

AMAZING GRACE GOES BROADWAY | KATE BOSWORTH, MICHAEL W. SMITH, COLTON DIXON, NEWSBOYS IN PICTURES

FROM UNSHAKEN TO UNASHAMED,

BUILDING 429

UNLEASHES NEW SET—WILL IT HAVE STAYING POWER?



JON FOREMAN
AROUND THE WORLD
IN **24** SONGS



STRYPER
YELLOW & BLACK
ATTACK IS BACK!

Your Kids Know the Story of the Bible.



But do they know what it means?

Join bestselling author and pastor Randy Frazee as he shows children how to think, act, and be more like Jesus. Through 30 Old Testament and 30 New Testament stories that highlight biblical truths and answer big questions about God, kids of all ages will learn what it means to become more like their Lord in every way.



The *Believe Student and Children's Curriculum* helps you teach 30 big ideas found in Scripture, and contains 30 complete lessons each for twos, preschool, early elementary, and later elementary.



FEATURES

BUILDING 429

We can all relate to an old and meaningful song, what musical throwbacks were behind the inspiration of *Unashamed* for Building 429 and lead singer Jason Roy?



JON FOREMAN

Can Jon Foreman's latest musical journey accurately provide the soundtrack to the *sunlights, shadows, darknesses and dawns* of our lives?



'AMAZING GRACE' BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH

From the mind (and heart) of a former police officer and youth leader, the story of John Newton's life like you've never seen it before!



DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

PHOTOS

OUT AND ABOUT

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



REVIEWS

MANAFEST, STRYPER,
JON FOREMAN + MORE!



Publisher
Michael Miller

**Associate Publisher |
Brand Manager &
Editor in Chief**
Shaun Helton

**Associate Publisher |
Mixed Media Production**
Ross Cluver

**Associate Publisher |
Circulation & Marketing**
Smitty Wheeler

Managing Editor
Kevin Sparkman

Designers
Martina Ahlbrandt
Joshua Jamison

Contributing Editor
Andy Argyrakis

Contributors
Rebekah Bell
Matt Conner
Christina Fox
Andrew Greer

Assistant Production Manager
Paula Rozelle Hanback

**Fulfillment & Customer
Service Manager**
Jennifer Evenson

Customer Service Reps
Janice Collier Arsenault
Jason Lloyd

**Executive Directors of
Advertising**
DeDe Donatelli-Tarrant
805.987.5072
dede@salemPublishing.com

Joel Stombres, 630.584.0213
jstombres@salemPublishing.com

Account Executive
Jon Edlin, 913.231.7333
JEdlin@salemPublishing.com

Web Ad Traffic Director
Tamara Phillips

Unless it surrounds an enormous event, for example, the **GMA Dove Awards** (of which we will be covering in our Nov. 1 edition!), we usually don't intend to link our featured stories to one particular theme or subject. As I have sat down to write these editor's notes over the past few months, I've found that, more often than not, there is a very natural tie-in between the subjects we end up covering within the confines of a particular magazine release.

Such is the case with our October 15 issue. In the pages ahead, you'll read about the enduring power of a song—**Building 429's Jason Roy** goes in-depth on the music that helped to shape his faith, and how it still resonates with him today. **Jon Foreman's** new project, ***The Wonderlands***, is filled with musical masterpieces, and discusses with us the ways in which music and song both speak to him, and offer an outlet for his most precious thoughts and emotions.

Just this morning, while at the home of **Natalie Grant**, amidst presenting the songs from her new album, she paused to eloquently remind us not to forget the pure and simple gift of music.

Music has the power to evoke many things—a myriad of memories, pain, joy, sadness, laughter...it's quite endless. I love how our particular niche of music, contemporary Christian music, can exhibit elements that are integral to our spiritual journeys. What songs have been influential to you in your walk with Christ, and why?



Kevin Sparkman
Editor, CCM Magazine
KSparg@CCMMagazine.com



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



Andrew Greer is a Dove-nominated singer-songwriter and writer. The Texas native and Nashville, TN resident recently released his first book, co-authored with Ginny Owens, titled *Transcending Mysteries* (Thomas Nelson). More info at Andrew-Greer.com.



Matt Conner is a music writer for the *Indianapolis Star*, *Relevant* and *Metromix* and the founding editor of *StereoSubversion.com*.

#CCMmag



[FACEBOOK.COM/CCMMAGAZINE](https://www.facebook.com/ccmmagazine)



[TWITTER.COM/CCMMAGAZINE](https://twitter.com/ccmmagazine)



[INSTAGRAM.COM/CCMMAG](https://www.instagram.com/ccmmag)

For fans of Christy Nockels, Brooke Fraser, and Natalie Grant...

MEREDITH KINLEIGH

BEAUTIFUL MESS

RELEASE DATE:
OCTOBER 2, 2015

Track List:

Beautiful Mess
My Foundation
Sail On
Healing Waters
Wait and See



Inov8Music.com
MeredithKinleigh.com

COMPILED BY
ANDY ARGYRAKIS

1 *American Idol* favorite turned established singer/songwriter **Colton Dixon** pops the question to his girlfriend **Annie Coggeshall** at the Magic Kingdom theme park just a few hours before performing at Disney's annual **Night of Joy**. (Photo by The Walt Disney Company)

2 Dove Award winner **Cheri Keaggy** showcases music from her ninth CD, **No Longer My Own**, on *The Harvest Show*. Pictured from left to right: co-host **Valerie Lowe**, Keaggy and co-host **Stefan Radelich**.

