who we are. But we always knew there was so much more."

"The thing I don't understand about the critics is that they seem to disrespect these types of artists from the outset by the way they were discovered," adds Janna. "I mean, if their talent is there, why does it matter how it came to a label's attention? Whether you are discovered by

someone hearing you at your college or by your being in a talent search, your talent is the same."

"It's been a difficult thing for us within the industry, in particular," Jody continues. "People who love our music have been extremely supportive of us, but the industry has been quick to write us off for reasons none of us completely understand. For example, we won the American Music Award last year. My wife, who works in the industry, came back to her office after the Awards, all excited to tell her co-workers; and people in her office said, 'Oh, the only reason Avalon won is because they were there.' We just have a hard time understanding why people in the industry seem to want to tear us down when we get such great feedback from our fans."

"All of that leads us to places that make us ask, 'Why are we doing this? Is it to please industry types, our audiences, the Lord or ourselves?' Obviously, we feel this is our calling, our ministry (and a very viable ministry); but we also do a lot of this for ourselves. The kind of music we record is the kind of music most of us would listen to at home. We love R&B/pop music, and we try as best we can to do what we love within the formula we're given."

"The funny thing was," says Janna, "although inside the group we felt very weary and fatigued, it seemed God just continued to do things that were just blowing us away. I remember we had this one show last summer when Greg was filling in after Michael left, where we really felt God's presence in the concert; and people were really responding with their own worship more than what we see normally. It seemed like the harder things got for us, the

more things started happening for our ministry. For me, that was even a bigger sign of God's communicating: 'I am not done with you yet.'

"There's this song Jody sings on the new album called 'You Were There' that has a line in it that says, 'You were there when obedience didn't make sense.' For me, it was like a light bulb went off in my head because, even though my world as I knew it was crumbling, falling down, I did not feel a release from this [group]. So, for me, I just resolved that until I felt differently, I would just keep showing up for work."



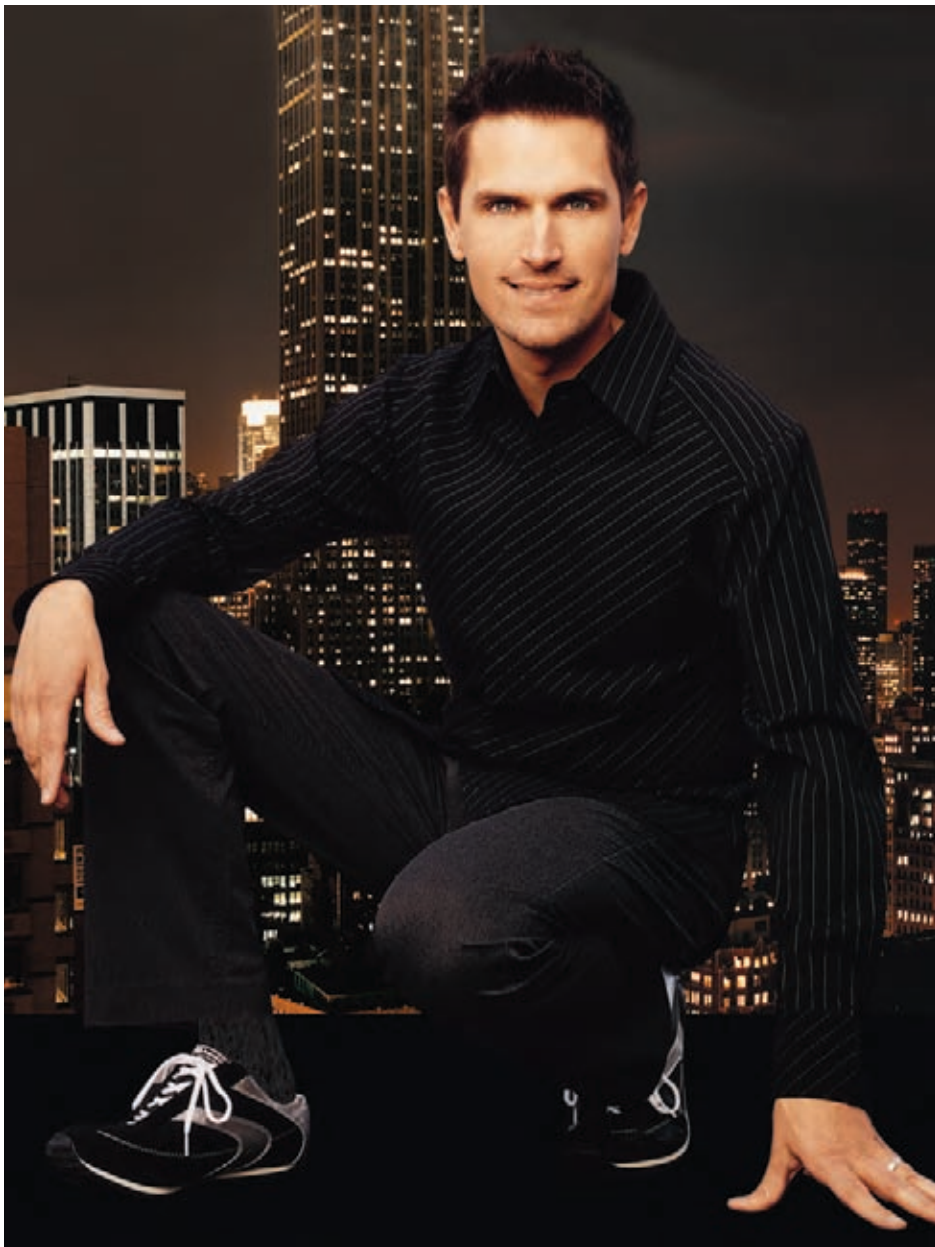
## REINVESTED

And show up they did, along with about 15 of the industry's top songwriters, to a "writer's camp" of sorts, put together specifically for Avalon to begin the process of writing for the album that would become *The Creed* (Sparrow).

"The writer's camp was a vision of Grant Cunningham's," explains Jody, "though we had never done it before. We talked about doing it for *Oxygen* but ran out of time. We mentioned it to Brad O'Donnell, our new A&R guy—who's had some big shoes to fill—and he stepped up to the plate on our behalf and let us give this a try. Part of the reason we wanted to try this was because we wanted to invest more into the songs ourselves. Did we feel we wanted to try writing all the songs alone for the first time? I don't think any of us—with the exception of Greg—are really good enough writers to tackle that alone."

"It was a desire in us to nourish that gift," adds Melissa. "I had always wanted to write with Cindy Morgan, so we invited her to come; and we all agreed upon the writers we wanted to be a part of this."

Greg continues, "We were invited to tell this group of writers what we were feeling, the things we wanted to say on this record. A lot of ideas were birthed there but not turned into completed songs. But three songs that made it onto the record came out of that experience. It was really amazing. I have to tell you it was really interesting," Greg continues, "to watch the transformation in Jody alone, who said on the tour bus at one point, 'Maybe this is done. Maybe we're done with this.' Less than three months later, I heard him say, 'I don't care if we've got a record label or not. If we're supposed to keep doing this, we'll make our own records if we have to.'"



## THE ROAD BEHIND... THE ROAD AHEAD

Most Christian pop music fans know that Greg Long isn't just the "new guy in Avalon" or the "husband of Janna from Avalon." They know, for instance, just how long Mr. Long has been singing "How Long," his first single and first No. 1 song from his first solo album, *Cross My Heart*, in 1995. It was the first of four solo albums that each delivered at least one No. 1 hit on Christian radio.

But after stepping in to help his wife and friends in Avalon when Michael Passons left the group last summer for a number of already booked dates, the resulting blend of voices and hearts led Greg to agree to join the group permanently. And though the familial aspects of that decision are self-evident, being an 'Avalonian' didn't lessen his desire to create music as a solo artist. In fact, if the songs on his fifth and latest solo album, *Born Again* (Christian Records), are any indicator, it would appear the experience has caused the singer to become more personal than ever before.

The album's title song tells the story of Greg's own baptism at the hands of his father, an itinerant preacher/evangelist who led revivals in various parts of the country. "All my life I was a vagabond," he says, recalling a childhood spent on the road. "My two brothers and I were students at a Christian school but only spent five to 10 days a school year at the facility itself. The rest of

the time we were out with the family on a bus being tutored by my mom. And when your friends are back home in South Dakota, you make short-term friends at the churches Dad's ministering at, getting real chummy but knowing by Friday you'd be done.

"My dad had to make a choice between being away from his family most of the time or taking them with him in an RV on the road. I personally am glad he chose the latter because whatever was lost in the sense of rooted-ness in a certain place was more than made up for by being with him. I guess it prepared me for the life I live today."

In college, Greg started a men's trio that traveled every summer and weekends for concerts. After four years, he joined up with a touring evangelist for whom Greg would provide the music ministry and lead worship. As Greg says, chuckling a bit, "Yeah... outside of working in the campus bookstore when I was in college, I've never really had a 9-to-5 kind of job. This is who I am. It's in my blood."

As for the title song, Greg explains, "My parents taught me that Jesus loves me and encouraged me to give my heart to Christ, which I did at 5. But they never forced me into any other religious commitments or service. I sang on the platform when I was a kid, but that's because I asked to do that. It wasn't until I was 12 that I asked to be baptized. We were ministering at a church in Florida on the Gulf of Mexico at the time, and the lyric of the song is literally the story of my baptism. In fact, the video we made for the song [included on the enhanced CD] features actual footage of my baptism that was shot for home movies at the time!

"When I first mentioned the title of the song to Don Koch, who I wrote it with, he balked a bit, saying it sounded like a title of so many songs that had been recorded years before. But I said that it wasn't a song about the need to be born again *per se*, but it was my testimony, my life, my story; and nobody's testimony is invalid. Having said that, I hope that by the end of the chorus, when the lyric says, '*It's not about what I was/It's about what I am,*' anyone who has found Christ and been found by Christ should be able to relate to those words. I mean, I believe we are compelled to present Jesus to our culture in a way that is contemporary, and I hope the music does that; but the term 'born again' comes out of the mouth of Jesus himself, and there's no reason to shy away from that."

Another very personal song on the new CD is Greg's updated cover of Dallas Holm's classic anthem, "Rise Again," which he says also has a Florida connection.

"The reason I chose to record 'Rise Again' is because I recommitted my life to Christ when I was 14 at a Dallas Holm concert that was also in Florida. His music really, really ministered to me and impacted me; and, without stretching the truth at all, I can tell you that when he called people forward for commitment that night, it was almost like I couldn't resist. I was drawn so strongly to recommit my heart to Christ, there was really no other decision for me in that moment.

"In looking at that now from a music minister's standpoint, there are times when I think to myself, 'I've got to make these people really want to serve Christ or commit their lives to Christ.' But Dallas Holm didn't make that happen for me that night. That was the Spirit of God moving in that place and in my heart who compelled me to do that."

And Long says it's that same Spirit who he calls upon to take his words and music and make something of it that is more than the sum of its parts.

"I don't want to sound hokey, but I pray that God would really and honestly use my music in people's lives because I experienced the power of this music and message in my life growing up. From Dallas Holm, to Russ Taff, to Andraé Crouch, to Edwin Hawkins, the Imperials, 4Him... these people and their music really did make a difference in my life. I can honestly say I'm honored to do the same kind of work and pray to make the same kind of difference in someone else's life." **T. G.**



That's a significant transformation."

That transformation is palpable on *The Creed*. Produced by the "dream team" of Charlie Peacock, Brown Bannister and Tedd T., the album sports the same perfect, pop music that fans and critics alike have come to expect, but its lyrics dig deeper at times... if not too specifically. When asked why none of the lyrics seemed to address the trials of the last few years by name but rather in broader, more religious language, Jody tried to explain.

"I feel like what we're called to be as a group is sort of an 'all things to all people' kind of thing. I don't think we're called to do deeply introspective songs in *Avalon*, but I guarantee you that on this new album—more than any we've done—songs like 'Renew Me' represent our real heart's cry right now. 'You Were There,' as Janna said, is deeply meaningful for us. And I think one of the reasons we chose to record (and title the album with) *The Creed* is because even the first verse says, 'I'm broken and battered/And I'm desperately searching for faith to make sense of all of this mess.' We're sort of back to a place of embracing some real fundamental truths and, churchy or not, those lyrics are no less true for us."

"You know what?" Janna interjects. "I can't sing about drug addiction; I can't sing about an abortion; I can't sing about a marriage falling apart. What I can sing about is being a kid who has heard about God all her life and has had those crisis-of-faith moments when I have to ask myself, 'Do I really believe what I say I believe because my parents taught me or because God has shown His presence to me personally?'"

"There's a part of me that abhors 'Christian-ese' language," Jody continues, "because I remember a time when everything in my world just felt really crappy, and my pastor said that morning, 'God will never put more on you than you can bear.' I just thought, 'Forget this.' I think our music is a key that opens the door for us to communicate more fully to our audience in our concerts. In that context, we all really speak our hearts pretty plainly. I tell people we are jacked-up, screwed up idiots who are in constant need of the love of God in our lives."

It seems odd to say that a group as successful as *Avalon* might just be coming of age, but one senses a new resolve in the foursome to both push the envelope most associated with their genre and accept with deeper grace the "calling to which they have been called." Call it the results of a good mid-life crisis.

"Perhaps you have to go through some of the things we've gone through to reach that level of maturity and say, 'OK, maybe it's not as polished and pretty, and we're not as together as people thought,'" says Janna. "But coming out of that, we realize what our faith really means and how much we really do need God in our lives. For us, this is who we are, and I can't imagine being anywhere else. This is what we've always wanted to be and do. There is no disappointment here. We get to do what we love and at the same time, we feel like we're making a difference in people's lives."

Jody summarizes, saying, "*Avalon* always had this slick, polished persona that has been manufactured for us, and with it perhaps has come the idea that we are pop stars and not approachable. Over the past year we reached a point where we decided it's not about the Christian music industry anymore for us. There came a point where we had to say, 'OK, God, we're a ministry. With or without the industry's support, we're going to continue to try and reach people because that's what we are called to do... not as *Avalon*, but as four people who desire to use their gifts to bless and encourage God's people.'

"We want to be entertaining, and we want to do it with excellence; but, at the same time, we also want to be truly authentic with our audience and tell them who we really are and what we really believe. The only reason we have the right to stand up here and do this is because of what Christ has done for us. That's what *Avalon* is called to communicate. That's where the rubber meets the road for us." **ccm**







# The Park of Beauty

*Sinny Owens*



# Side



"As a songwriter and a creative person, I'm always searching for something," singer/songwriter Ginny Owens says over lunch at Bricks, a cozy Franklin, Tenn., diner that's a block from her home. "I don't always know what I'm searching for; and, even in the most content times in my life, my mind is wandering. If I'm going to continue on this [musical path], the only way to move forward is to have varied experiences rather than do the same thing every day. That means going to a place where I am more open, honest and comfortable with the story I have to tell."

Owens' "story," is found in the songs of her third Rocketown Records release, *Beautiful*. The most honest and accurate picture of her life to date, according to the writer of No. 1 singles "Free," "If You Want Me To" and "I Am Nothing," the record chronicles her quest to define terms. "The dark side of the song, 'Call Me Beautiful' [after which the record is named] came out of a huge struggle in my heart to understand what real beauty is," says Owens. "Who has it? How do you define it?"

And while her question is one pondered by any thinking person, Owens' struggle to grasp the concept was intensified due to her lack of sight, she says. Because she went blind at a young age due to a congenital eye disease, Owens says it was always hard for her to comprehend what "beautiful" was because she'd always associated the word with visual things. "I would be out on tour and hear guys say things like, 'She's hot; she's beautiful,' but I never heard that said to me," Owens explains.

Even in younger years, Owens shied away from exploring the concept because the introspective singer feared sticking out in a crowd. "I'm not sure why, but I grew up not very aware of what things looked like. My mom would describe things in detail, and I don't know if it's that I didn't listen or if I just had sensory overload growing up—trying to adjust to life in general—but I had very little appreciation for visual things."

She explains how she tried to avoid being "different" at any cost, and how that often she kept her inquiries about the world to herself: "I tried to go so far as not to ask for things that were too unusual," says Owens. "I didn't ask visual questions because I wanted to blend in—so people didn't feel I was an inconvenience. For years I felt like, 'If I just work really hard, then I'll be accepted. I'd always thought there was no way I could be beautiful anyway because I can't see. I believed they'd never see me as beautiful because that [blindness] was an obvious flaw I had."