1



2



3



3 Rapper **Manafest** (Chris Greenwood) takes a breather after a photo shoot in Toronto for his new album, **Reborn**. (Photo by Melanie Greenwood)

4 After creating the score for **90 Minutes In Heaven** alongside his son **Tyler, Michael W. Smith** visits with actress **Kate Bosworth** and director **Michael Polish** during the film's world premiere at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta. Pictured from left to right: Smith, Bosworth and Polish (Photo by Lovell-Fairchild)

4



5 Christian music mainstays the **Newsboys** celebrate their signing of an exclusive recording agreement with **FairTrade Services**. Pictured from left to right: FairTrade Services vice president of A&R **James Rueger** and FairTrade Services president/founder **Jeff Moseley**; Newsboys' **Jeff Frankenstein**, **Jody Davis**, **Duncan Phillips** and **Michael Tait**.



6 Difference Media recording artist and Cornerstone Church worship leader **Ricardo Sanchez** films a series of unplugged videos to coincide with his new album, **Grand Symphony**. Sanchez is shown during a performance of the song "Halle-Halle," which he co-wrote with **Israel Houghton**.





GLASSES NOT REQUIRED

GIANT & LARGE PRINT BIBLES
THOMAS NELSON



God's Word: Clear. Comfortable.

Enjoy God's Word without straining your eyes. Thomas Nelson offers a wide selection of giant and large print Bibles available in a variety of styles and prices. Experience the clarity and comfort for yourself!

LEARN MORE



Thomas Nelson Bibles is a proud supporter of World Vision in eradicating poverty and preventable deaths among children. Learn more and discover what you can do at www.seegodswordinaction.com.



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

THE POWER



OF A SONG



Combining Music With Lyric Is Nothing New For JASON ROY & BUILDING 429, However, With The Release Of Their Latest Album UNASHAMED, They Just Might Have Found Something More

BY CHRISTINA FOX

While preparing for my *CCM Magazine* interview with **Building 429's** lead singer **Jason Roy**, a friend told me of the impact that their song, "Where I Belong," once had on her family. She described how her foster daughter used to belt out the lyrics from the back of the van—coincidentally, unsure if their child would remain with them, or have to return back to her home.

At that point in time, "Where I Belong" became that family's powerful anthem, and was a musical reminder of where they truly belonged.

For Roy, now sixteen years into fronting the band from Fayetteville, North Carolina, there have been many songs that have been both musically influential, and spiritually impactful. From his youth, he mentions that **Geoff Moore and The Distance's** song, "The Vow," helped shape him as a young Christian.

"As a kid, 'The Vow' was a bit of a defiance cry for me," says Roy. "In a weird kind-of way, the church was my way of being defiant—it was the antithesis of the chaos that was in my life, so I loved the thought of standing in the midst of a crowd, alone, and saying 'I will be faithful.'"





Others, such as **Steven Curtis Chapman's**, "Free," and **Audio Adrenaline's**, "Ocean Floor," touched him in ways spoken words alone could not. Of "Ocean Floor," Roy says, "I truly began to believe that my sins were gone, and literally cast to the bottom of the ocean floor."

For many of us, including my friend and for Roy, Christian music has served as mile markers along the paths of our spiritual journeys. It stirred our souls, far beyond the capacity of bare words. We experienced the marriage of music and lyrics as it breathed life and fire into theological truths, propelling us forward in faith.

Building 429's latest album, ***Unashamed*** (released September 25, 2015, Provident), contains a set of songs that are primed to fulfill this role. Holding true to the meaning of the band's namesake (inspired by **Ephesians 4:29 ESV**, *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*), the new album is rich with themes that are intended to walk right alongside the listener, encouraging their steps along the path.

Roy, who describes Building 429 as "aged, and wiser," and representing band mates **Michael Anderson** (drums), **Aaron**



Branch (bass), and **Jessie Garcia** (guitars) says, “[*Unashamed*] is a story that we want to share in the hopes that it encourages people in the truth that the grace of God is sufficient—exactly what we need, for right where we are.”

Much of the album, birthed from many late night conversations with colleagues and other fellow artists while traveling on the **Winter Jam tour** earlier this year, are “songs reflecting the raw honesty of seeking God in his word, waiting and watching for Him to move, and resting in His sufficient grace,” describes Roy. Inspired by **Romans 1** and standing firm on these ideas, the title song,

“Unashamed,” states: I’ve been down, I’ve been broken / But I believe what You’ve spoken / That You make all things new / I have witnessed Your mercy / Stood in awe of Your glory/ And none compare to You...I am unashamed, I won’t hide Your name.

And, as far as intentions are concerned, Roy adds, “Our last record (2013’s *We Won’t Be Shaken*, Provident) was more about where we *wanted to be* in our spiritual life, where *Unashamed* is more about what life is like for us *right now*, messiness and all.

“As believers, we need to be honest about what is going on in our lives. We can’t hide behind false-selves and pretend that life is





"[UNASHAMED] IS A STORY THAT WE WANT TO SHARE IN THE HOPES THAT IT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE IN THE TRUTH THAT THE GRACE OF GOD IS SUFFICIENT— EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED, FOR RIGHT WHERE WE ARE." **-JASON ROY**



wonderful, when clearly it is not,” states Roy. “In fact,” he adds, “We can’t tell others about what Christ has done for us, without also revealing how He has worked through the mess in our lives.”

Admitting that the song was written out of personal heartache, “Be With Us Now,” featured on *Unashamed*, is a track that supports Roy’s claims for the new album: *It’s hard to understand this life we’re living / More down than up, more lost than found these days / And everybody’s searching for the reasons / The pain, the shame, it just won’t go away / If there’s a miracle in Your plan / It’s that we know we are in Your hands / Even when we don’t understand/ Be with us now, be with us now.*

“I believe that the message of the gospel is incomplete apart from the real stories of God’s work in our lives. The more we hide or put up facades, the more we inhibit the gospel message,” says Roy.

Continuing the sentiments along the storyline that is their new album *Unashamed*, “Ocean Deep” reflects a desire to rest in the steadfast love and grace of Christ: *It’s more than I deserve / Before I’ve said a word / You know all of my fears / Every tear I will ever cry / And You keep reaching out / Far beyond my doubt / When I see all that You’ve done, I’m overcome... But Your mercy is an ocean deep / Your grace is washing over me / Your love is like a wildfire chasing after me.*

With the impact that a memorable song can have on the soul still fresh on his mind, Roy turned his attention back to the album’s themes of encouragement. “Don’t ever get stuck in a rut and lose perspective,” he says. “These times in our lives that feel like desert wanderings are often the times when God is preparing us to be used.”

Like reminiscing on a memory, perhaps one triggered by a favorite song, Roy says, “Think on your past and the ways God has moved in your life, [use those memories] as confidence to what He will do in the present. Oftentimes, the mountain that is in our way is just a door



by which God will use to walk through and prove Himself faithful.”

This truth is reflected in their new song “Eyes Up:” *All your broken and all your mess / Lay it in the hands of His*

faithfulness... Every mountain seems so high / You’re gonna see it from the other side / How big a God we really have / His love is deeper than the ocean, ocean wide.

“Impossible,” reaches further into the trenches in which we can find ourselves, and pleads to the doubter: *We can rise above the typical / And be anything but usual / We know... That there’s no such thing as impossible / And nothing is unreachable / When we trust the God of miracles / We know, we know... That there’s no such thing as impossible.*

“Look to Christ, live as He lived, and love others as He loves them,” professes Roy, “We’ll make a greater impact in this world.”

“Earth Shaker,” from *Unashamed*: *Your love and Your life / Will be the change, will be the light / With Your name lifted up high / We’ll be the change, we’ll be the light.*

“Evil will not win. If we believe what we say we believe, we should be living lives in assurance of that fact.”

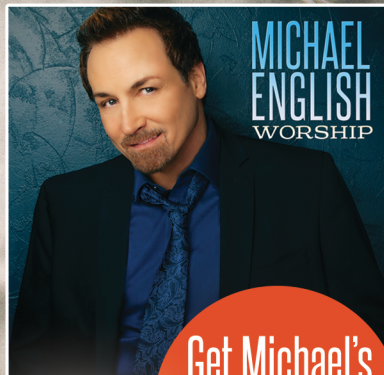
Just like the smell of baking cookies can instantly place us back in our grandmother’s kitchen, hearing a song can conjure memories as fresh and real as though they happened yesterday. For this reason, music can be an integral part of our personal histories. As believers, it has the power to become part of our journey’s story.

Perhaps, one or more of the songs from *Unashamed* will become a part of your spiritual history?

“Where words fail, music speaks.” —**Hans Christian Anderson** CCM



READ CCM’S REVIEW OF BUILDING 429’S NEW ALBUM, *UNASHAMED*, ON CCMAGAZINE.COM

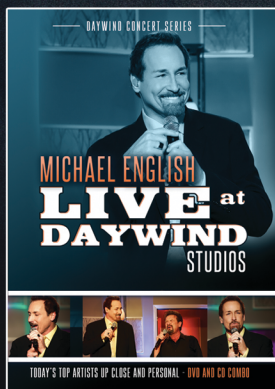


MICHAEL
ENGLISH
WORSHIP

*Click here
to preview*

Get Michael's
NEW CD
Today

MICHAEL ENGLISH



COMING SOON!

Michael English Live at Daywind Studios

CD/DVD Combo



Available on
iTunes



AROUND THE WORLD IN TWENTY-FOUR SONGS, WITH JON FOREMAN

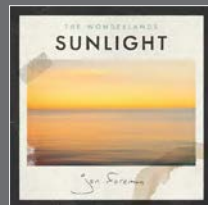
The Switchfoot Front Man Goes Behind The Music, Reveals Rhymes And Reasons Behind The Wonderlands EPs

BY ANDREW GREER

As one of the founding fathers of the multi-platinum alt-rock band **Switchfoot**, **Jon Foreman** is one of music's most recognizable young veterans. But even longtime Switchfoot listeners admire the beloved front man for more than just music. His holistic platform encompasses a passion for philanthropy, his west coast homeland and surfing, and a reflective solo discography, wrestling down the mysteries of his faith alongside fans, not simply in front of them.

Having already released a seasonal EP series—*Fall*, *Winter*, *Spring* and *Summer*—plus a pair of acoustic-alt-folk records as one-half of **Fiction Family**, a side collaboration with **Nickel Creek**'s **Sean Watkins**, Foreman's thoughtful singer-songwriter prose has enlisted a throng of discerning listeners all his own.

Following his serial trend, 2015 introduces a new collection of EPs entitled *The Wonderlands*. Featuring 24 songs, produced by 24 creatives, divvied up between four EPs—the already-released *Sunlight*, *Shadows* and *Darkness*, with *Dawn*, releasing later this month—Foreman takes the time to pause and reflect on the unique language of music, and how this melodic speech can help us express our hearts for each other...and for God.