Her drive to understand beauty was intensified just after Owens signed with Rocketown. She accompanied labelmate Chris Rice and songwriter Wayne Kirkpatrick on a tour in support of her debut record, *Without Condition*, and the result was a sense of wonder she'd never experienced. Owens says Rice and Kirkpatrick were the first people (besides her mother) who really invested the energy in explaining the world in detail, painting pictures for Owens in ways she'd never experienced. "We'd go down to the beach on a tour stop in Florida, and they'd say, 'I wish you could see the stars right now.' They'd describe what stars were—how they didn't look like the five-point shape you'd imagine, but that they were tiny [when you looked at them]. They explained what rainbows and stuff like that looked like. I called them the Discovery Channel," jokes Owens.

With her curiosity piqued, Owens found herself on a constant quest to see the world as others around her viewed it. "I was challenged to be less afraid to ask people things that might be a little different than what most people would ask. I became even more interested in the visual. I had more of a mental picture when I'd go to the ocean or go on a hike, and those experiences have made me aware of God, of who He is, of being able to feel His presence and to say, 'OK, You are still here.'"



As Owens began developing an understanding for the visual world, she was maturing in her career path and becoming more attuned to the pressures of meeting an entertainment industry standard of beauty. "I felt I was never going to measure up," Owens admits. "It took me a few years to find out how important image really is in this business, and I feel I was on a marathon going, 'If I try hard enough to look good, they [the industry] will be pleased with me. I got to a point where I said, 'I've worked out all the time, tried to lose weight, tried to do everything to my hair that I can think of to do, and I still don't have confidence.'"

Her "breaking down" of sorts inspired the searching, writing and digging for answers that set the tone for the new album. "The question became, 'How am I supposed to do this, to see life, to see myself?'" she says. Through that questioning, the Lord started revealing to me what true beauty is."

She began unearthing some answers last year after delving into Angela Thomas' book, *Do You Think I'm Beautiful?: The Question Every Woman Asks* (Thomas Nelson). The book explores the common struggle of women who live in a world that defines beauty by the standards of a 6-foot blonde supermodel with a Crest smile and plastic enhancements. Thomas instructs Christian woman in a view that's biblically based, though it's a hard view to hold, admits the author, when the rest of the world says otherwise. Owens notes, "The whole premise of the book was that the only one who is ever going to know us and accept us completely as we are is our Heavenly Father."

Though she admits that wasn't a new concept for her, "there was something about the burdens the author carried and the way she brought them to the altar that really encouraged me. I began realizing that it's a very personal relationship with Someone who's created me and continues to love me in spite of myself and even for all that I am—or am not."

Owens says she was at the beginning of a writing cycle for *Beautiful* when she began reading the book, and she finished the title track a few months later—after she'd had time to "process the reading material." When it came time to take her first batch of songs to her label, the fear set in. "I remember going in to those first meetings with my song 'Call Me Beautiful.' I was thinking, 'Right now my life is this song. Please don't hate it!'" admits Owens.

Every song on the new album ultimately explores "my struggle to understand how I am supposed to look at life," says Owens. "These songs point to the way the Lord is teaching me to see life, to see others and myself as the beautiful creatures He intended us to be. [Being] beautiful is not wonderful, necessarily; it's mysterious, dangerous, complicated, simple and so many different things. Finally, after five years in the business, I've been able to pinch myself and say, 'This is so much fun, I can't believe God has allowed me to do this.' I've learned to regard each experience as beautiful."

*There's a smile on my face  
And a brand new light in my eyes  
It's a new day  
And I've never felt so alive*

*Now I can finally start to live  
Take those chances I have missed  
Things will be so different  
Now that I know  
You call me beautiful ("Call Me Beautiful") ccm*





# the new life starts here

BY  
JAY SWARTZENDRUBER

## Sara Groves



**“Can I tell you a story?”** she asks. *Is she kidding?* “Storyteller” is Sara Groves’ middle name. And both in her art and in her life, Sara’s stories are her language of choice.

With the March 23 release of her new album, *The Other Side of Something* (INO), Groves’ melodic narratives are as deeply personal as ever. (See the CD’s lead review on page 47.) There’s a good reason for this.

Start by picturing Sara at the age of 4—that’s when the Springfield, Mo., native recalls a simple yet profound conversation with God in which she “wanted to know if Jesus would come live in my heart.” As she puts it, “That was sort of the beginning of my journey.”

True—4 years of age would prove to be pivotal for Groves in other unusual ways. As her faith journey started, her pilgrimage as both a musician, via piano lessons, and a songwriter also began. “My mom has always been a songwriter, too,” she says. “She’s really artistic that way and does choir pieces occasionally for the church. I’ve always seen her writing music, so it was very natural for me to mimic her.”

While Groves’ songwriting didn’t reveal its prolific potential before she was a young adult, the faith that informs it anchored itself throughout her childhood. As her parents made a focused effort to nurture a healthy, spiritual environment for their children, they also inadvertently created a family atmosphere that would enable Groves’ potently relational songwriting style. “I think that comes from the home she grew up in,” affirms her husband, Troy, who married Sara after they attended Evangel University in Springfield. “What always amazes me about her songwriting is how she puts her finger on how to say what she needs to say, how to translate that in a sort of poetic yet lyrical way that

just makes sense. Sara's folks are both educators, and lots of conversation goes on in their home. They're the kind of family that when dinner's done, things are just getting going. They will continue with the conversation at the table for hours. That's her foundation."

"I had been writing music all those years in college but hadn't matured in it," explains Sara, who now lives in Minneapolis with Troy and their two young sons. "I've always written from a therapeutic place, so a lot of the songs were really just long and rambling and exploring emotions. It certainly wasn't palatable for a larger audience. Then I started doing it more as a hobby and a craft and really enjoyed that. My father-in-law and my husband were the ones who said [my music] is for other people. They said, 'When you sing in church it ministers... let's make an album.' To me that was a very big deal because it was putting myself out there and *acting* like I wanted to do this. I never wanted to actually admit to someone that I wanted to do it. God just had to speak to me and say, 'False humility is worse than pride.' Every time someone gave me a compliment, my "Aw shucks" routine was not any more holy than just saying, 'Thank you. God gives good gifts.'

In the same way people often raise funds for a short-term missions trip, Sara's father-in-law drafted a letter asking about fifty of their friends and family to financially support her first studio endeavor. The response trumped the highest expectations, and *Past the Wishing*, her first independent album, released in early 1998. Sara and Troy watched in grateful amazement as her music began to connect with a mass audience and attract the attention of record labels.

"As soon as we entered into the whole music industry, we very quickly had to get an education on how that worked," Sara says. "Troy was my defender. He started learning everything there was to know about the music industry—he became my lawyer, my manager, my booking agent... everything."

The next few years and a second custom CD, *Conversations*, would see Sara establish herself as one of America's most well-received independent artists. After introductions to several recording companies were made, she and Troy found a kindred spirit in Jeff Moseley's artist-oriented label, INO Records (MercyMe, CeCe Winans). "When I first heard Sara's music, I heard it over the Internet, and I fell in love with it," says Moseley, INO's founder, president and CEO. "I got a CD, and I remember going home and talking to my wife. I looked at her and said, 'I think I've found an artist we need to work with.' And she listened to Sara's CD and said, 'You know what? You're right. She has to be heard.' For us Sara was truly a labor of love. Early on I remember thinking that it didn't matter how many records she sold; I felt like she was going to be important for the marketplace."

INO picked up *Conversations* and, adding two songs to it, distributed the album nationally as Sara's label debut. Sara soon landed a No. 2 pop hit at Christian radio with "The Word" and gained

industry acclaim with a 2002 Dove Award nomination for "New Artist of the Year." And while INO had initially hoped Sara's re-issued indie album would sell 30,000 to 40,000 copies, *Conversations* actually went on to connect with more than 120,000 fans.

Two years, a second CD—*All Right Here*—and several radio hits later, and Sara's artistic stage would be primed for a breakthrough album. Just raise her production budget once again, let her do her thing, and she'd be good to go. Right?

Not so fast. This is Sara Groves we're talking about—what she lives is what you get. *The Other Side of Something* indeed.

Several months prior to Sara's record label



debut, she and Troy had welcomed their first son into the family. Kirby, who's now 3 and a half years old, would become a focal point for unprecedented turbulence in Sara's relationship with God.

"I've been a believer all my life—I never rebelled," she begins to explain. "I never had a time in high school where I was rebelling against my folks or anything. I've always been really passionate about my walk with the Lord and wanted to represent God and represent my dad—who's a pastor—well. And I've always said [to God], 'Wherever, whatever, take everything. Make me, break me, send me to Timbuktu, whatever; but Your will be done in my life.' But when I had Kirby, suddenly, instead of just for myself, I was saying for him, 'Take him, make him, break him, whatever.' And I saw what 'whatever' meant in other people's lives around me. I was in a season of my life where a lot of

God-fearing people—good people—were experiencing incredible hardship. A couple—friends of ours—lost an infant child, a girlfriend was having three miscarriages and just after my aunt had been reconciled with her son, he disappeared. They found his body in a field and still don't know what happened. He has two young boys.

"I had grown up thinking, 'If you do *these* things, then God will bless you *this* way.' And I was finding out through all these godly people in my life, who were following the Lord and doing these things—A, B, C—that hard things were still happening to them. "I don't know if this is the case with every new mom; but, for me, I started becoming 'mama bear' and really was on the defense against the Lord. I said, 'I want to know what I can land on because this son is my most precious possession. What are You going to do with him?' And I went to the Bible to find, 'You will always be safe.' That's what I thought I wanted. I wanted safety, and I wanted assurances that I would always be comfortable. Instead, I found Jonah running from God, Job scratching himself with a piece of clay and men plotting to kill Jeremiah. David, Paul, Peter—all of God's own—strung out, hurt, beat up, messed up, and I got so... I was hurt."

That year Sara and Troy were on the road 270 days. She became fatigued. In her words, "All my gauges were on empty—my spiritual gauge, my emotional gauge, my physical gauge—all of them were pegged on empty." She continues, "With all these characters in the Bible and all these people in my life, I became their lawyer to God. I was saying, 'Lord, leave Jonah alone. He doesn't want to go to Ninevah. He's tired. And leave me alone. I don't want to go to Ninevah. I'm tired. And don't have me swallowed by a whale—that's lame.' I was just angry. And Job, tell God, 'The second family doesn't cut it.' I just systematically went through all these things, and I was harboring this rebellion in my heart. Basically, at the end of the day, I was having a hard time swallowing the 'sovereignty pill.' It's a big pill to swallow. But that's the pill that says, 'Bad things happen to good people.' And He's working things out for our good, but we don't always understand it. And the Lord didn't have to, but He systematically answered every single question I raised."

But before the answers started coming, Sara spent several months defiantly challenging God's personal nature. "I was sitting up in front of the bus talking with our new driver, Dick. He was a total [Ned] Flanders guy. ('God is good all the time.') And I was not in that place at all. My attitude was so rotten. I said, 'Tell me your testimony.' He told me his only son had been shot by a friend goofing around with a shotgun. He was 16 years old, and Dick lost him. In the wake of their grief, he and his wife heard about a ministry to adopt terminally ill children from Russia. With everyone saying, 'You're crazy. You're in the middle of grieving. Why are you doing this?' they began adopting these children and either nursing them back to health or... One of these boys died in their home.



“So I’m talking to him in the middle of this season in his life. And it was so interesting, and it moved me, but I didn’t quite ‘get it.’ And I went back to my bunk and was about to fall asleep when I felt the Lord just whisper in my spirit, ‘Go up front and tell Dick, ‘The second family doesn’t cut it.’ I had said this months earlier about Job. The Lord was listening to me, and I just balled... just fell to pieces because Dick and Job know something about grief and about gratitude that I will never understand.

Likewise Sara revisited the biblical histories of Jonah, David, Jeremiah and the rest of her “clients.” She realized over and over again that her perspective and the convictions based on it had been far too narrow and one dimensional.

“All these people I set up as my reasons to not believe ended up being the very men who pointed me to God,” she explains. “Jeremiah says, ‘It is good to serve the Lord.’ He ends up saying, ‘His Word is good. It burns in me. And I can’t hold it in.’ And every single one of those people—Paul in chains and Peter upside-down on his cross—all of them end up saying, “It is good to serve the Lord.” And in my heart I just said, “I want to know what they knew—to say in the middle of loss and pain... that bad things happen to good people. I am compelled to serve You because it is good to be with You.

“I grew up in a church environment that emphasized holiness. I love my background, and I value that as my homebase. But the focus on holiness became a hope to me. When I say in ‘Compelled,’ *‘I have a new hope that blows away the small hopes I knew before,’* my small hopes were that I could be holy, that I could actually clean myself up enough to be holy like Christ. And I tried to do that, and I made a pretty good go at it. I was a good, good person. But when I found out I wasn’t holy, that I couldn’t make it, it was unbearable. I kept sinning. And so I ran into the arms of a ‘grace message.’

“Each camp has a name for the other one,” she explains. “The one calls the other ‘legalism,’ and the ‘legalism’ camp calls the other one ‘sloppy grace.’ I ran into the arms of



(L-R): Sara, Toby, Troy, Kirby

## THE SOUNDTRACK

“Production-wise we went to make a ‘movie,’ instead of a ‘play,’” explains Sara Groves about her new album, *The Other Side of Something* (INO). “This time, I just said, ‘You know what? I want to play. I want to have fun. And I’d like to add some other gifts into this.’

While Sara turned once again to her long-time friend and collaborator, Nate Sabin, to skillfully anchor most of the album’s production, four of the CD’s key tracks—lead single “The One Thing I Know,” the hook-driven “Compelled,” the empathy invoking “Esther” and the eclectic jazz epic “The Boxer”—would be helmed by Charlie Peacock (Switchfoot, Twila Paris).

“Sara and her husband, Troy, are the ‘real thing,’” says Peacock. “It’s so rewarding to work with people who love Jesus, good words, great art, family, goofing and just being human in general. I enjoyed producing Sara’s music, but I’d pay her just to listen to her tell stories. You know it’s good when you thank Jesus for creating particular people and with the Groves, I’ve done just that.”

While Peacock’s fingerprints artfully enhanced *The Other Side of Something*, it was Sara’s faith-deepening experience and beautiful knack for communicating truth through story that delivered the goods. In light of the past two years it might seem superficial for music critics or record label types to ponder the momentum of Sara’s career and anticipate the timing of a potential “breakthrough” album. Regardless, one can’t help noticing the far too uncommon intersection of relational depth, gutsy faith, optimism and tough love expressed via the fan-friendly folk-pop and the articulate, thoughtful lyrics on her new CD.

In describing the album, Sara says, “On other albums I strived to have different themes, make sure that two songs don’t say the same thing. And this time I just let the songs just flop all over each other. I think that’s because I was writing all this music from the same place.” **J.S.**

‘sloppy grace,’ and I needed that message—that God loves me no matter what I do. But that camp tends to focus on our failing and falling. And so I spent a lot of time saying, ‘Oh well... God made me; He knows I’m a sinner. I’m going to sin, fail and fall. And that’s who God is—He’s going to meet me and meet me and meet me.’ I wasn’t comfortable there either.

“This album is marking an epiphany that they’re both true. God is calling me to a life of holiness, and He loves me no matter what. And somewhere in the middle of that is a new hope that blows away these two smaller hopes, that at the end of the day I am marked—I’m a child of God; and no matter what I do, He’s not going to let me go. I am fighting the good fight, and it’s not going to be determined by one action, one sin or one good work. It’s going to be determined by finishing strong, and He’s not going to let me go. And I just have to keep waking up every day and saying, ‘My stuff is Your stuff, and I trust You.’ And that’s what the Lord has worked out in my heart these last two years. He’s said, ‘I want all your stuff, and your righteousness isn’t in the balance every day. ‘You’ve got a mark on your heart—you’re My child. I’ve adopted you.’

“So that’s what I’m on the other side of. I’m coming out of this legalism-grace war... And it’s a great freedom and a great gratitude that He would keep teaching me.”

“This whole album is trying to document that struggle for me—and hopefully that place of victory. And right now I’m in a place of extreme gratitude. I feel like I was in a fight with my best friend for the previous year and then this last year coming home, I just had time off the road; Troy and I had time to heal—we just had time to get back in our Bibles and hear from God. So we’re coming out swinging... coming out of the corner, knowing that greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. We’re compelled to serve Christ, and I’m ready to go out in concert and give a rally call to all the people who are selling themselves out to smaller stories. We need to hear the call of Christ on our lives and to not just settle in but to pursue and live fully for Christ.” **ccm**

# HE'S A LITTLE BIT GOSPEL AND A LITTLE BIT ROCK & ROLL — — — —



**DAVID PHELPS** MAY BE A MEMBER OF A LEGENDARY SOUTHERN GOSPEL GROUP, BUT THIS DOVE-NOMINATED SINGING VIRTUOSO BELTS OUT EVERYTHING FROM BALLADS TO POP TUNES TO R&B SONGS. NOW WITH A NEW SOLO RECORD, PHELPS IS LIVING OUT A DREAM THAT ALL BEGAN WITH A SINGING CONTEST 16 YEARS AGO.

**BY DEANA WARREN**



**S**itting at the piano onstage in the center of an empty, 20,000-seat arena, David Phelps softly plays a song. While a scurry of technicians are making last-minute audio, video and lighting adjustments near and on the stage, the venue staff is busy aligning chairs on the floor for the evening concert. The building is dimly lit on this particular Saturday afternoon, and Phelps is in his own world, oblivious to the events around him. Dressed in shorts and a t-shirt, he has just finished a jog around the arena during which he had an idea for a new tune and has now made his way to the piano to "play out" the idea.

But who is David Phelps, you might be asking, and why is he playing at a 20,000-seat venue? Phelps just happens to be one-fourth—and the youngest member—of the legendary Gaither Vocal Band. And now the questions are probably *really* swimming in your head: How did he get in the vocal group in the first place, why does he have a solo record out? And why would an artist who's "got it made" in the southern gospel world want to cross over into the pop-rock/contemporary realm of Christian music?

These are all good questions. At the beginning, Phelps' love for music developed at a young age, eventually propelling him to enter and win the Gospel Music Association's 1988 "Seminar in the Rockies" talent competition in Estes Park, Colorado. He went on to pursue a musical degree at Baylor University in Texas, where, the native Texan explains: "I had a teacher who tried to lead me toward other styles of music; but when she finally accepted that Christian music was what God was calling me to do, that became a real turning point for me."

In 1996, Phelps and his wife, Lori, made the move to Nashville, like so many other music hopefuls; however, after only six months, his hopes of landing a record deal waned. The two ran out of funds and contemplated moving back to Texas. Upon learning of the couple's situation over Christmas that year, his family gathered around them and began to pray. And like a scene in a movie, the next day, a record company meeting, in which he had no hope of any positive outcome, turned into the opportunity the family had prayed for. Phelps was asked to audition for the multi-Grammy winning Gaither Vocal Band.

Two weeks later he shared a stage with Bill Gaither and the Gaither Vocal Band, singing to more than 15,000 people. "I didn't know very much about southern gospel artists until Bill introduced me to them," Phelps relates. "They have embraced and welcomed me, and my life is so much richer as a result of the impact they have had on me."

And now seven years later with six albums, 27 gold and platinum-certified videos and countless appearances to his credit as a Vocal Band member, Phelps is finally realizing his dream as a solo artist. But does this release mean his Band days are over? Apparently not. "Bill has seen what my desire is, artistically," Phelps explains, "and he's encouraged that and given me a platform to sing songs I've written."

And *Revelation* certainly isn't another southern gospel record along the lines of the Gaither Vocal Band's sound. With styles ranging from pop/rock to R&B to Latin, *Revelation* spans the gamut of Phelps' early influences. "I was raised in a very eclectic household, listening to a lot of different musical styles, and I learned to appreciate them all. I grew

up when contemporary Christian music was coming into its own. I listened to Sandi Patty, Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant and the Gaither Vocal Band (with Michael English). I also listened to rock bands like Journey and REO Speedwagon. My exposure to those varying styles has affected who I am and the music I enjoy performing."

That diversity has also influenced Phelps' songwriting craft as well, and he admits: "We know no truth outside the universe and eternity other than what God makes known, and that encompasses this entire project. Each song on *Revelation* tells of something God has revealed to me." But, according to Phelps, it's the first line in the song "Break Free" that really sums up the project as a whole and the message he hopes to convey: "*Forget what you've heard about Jesus if it doesn't begin and end with love.*"

"We live in a cynical world," the father of four explains. "We have all these reality TV shows, and nothing is real about them. The news is based on ratings rather than the truth. We have a generation of people who have seen TV preachers go to jail because they don't practice what they preach, but that's not Jesus. That's not who He is. He didn't come to condemn us. The truth is, the only reason He came was to show us love."

Another cut, "Arms Open Wide" that's written by Rita Baloché and portrays that same message of Christ's unconditional love, is the project's first radio single. "This was one of the first songs I heard when we were considering songs for this album, and it just blew me away. Actually, I had been toying with writing a song about this same subject when I heard it," Phelps says. "Musically, it's fun, and it reflects how Christ lived His life here on Earth—holding nothing back. He lived, and He died with His arms open wide. Now *that's* love."

A favorite for Phelps is the title cut, a song he invested a lot of time and effort in writing. "I was listening to one of Gloria's [Gaither] poems," he remembers. "It was a brilliant poem with such an original viewpoint, and I thought it was a great idea for a song. The song turned out to be one of my favorites because it represents a lot of what I love about music. It's a bit like a rock opera in that it tells a story about what turns out to be the day of the second coming of Christ."

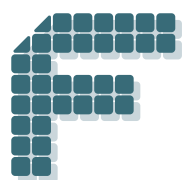
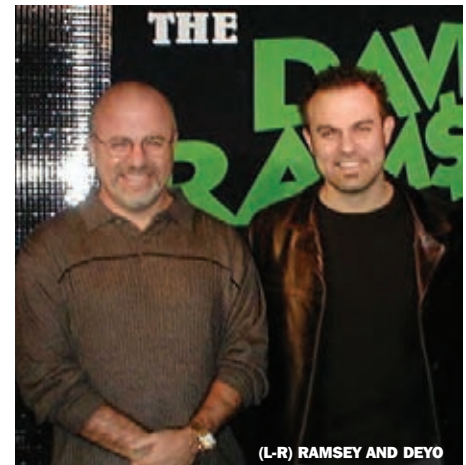
Phelps plans to support *Revelation* with a 30-city tour in June and July. But dates with the Vocal Band won't suffer as a result, as 70-plus dates with them have already been booked throughout 2004. "Some people have questioned if I'm leaving the Vocal Band," he confesses. "The answer to that question is, 'No.' I love being a little bit of who I am with the Vocal Band, but I can do my solo dates with a full band, lights and production and let people know my heart. The people who have seen me over the past six years with the Vocal Band have rarely heard me talk onstage, and they haven't had a chance to get to know who I am. But at my solo dates I can be honest with the crowd, share my heart with them, joke with them and have a great time doing the songs with the band. It's great to be able to do both."

"I've come to understand that Christian music isn't about a style," Phelps explains, "It's about a message. In order for us to get our message across, obviously, we have many genres represented; however, if the song is good and it tells the truth, people of all ages will embrace it."

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# LISTENING IN...

with **Jeff Deyo** and **Dave Ramsey**



or this month's "Listening In..." we've arranged for you to "eavesdrop" on a candid conversation between Gotee recording artist Jeff Deyo and national radio talk show host/author Dave Ramsey. Deyo, of course, co-founded Sonicflood before going on to pursue a solo career as a worship leader. He recently released his new album, *Light*, which features duets with Third Day's Mac Powell, Natalie Grant and Rita Springer. (See review on page 48) Ramsey, meanwhile, can currently be heard on almost 200 radio stations discussing finances. While some Christian programmers carry "The Dave Ramsey Show," his cut-to-the-chase advice is primarily broadcast on mainstream outlets. (For more information visit [daveramsey.com](http://daveramsey.com).)

**Jeff:** So here I am, an artist, and I've been in Nashville since '93. There are some traps that happen for artists when they come to town. They have these big dreams of making lots of money. You think, "OK, those people are probably making serious money." In fact, one of the guys in my band said he had a friend of his who came down after he joined my band, and he said, "Come on, Fred, tell me the truth: You guys are making six figures, right?" They're barely on salary.

**Dave:** [laughs]

**Jeff:** "And Jeff's making a million dollars a year, isn't he? He's making at least a million!" And I said, "Well, not quite."

**Dave:** [laughs] Not quite.

**Jeff:** Guys like us, we come in, and we're trying so hard to make it, but it's a challenging thing because you need a lot of stuff to make it happen. You're trying to get a great guitar so you can sound good; you're trying to do all

these things to get a record deal and get noticed. You end up in debt. And you're all trying to do it for the good cause of the gospel. But in the music industry, the money comes nine to 12 months after the success. So you're kind of in this mentality where you're spending the money before you get it. You know it's coming, but you never get to enjoy it because when it comes in, you're paying off those credit card debts. So how do you talk to musicians about all this stuff?

**Dave:** Getting into debt to live your dream is not a new story. It's the story my wife, Sharon, and I lived, too. We got married. Then to live our dream, we were going to be real estate moguls. We got four million dollars worth of real estate, starting from nothing, by the time we were 26 years old. We made \$250,000 at 20-something years old one year. Sometimes you hear people say, "All those rich people are miserable!" Uh-uh! We were having fun! But the bank got sold, and the tellers were making the decisions. They called our notes, and the short story is we spent the next two and a half years losing everything we owned. We were

sued; we were foreclosed on; and finally, with a brand new baby and a toddler, scared to death at the bottom of that mess, we were bankrupt. That was 15 years ago, and we started over. At the bottom of that, being a financial guy—a broke financial guy—I decided I was going to learn how money really works. As a baby Christian, I had met the Lord on the way up—I do everything backwards—and as a baby Christian, I was going to see what the Bible had to say about money. Nobody talks about it much because it's like a lot of things in the Bible: It's apparently uncomfortable when you start realizing: This is the truth, and I'm going to have to apply it; or I'm going to have to ignore it.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Dave:** What's a good plan to handle *His* money *His* way? How do you deal with that when you dream yourself into debt, and it creates a mess for you? It sure is a painful way to learn. Hopefully we can catch a few young artists with this conversation and go, "Stop it! Don't do it! Please, don't do it! Don't finance your dream!"



**Jeff:** But what's the alternative? For guys like that, they think this is the only option. They believe it because the culture tells you that, society tells you: "Make the sacrifice now, and then you can pay it off later."

**Dave:** Well, as an old guy now 15 years later, talking to young artists and running a business that we've never borrowed a dime to run (with almost a hundred folks on our team, a couple hundred radio stations and with our third *New York Times* bestseller), I can tell you it can be done without debt. This sounds like a little Bible-thumping, but the truth is if God wants something done, the money will come—if it's His dream. Sometimes it's His dream, and I've got the wrong timing. I don't know about anybody else, but I can go ahead of Him.

**Jeff:** Absolutely. That's the thing that happened to me. I moved to Nashville into this duplex, and this friend of ours let us live there for free. We said, "OK, we'll live there for free for six months. By six months I should have a record deal and be a national selling artist." But that didn't happen. Sometimes our dream is the wrong form of the dream. I knew I was gifted musically, but I assumed certain things based on my gifts—my dream was to be a performance artist. So I tried and tried and tried, and I spent money trying to do this for five years in Nashville, trying to get a record deal but spinning my wheels going, "What is going on here? Finally I realized I was supposed to be a worship leader. I had distorted what God had called me to do, and He was all the time saying, "Hello, Jeff, are you down there? Are you listening?" "No, I got it figured out, God. You want me to be a rock star for Jesus." It seems like we end up taking God's calling and turning it into something that's more of our own. Then we get off the path, and that's when we make decisions He's not blessing.

**Dave:** Well, you can be sure of this: If you're going in to debt to do it, you're out of God's will. Oh, that was a bold statement!

**Jeff:** Yeah that's so black and white, Dave!

**Dave:** Just show me once in Scripture where God used debt to provide a dream, where God used debt to protect or provide. There's not even a single positive reference to debt. Every time it's mentioned, it has a negative connotation. Now, you're not going to hell for using a credit card. A credit card is not the "mark of the beast." This is not what I'm saying. But it's just when Proverbs says, "The borrower's slave to the lender," get a clue! God didn't come to put you into slavery—He came to set the captives free. And so if He wants you to have a guitar, guess what? You're messing up your spiritual walk when you go get one instead of letting Him give you one. He's got a plan.

You're messing up your spiritual walk when you dive headlong into a really bad record deal.

**Jeff:** Can I ask you one more question? I was in a band and saw a lot of success and then saw my solo debut, *Saturate*, come out and do well; but, my gosh, it probably sold a tenth of what the band's album sold. So you know, my expectations were high. My record company



had high expectations, and you get lots of encouragement from people whose lives are touched, so that's a good thing. But I've come to a conclusion in my life: I feel there's a misconception out there that if things are done from the godly, correct perspective, it's going to be successful. Meaning, it's going to sell lots of units; it's going to touch millions of people. That's not always the case. Something that reached tons of people doesn't necessarily mean it has the hand of God on it. And the opposite is true as well: If something is not getting out

there, it doesn't mean God isn't one hundred million percent behind it. Do you have any thoughts or wisdom on any of that?

**Dave:** We face exactly the same thing sometimes. We go to an immense amount of trouble sometimes, and we lose a pile of money to pull off a certain deal. We did a deal a little while back that we thought was going to touch 60,000 to 70,000 people in one fell swoop. Instead it did about twelve thousand and, consequently, we lost a couple hundred thousand dollars on that little deal. And one of the things God really spoke to me in my prayer life after that happened was: "There's one guy in Maine or Seattle or wherever who watched that deal you did. Do you not think I would spend \$350,000 to get him into the Kingdom? By the way, it's my money, Dave. I'm crazy about him. Do you not have my perspective of what success looks like?" So I said, "OK, I'll shut up."

**Jeff:** We're the tool.

**Dave:** He would've brought several tools to bear, several of His dollars to get that one because he'd leave the 99 sheep to go get the other one and drag it in. I'm convinced that when we get to heaven, we're going to find out that some of these projects that were "flops" were laser shots, and that they picked off somebody important. You may have just led Billy Graham to the Lord and didn't know it. I don't know.

**Jeff:** Sure.

**Dave:** And so what I constantly do is step back as we're running this business, when I have 42 different things running through at a given moment. I say, "OK, let's redefine what success is. Yes, we've got to be good stewards; yes, we've got to be wise; yes, we've got to be diligent; yes, we've got to do everything we can to make this thing both a spiritual and a financial success." But every time one isn't, I don't have to automatically assume I missed God. I might have been doing exactly what He wanted me to do to go get that one.

I had a band here the other day, and they were struggling. Their record deal had fallen apart. They were finishing up the tour with their lips stuck out, and we put the 13-week series *Financial Peace University*, which some of the record companies are putting their artists through, on the bus with them. That band may fall apart. Or one of those guys may be the next Jeff Deyo, maybe leading worship at a youth camp where my 12-year-old increases his walk with the Lord. You don't know how this stuff works; it's just way too complicated. All things work together. It's the only thing that keeps you scratching and clawing and fighting through these businesses that you and I have chosen to minister in. [ccm](http://ccm.com)





# TWO DECADES DOWN— CHARLIE PEACOCK

BY DOUGLAS KAINE MCKELVEY

*This month we celebrate Charlie Peacock's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a solo artist. Lie Down in the Grass (EXIT/A&M) served as his potent calling card those many years ago, leading CCM Magazine to respond accordingly: "In this powerful solo debut... Charlie Peacock forays into musical territory until now unexplored by Christian musicians." (June, 1984) This adventurous approach would come to define Peacock's career as both a recording artist and a producer. And make no mistake, his daring conviction enhanced his lyrics as well as his music. As one fan in Boise, Idaho, recently told CCM, "It was Charlie's 1991 album Love Life (Sparrow) that changed my perspective on what Christian music should be about. I realized that Christian music should be relevant and honest concerning any topic, not just our relationship to our Savior." As a producer Peacock's diverse resumé includes Switchfoot, Nichole Nordeman, 775, Avalon, The Choir, Al Green, Twila Paris and Sarah Masen, among others. It's no surprise he was first to be named the Gospel Music Association's "Producer of the Year" three times. To kick off our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary tribute to Peacock, CCM Magazine has invited Douglas Kaine McKelvey to write a special salutorial. McKelvey has been a fan since the beginning and eventually went on to become Peacock's primary songwriting partner.*

I don't know what the name Charlie Peacock means to 18-year-olds today. But I know what it meant 20 years ago.

That was back when most of us hardcore Christian music aficionados knew only how to play defense. The bulk of our energy was expended in simply defending the music we listened to. As for penetrating and transforming the larger culture or creating artistry with any viability and relevance outside our own little backwaters, forget it. Those things weren't even on the radar yet.