Review excerpt from CCM Magazine, July 1, 2015:

Opening with *Sunlight* and closing with *Dawn*, Foreman's new solo sets show a deep consideration of a life lived in both darkness and light. "Terminal," the lead track, is an enchanting treatise on mortality and might just be among the best songs Foreman's ever penned. "Caroline" is already a viral hit, and "All of God's Children" provides a powerful unifying reminder that "all of God's children shine underneath." – Matt Conner



Review excerpt from CCM Magazine, August 1, 2015:

Emerging from the tides of trends, we once again find Jon Foreman with his second of four to-be-released EP's under the headline of *The Wonderlands*. Following suit, *Shadows* incorporates six stand-alone treasures that showcase an introspective, yet spotless Foreman. It's rare for a collection of songs to contain such depth while musically raising the bar—think *OK Computer* and *Revolver*. – Kevin Sparkman

CCM: Twenty-four songs. Twenty-four producers. Help me wrap my head around the motivation behind utilizing so many different people to capture this massive set list of songs?

Jon Foreman: The question was, “How do you make a record while touring?” I wanted *The Wonderlands* to be acoustic guitar with lush instrumentation. I can fake playing enough instruments on the road, but I don’t play cello or bass clarinet [Laughs]. I really can’t get that orchestral feel. So, my friend, **Chris York**, and I came up with the idea of hiring these incredibly talented friends of ours, sending them the songs and they would send us back all the tracks. Cello, piano, choir, whatever.

All these different producers—**Andrew [Wessen]** from **Grooplove**, **Darren [King]** from **Mutemath**, **Taylor [York]** from **Paramore**, **Jeff Coffin** from **Dave Matthews Band**—I would send them various stages of a song, and they would send their version of it back.

After the first record I realized I really like a sparring partner. I like someone to hit back with their own musical muscle. I need that. I need somebody else in the ring with me.

CCM: What was the significance behind the number ‘24’?

JF: I wanted to create a world with *Wonderland*, where all these songs would map out this place that wasn’t quite earth. Where you could look back at our planet from this objective position that gives you a little distance. Then the concept of 24-hours of this musical planet came as we were grouping the songs.

CCM: Music is therapeutic. It is an outlet for our feelings—to give feelings to our penmanship, of sorts. These EPs explore the gamut of emotions. How do they help you express what is on your mind and heart?

JF: I feel like melody and music, in general, expresses things I can’t express any other way. Music often tells the truth quicker than words, couple that with social acceptability. It is socially acceptable for me to sing a song about God, girls, sex, doubt, fear, anything, in front of thousands of people, but I would have trouble talking about these issues with my closest friends. It gets to the heart of the matter.

Referring to the idea of writing fantasy, **C.S. Lewis** said it could, “steal past those watchful dragons,” of religion. I feel like music does the same thing as a kind of melodic allegory of life.

In music, there’s this idea of tension and release. Periods of doubt, and then resolve. We get to the other side. Sometimes music says those things more clearly than words.



Review excerpt from CCM Magazine, October 1, 2015:

Jon Foreman continues his “opus of light and darkness” with the EP titled *Darkness*. Despite its name, this short set doesn’t play like a musical dirge, rather, keeping the *Wonderlands* tradition alive with sonically diverse sensations and ongoing brilliance. Songs like “Larger Than Life” bark a Switchfoot-like timbre, but the undertow of Foreman’s new musical direction continuously pulls the listener into uncharted, but welcome waters. – Kevin Sparkman



Review excerpt from CCM Magazine, October 15, 2015:

Following the more reflective *Darkness* and *Shadows*, *Dawn* brightens the horizon with six new acoustic tracks that lift the spirit. “Inseparable” sets Paul’s passionate and poetic description of God’s love to music, while “Run Free” invites the listener to do just that, “Come on, won’t you run free?” 5-stars! – Matt Conner



CCM: Music seems to have a universal relatability.

JF: I've played shows in Japan, India, South Africa, all over the Philippines, and Malaysia, where people don't necessarily speak English. And that's what I sing in, right? [Laughs] Somehow the content of the lyric gets across. It's crazy to see a bunch of people who don't speak English singing along perfectly to your song with their hands up in the air, eyes closed. Then you talk to them after the show and they don't speak English. You realize what a powerful connection music has with the heart.

CCM: I have heard you suggest there is a stark difference between cynicism, of becoming cynical, and being honest and vulnerable. Can you expound on the relationship between becoming honest and music?

JF: I think we get hurt in this life. There are moments of suffering, and some of those suffering moments are at the hands of other human souls. A lot of it takes place in junior high and high school, right? Kids can be ruthless. That doesn't necessarily stop in adulthood. So we begin to wear these masks, and cover ourselves up for protection.

The problem is these masks destroy our authenticity. They destroy our ability to be completely immersed in the moment, to be present in the present. As much as they keep out pain, they also keep out joy.

So, I think cynicism is a response to the pain. Every cynic was a dreamer once, but cynicism seems like a good knee-jerk reaction to protect. Sometimes it takes a song or a reminder to get over the walls we've built. Beauty does that so well. I see the eyes of my daughter and all my walls are broken down. I'm a kid again. Music can do the same thing. An incredible painting, a picture, a phone call from a friend can take us there. These are the reminders of a story bigger than the pain. Sometimes that's what we need. I need it, for sure.

CCM: The verses of these songs delve into

the deep mystery of life's unknowns, and seem to come to terms, or become comfortable with mystery at the same time. It feels like a coming of age for you spiritually speaking. Is that true?

JF: Hopefully. The moment God becomes something we can write down on a piece of paper, put in our back pocket and say, "I possess," we almost have a false god in our back pocket. He's going to be bigger than any kind of theorem we can put Him in.