Then came the summer of 1984 and with it a new EXIT Records artist from Yuba City, Calif., named Charlie Peacock. He hadn't been a Christian long enough to absorb the clichés or adopt the classic defensive posture. He was naïve enough to operate on the assumption that if you made enticing, invigorating, lyrical, imagistic, great art, people would connect.

Charlie's jazz-influenced, new wave EXIT debut, *Lie Down in the Grass*, was hip without desperately wanting to be. It was original. It was weighted toward the pro, leaning into the cultural conversation. Lyrically, it seemed to represent a faith that was worn very humanly, both in the secular marketplace and in the

Christian subculture. People inside and outside the church found something that resonated with them.

The rest of us took a long look at this odd bird, scratched our heads and managed a profound, "Oh." The old defensiveness suddenly looked a lot less defensible when viewed against this new paradigm of honest, cultural engagement. The next couple years saw Charlie sign a music publishing deal with CBS, record for labels A&M and Island, land a cut on the hit TV show "Fame" and write, tour and hobnob with '80s headliners such as the FIXX, Bourgeois Tagg, General Public, Let's Active and Missing Persons. His early career was marked by the creation of art that was emotional, compelling and varied and by a conscious attempt to dismantle the barrier between artist and audience.

Following the critical success of his self-titled Island project, Charlie independently released the three-volume *West Coast Diaries* collections. It was a bold move. The *Diaries* were stripped down, barely produced, sometimes even incomplete recordings. But the unique relationship Charlie had cultivated with his fans allowed for that kind of intimacy. In fact, his fans had come to expect it. The inviting openness and confessional candor Charlie displayed onstage had become a magnet for young believers disenchanted by white-washed expressions of Christianity.

In 1990, spurred by a growing desire to serve the body of Christ in a deeper and more intentional way, Charlie moved his family to Nashville and signed a deal with Sparrow Records. Brown Bannister (Amy Grant) produced *The Secret of Time*, a project that put the final polish on a few *West Coast Diaries* favorites, and that gave Charlie an expanded platform in churches and in the Christian music community.

It was during that time, too, that Charlie and his wife, Andi, purchased and began renovating a 100-year-old church building. Their dream was to provide a center for hospitality, biblical study and a shared journey with other believers intent on living life artfully. In those quarters the Art House was born, an entity still vibrant today, hosting authors, teachers, studies, concerts and even the occasional luminary like Mel Gibson or U2's Bono.

Charlie continued to record his own visionary projects over the next several years (*Love Life*, *Coram Deo I & II*, *Everything That's On My Mind*, *Strangelanguage* and



Kingdom Come), but his preferred role shifted increasingly to that of producer and mentor for younger writers, producers, bands and artists. Charlie's desire to prepare the next generation for the work of being "salt and light" in the culture eventually culminated in the formation of his own record label, re:think (best known for the discovery and development of modern rock sensation Switchfoot and folk artist Sarah Masen).

His songwriter and producer credits during that era grew too numerous to list, but they include more than 200 cuts, dozens of hits such as "In the Light" and "Every Heartbeat," 14 BMI Awards, nine Dove Awards, one Grammy award and numerous nominations. Along the way Charlie waded into more diverse waters as well, authoring the thought-provoking book *At the Crossroads*, working on a masters in theological studies at Covenant Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., recording an experimental jazz project titled *Love Press Ex-Curio*, accepting a post as principal artist faculty of the Wheaton Conservatory of Music International Improvisational Institute and traveling extensively as a lecturer on subjects related to Christianity and artful living.

His new projects are *Full Circle*, a retrospective recording that reinvents his best-loved songs with the help of friends such as Sixpence None the Richer, Jon and Tim Foreman (Switchfoot), tobyMac and Sara Groves and *New Way to Be Human*, a Waterbrook Press book that explores what it means to be a student/follower of Jesus. Both are potent distillations of Charlie's two-decades-old commitment to simultaneously nurture the body of Christ and engage the culture.

And while the resumé is impressive, the real story of Peacock's legacy is in the relationships. I'm convinced that Charlie's underlying secret is in the way he's able to turn fans into friends and ideological opponents into curious questioners. The same intelligent honesty, experimental creativity and personal integrity that launched his career in 1984 continue to expand his reach and impact today.

It's not every Christian artist, after all, who finds himself or herself contributing commentary and opinion to NPR's "All Things Considered," "Talk of the Nation," *USA Today*, *CCM Magazine* and the *Wall Street Journal*. One man gets around, indeed.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT CHARLIE

### AMY GRANT:

"I first had the chance to work with Charlie when he wrote the song "Every Heartbeat" for the *Heart in Motion* album. Brown Bannister was specifically looking for a fun, upbeat shuffle and, no surprise, Charlie delivered. "Every Heartbeat" is a song I still enjoy singing. Charlie and Andi have provided a homebase for a large community of Christian artists here in Nashville. If there is to be a gathering of any kind, whether it's for the screening of *The Passion of The Christ* with director, Mel Gibson, or a "think session" with Bono over the AIDS in Africa crisis, Charlie is available and willing to facilitate gatherings for prayer, for entertainment, for learning. His heart for service and his amazing life partner, Andi—along with her gifts for caring and communication—have been welcomed 'glue' for our community of artists in this town."

### TOBYMAC:

"I've always had a huge amount of respect for Charlie and his desire to expand God's Kingdom. As an artist and songwriter, he has been a groundbreaker in seeing and celebrating the gospel in all of life, including romance. Not only have I recorded his songs, but at our wedding my wife and I chose his song "One Thing" as a backdrop to our first dance. Thanks, Charlie."

### BART MILLARD, MercyMe:

"The first time I heard Charlie was when I saw an "unplugged" performance with Vince Ebo and Jimmy Abegg. It absolutely changed my life! His music was, and still is, so unique and passionate. Not only did his music make an impact on my life, but the times I have heard him speak during his performances played a huge role in me surrendering to the ministry."

### NICHOLE NORDEMAN:

"There will always be great singers. There will always be great writers. There will always be great players. There will always be great producers. But great visionaries are scarce and seldom... a gift not to be squandered. Thank you, Charlie, for leading us over each new hill."

### JON FOREMAN, Switchfoot:

"Charlie's place will always be a second home for me. I've learned so much about making music at Charlie's side. However, one of the most important things he taught me has nothing to do with sounds or lyrics. He told me that "relationships will always matter more than the music. Twenty years from now your platinum albums or radio hits will mean very little. Always live with the families and friendships in mind." So true. I've admired Charlie for as long as I've known him.

continued on pg. 44



Top-Bottom (L-R):

As a teenager in Yuba City, CA; Charlie with Jimmy A.; backstage prior to opening for Bob Marley; CCM cover (February 1995); Charlie hosting Bono at The Art House; Mel Gibson visits for a screening of *The Passion of The Christ*; high school sweethearts; Charlie with Switchfoot's Chad Butler and Jon Foreman; backstage with his manager—rock legend Bill Graham; CCM cover (December 1991); in the studio with his producer Nigel Gray (The Police).





Whether in the studio or in the kitchen, he was the type of guy that you wanted to emulate. I hope to be a Charlie in the San Diego scene."

**PHIL KEAGGY:**

"I have always appreciated the creative mind and heart of Charlie Peacock. Especially since 1989, the year I moved to Nashville, Charlie has been a constant light in this beautiful thing called music. I am also glad to hear the best in him come alive in these new days of artistic freedom."

**JODY MCBRAYER, Avalon:**

"We started our adventure into the industry with Charlie Peacock at the creative helm. Little did we all know that on that journey he would grow to become so much more in our lives. Insecure and uneducated as to how this world works, Charlie took us under his wing and helped us understand what true artistry as a Christian musician is all about. His desire to use his gifting to further the cause of Christ as well as his deep commitment to pursue spiritual and artistic integrity in his work is, to say the least, inspiring. He has been to Avalon the purest example of conviction, integrity and, most of all, patience. Avalon would like to congratulate and thank Charlie for all he has done to creatively communicate the gospel of Christ over the past 20 years."

**MATT SLOCUM, co-founder of Sixpence None the Richer:**

"Charlie has been a true inspiration and example to me in so many areas. I would do well to emulate his excellence and integrity as a writer, performer, producer, arranger, thinker and, most importantly, friend."

**SARA GROVES:**

"I like a lot of things about Charlie Peacock, but my favorite thing is his joy. It pours out into his music, production, writing and friendships. He is preoccupied with the Kingdom, how it works and how it is meant to come to us and because of this, his books, his music and his life are full of fruit and clues about Kingdom living. Charlie and Andi have inspired Troy and me in our hearts and home."

**STEVE TAYLOR:**

"In 1984 I entered the back door of the Country Club, a rock club in Southern California. Charlie was playing keyboards with the Sacramento band Vector, and they were sound checking. I'd never met them before, and there's no reason for me to remember that moment except one: They were good. Very good. So many of the bands we'd share the stage with during that era confused sincerity with musicality, but these guys were sincere and musical. When I got to the dressing room, my band was already discussing in hushed tones how good the other band was. After a year on the road, I believe this was the first time that had happened. The net effect? I hit the stage that night feeling a tiny bit intimidated. If we played a good show (and my recollection is that we did), it was because Charlie and Vector raised the bar. Twenty years later, Charlie's still raising that bar. And I'm still a tiny bit intimidated."

**MIKE ROE, 77s:**

"I became a huge fan when I got to work with him up close and see what he was really up to. There was certainly a lot of imagination and skill. I especially liked what he 'left out' as much as what he 'put in.' He was always willing to take a risk rather than just play it safe and do the obvious. I really learned a lot from Charlie."

**JEN WATERS, features writer, *The Washington Times*:**

"My oldest memory of Charlie Peacock is reading articles about him in *CCM Magazine* in my teen years. I probably still have some of the interviews buried in my closet somewhere. I also remember my youth group dancing to "In the Light," even before dc talk covered it. I have always been impressed with Charlie's clear thinking and the ways he has challenged the Christian music community to be stronger, more daring artists. And I love the fact that he lives in a renovated church!"

**DARWIN HOBBS:**

"Charlie is the reason I am a label artist. While a session singer in Nashville, Tenn., he encouraged me to pursue my God-given destiny to record solo records."

**MARGARET BECKER:**

"Long before he was in this industry, I appreciated his music, and he's been a leader wherever he is placed. I appreciate, above all things, his sensitivity to that role."

**JAMIE DRUMMOND, executive director of DATA:**

"On behalf of the DATA staff, we want to applaud Charlie Peacock not only for his fantastic career in the music industry but also for his commitment to social justice. Charlie talks about the "wind of the Spirit" moving across America to capture the hearts and minds of evangelicals to combat HIV/AIDS in Africa. We appreciate Charlie for being at the forefront of this movement to galvanize awareness and promote advocacy for those suffering from AIDS. His work has been instrumental for us, the church and Africa. Thank you, Charlie, for your music and your life. God bless you."

**BRENT BOURGEOIS, solo artist/co-founder of Bourgeois Tagg:**

"Charlie and I go back to the days when neither of us had much conception of what it was like to be living a healthy or spiritual life. Nonetheless, even in those days, we were both making challenging, creative music. When Charlie got sober and then saved, he sent shockwaves through our community that have consequences to this day, not the least of which was in me. I give Charlie the credit for being the light which led me to Christ, which in my mind is a far more important thing than any or all of the innumerable musical contributions that he is properly credited for."

**JIMMY ABEGG, guitarist/painter/art czar, Rockettown Records:**

"I spent seven or eight years in many different musical configurations, playing guitar and learning from Charlie—someone whose take on the things of faith and creativity inspire me to this day. I'm grateful God introduced Charlie and me."

**SCOTT DENTÉ, *Out of the Grey*:**

"One day in 1989 a friend handed me a pre-release cassette of *The Secret of Time*, and the course of my life was changed. Over the last 14 years Charlie and I have written, recorded, traveled and shared many meals together. I learned more in a couple of years making records with Charlie than in five years of music college. But more than that, through his friendship and deep, deep heart, he has shown me Jesus."

To read more tributes to Charlie, visit [CCMmagazine.com](http://CCMmagazine.com).





# The Other Side of Sara

**Sara Groves' storytelling has always made us think, but now it's got a brand new, lively soundtrack that keeps listeners guessing.**



**File under:** Pop **Grade:** A -  
**For fans of...** spiritual insights that stray far from tried-and-true clichés.

**SARA GROVES**  
*The Other Side of Something*  
 INO

**Sara's musings prove to be the winner in this wrestling match.**

Sara Groves' third album finds the insightful singer/songwriter in a place where she's examining, analyzing and striving to make sense of her personal and spiritual landscape. While her last album was more focused on love and relationships, both in earthly and heavenly realms, *The Other Side of Something* conveys an artist who has been wrestling.

Groves' latest embraces topics as diverse as the struggle to understand God's timing, the fight to put aside selfish human nature and the joys and pains of married life, among others. This time around, Groves also departs from her straightforward, didactic style of storytelling in favor of poignant metaphors on songs like "The Boxer" and "Roll to the Middle," inviting the listener to ponder the meaning behind the tunes.

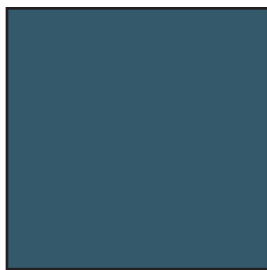
While *The Other Side of Something* covers new lyrical ground, the sonic element also swings to something unique. Groves enlisted the help of Charlie Peacock (Nichole Nordeman, Switchfoot), along with her longtime friend/producer Nate Sabin, for a vibe that's less acoustic and a little more experimental than *All Right Here*. The new record is more upbeat, with a decidedly pop flavor and a thicker overall texture. Groves and the producers

stack synths, drums, electric guitars and background vocals on nearly every tune. Most times the result is easy on the ears, though the tongue-in-cheek track, "All I Need," about a newlywed woman with a growing appetite for worldly possessions, comes across as slightly cheesy with the abundance of studio bells and whistles.

"Jeremiah," particularly, is one of the album's finer pieces. With a unique take on the power of God, it opens with a haunting vamp on strings, sustained by a dark melody that moves the song along. "Compelled," co-penned by Groves and Peacock, draws from classic Sarah McLachlan style with its moody, atmospheric electric guitars and keyboards. Conversely, "Esther" paints a relevant picture of missional living and addresses the AIDS epidemic in Africa. "Undone" is a breezy, piano-driven track that evokes Jackson Browne or Bruce Cockburn, and "The Boxer" is a disco/jazz/funk fusion complete with '70s-inspired BGVs that's one of the album's coolest offerings.

Given her new direction, *The Other Side of Something* will serve as a surprise for some of Groves' fans. But the fact remains that history's best artists are those who are always evolving, even though they may ultimately end up right back with their original style. Groves, however, is following the path of those like Joni Mitchell, who chased her curiosity and produced great art as a result. Word to the wise: The first 40,000 copies of Groves' new album include a bonus CD featuring the "Living Room Sessions" (six of her previously unreleased demos) and a 30-plus-minute audio interview with personal thoughts by Groves on each song on *The Other Side of Something*. Furthermore, the bonus CD is enhanced with lead sheets of multiple songs, photos and Web resources.

**LIZZA CONNOR**



File under: **Grade: B**

Rock  
For fans of... the melding of Starflyer 59's respective musical eras into one disc.

**STARFLYER 59**  
*I Am the Portuguese Blues*

Tooth & Nail

Starflyer's past, present and future collide for one loud rock sound.

Certain decisions can completely alter the course of a band's career. For Starflyer 59, this happened in 1998 when frontman Jason Martin decided to shelve what is now *I Am the Portuguese Blues*. Instead, the band's follow-up album to *Americana* was *The Fashion Focus*, which resulted as the first of four critically acclaimed Brit-pop offerings that changed the course of Starflyer 59's sonic transformation forever.

To some, *I Am the Portuguese Blues* will signal a return to the old Starflyer guitar-driven albums such as *Americana*. But, in other ways, the album echoes the more aggressive tracks of the band's recent offering, *Old*, with the notable absence of keyboards. Still, in either case, Starflyer manages to break new ground by rocking out more than it ever has before (think the raw, pounding feel of the Black Rebel Motorcycle Club) with in-your-face bluesy guitar licks and solos.

All 10 songs have an upbeat groove and clock in at fewer than three minutes long, with the exception of "No Revolution," the album's only ballad. Among the highlights are "Unlucky," with its country honky-tonk feel, and the instrumental blues jam of "Sound to Sound."

All things considered, old-school Starflyer fans may find the band's 12<sup>th</sup> release to be a breath of fresh air, but newer fans of the band may not acclimate as quickly. Nevertheless, in the grand scheme of things, while *I Am the Portuguese Blues*, ultimately, has a hard line to tow to compared with the more recent Starflyer efforts, it effectively serves as an interlude before the band's next production, which it hopes to release later this year.

MATT MODRICH



File under: **Grade: B+**  
Worship/Pop  
For fans of... original and atmospheric worship.

**JEFF DEYO**  
*Light*

Gotee

This worship isn't "light" on accessibility.

Unlike most worship-oriented fare, the sophomore release from one of modern praise's pioneers, Jeff Deyo (co-founder of Sonicflood), not only serves as a great worship record but also weighs in as an outstanding collection of pop/rock gems.

With 13 tracks and four spoken-word "interludes," where the "skip" button on your stereo may come in handy, all of the songs were actually penned by Deyo—a fact that serves as a unique feat in the world of worship albums. And a few of these ("These Hands," "Show the Wonder" and "Bless the Lord") have universal, sing-in-church potential. "Bless the Lord" is an especially strong example, with lovely harmonies, courtesy of worship leader Rita Springer, and a melody that

will stay with you. Deyo's voice also blends well with the deep pipes of guest vocalist Mac Powell (Third Day) on "We Come to Your Throne with Weeping."

The music ranges from a full orchestral sound on the aforementioned "Bless the Lord," to the atmospheric electric guitar punch of "Your Name is Holy," to the killer drum beats on "I Am Yours Forever" and even a taste of techno on the ironically titled "Ray of Light." With lyrics inspired by Scripture (references are listed before each song) *Light* is a bonafide worship album; but this shouldn't be a turn-off for Christian music fans who simply want to hear great modern rock tunes with pop sensibilities.

JESSICA ROBIN



File under: **Grade: A-**  
Pop/R&B  
For fans of... reflective, silky singers like Natalie Merchant and Jewel.

**GINNY OWENS**  
*Beautiful*

Rocketown

The real beauty here is simplicity.

Since entering the Christian music scene some five years ago, Mississippi-born singer/songwriter Ginny Owens has consistently shirked all things ordinary. On her critically acclaimed debut in 1999, she delivered enough refreshingly original material to secure 2000's "New Artist of the Year" Dove Award. She's also been featured in places not common to artists of faith—"Lilith Fair," Sundance Film Festival and National Public Radio.

With that said, it should come as no surprise that on *Beautiful*, her third full-length release, Owens unveils an

imaginative, delicately tuneful set that stands apart from other recordings of similar ilk. On one end of the scale, the project tilts toward reverent, piano-driven ballads. The remainder weighs in with what Owens calls an "old soul" élan (think R&B coupled with smooth jazz). Once again, Owens wisely taps Grammy-winning producer Monroe Jones (Third Day, Chris Rice) and a bevy of talented session artists, such as Scott Denté (Out of the Grey, Nichole Nordeman) and Paul Moak (Amy Grant, dc talk).

With *Beautiful*, Owens extends herself beyond familiar sonic terrain, and she's definitely up to the task. Rare are the acoustic leanings or edgy rockers evidenced on her previous efforts. Instead, Owens comes out strong with subtle yet atmospheric arrangements like "New Song," co-produced by Margaret Becker (Kelly Minter), which addresses life's enduring joys and sorrows, and the beguilingly simple "Let Them Hear," a song about living out faith with authenticity. To best capture the essence of Owen's vocal proficiency, picture Tori Amos and Natalie Merchant sharing a cup of Chai tea.

But where Owens sounds most effortless is on groove-filled numbers like "Bread" (Close your eyes and hear a younger incarnation of Nicole C. Mullen.) and "I Love the Way," which sports a captivating bluesy syncopation. These selections and others reveal an artist who pensively

considers subjects ranging from self image and peer pressure to God's faithfulness, despite human frailty. And it's all woven into one of this year's most uncontrived, sensible recordings.

DAVID MCCREARY



File under: **Grade: B+**

Alternative Rock  
For fans of... a reminiscent look at what made '90s alternative rock so great.

**AARON LACKLUSTER**  
*Sprinkle*

Tooth & Nail

Anything but lackluster, actually...

Sure, he's built his acclaimed resumé while working with some of the brightest talent in the Seattle indie-rock scene, but it turns out that Aaron Sprinkle is no slouch either when it comes to crafting his own unique brand of rock.

On *Lackluster*, a collection of songs previously released from his independent albums plus one new song, *Sprinkle* delivers thought-provoking lyrics mixed with a heavy dose of left-of-center musicianship.

*Sprinkle*, also the former guitarist of the critically acclaimed band Poor Old Lu,





doesn't disappoint as he fuses a stereotypical Brit-rock sound with a dash of conventional pop. Refreshingly innovative instrumentation layers the album, as Sprinkle effectively balances the traditional acoustic sound with dreamy electric guitar solos and riffs. His voice, though never really strong or smooth, provides the emotion it takes to fuel each song.

The opening track, "Really Something," sets the tone and energy level right out of the gate, while "All You Can Give" and "Let Me In" are eclectic musical finds. Showcasing his diversity, a harmonica and vibrant harmonies reign supreme on the upbeat cut "Colorblind," while Sprinkle's true gift of song-crafting is portrayed most effectively on "Sweeter Than Me" and "Not All Bad."

Overall, the roots and purity of this album make *Lackluster* easy to get lost in. Fans of acoustic-alternative or even folky rock will certainly find plenty to like in Sprinkle's artistry.

**DICK FARLEY**



**File under:** Pop **Grade:** B+  
**For fans of...** a helping of harmonious songs filled with hope.

**AVALON**  
**THE CREED**

Sparrow

**The tried-and-true formula works just fine here.**

Weathering through a season of personnel change and solo project exploration from founders Janna Long and Jody McBrayer, winner of *CCM* Readers' Choice for "Favorite Group" doesn't seem to be displaying any signs of wear on *The Creed*. Serving as the group's first full-length studio release in three years, there aren't many surprises when it comes to the end result; yet the mix manages to adequately sidestep staleness.

New Avalonians Greg Long and Melissa Greene easily complement the established vocal stylings, resulting in rich harmonies and satisfying solos. Produced by Brown

Bannister (Amy Grant, Point of Grace), Charlie Peacock (Twila Paris, Audio Adrenaline) and Tedd T. (Rachael Lampa, ZOEgirl), *The Creed's* standout tracks include the uplifting "Far Away From Here," an energetic pop pleaser punctuated by a beautiful piano interlude, and "I Wanna Be You," a soaring anthem with a memorable hook. The re-mixed "Overjoyed" is also a highlight that's sultry and soulful with Janna's trademark chops taking center stage.

Lyricaly, *The Creed* benefits from an assortment of songwriting pens. "You Were There," written by Ben Glover, shines in its worshipful exploration of God's steadfast nature. The title track is a simple yet stirring declaration of faith co-written by Matt Huesmann, Chris Davis, Cindy Morgan and former Avalon vocalist Michael Passons. "All," the record's first radio single, penned by Ian Eskelin and Brian White, cleverly wades through the roller coaster of emotions of spiritual surrender.

For those who love Avalon's polished, feel-good vibe, there's plenty to love about *The Creed*.

**KATIE KROMPEGEL**



MICHELLE WILLIAMS



**File under:** Urban Gospel **Grade:** B  
**For fans of...** vintage gospel fused with a modern R&B flair.

**MICHELLE WILLIAMS**  
**Do You Know?**

Columbia

**A step in the right direction for this destiny**

Destiny's Child claims countless accomplishments, from scoring a grip of Grammy statues to stacking up the platinum plaques with historic sales. Such accolades paid artistic dividends when the trio tried their hands at solo projects, a venture that arguably showed the core of each "Child's" heart. Michelle Williams bypassed the pop trappings of her mates by delivering to fans a gorgeous expression of her spiritual roots.

*Do You Know?* radiates with transparent sincerity and emotional outpouring, and the new disc's energy is a few cranks up from Williams' 2002 release, *Heart to Yours*. The R&B groove of "The Incident" and the soulful smoothness of "My Only Love Is You" could easily pull double-duty as commercial pop numbers, though more gospel-minded listeners will favor "Do You Know," "Rescue My Heart"

and "I Know" (the latter featuring the entire Destiny trio). In a show of artistic ambition, "Purpose in Your Storm" dramatically carries the vocals forward atop a wave of percussion, horns and acoustic guitars. Overall, the album's gospel influences give way to more R&B/soul leanings; but as these touches reflect more vintage tastes, the end result is an album that boldly balances the best of yesterday and today.

**DAVID JENISON**



**File under:** Rock/Modern Worship **Grade:** B  
**For fans of...** Brit-influenced music with driving rhythm

**TREE63**  
**The Answer to the Question**

InPop

**A sonically compelling Q&A**

On its third major release, South African-bred rock/worship trio Tree63 delivers its tightest and most accessible recording to date. Once again, the band sports its standard Brit-influenced sound that recalls U2, Delirious and the vintage Police era. But this time around they mix things up more than usual, offering a diametric mix of

**Indie Pick: LIZZA CONNOR**



**File under:** Alternative country/acoustic rock **Grade:** A-  
**For fans of...** songwriters cut from the same musical and lyrical cloth as Lucinda Williams, Patty Griffin and Emmylou Harris.

**Runaway**

Independent

**CCM Magazine's contributing writer merits a review of her own.**

Our own Lizza Connor may not have a record contract to back her up, but she already has enough credentials to back her legitimacy. For one, she's spent childhood immersed in recordings by George Jones and Tammy Wynette, Simon & Garfunkel and Neil Young, worked with Andy Osenga (The Normals, Caedmon's Call) on the production front and placed second in a gospel songwriting competition for Merlefest 2003 (This contest has already birthed *O Brother Where Art Thou* soundtrack star Gillian Welch and Lost Highway act Tift Merrit.)

Not only does her resumé ring with respectability, but her disc is stocked with an adventurous blend of alt country, folk, southern gospel and even contemporary bluegrass, laced with potent poetry and textbook storytelling. The 25-year-old unleashes the deep fried guitar of "Runaway" with Emmylou Harris in mind, adding additional elements of deep southern cookin' on "I Won't." She develops a Tex-Mex sonic edge on "New Mexico Romance" (discussing the challenges of smalltown living), engages listeners in eloquent character development on "Amy" and ties up the battle-themed "Arlington" with somber acoustic solitude on what's a stellar debut effort.

**ANDY ARGYRAKIS**



## All Access: The Latest DVD Buzz

When it comes to concerts, nothing quite compares to the energy of being right in the middle of the action. But if you can't make it to the show, concert DVDs are the next-best way to experience the gig. Still, it's even better when the discs possess that extra-special something that sets them apart from the pack. All three of the following DVDs have that "x-factor" in droves.

First up is **Steven Curtis Chapman Live (Sparrow)**. The nearly two-hour concert features Chapman & band displaying its usual penultimate performance prowess, but the highlight—by a mile—is his inspiring multimedia tribute to Jim Elliot's Amazon missionary team that was killed in 1956 by the Auca Indians they were trying to reach with the gospel. Within the tribute is the particularly poignant onstage testimony of Steve Saint. Saint is the son of one of the five slain missionaries, who went to live with the Auca people and actually befriended the very man who speared his own father to death. This Auca tribesman—now a Christian—also appears onstage. Now trust me, Steven Curtis is always fab, but God bless him for bringing this story to life during his show. It's worth far more than the price of the DVD. **(Grade: A)**

Passion's **Sacred Revolution: Live from OneDay03 (Sparrow/sixsteps)** is a snapshot of the event from start to finish, highlighting the speakers (such as Louie Giglio, actor Kirk Cameron and freed missionary hostage Heather Mercer) and musicians (including David Crowder Band and Chris Tomlin). The DVD deftly captures the edgy emotion of the huge crowd, often prostrate in fervent prayer, singing, crying and dancing to the constant flow of high-intensity worship music. Overall, a fine bird's-eye view. **(Grade: B+)**

Finally (and finely left-of-center) is **See Spot Rock**, a humorous look at life on tour with the O.C. Supertones, Relient K, Pillar, John Reuben and Sanctus Real. The fact that Steve Taylor scripted and directed this DVD is reason enough to check it out. And once you do, you'll find a hysterical mix of non-musical vignettes featuring the bands sarcastically insulting each others' artistry, fake-fighting, hobnobbing post-show, not to mention a singing security guard, witty animated interludes and Taylor's conducting a focus group full of preschoolers. Besides offering a disarming view of rock bands on the road, the DVD's extras include full music videos, "Life of a Dreamer" (Taylor's "hagiography") and other goodies. For Christian rock fans, this is the "Behind the Music" episode we've all been hoping for. **(Grade: A)**

DAVE URBANSKI



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3

effervescent pop/rock swirled in with assorted mid-range worship tunes. The result is a sonically compelling set, although the lyrics aren't as imaginative as one would expect.

Whether it's the joyfully rhythmic title track or the guitar-driven melodies of "King," the up-tempo selections move at a near-immediate pace without crossing the breakneck threshold. Hard-charging cuts like "You Only," which speaks of God's sovereignty, and the predictable Jesus-is-my-hero offering "But Now My Eyes Are Open" are replete with urgent guitar riffs and sing-along-required choruses.

On the softer side, standouts include the Matt Redman-penned track "Blessed Be Your Name" and intimate worship ballad "I Stand for You."

While Tree63 scores high marks for musicianship and production, they are graded down for lyrical content. Consider this vanilla stanza from "Over and Over Again": "Whatever I hear you say I'll do/Whatever you want, I want it too." But don't let this lack of creativity stop you from enjoying this satisfying aural treat.

DAVID McCREARY



File under: **Grade: B**

Pop  
For fans of... an American Idol alum without the usual T.V. show musical cheese whiz.

## R.J. HELTON

**Real Life**  
B-Rite Music

**A debut even Simon Cowell would praise**

R.J. Helton is proof that Americans love a wild card. As a contestant on

"American Idol," Helton clinched the wild card vote to become a Top 5 finalist in the inaugural season. Seen by millions on the small screen, Helton also hit stages nationwide on the "American Idol Tour" and rocked stereos via the show's "greatest moments" compilation disc. In the wake of such mammoth media exposure, the Atlanta-based singer fielded many label offers, but as a tribute to his spiritual integrity, he aligned with B-Rite for his full-length debut, *Real Life*.

Helton, whose birth certificate reads Richard Jason, tackles his rookie release with staggering confidence. Holding nothing back, his vocal performances radiate an all-out energy and sense of purpose. While the album falls under a pop umbrella, Helton dives head first into an array of influences—from hip-hop and neo-soul to urban dance and R&B balladry. *Real Life* flexes an attitude without seeming cocky and boasts an artistic edge that doesn't drown out the clear spiritual overtones. Few artists can make a prayer anthem sound as hip as Helton does with "Why Don't We Pray."

To showcase his vocal wizardry, *Real Life* features several slow songs such as "Missing You," "Even If," "Delicate Child" and "All We Need to Know" (which he co-wrote with Natalie Grant). The mellower music concedes more room for Helton's vocals to stretch and flourish, and, for voice aficionados, such moments seem magical. Still, the singer is most compelling on upbeat numbers like the quirky, beat-driven "Crazy" and the dance floor-kindling "Freedom."

Although it's another "Idol" runner-up, Clay Aiken, who currently holds all the sales records among the show's alumni, this runner-up's release will leave even Simon Cowell speechless.

DAVID JENISON



My husband often says, “So when was it that books stopped being written by authors?” You know what he’s talking about—sometimes it seems like anybody with even a little bit of celebrity writes a book. But then, we always know when we read something crafted by a *real* writer, don’t we? A gifted writer creates a masterpiece painted with words. And that’s what I’ve discovered in several books this month. Michael Card, Charlie Peacock and Max Lucado are three creative personalities, gifted at infusing spiritual and Scriptural insight with beauty.

**1** Singer/songwriter/author Michael Card gave the devotions at a publishing conference I attended last week, speaking from his book, *A Fragile Stone: The Emotional Life Of Simon Peter* (InterVarsity). I sat spellbound. Now I’ve also been deeply moved as I’ve read his book over the days since the conference. The introduction points out that Peter is central in so many of the most significant moments recorded in the New Testament—when Jesus walked



Michael Card

on the water, at the Transfiguration, when Peter slept in the Garden of Gethsemane and then cut off the soldier’s ear, when he denied Christ three times, among others. Card works his way through Peter’s life as revealed in Scripture, seeking to focus on Peter’s friendship with Jesus and then calling his readers to learn from viewing Jesus through the eyes and experiences of Peter. This is a beautiful and insightful book I will go back to many times.