If we disallow the mystery, especially in our theology, but also in our own personal lives, then we are forcing this odd dichotomy where we aren't allowing ourselves to be fully human. To be human is to be immersed in the mystery. To be soul, and body. To be in the present with an awareness for the future and the past, with an understanding that someday this body will no longer be living.

The moment we cut these mysteries up and make them less-than, we've done ourselves, and our children a disservice. You know?

CCM: Where you live in California, you are founding a music school where underprivileged teens can receive music lessons. What inspired this?

JF: A desire to see the world change was the initial impetus for all of my crazy projects. You are first aware of a problem. The problem, at least in California, is all the music programs are being cut—art and theatre programs as well. So I thought, "Maybe music is being cut because music it's no longer needed for a child's education." Then I did the research, and music is crucial for better test scores in art, math and literature. And it's also crucial for self-esteem, holding a job and higher education. So then the question becomes, "What are we going to do about it?"

As musicians, we care more about music than anyone. So if we're not going to do something, then no one's going to do anything. That's where the initial thrust came from. We're hoping to open it this fall. **CCM**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR FAVORITE ARTISTS DISCOVER 100 YEAR-OLD LOST LYRICS?

Though blind from infancy, legendary hymn writer FANNY CROSBY inspired generations of Christians around the world with songs like "BLESSED ASSURANCE," "TO GOD BE THE GLORY," and "ALL THE WAY MY SAVIOR LEADS ME."

In celebration of her remarkable legacy, Integrity Music has taken Fanny's unfinished songs, long hidden away in a vault at Wheaton College, and offered them to leading worship leaders and songwriters. The goal? To complete her astounding work, breathing new life into Fanny's gift to the Church for generations to come.

FREE SONG DOWNLOAD

"WE ARE WAITING"
FEAT. ALL SONS & DAUGHTERS

[CLICK TO DOWNLOAD](#)

* LIMITED TIME OFFER.



Blessed Assurance

THE NEW HYMNS OF FANNY CROSBY

- 1. WE ARE WAITING**
All Sons & Daughters
- 2. NOT BE MOVED**
New Life Worship (featuring Jon Egan)
- 3. HALLELUJAH [KING OF GLORY]**
Dustin Smith
- 4. IN THE BLOOD**
Israel Houghton (featuring Seth & Nirva)
- 5. BLESSED SAVIOR, FOUNT OF GRACE**
Darlène Zschech
- 6. NO ONE LIKE JESUS**
Michael W. Smith
- 7. BLESSED ASSURANCE**
Chris McClarney
- 8. IN LIFE AND DEATH**
Greg Sykes
- 9. WHOLLY THINE**
Meredith Andrews
- 10. THE SAVIOR OF ALL**
Matt Redman
- 11. COME TO THE WATER**
Paul Baloche
- 12. I HAVE FOUND A PRICELESS TREASURE**
Ernie Haase & Signature Sound
- 13. ALL IS WELL**
Ricky Skaggs & The Whites
- 14. I NEVER, NO NEVER**
Elias Dummer
- 15. WHERE COULD WE GO**
Blind Boys Of Alabama with Michael Farren



INTEGRITYMUSIC
THE SOUND OF WORSHIP

'AMAZING GRACE' BRINGS ANTHEM OF HOPE TO BROADWAY

FORMER ATHEIST, AMATEUR MUSICIAN/WRITER
PENS DRAMA BASED ON THE LIFE OF JOHN NEWTON

BY REBEKAH BELL
PHOTOS BY JOAN MARCUS

John Newton's life is the story of a great sinner, and a Savior who was greater still. Born in the 1700s, Newton rose to prominence as the captain of a British slave trading ship. During one of his voyages, Newton found his ship in a violent storm.

Although the shrewd sea captain had long ago disavowed any religious conviction, he earnestly cried out for God to save him in the midst of imminent death. After making it to safety, Newton proclaimed that God had indeed spared him, and marked that day as the moment of his conversion.

Years later, Newton apologized for his role in slave trading, and actively sought to end the practice. He ultimately saw the abolition of the British slave trade during his lifetime.

Newton's story is now being told on *Broadway*, of all places, due to the vision of self-taught musician and writer

from Pennsylvania, **Christopher Smith**. Additionally, and as part of the broad scope of his concept, Smith co-wrote the companion book for ***Amazing Grace*** alongside author **Arthur Giron**. The epic is an exhaustive story of the 18th century slave trader, most known for writing the enduring hymn that has been sung in churches, pubs, and everywhere in between the world over, for over two hundred years.

"I actually found a book about John Newton in the library of a church," Smith remembers. "At the time, I did not know who he was... In a flash, however, I envisioned this incredible story of a wretched slave trader being transformed by God's grace as an epic musical saga." Smith, who is a retired police officer and former youth director, had never written anything professionally. Despite being intimidated by the scope of the project, he knew he had to find a way to share his



Pictured (left to right): Erin Mackey and Josh Young.



Pictured: Chris Hoch and the ensemble of *Amazing Grace*.



Pictured (left to right): Laiona Michelle, Rachael Ferrera, and the ensemble of *Amazing Grace*.



Pictured: Josh Young and the ensemble of *Amazing Grace*.



Pictured: Chuck Cooper and the ensemble of *Amazing Grace*.



Pictured (left to right): Erin Mackey and Laiona Michelle.

vision, and to retell Newton's inspiring story in this unique way.

Furthermore, Smith was especially convicted to share this story, as he directly related to Newton's spiritual awakening. "I used to be a very staunch atheist. I was first motivated to read the Bible so I could point out to others that what they believed was wrong. But the more I sought to break the Bible down, the more it broke *me* down. I began to see how the Word fit into my own life, too well to just be a coincidence. I experienced God's grace then, as I still do to this day."