**2** Honestly, it took some effort on my part to dig into Charlie Peacock’s *New Way to Be Human: A Provocative Look at What it Means to Follow Jesus* (Shaw Books/WaterBrook). But little that is worthwhile comes easily, right? Once I was in, I was hooked. Peacock’s mind-altering, life-changing, perspective-adjusting answers to the question, “What does it mean to be a student-follower of Jesus?” challenge all of our Christian culture *modus operandi*. He invites us into the passionate adventure of bending the shape and purpose of our lives into something far more significant than we have settled for. What he has to say has an impact on our love lives and work agendas, and the message is radical. “One of the strange upside-down things about the life of following Jesus is that you really want it to cost your life,” Peacock writes. “If it doesn’t, you’ve yet to step into the Story with intentionality.” I suggest you *intentionally* read this book for a deeper “purpose-driven life.” (Switchfoot fans will be pleased to discover that the

book’s forward is written by frontman Jon Foreman.)

**3** Remember the old adage “a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down”? That is the image I thought of as I read *It’s Not About Me: Rescue from the Life We Thought Would Make Us Happy* (Integrity). The medicine? Theology. The sugar? Max’s simple, authentic style. This book is feeding foundational theology about the nature of God—His holiness and



Max Lucado



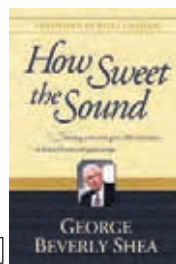
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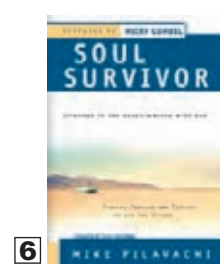
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6

## Making Your Life Count

In addition to his own recordings, concerts and touring, **Fernando Ortega** has been an essential part of Anne Graham Lotz’s “Just Give Me Jesus” revivals around the country and across the world over the past four years. Upcoming locations for revivals in 2004 include: San Juan, Puerto Rico, June 10-11; Chicago, Sept. 20-22; and Seattle, Oct. 1-2. So we asked Fernando to read Anne’s new book, *Why? Trusting God When You Don’t Understand* (W Publishing) and give us his impressions.

**CCM:** Why have you committed yourself so much to “Just Give Me Jesus” with Anne Graham Lotz, and in what ways has being a part of the revivals influenced you?

**Fernando:** Beyond the fact that Anne is an amazing speaker with a powerful message, she has become a good friend over the years. It has been easy and natural to commit myself to the “Just Give Me Jesus” revivals for that reason alone. The events themselves are exhausting but richly rewarding for me and for the guys in my band. It is always deeply moving when Anne gives the invitation and so many people come forward for prayer. I also love to hear all those voices singing hymns. I

will never forget our experiences in Seoul, London and Cardiff, Wales.

**CCM:** What are your impressions of Anne’s new book?

**Fernando:** What strikes me most about it is that Anne has attained true empathy for people’s suffering by way of her own suffering and heartache. When she asks the question, “Why?” you get the sense that she really means it—and that it’s a question we will be asking God for the rest of our lives. The answer Anne constantly points to is that God is with us. I find that conclusion very comforting, mostly because of the difficult last

immutability, His goodness and love. But the purpose is not information, it's transformation. As Lucado draws back the curtain on God's nature, we can't help seeing our self-promotion, self-preservation and self-centeredness for what it is in light of God's overriding purpose—to reveal His glory. "God's staff meetings, if He had them, would revolve around one question," Lucado suggests, "'How can we reveal My glory today?' God's to-do-list consists of one item: 'Reveal My glory.'" And Lucado assures us this agenda of God's does not reflect an ego problem. "He does not reveal his glory for his good. We need to witness it for ourselves." Like so many Lucado books, this one is short and easy-to-read and yet profoundly powerful.

You can hear Lucado speak from *It's Not About Me* at your local Regal Cinema on Tuesday, April 13 at the premiere of a digitized, surround-sound, full-length MercyMe concert from "The Imagine Tour." Every Regal Cinema around the country with

high-definition digital technology will participate in the premiere. Following the cinema debut, "MercyMe Live Featuring Max Lucado" will be available the rest of April via national pay-per-view television outlets such as Direct TV and IN-DEMAND.

**4** What singer do you think has sung live in front of more people than any other performer? Elton John? Elvis Presley? No. George Beverly Shea. It's true. Shea, through his life-long association with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, has sung in front of more people than any other singer. (After all, Billy Graham has presented the gospel in person in front of more people than anyone in history.) In his new book, *How Sweet the Sound: Amazing Stories and Grace-Filled Reflections on Beloved Hymns and Gospel Songs*, Shea tells the history of how such treasured songs were written or introduced, offers moving accounts of songs touching tender hearts and shares

remembrances of people and places from his long ministry through music. Talking about Shea's trademark song, "I'd Rather Have Jesus," worship leader/recording artist Jeff Deyo said, "These words are still the heartbeat of a generation of young people who have been saturated with technology—the microwave generation. The cry of their hearts is still: 'I'd rather have Jesus than anything'—more than fame, money, success or power!"

**5** Music from the Soul Survivor movement via Matt Redmond and Tim Hughes seems to have crossed the Atlantic long ago, and now we are seeing its influence in the form of books from the UK youth movement. In *SOUL Sister: The Ultimate Guide to Being a Girl of God* (Regal), Beth Redman (married to Matt) deals with loneliness, self-image, relationships, purity and the ways to find help for all of life's issue through prayer and study of Scripture.

**6** Also out this month from the leader and founder of the movement (and mentor to Redman and Hughes), Mike Pilavachi, is *Soul Survivor: Finding Passion and Purpose in the Dry Places* (Regal). In short chapters, Pilavachi invites his readers into the desert—dry places where we meet God in new and significant ways that change the way we live. "The desert is a place where you have to come to terms with your humanity, with your weakness and fallibility," he writes. "The desert is a lonely place; there are not usually many people there. Above all, the desert is God's place; it is the place where He takes us in order to heal us."



few years I have gone through with my own family. God didn't answer our prayers the way we wanted Him to, though He answered them in ways that affirmed His presence in our lives.

**CCM: How does the message have a personal impact on you?**

**Fernando:** A few years ago, when my father was depressed and dejected after bad reports concerning his kidney disease, God answered his prayers by way of a little grandson that was born to my sister. Though my father was still on dialysis, he was no longer depressed. I hadn't heard him sing in a long time, but there he was on the floor with my nephew, singing and reading books and playing games. *Why?* helped me recognize the fact that God was with us through that and several other hard times that came later—some of which are not resolved. *Why?* doesn't supply pat or automatic answers, but it certainly points to the simple truth that God is with us which, for me, is a real resting place. I've been asking God, "Why?" all my life.

**CCM: What are you up to yourself?**

**Fernando:** I have been fairly busy lately, writing songs and recording a new project, which will release in August on Curb Records. I am thrilled with how the record turned out. It's a slight departure from past stuff—the production is a bit stripped down. Some of the songs are a bit more edgy than my usual work—the guitars more prominent and the drums more punchy. There is still plenty of piano and, as always, a few arrangements of hymns.



**Fernando Ortega with Anne Graham Lotz at a "Just Give Me Jesus" revival. For more information, go to: [angelministries.org](http://angelministries.org)**



# HOT releases. COOL prices.

## new releases

### new releases in music

BY CHRISTA FARRIS



Dove Hits 2004  
VARIOUS ARTISTS

\$13.99

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SARA GROVES

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L.A. Symphony



Natalie Grant

Why limit this month's spring cleaning to all your crowded closets when you could spruce up your CD collection with a sparkling makeover as well? If some new musical inspiration is what you're after, this month is the perfect time for a revamp as plenty of diverse sounds are headed to a store near you.

For instance on April 6, **GINNY OWENS'** third full-length CD, *Beautiful* (Rocketown), will definitely engage your senses as Ginny provides unique introspection on a variety of subjects any listener can relate to.

Offering an equally genuine look at matters of faith and the heart, **MercyMe** is back with a new disc the band named *Undone* (INO). Be on the lookout for a track we've heard called "Homesick." If you thought "I Could Only Imagine" tugged at your heartstrings, this song could potentially cause a full-on crying fit. Engaging stuff.

Now for something a little different for those craving a new musical flavor, Word's newest act, **Building 429**, has a debut EP titled *Glory Defined*. These ministry-minded guys write the kind of pop hooks you can't get out of your head—something that's always a welcome quality. Look for *Glory* on April 6. Word also mixes things up again this month with its annual rendition of *Dove Hits* on April 20, which features the diverse palette of artists reflected in this year's Dove nominations.

Compilation lovers will also find plenty to love in April with the release of two retrospective collections from folk-pop phenoms **Caedmon's Call** (April 6) and recently defunct rockers **Five Iron Frenzy** (April 20). For the Caedmon's camp, longtime Guild members and new fans alike can enjoy *Chronicles* (Essential), an album of rarities, remixes and live favorites, plus two brand new songs. And for FIF fans, who may still

be mourning the loss of the frenetic ska outfit, redemption comes in the form of a double-disc effort, *The End Is Near*, which includes the live offering of the band's last show in Denver, Colo., among other sonic treats.

Switching grooves from rock to hip-hop, **Flynn of L.A. Symphony** fame has his third solo release, *In Like Flynn* (ILLECT) set for release this month. Dubbed as featuring "all of the hotness that L.A. Symphony and Flynn fans have come to expect," you can catch him in action as he hits the road with L.A. Symphony and *Out of Eden* this summer.

Now for those in a praise frame of mind, there's plenty to keep you focused and soulful as the **Florida Youth for Christ Project**, *Love Comes in All Colors* (Emtro) is scheduled for release on April 27. While a theme of hope and unity anchoring the project never hurts in relating to a mass audience, it's the production/direction of *Preacher's Wife* soundtrack alum **Troy Sneed** that really helps set this particular album apart.

Worship connoisseurs will surely recognize a few names in the next few efforts this month with *Faithful* (Hillsong/Integrity) on April 6, featuring the likes of **Darlene Zschech**, **Reuben Morgan**, **Marty Sampson** and more. **Don Moen** lends his praise prowess to *Thank You Lord* (Hosanna!) on the same day, while power vocalist **Natalie Grant** teams up with a few pals such as **Darwin Hobbs**, **John Elefante** and more for *Worship With Natalie Grant and Friends* (Integrity) on April 20. **Terry MacAlmon** continues to stay busy as he releases *Sound of Heaven* (INO) on April 20, too. And last but not certainly not least, **BeBe Winans** treats listeners to more sweet vocals on April 20 with *Dream* (Hidden Beach/Columbia/Integrity).

Go to [CCMmagazine.com](http://CCMmagazine.com) today to get these great deals! Available at The CCM Store for a limited time only!

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**FOCUSRITE PLATINUM VOICE MASTER PRO**

With all the accolades built into its name, the Platinum Voice Master Pro should be a winner, and it is. Just as Antares did with the AVP-1, Focusrite brought together several related devices into a single unit designed to address all the needs of one application. From Focusrite's perspective, the key to good vocal reproduction is the first stage preamp, where the mic meets the board. With a storied heritage of preamp designs in its workroom, Focusrite's engineers developed a discrete (separate component) Class A (linear and quiet) mic preamp that caresses the signal before handing it off to an optical (non-invasive) expander and compressor and a voice-optimized equalizer section. The front panel can be intimidating to a novice, but the layout is logically divided into sections that demonstrate proper signal flow in a simple, visible manner. If you have an old, noisy mixer, the Master Pro can make at least the lead vocal soar above the fray until funds are available for a new console—or several more Master Pros.

\$750  
focusrite.com



**TC ELECTRONICS VOICEWORKS**

Vocal harmony, whether in the vein of the Carter family, Out of Eden or The Katinas, requires years of practice and refinement. Or does it? Artificial harmonies, derived by electronic boxes from a single lead vocal, are now a functional reality. Canada's IVL Technologies began the trend, and Denmark's TC Electronics has moved it forward. To shrink the gap between processed and pure, TC worked on the formant (defining resonance and response) aspects of the human voice, including head, chest, breath, vibrato and inflection. TC then added realistic harmonies above and below the reference signal without introducing "Chipmunk" artifacts into the signals. The result is a close approximation of what humans sound like when they sing together. Using the VoiceWorks unit is not a plug-and-play process, but it is easy enough to warrant taking the time to understand it. After the song's key and scale are selected, its chordal progression can be programmed and driven by any MIDI device.

As long as the harmonies are within a fifth of the lead, they are convincing enough for almost any live application or demo recording. With TC's newest twist, HarmonyHold, backing voices can be frozen while the lead vocal continues unabated, adding another dimension of reality to the process. TC's VoiceWorks brings a degree of intimacy to the otherwise sterile environment of digital processing. Throw one in the rack and create your own family harmony without creating any sibling rivalries.

\$799  
telectronic.com

**ANTARES AVP-1**

It's the "open secret" of the audio community. Real-time pitch correction devices are as common onstage as Dasani water bottles. How else could you explain perfect pitch emanating from the mouths of performers who are suspended upside-down and spinning at breakneck speed? In addition to artists such as Cher, Antares has a little black book of users who have benefited from its "vocal enhancing" inventions, including their latest offering, the AVP-1 Vocal Producer. Armed with the ability to push flat notes higher and quell uneven volume, the AVP-1 is a voice fix-it box of the highest order. Built-in mic modeling grants any humble stage mic the characteristics of a supreme studio mic (well, almost), while the de-esser rids the track of sibilance, and the Double Tracker adds a sense of fullness. In all, Antares has combined the most needed vocal controls into one simple unit that delivers the goods. It won't turn Joe Cocker into Greg Long, but it gets close.

\$599  
antares.com





# 2004 Festival Crib Sheet



Now that winter is finally drawing to a close, you know what that means—summer is almost right around the corner! And before it's officially warm enough for flip-flops, shorts and sunscreen, it's a great time to start making those festival plans. After all, what more could a Christian music fan want than catching all your favorite artists in one place while hanging with friends, camping and, in some cases, even enjoying a rollercoaster ride or two?

By Christa Farris and Kelly O'Neill  
Photos courtesy of Alive Festival and Creation East and West

To get all the festival fun started, be sure to check out our handy online resource below with all the information we have at press time. Registering early will often save you money, so it's never too soon to start. Also, to get the most up-to-date artist lineups, ticket information, etc., surf over to the official Web site for each festival.

## ALIVE FESTIVAL

June 16-19

Clay's Park, Canal Fulton, OH

[Alive.org](http://Alive.org)

Alive Festival features four stages with more than 60 concerts, including MercyMe, tobyMac, Stacie Orrico, Tait, Rebecca St. James, The Elms, Sanctus Real, Plus One, Barlow Girl and many more! Mixing things up, there is also a "Youth Leader Oasis" featuring worship and seminar leaders such as David Nasser, Ray Guarendi, Chris Tomlin and Matt Redman. And if all the music wasn't enough to keep you busy, attendees can also explore the great outdoors at this beautiful camping ground, where swimming, hiking, beach volleyball and skateboarding are among the numerous recreational activities available.

## ATLANTA FEST

June 16-19

Six Flags, Atlanta, GA

[Atlantafest.com](http://Atlantafest.com)

With everything from practical seminars, to Bible studies, to amusement park rides and, of course, awesome music,

AtlantaFest offers plenty of fun for festival-goers.

Musically speaking, fans will hear from the likes of Paul Colman, Across the Sky, Warren Barfield, downhere, Mission Road, The Pool Boys, Lil' iROCC, Casting Crowns, Pillar and more. Featured speakers for the three-day event include Gabe Lyons and Darren Whitehead.

## CORNERSTONE FESTIVAL

July 1-4

Bushnell, ILL

[Cornerstonefestival.com](http://Cornerstonefestival.com)

With a diverse artist roster that includes Bleach, Jeremy Camp, David Crowder Band, KJ-52, Kutless, Newboys, Over the Rhine, Pillar, P.O.D, Rock 'n' Roll Worship Circus, Cool Hand Luke, Ester Drang and more, there's also a new band showcase where hot unsigned bands are selected to play on the mainstage. More than 250 hours of seminars and workshops keep things lively and feature main speakers Josh McDowell and Ron Luce, among others. Plus, enjoy the Flickerings Film Festival, The Prairie School of Writing, The Imaginarium and The Cornerstone Games. In addition there are also two "Baby Cornerstones" in Orlando Fla. (May 7-8), and Elon, N.C. (June 11-12). Visit [CornerstoneFlorida.com](http://CornerstoneFlorida.com) and [CornerstoneFestivalNC.com](http://CornerstoneFestivalNC.com) for all the details.