That transformational experience took place for Smith around the age of seventeen, interestingly, Newton's conversion happened at a similar point along his historical timeline. Deriving even more inspiration from that parallel, Smith began to wholeheartedly work on the script, tirelessly approaching the *Amazing Grace* project as a calling over just another work of art.

Smith then invested hundreds of hours—he pored over Newton's biographies, letters, and other songs, and consulted cultural and historical experts to confirm his play would accurately portray the timeframe. According to Smith, the self-taught musician worked diligently to weave musical scores together with a freeware MIDI program and keyboard interface. "It took a few months to master the software, and my own unconventional approach to music," Smith humbly recalls.

The genesis of realizing that *Amazing Grace* could actually come to fruition on-stage began when Smith and his first business partner, **Rich Timmons**, worked to raise over \$350,000 from entrepreneurs and investors in and around his home of Bucks County, PA. The success of this initial support also allowed Smith and Co. to maintain creative control over the project.

Supplied with funds, Smith had the ability to surround himself with a talented and

winning team to help push *Amazing Grace* into the home stretch. "Those earlier recordings I worked on at home were what I used to pitch the show to early investors. Now, I work directly with music director **Joe Church** and orchestrator **Kenny Seymour**." Still creating the parts from scratch, Smith recalls, "I used to make voice memo recordings of the vocals, and sometimes even chord structures and instrumental lines, and would then send them along. Joe Church developed the arrangements and roadmaps for each piece, Kenny Seymour then implemented those plans for full orchestra."

Smith was not alone in the process, however. It was the early encouragement from his wife, **Alana**, who helped Smith to pursue his passion full-time. "The idea behind the song, 'I Still Believe,' actually springs from the very real way that God uses others to see in us, those things we cannot see in ourselves. Alana brings this truth to life for me," he says.

Smith then met executive producer **Carolyn Rossi Copeland**, a fellow believer, when she attended a reading of the show in the basement of the Empire State Building in New York City. At the time, most industry professionals did not believe *Amazing Grace* could be a Broadway hit. Unlike other shows, the play is not based on a film, novel, or modern work of art—there are no celebrities, performers, or musicians associated with the show.

Fully embracing its underdog status, Copeland believed that the story's message would resonate with theater enthusiasts of all ages, saying "We are all in need of redemption, even in our daily lives. 'Amazing Grace' is a healing song that brings people to the point of recognizing we are all in the room of grace together. People can change. There is hope for even the most wretched of human beings."

“I USED TO BE A VERY STAUNCH ATHEIST. I WAS FIRST MOTIVATED TO READ THE BIBLE SO I COULD POINT OUT TO OTHERS THAT WHAT THEY BELIEVED WAS WRONG. BUT THE MORE I SOUGHT TO BREAK THE BIBLE DOWN, THE MORE IT BROKE ME DOWN. I BEGAN TO SEE HOW THE WORD FIT INTO MY OWN LIFE, TOO WELL TO JUST BE A COINCIDENCE. I EXPERIENCED GOD’S GRACE THEN, AS I STILL DO TO THIS DAY.”

—CHRISTOPHER SMITH, CREATOR *AMAZING GRACE MUSICAL*

Bolstered by her belief in the show’s timeless message, Copeland worked tirelessly to assemble a Broadway team, secure a theater, and raised over \$16 million for the production. She also worked with Smith in enhancing the original story, so that it would better connect with audience members on a more personal level.

“I was a bit of a ‘voice in the wilderness’ for a long time. Almost no one in the industry believed that a show about the spiritual and moral redemption of a main character was something that would draw an audience,” Smith admits. “But I firmly believed that statistics were on our side. People, regardless of their background or beliefs, want to be inspired.” If *Amazing Grace*’s initial run in Chicago is any indication, Smith is right. The show frequently received standing ovations from audiences inspired by the show’s stirring and emotional message.

Josh Young, a more-than budding actor, having previously held lead roles in productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*, plays the role of John Newton. **Erin Mackey** plays Newton’s long-time love interest.

Mackey, noted for making her Broadway debut in 2009 as “Glinda” in *Wicked*, takes on



Pictured (left to right): Chuck Cooper, Josh Young, and the ensemble of *Amazing Grace*.



Pictured: Erin Mackey.

“WE ARE ALL IN NEED OF
REDEMPTION, EVEN IN OUR
DAILY LIVES. ‘AMAZING
GRACE’ IS A HEALING SONG
THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TO
THE POINT OF RECOGNIZING
WE ARE ALL IN THE ROOM
OF GRACE TOGETHER.
PEOPLE CAN CHANGE.
THERE IS HOPE FOR EVEN
THE MOST WRETCHED OF
HUMAN BEINGS.”

—CAROLYN ROSSI
COPELAND, EXECUTIVE
PRODUCER, AMAZING
GRACE MUSICAL



Pictured: Chuck Cooper.



Pictured (left to right): Harriett D. Foy, Tom Hewitt, and the ensemble of *Amazing Grace*.



Pictured (center): Chris Hoch, Erin Mackey, and the ensemble of *Amazing Grace*.

the role of “Mary” in Smith’s *Amazing Grace*. Encouraging her to think deeply about the way faith impacts her life, she says, “One line that always strikes me in the show is when Mary asks, ‘Aren’t we accountable if we could help others, but choose not to?’ Playing Mary reminds me to ask that of myself. Can I truly say, ‘I love God,’ if I don’t take care of others?”

When asked her hopes of what audiences will take away from the historical epic, Mackey emphatically states, “Hope. Ultimately, I think that’s what the song ‘Amazing Grace’ inspires in people. And, I think by gaining a deeper understanding of the man behind the song, it will bring even more hope and depth to its meaning. No one is ever beyond forgiveness and redemption.”

The vaulted hymn does surface during the play, when Young (Newton) begins it in a cappella, and is then brought into crescendo by the rest of the cast. This culminating point in the story is a must-see moment, a signature mark for the production.

“From the time I read Newton’s autobiography, I began to view ‘Amazing Grace’ differently than many others. The song is often performed with solemn reverence, but I hear it as an anthem, a celebration. And at the end of the night we sing it as just that, an anthem,” Smith continues. “I hope that [audiences] find in this musical a portrait of hope in a desolate and desperate world. There are many voices of hopelessness in our culture and we desire to present an uplifting and empowering vision of redemption and reconciliation.” **CCM**

+ **AMAZING GRACE OFFICIALLY OPENED ON BROADWAY ON JULY 16, 2015. FOR MORE, PLEASE VISIT AMAZINGGRACEMUSICAL.COM.**



For fans of the classic sounds of Broadway musicals and, for anyone that loves great music in general, *CCM Magazine* invites you to read our story on **ANNIE MOSES BAND**, by former editor Lindsay Williams. Enjoy this feature, in a convenient all-digital format, on our recently upgraded **CCMmagazine.com** website home.



STRYPER

Fallen (Frontiers Music)

FOR FANS OF: Petra, Bon Jovi, Nelson



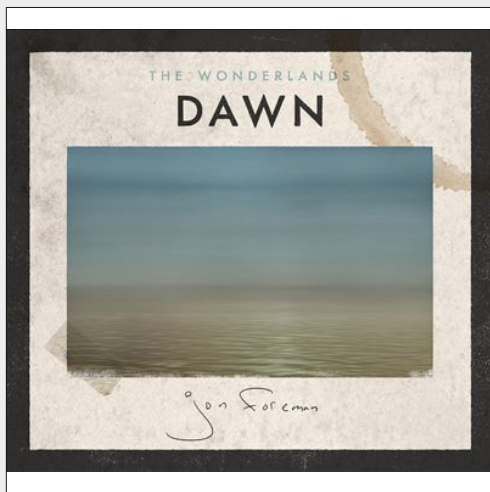
Arguably the most game-changing Christian rock band in history, Stryper continues to excel with a steady stream of new music that fits right alongside a ten million-album selling catalogue. In fact *Fallen* comes just two years after *No More Hell To Pay* landed at #35 in the general market's Billboard Top 200, and clearly the Dove Award winning/GRAMMY nominated group's been rejuvenated by such unwavering public reception. Though the new project most certainly sounds like it was produced in 2015, "The Yellow And Black Attack" are once again recalling their heavy melodic rock/metallic edge of the '80s and falling right in line with the now classic tradition of "Free," "Honestly" and a whole host of other hits that once ruled MTV. "Fallen" and "Big Screen Lies" scream with charging guitars, "All Over Again" puts a few unpredictable twists on the textbook power ballad, while aggressive album closers "The Calling" and "King Of Kings" boldly retain the group's spiritual insistency in the midst of ongoing crossover success.

—Andy Argyrakis

IN THIS ISSUE



WE LIKE: "Heaven"

**JON FOREMAN*****The Wonderlands: Dawn*** (lowercase people)

FOR FANS OF: Switchfoot

★★★★★

The final installment in Jon Foreman's four-EP series has arrived in the hope-filled revelry of *Dawn*. Following the more reflective *Darkness* and *Shadows*, *Dawn* brightens the horizon with six new acoustic tracks that lift the spirit. Sara Watkins (Nickel Creek) returns for the EP's single "Before Our Time," a vibrant song encouraging the believer to live in the present in the light of eternity. "Inseparable" sets Paul's passionate and poetic description of God's love to music, while "Run Free" invites the listener to do just that, "Come on, won't you run free?" Whether singing to his wife ("When We Collide") or anyone who will listen, Foreman sings as one who has found light in the darkness, wrapping this EP series with the revelations learned along the way.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Run Free"

**MANAFEST*****Reborn*** (Self-Released)

FOR FANS OF: Lecrae, KJ-52, Thousand Foot Krutch

★★★★☆

Returning to his independent roots seems to have lit a creative fire for Manafest on the aptly named *Reborn*. The singer/songwriter/rapper also taps back into his hip hop roots, resulting in a collection that's sure to hook longtime fans and instantly catch new ones up to speed. Much of Manafest's success comes from his razor sharp skills behind the mic, in addition to a series of guest stars as diverse as rocker Trevor McNevan (Thousand Foot Krutch), the unclassifiable Soul Glow Activatur (Family Force 5), plus rappers Tedashii and Shonlock. Whether solo or collaborative, Manafest leaves listeners with themes of starting fresh through faith and all around renewal, which after more than a decade in the game, is both admirable and inspiring.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Shine" (featuring Thousand Foot Krutch's Trevor McNevan)



CARROLLTON
Sunlight And Shadows
 (Centricity)
 FOR FANS OF: *Third Day*,
Newsong, *I Am They*
 ★★★★★☆

Experience a fervor—reminiscent of Mac Powell-type emotion—performed by front man Justin Mosteller, as he belts out a collection of honest-laden lyrics on the band's Centricity EP, *Sunlight And Shadows*. Declaring the everlasting faithfulness of Christ, the foursome from Cincinnati and Louisville brilliantly capture, in song, the gamut of Christian living from its high's (*Sunlight*) to its low's (*Shadows*). Fans all over and in-between the The Lone Bellow's hip vibes, to pop's Phillip Phillips will enjoy this Carrollton release.