## CREATION EAST

June 23-26

The Agape Farm

Mt. Union, PA

## CREATION WEST

July 21-24

Gorge Amphitheater

Gorge, WA

[creationfest.com](http://creationfest.com)

Dubbed as "a tribute to our Creator," artists at this year's Creation festivals include: Switchfoot, Newsboys, GRITS, Jeremy Camp, Superchic[k], Big Daddy Weave, Jars of Clay, Out of Eden and Plumb. Other Creation activities include a fireworks

*(continued on p.62)*





# 2004

CORNERSTONE FESTIVAL  
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## JULY 1-4

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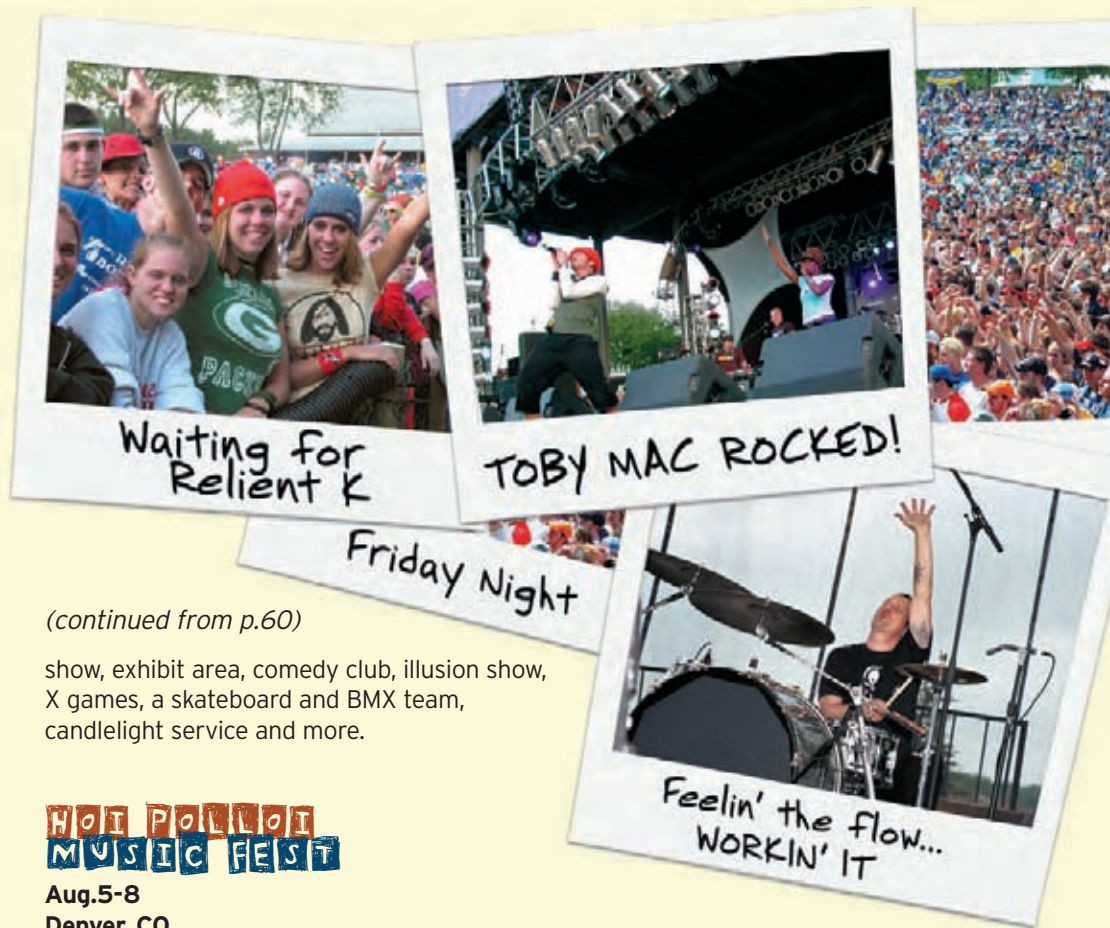


P.O.D.  
Switchfoot  
MxPx  
Relient K  
Blindside  
Newsboys  
Pillar  
Jeremy Camp  
Kutless  
David Crowder Band  
The Alarm  
Pedro the Lion  
mewithoutYou  
and many more...

for tickets and info  
[www.cornerstonefestival.com](http://www.cornerstonefestival.com)  
or call 773.989.2087



**iTickets.com**  
CHRISTIAN EVENT TICKETS AND INFORMATION



(continued from p.60)

show, exhibit area, comedy club, illusion show, X games, a skateboard and BMX team, candlelight service and more.

### HOT POLLOI MUSIC FEST

Aug. 5-8  
Denver, CO  
[Hoipolloifest.com](http://Hoipolloifest.com)

The Mile High City is going to rock, with events held in not one but *three* major venues, including the Pepsi Center, Universal Lending Pavilion and Six Flags. Third Day, Pillar, Skillet, Relient K and tobyMac are a few of the confirmed bands at press time. More will surely be coming to entertain the hoi polloi—or the masses—at this event.

### KINGDOM BOUND MINISTRIES FESTIVAL

Aug. 1-4  
Six Flags Darien Lakes Resort, NY  
[kingdombound.org](http://kingdombound.org)

In addition to the "Kingdom Bound Sports Experience" that will feature the Christian Wrestling Federation and "Livin' it Live" with actor Stephen Baldwin and BMX racing, Six Flags park admission is included with all Kingdom Bound tickets.

Artists slated for festival performances include Third Day, Newsboys, Audio Adrenaline, FFH, Nicole C. Mullen, Petra, Skillet, O.C. Supertones, Thousand Foot Krutch and more. Worship leaders include Paul Baloche, Lenny Leblanc, Ken Freeman and former "Growing Pains" star Kirk Cameron.





# CREATION 04

**June 23 to 26**

*The Agape Farm • Mt. Union, PA*

**July 21 to 24**

*George Amphitheater • George, WA*

**Newsboys • Audio Adrenaline**

**Jars of Clay • Switchfoot**

**Steven Curtis Chapman**

**Relient K • Skillet • Delirious**

**tobyMac • Jeremy Camp**

**Stacie Orrico • Kutless • Petra**

**Chris Tomlin Band • Grits**

**12 Stones • Pillar • Plumb**

**Paul Colman Trio • KJ-52**

**David Crowder Band**

**Superchic(k) • Out of Eden**

**Paul Baloche • John Reuben**

**Casting Crowns • Telecast**

**Big Daddy Weave**

**Sanctus Real • Starfield**

**Rock & Roll Worship Circus**

**7th Day Slumber**

**Thousand Foot Krutch**

**FM Static • Falling Up**

**Cool Hand Luke • 7 Places**

**Sarah Kelly • Building 429**

**Desperation • Jason Morant**

**The Speakers Luis Palau Josh**

**McDowell • Rob Bell**

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creationfest.com  
800-327-6921

## LUIS PALAU RENO FESTIVAL

June 11-12

Warshoe County Rancho  
San Rafael Regional Park, NV  
[palau.org/reno](http://palau.org/reno)

In this free event, Point of Grace, tobyMac and Kutless are a few of the big acts that'll highlight this two-day festival. Plus, hear an evangelical message from professional skateboarders as they demonstrate extreme sports in a 9,000-square foot skate park, or enjoy some lighter kiddie fun and games at the Veggie Tales children's area with ventriloquist Mark Thompson.



There's me!!!

## LUIS PALAU TWIN CITIES FESTIVALS

Aug. 7-8

St. Paul, MN  
[palau.org/twincities](http://palau.org/twincities)

Two more days of great music and strong worship featuring Point of Grace, Jump 5, Hezekiah Walker, Casting Crowns, tobyMac and Mary Mary will take place in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. Extreme sports and Veggie Tales fun will also be there at this free event.

## SEMINAR IN THE ROCKIES

Aug. 1-7

Estes Park, CO  
[gospelmusic.org](http://gospelmusic.org)

Forget "American Idol." If Christian music is your thing, this is a great place to get discovered. Just ask Stacie Orrico and Nichole Nordeman. Signing up will also allow attendees to enjoy evening concerts with some of Christian music's biggest artists in the gorgeous Rocky Mountains.

## SOULFEST

July 19-Aug. 1

Loon Mountain Resort  
Lincoln, NH  
[newsoundconcerts.com](http://newsoundconcerts.com)

With more than a dozen campsites to stay at in the surrounding area, the main event is located at Loon Mountain, where Jars of Clay, Rebecca St. James, Bob Rice, Kevin Max, Ginny Owens, Sarah Kelly, Tree 63, Paul Wright, Math (formerly Earthsuit) and many others are going to rock out New England.



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Supertones • Skillet • Casting Crowns • Kirk Cameron • Reggie Dabbs • Kutless  
Cool Hand Luke • Holland • Paul Colman • Among Thorns • Jason Upton  
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# 2004 MUSIC FESTIVALS

1. **LUIS PALAU RENO FESTIVAL**  
JUNE 11-12, WASHOE COUNTY  
RANCHO SAN RAFAEL REGIONAL  
PARK, NV
2. **ALIVE FESTIVAL**  
JUNE 16-19, CLAY'S PARK, CANAL  
FULTON, OH
3. **ATLANTAFEST**  
JUNE 16-19, SIX FLAGS, ATLANTA, GA
4. **CREATION EAST**  
JUNE 23-26, THE AGAPE FARM
5. **CORNERSTONE FESTIVAL**  
JULY 1-4, BUSHNELL, IL
6. **SOULFEST**  
JULY 19-AUG. 1, LINCOLN, NH
7. **CREATION WEST**  
JULY 21-24, GORGE AMPHITHEATER,  
GORGE, WA
8. **KINGDOM BOUND  
MINISTRIES FESTIVAL**  
AUG. 1-4, SIX FLAGS DARIEN LAKES  
RESORT, NY
9. **SEMINAR IN THE ROCKIES**  
AUG. 1-7, ESTES PARK, CO
10. **LUIS PALAU TWIN CITIES  
FESTIVALS**  
AUG. 7-8, ST. PAUL, MN
11. **HOI POLLOI MUSIC FEST**  
AUG. 5-8, DENVER, CO



# SOULFEST 2004

JOIN THE CELEBRATION,  
THE NORTHEAST'S  
PREMIER CHRISTIAN  
MUSIC AND  
TEACHING  
FESTIVAL.  
JESUS  
STARTED A  
REVOLUTION  
AND  
SOULFEST2004  
WILL INSPIRE YOU  
TO LIVE THIS  
REVOLUTION WITH  
RENEWED PASSION  
AND COMMITMENT!

THIRD DAY,  
NEWSBOYS,  
JARS OF CLAY,  
AUDIO ADRENALINE,  
STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN,  
REBECCA ST. JAMES, GRITS,  
RELIENT K, PETRA, PILLAR,  
THE DAVID CROWDER BAND,  
CHARLIE PEACOCK, TREE 63,  
L.A. SYMPHONY, JEREMY CAMP,  
O.C. SUPERTONES, DAVID RUIS,  
PAUL COLMAN, SUPERCHIC[K],  
GINNY OWENS, SANCTUS REAL,  
THE CROSS MOVEMENT, MATH,  
GOD ROCKS, OVER THE RHINE,  
JOHN REUBEN, PAID IN FULL,  
SARAH KELLY, PAUL WRIGHT,  
BOBBY BISHOP, JOHN FISCHER,  
STEPHEN BALDWIN, MARS ILL,  
DAVID NASSER, MIKE SMITH,  
JUSTIN McROBERTS, MAEVE,  
KEVIN MAX (FROM DC TALK),  
TAYLOR SORENSEN, SPOKEN,  
CAMERON JAYMES, BLEACH,  
SKATEBOARD & BMX TEAM,  
THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH,  
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# STANDING ROOM ONLY: YOUR GUIDE TO CONCERTS by Andy Argyrakis

For the latest concert listings, check out CCMmagazine.com's searchable tour database to find out when your favorite artists will play in a city near you.



Clockwise from top left: Amy Grant, Bart Millard, Bebo Norman, Nathan Cochran of MercyMe, Amy with hubby Vince Gill, Amy G. guitarist William Owsley

## "THE IMAGINE TOUR" featuring MercyMe, Amy Grant and Bebo Norman INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM BLOOMINGTON, IND.—FEB. 14, 2004

The name behind MercyMe's latest tour may have been pulled from its biggest hit single, but there was a whole lot more to this band than an instantly recognizable record breaker. Those who thought these guys were merely soft-spoken power balladeers would've found modern rock to be a more prevalent agenda in the show, and anyone who believed Christian concerts were confined to second-rate stage set-ups would have marveled at the hi-tech production.

Much of the band's liveliness came from frontman Bart Millard, who, besides growing out his hair, has developed a more interactive persona on his platform. As the misty green fog lamps rose to a cover of Phil Collins' "In the Air Tonight," he prowled the stage, weaving in between bandmates pumped up on the audience's adrenaline. The rest of the gang followed through with lightening bolt force, pounding through the alternative attitude of "On My Way to You" and "The Change Inside of Me," with images of racecars and constant color changes adorning the screened backdrop. That's not to say introspection didn't have its place in the set with "Word of God Speak" and "I Love You Lord." The Texas clan also foreshadowed this month's *Undone* CD with "Homesick" and "Here With Me," both of which seem quite capable of following the airwave patterns of "Imagine."

Another artist on the bill with a link to that track was none other than Christian music queen Amy Grant. The pioneering pop star covered "Imagine" on 2002's *Legacy... Hymns and Faith*, though the bulk of her show came from 2003's *Simple Things* (Word). The title cut, "Happy" and "Eye to Eye" radiated with acoustic cheer and sunny vocals. "It Takes a Little Time" hustled with her giddy guitar strums, and "Lead Me On" was spruced up by band leader William Owsley's rollicking solo. Aside from Grant's standard song selection on this tour, a pair of last-minute surprises included a cameo by hubby Vince Gill for the "House of Love" duet and a karaoke version of "Baby Baby" featuring the couple's kids on background vocals.

Prior to these main attractions, down-to-earth Georgia boy Bebo Norman filled the theatre with his soothing tenor and homegrown acoustics. If there's anyone who can turn a 3,200-seat venue into a cozy college coffeehouse, it's Norman, whose wit and charm far make up for his lack of full backing instrumentation. Favorites like "Stand," "Cover Me," "Beautiful You" and "Great Light of the World" were stocked with enough congeniality to make even unfamiliar attendees instant fans.

## RIDER REPORT

So what exactly are your favorite acts into eating, drinking and keeping occupied with before and after they hit the stage? We've raided MercyMe and Bebo Norman's tour rider (the list of "essentials" artists request at each venue) for a sample of the snacks and subjects that hit the spot.

### MercyMe

**Nifty thrifty:** Sam's Choice water is a "must" because a 12-pack only costs \$12.50.



Talk about anti-divas! **Reading materials:** The gang requests a local and national newspaper at shows to stay up on current events.

**M&M men:** Peanut and plain flavors are preferred and note:

There are no obsessive-compulsive requests for color sorting or separation.

### Bebo Norman

**Saliva supplementation:** Bottled water of any brand will do, and cranberry juice is also in order. And don't forget assorted herbal teas, a bottle of honey and hot water!



**Munchie mania:** With hopes of staying healthy, assorted raw vegetables with dip will do.

**Dentyne clean:**

Actually, make that Dentyne Ice tablets in arctic chill or spearmint flavor, please.

## TOUR TIDBITS:



(L-R) SHANES E AND B

College campuses will be greeted this spring by the triple-team action of dueling guitarists **Shane Barnett** and **Shane Everett**, singer/songwriter **Shaun Groves** and piano-playing songstress **Ginny Owens**.

**CeCe Winans** takes to touring behind her worshipful *Throne Room*, and she's keeping fans' budgets in mind. This ministry-minded outing has no admission charges as it comes to a church near you throughout the month.

# 20 THINGS YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT: KIRK FRANKLIN

BY MICHAEL NOLAN



Long before he “stomped” to No. 1 with his genre-defying signature hit, there were years when it was questionable whether Kirk Franklin would even survive.

Abandoned by his parents when he was 4 years old, Kirk was raised in Fort Worth, Texas, by an elderly aunt. With finances being tight, the two collected cans and paper to be recycled and used the money to pay for piano lessons. Apparently, those music lessons were well worth it. At age 11, Kirk was appointed minister of music, leading the adult choir at his aunt’s church.