—Kevin Sparkman

WE LIKE: "Holding On To You"

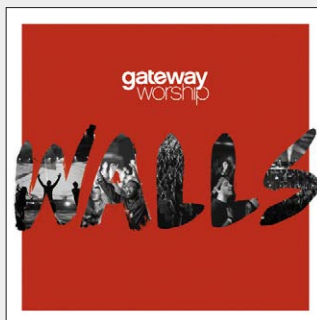


AMANDA COOK
Brave New World
 (Bethel/Provident)
 FOR FANS OF: *Brooke Fraser*,
Steffany Gretzinger
 ★★★★★☆

The ethereal feel of *Brave New World* helps Bethel Music's Amanda Cook carve out an impressive and instant niche on her debut solo recording. The writer of popular worship anthem "You Make Me Brave," Cook is already familiar to many, but these thirteen tracks (eleven new songs + two instrumentals) will set her apart with such cinematic accompaniment for these vertical lyrics. "The Voyage" and "Closer" are especially pleasing to the ear and heart alike.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "The Voyage"



GATEWAY WORSHIP
Walls (FairTrade)
 FOR FANS OF: Kari Jobe
 ★★★☆☆

Gateway Church's worship legacy continues with the release of *Walls*, the sixth live recording from the Dallas mega-church. With worship leaders like Rita Springer, Mark Harris and Kari Jobe among others, the set list for *Walls* is loaded for an album that focuses on tearing down the walls we encounter, both personal and corporate. *Walls* is, more than anything, an invitation and longing for God's love and grace to set the listener free, a theme highlighted by the powerful "Whatever You Want."

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Whatever You Want"

With all the talk about the changes in healthcare, it's nice to know that our family has a God-honoring alternative.

Medi-Share is healthcare reform for Christians!

Medi-Share isn't insurance. It's a community of believers across America who share each other's healthcare bills. Our family share is about

\$300 a month! And **unlike insurance, we know our dollars never go to pay for procedures that are unbiblical.** Plus, the new healthcare law has a provision for health sharing ministries, so we don't have to buy insurance or face penalties.

Medi-Share is a healthcare choice Christians can believe in!

Request your FREE information guide today.

- Over 129,000 members sharing your medical bills
- Family options average around \$300 a month
- No enrollment period—you can join any time



Medi-Share™
Affordable, Biblical Healthcare

Medi-Share is not health insurance. Medi-Share is not available in Montana.

**XXI**

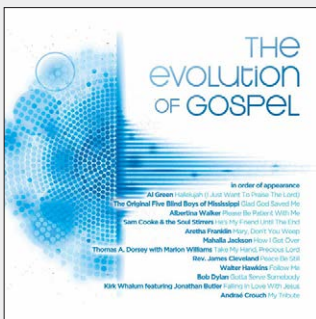
***Inside Out* (Tooth & Nail)**
FOR FANS OF: Wavory,
 Hawthorne Heights,
 Calls From Home

★★★★☆

From Central Kentucky comes recent Tooth & Nail signee XXI, and their new album *Inside Out*. Based on the recording's precision and execution, you wouldn't know that the composition of Carson Butcher (vocals), Seth Weigand (guitar/vocals), Jamie King (guitar) and Robbie Barnett (drums) began as a mere hobby less than five years ago. Tracks "Alive" and "Misfit" showcase the band's pop sensibilities, as they weave a flair of Angels & Airwaves (minus the keyboards), into their hard core debut.

—Kevin Sparkman

WE LIKE: "Wasn't Enough"

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

The Evolution Of Gospel
 (Rendezvous Music)

FOR FANS OF: Andraé Crouch,
 Aretha Franklin,
 Albertina Walker

★★★★☆

Chronicling "back-in-the-day" through to today, this curious compilation traces gospel music's varied growth through a series of sacred and secular sources. Regardless of a contributors' genre or primary recording industry, every single song on this eclectic collection is unabashedly grounded in the gospel, from golden oldies courtesy of Andraé Crouch, Aretha Franklin, Sam Cooke & The Soul Stirrers and even Bob Dylan, through newer material featuring Kirk Whalum and Jonathan Butler.

—Andy Argyrakos

WE LIKE: "My Tribute" by
 Andraé Crouch

**JIM SONEFELD**

***Love* (sonitime Records)**
FOR FANS OF: Rich Mullins,
 John Schlitt

★★★★☆

With *Love*, Hootie & The Blowfish drummer Jim Sonefeld releases his third Christian market EP. As expected, the drums/percussion, guitars and overall production value are stellar across the collection's five tracks. With some songwriting and vocal polishing still possibly needed for today's applications, there is a refreshing sense of reality in Sonefeld's deliberate delivery—think Rich Mullins' "Awesome God"—which will resonate with CCM fans across the board.

—Kevin Sparkman

WE LIKE: "God Is Here"

NEVER AGAIN MISS YOUR FAVORITE CHRISTIAN CONCERT



CHRISTIAN CONCERT ALERTS.COM



GET LOCAL CONCERT ALERTS DIRECT TO YOUR INBOX!

For more information on ticketing, promotion or advertising
please call (800) 526-3040



35 YEARS, AND STILL COUNTING!
CCM Magazine on CCMmagazine.com

Access in-depth and exclusive feature stories, interviews, reviews, images and more on *CCMmagazine.com*

CCM
MAGAZINE.COM