Although Kirk’s adolescent years were characterized by rebellion, he returned to the church with an intense sense of purpose. Blending R&B and hip-hop with the passion of choral gospel music, Kirk began developing his trademark sound. Thanks to a series of ensembles, he has been instrumental in ushering a new era of gospel music to widespread acceptance.

Drawn to his you-can’t-turn-him-down charisma and irresistible musical talents, he’s enlisted artists, including Crystal Lewis, Bono, Cheryl Jones of Salt N’ Pepa and Mary J. Blige to accompany him on his songs.

While Kirk’s used to drawing a strong response from audiences, we’ve now asked him to give us a few responses of his own.

## 20. KID-ERCISE

If you’ve seen Kirk perform, you know that standing still is not his forté. Does he do anything else to stay fit? “No,” he responds, “I have four kids, and that’s all the exercise I need.”

## 19. CAN I GET A WITNESS? OH YEAH.

Kirk has a simple explanation of how his mega-hit “Stomp” came into existence. “It was just an idea that God created, and I moved on it.” Did he ever.

## 18. HUMAN BUG ZAPPER

There’s no question that Kirk knows how to write, arrange and perform a song; but what non-musical talents are up his sleeve? The buzz is that he’s good at catching mosquitoes with his hands.

## 17. PLEASE HOLD

It’s been two years since platinum-selling *The Rebirth of Kirk Franklin* (Gospo Centric) was welcomed into the world. But don’t expect him to deliver a new bundle of joy soon. “I believe when the timing is right, God will speak something special,” notes Kirk.

## 16. FIRST CITY

Breaking new ground is business as usual for Kirk and his cohorts. The music video for “Stomp” was the first gospel video to air on MTV, and *Kirk Franklin & The Family* (1993) was the first gospel debut recording to be

certified platinum. His work on *Kingdom Come* marked the first time an established Christian artist has produced an entire soundtrack for a widely released movie.

## 15. JAZZIN’ WITH JAY

In recent years, we’ve seen Kirk perform on “The Tonight Show” several times. What don’t we see? “Jay [Leno] always comes into your room and gives you a gift basket. And he has everyone sign his guestbook.” Now imagine its value on eBay!

## 14. DISHIN’ WITH DONNY

Select the category “Things Most Gospel Artists Have Not Done.” In giving clues, you may mention appearing as a celebrity contestant on the \$100,000 Pyramid hosted by Donny Osmond. What was the hardest part of the show? “Making sure I don’t sound stupid,” he chuckles.

## 13. FUNNY FOLKS

Kirk flashes a fast smile when amused but when he laughs, it bowls him over. Who can score a strike? “John Gray [who sang with The Family] and Harry Bullock [his best friend]. They remind me of Eddie Murphy and Arsenio Hall.”

## 12. WONDER-FUL AND EVER-GREEN

Although on the edge musically, you can easily hear echoes of the R&B masters in Kirk’s music. Among his inspirations: “Stevie Wonder and Al Green. I love the passion and conviction they sing with. It’s like they really believe what they sing.”

## 11. SURPRISING SELECTIONS

Along with the albums you might expect to find among his CDs, Kirk also owns Steely Dan, the Doobie Brothers and John Mayer CDs.

## 10. DREAM TEAM

Kirk and tobyMac joined forces last year for “I Have A Dream: The Tour” as a musical statement of racial unity. Asked to divulge a Toby tidbit, Kirk laughs. “He’s really black.”

## 9. THE DREAM GOES ON.

Kirk hints there will be an encore of that tour. “I wished more people could’ve experienced the power and anointing,” he says. Stay tuned for details.

## 8. SAFE AT HOME

Yes, Kirk is a natural performer; but he’s also at home, *at home*. “My desire is to be a passionate father and attentive husband,” he asserts. He loves going to movies and Chuck E. Cheese’s with his kids to “watch them have what I never had.” While most gospel music is based in Nashville, Detroit or Los Angeles, he remains true to his roots in Dallas. “It’s all I’ve ever known.”

## 7. EXTENDED FAMILY

Technically, Kirk is a solo artist; but he always travels with a posse of stellar singers and musicians. In his search for talent, he looks for people with “great hearts. It always starts with the heart of the person,” Kirk says. He views his relationship with his ensembles as one of being “a big brother or father figure.”

## 6. THUMBS UP!

Among his favorite movies are *The Godfather* trilogy, *Glory* and *Philadelphia*.

## 5. LOOK OUT, DENZEL.

He has contributed to movie soundtracks, including *Prince of Egypt*, *The Preacher’s Wife* and *Get On the Bus*. He also spent some time in front of the camera for World Wide Pictures’ *Something to Sing About*. He and gospel powerhouse Donnie McClurkin are reportedly on tap for a family-friendly film to be shot this year for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox.

## 4. RIGHTEOUS READING

Looking for something to inspire you? Kirk recommends *Grace Walk* by Steve McVey (Harvest House).

## 3. WELL-VERSED

Currently, Kirk is tuned into Proverbs 3:5. Go ahead—look it up.

## 2. TURNING UP THE HEAT

No matter how he dresses, Kirk always leaves an indelible image. Foremost fashion faux pas: dressing for an outside venue when the service was held indoors. It wasn’t just the music that was hot.

## 1. SPEAKING OF HOT

Kirk confesses, “I’m still not where I want to be in my walk, but I’m in hot pursuit of Him.”



# Charlie Peacock: Everything That's on My Mind



## Everybody Needs a Fan or Two

As you have seen in this issue of CCM, my 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a solo artist is being celebrated. In that same spirit of generosity I'm devoting this month's column to my own salute—a celebration of the fans. Everybody needs a fan or two—not a fanatic in the negative sense but just someone who “gets” you, who understands who you are, and why you do what you do. I suspect that many of you who read this magazine are enthusiastic fans of the artists appearing in its pages month after month. You are hardly stalker types (Right?) but instead, just good people moved by the artistry of brothers and sisters following in the Way. If so, you deserve to have a little love and respect yourselves. The fans need a “superfan,” and I intend to be yours. So here's some love coming back at you.

You are not afraid to express your joy at being touched by the music of your favorites. This childlikeness is what I love about you. A true fan is not too cool to be fan-like. You can't help yourself, can you? That's good. Don't lose this. There are too many people flatlining in this world already. Be truly human and show the world there are things worth caring about, that music can actually move people to express themselves in word and deed. Fans are the enemy of apathy. They're passionate. Thanks for that.

You're creative, inspiring and giving, too. Tineke from The Netherlands, you gave me a book, *The Clown of God*. You said I reminded you of the main character. Thank you. Mark Carter from Fresno, Calif., remember that wonderful pin you crafted for me? It was good, too. Artful, excellent. Thank you. Ned and Leslie, remember how you had the courage to write and ask if I would sing at your wedding (in Pennsylvania)? I'm glad I said, “Yes.” That was cool. Thank you.

You're seekers of truth, knowledge and wisdom, too—looking for wounded healers to help you follow in the Way of Jesus. Nick,

Doug, Jay, remember the tears, the challenges, the theologies turned upside-down, the hope of something more and better? Remember the short trip from fan to friend? I do. You heard some songs, dreamed a dream and became men. Well done. Thank you.

What is music without a community to hear it, enjoy it and tell its story? You can be an artist's greatest champion. And even when you step into the role of critic, it's because you care. Thanks for caring. Thanks for speaking up. If I hadn't been so self-absorbed as a younger man, I would've known to listen better. Why? Fans are the community. And music without community is less than life, less than human. Thanks for keeping us artists both encouraged and challenged.

It's true. Fans can have some high expectations for the artists they love and support. Keep setting the bar high. It's said that people get the music they deserve. Please aim high. Of all the musicians and recording artists in the world, Christians ought to be the ones taking the care of music most seriously. How can we say we love God and not care for His creativity and the human fruit of it? Remember, you're the community. Talk to us. Cheer us on to excellence for the cause of Jesus in the world. You are ceaseless spiritual beings created in the image of God, now through the grace of God being re-created into the image of the Son, the new way to be human. You are ambassadors of Christ, caretakers of His creativity, co-laborers with Jesus in His Kingdom. Do you hear me? Ask for the music you deserve!

Everybody needs a fan or two—not a fanatic in the negative sense but just someone who gets you, who understands who you are and why you do what you do.



Illustration by Jimmy A.

### Art House: A Word on Worship

Looking For Some Good Work?

1. Good work is storytelling and storied living after the pattern of Jesus. This means knowing and telling the Story and making God's reign and rule visible in daily life. It means overcoming evil with good and pushing back the effects of the Fall.
2. Good work is inescapably connected to the Father's business in the world—cooperating with Him in restoring rightness, doing justice and showing mercy. This means removing any impairment to healthy functioning (everywhere and in everything).
3. Good work is caring for God's creativity—people and place and all of creation. This means dreaming well for it and using creation for the good of people and to proclaim God's excellence as Creator.
4. Good work is caring for God's relational will. This means knowing it and embodying it and, as a result, teaching it to others. More than anything, this means loving God with your whole being and loving your neighbor with the kind of love and care you desire. It means doing for others what God has so graciously done for you.

For more information about our ministry write to: P.O. Box 218307, Nashville, TN 37221 or e-mail: [arthouseamerica@bellsouth.net](mailto:arthouseamerica@bellsouth.net).

Charlie Peacock is an artist, producer, author and teacher. His new album, *Full Circle: A Celebration of Songs and Friends (Sparrow)* released March 9. His new book, *New Way to be Human (Waterbrook)*, released March 16.

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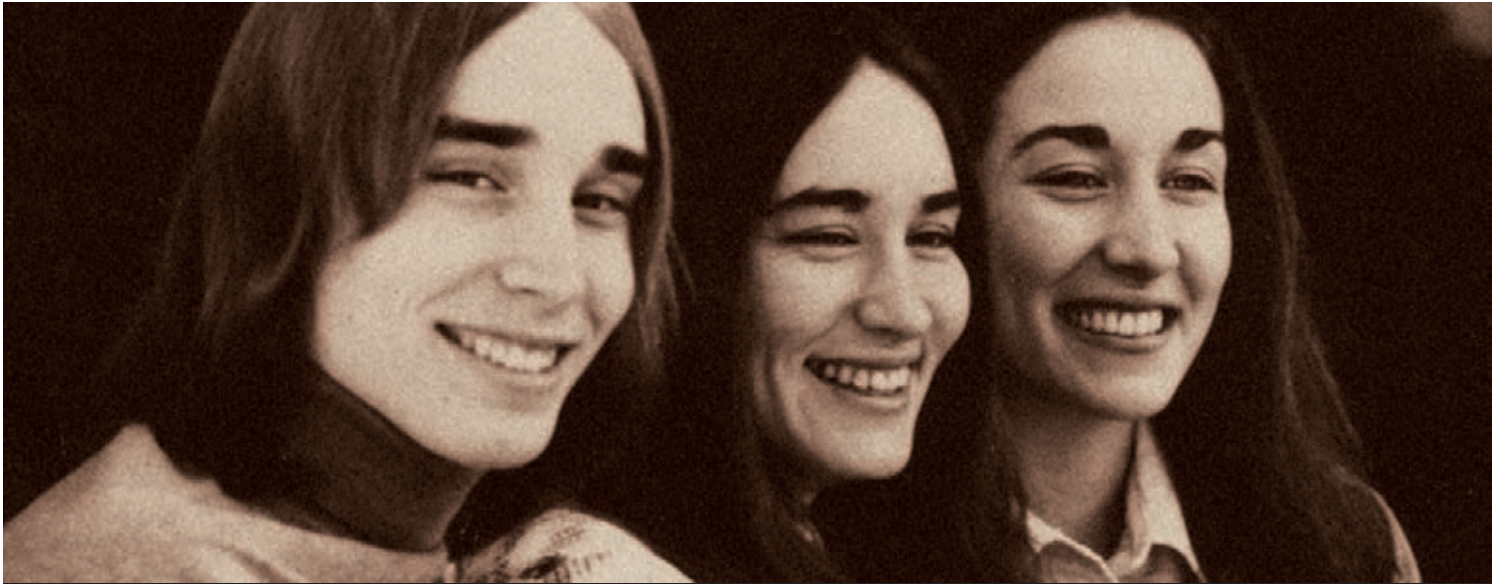
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L to R: Matthew Ward, Annie Herring, Nelly Ward Greisen

# 2nd Chapter of Acts

"God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform" as the William Cowper hymn goes. And sometimes those mysterious ways involve great pain for His children. In 1970, following the death of their mother from a brain tumor in 1968 and later their father from leukemia, Matthew and Nelly Ward left their native North Dakota and moved to California to live with their older sister, Annie Herring, and her husband, Buck. It was this heartbreaking cross-country move that birthed 2nd Chapter of Acts, referred to by CCM in 1998 as "one of the most unique and original acts that has ever graced Christian music."

Matthew, 13, and Nelly, 15, soon began harmonizing with Annie, as only siblings can, on her original worship compositions, which led to a few public performances in the early '70s. It was one such performance that caught the ear of popular Christian entertainer Pat Boone. Boone's connections soon landed the newly christened 2nd Chapter of Acts a deal with MGM for the release of two singles, "Jesus Is" and "I'm So Happy."

Though MGM didn't release a full album from the group, it was enough to attract the attention of Billy Ray Hearn's new label, Myrrh Records,

which signed the three siblings to a record deal. The group's first album, *With Footnotes*, garnered an enthusiastic audience. In fact, in 2001's CCM's *100 Greatest Albums in Christian Music* the author described Matthew's soaring tenor voice by saying he "sang with more blue-eyed soul at 13 than most do in a lifetime."

*Footnotes* included "Easter Song," which was named by CCM in 1998 as the No. 4 Christian song of all time. Though little more than two minutes in length, the song packed quite a punch. Despite its blatantly faith-driven lyrics ("Hear the bells ringing/They're singing that we can be born again/Joy to the world/He is risen, hallelujah!"), it managed to get played on Christian and mainstream radio alike and remains a classic some three decades later.

The group went on to achieve much success over the years, drawing comparisons to everyone from ABBA to Queen because of its tight vocal blend and harmony. The *Billboard Guide to Contemporary Christian Music* later said in 2001 that 2nd Chapter's style was a "hybrid of old-fashioned hymnody, 1970's-era hard rock and American theater music." The group toured extensively, eventually crossing the United States and heading overseas as well. During the

course of 16 albums and 17 years, Matthew and Nelly each contributed to the songwriting process, but Annie served as the primary songwriter for 2nd Chapter. (She once said, "I'm not a songwriter, I'm a song receiver. I start playing, and the music comes.")

Very firm in its mission to serve the Lord through music, 2nd Chapter of Acts never wavered from what it believed to be its calling. Both Matthew and Annie turned down offers from major general-market record companies during their careers because they felt it wouldn't be the right fit. (Over the years, Matthew has sung with superstars Donna Summer and LeAnn Rimes and dueted with Leslie Phillips in 1984 on her hit "By My Spirit.")

In 1988, arguably at the top of its game following two successful *Hymns* projects, 2nd Chapter of Acts felt God's prodding for the group to retire. After a farewell tour, Annie and Matthew continued to do solo projects (as they had been doing for some time), while Nelly Ward Greisen settled into her family life. Matthew survived a triple diagnosis of cancer in 1994, undergoing treatment for two years before being given a clean bill of health in 1996.

—MICHAEL CIANI

For more information, visit [2ndChapterofActs.com](http://2ndChapterofActs.com), [matthewward.com](http://matthewward.com) and [annieherring.com](http://annieherring.com).

## ESSENTIAL 2ND CHAPTER OF ACTS

*How the West was Won* (Myrrh, 1977): Only the second live album of the contemporary Christian music era, CCM's *100 Greatest Albums of All Time* proclaimed the ambitious project "daring."

*Mansion Builder* (Sparrow, 1978): The title track was named one of the "Top 100 Christian Songs of all Time" by CCM in 1998.

*The Roar of Love* (Sparrow, 1980): *Billboard's Guide to Contemporary Christian Music* later referred to the project as a "Christian rock operetta of sorts."

*Hymns* (Live Oak, 1986): This won the group their sole Dove Award in 1987 for "Praise & Worship Album of the Year."

## SOME OF 2ND CHAPTER OF ACTS' MOST WELL-KNOWN SONGS

- "The Easter Song"
- "Mansion Builder"
- "Rejoice"
- "Humble Yourself"
- "Yahweh"
- "Which Way the Wind Blows"
- "Bread of Life"
- "Takin' the Easy Way"