

KUTLESS, MERCYME, MR. & MRS. SOMETHING | IN REVIEW: PASSION, NEWSBOYS + MORE

CCM

PASSION 2016 WAVE UPON WAVE

THE 268 GENERATION'S TIDE CONTINUES
TO SWELL UPON UNENDING MESSAGE



FEB 1, 2016

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From the Editor

Passion 2016

Louie Giglio and his Passion Team are constant in their quest to “make Jesus famous,” and instill the message of Isaiah 26:8 to raise up generations to proclaim Jesus’ name. We talk with worship leaders Kristian Stanfill & Brett Younker about this enduring theme, & recap this year’s gathering.



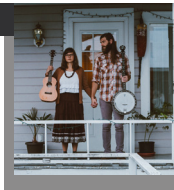
Kutless

Now a “veteran” band? It’s crazy to think that Jon Micah Sumrall and troupe have been at it for fifteen years now, but if their latest release “Surrender” is any indication, they aren’t yielding on their laurels. ***ONLINE ONLY***—Visit CCMmagazine.com for full story!



Mr. & Mrs. Something

Benjamin “Bino” Peck of the new West Coast duo Mr. & Mrs. Something provides CCM Magazine with an introspective on being salt and light, even when we’re weary.



Reviews

Album summaries of the latest releases from:
 Passion • Meredith Andrews
 Newsboys • Ricardo Sanchez



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Jason Lloyd

Executive Dir. 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

“Second verse, same as the first verse” | I always thought chanting that phrase as a segue in an old campfire song was kind of funny. Even if you didn’t know the song at first, most of us would be able to pick up—at least within a line, or a couple of notes—that the second verse was repeating the previous. It’s fun, though, and the familiarity of the chant seems to bind us together in those moments—kind of like the, “Bah-bah-bah’s” and, “So good-so good-so good’s” during the chorus of **Neil Diamond’s “Sweet Caroline”** at a wedding reception, for example.

When it comes to planning **Passion Conference’s** every year, and considering the scriptural themes, I wonder if **Louie Giglio** and his team have ever chanted, “Second verse, same as the first verse?” For twenty years now, they have not swayed from their anchor verse of **Isaiah 26:8** (*...Your name and renown are the desires of our hearts.*), which has been the centerpiece of everything they do. It’s quite impressive, actually, when you consider the growth that Passion experiences year after year.

This got me thinking about the steadfastness of Christ again. **Hebrews 13:8**, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* This world is changing fast, and at times it can seem like we’re getting hit from all directions—pulled this way and that, bombarded, overwhelmed. But our Lord knew about this then, He knows about it now, and if we allow Him to He will hold our future (*I can face tomorrow ... He holds the future / “Because He Lives,” Bill and Gloria Gaither*).

As the world turns, and as we—again, at times—seemingly burn through our lives, it’s comforting to know that Christ *has us*. That His resurrection was real, and the He truly lives. His message, like Giglio’s at Passion’s annual gatherings, remains the same—and it’s the most important thing we could ever know and be reminded of again and again.



Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Sparkman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Kevin Sparkman
Editor, *CCM Magazine*
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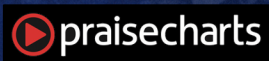
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I'M HOLDING ON TO YOUR PROMISES

PASSION 2016—Wave Upon Wave

The 268 Generation's Tide Continues To Swell Upon Unending Message

BY KEVIN SPARKMAN

In the wake of their most recent conference, combined with the release of its companion album *Salvation's Tide Is Rising*, **CCM Magazine** sits down with **Passion** worship leaders **Kristian Stanfill** and **Brett Younker** to recap the 2016 gathering—which occurred simultaneously and across (many) state lines in Houston, Texas and Atlanta, Georgia on January 2-4, 2016

The Jan. 2-4 dates for next year's conference won't be the only identical carry over, as **Passion** is now in its twentieth year of annually reaching the most impressionable generation, 18-25 year olds. As with this year's gathering and pushing the envelope to lead thousands upon thousands of college students into the presence of God with worship, teachings, and a challenge to declare the name of Jesus in their lives and communities—all based on the foundation of Isaiah 26:8, "...Your name and renown are the desires of our hearts"—the message and the aim will remain the same next year.

The 2017 event is primed to be their biggest yet, to be held in Atlanta's Georgia Dome, the 2015 and most recent gathering have been a two-year build-up of sorts to next year's incarnation. For this year, however, founders **Louie** and **Shelley Giglio** and their talented team of worship leaders wanted to attempt bringing together a spirit of worship, despite the multiple locales. Mission accomplished. In an upgraded form of a simulcast, Giglio and Company loaded up their gear (constantly) and amassed frequent flyer miles between George Bush Intercontinental and Hartsfield-Jackson, and all arena-

hopped their way through Passion 2016—providing a unique experience for the attendee/worshipper, something that we're not sure has ever been accomplished on this scale.

So, what makes Passion such a quest for college students year after year? Despite how the event evolves in structure from one to the next, we know what Louie and Team will be bringing to the table. Perhaps it lies within the fact that Kristian Stanfill may not have actually needed an airplane to get from Texas to Georgia? (Read on!)

CCM: Your own merits notwithstanding, what has the opportunity to collaborate with the great songwriters from within in the Passion family been like for you both?

KS: When I was around thirteen or fourteen years old and just starting to play guitar and figure out what a worship leader does (and how that all works), I was looking to **Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman, David Crowder, Charlie Hall, Christy and Nathan Nockels**, and Passion as a guide. They were what I gravitated toward as I was just trying to figure it all out, you know? They have been my heroes for a long time, and they still are! [laughs] To now be a part of the same team, and to write and lead alongside them—to be able to call them friends—it's an incredible thing.

What I love so much about all of them is that when you're close, you realize that their hearts ring true. They want people to worship God—they just want to worship God. Their hearts are for people to see Jesus. They're all different, and each of them have their own unique anointing and callings. I've learned so many different things by just observing them and watching them lead. Brett and I have been friends for a long time, so for the both of us now to be in close

proximity to these guys, and to watch them do what they do, it's phenomenal.

BY: It's amazing. [All of the names Kristian mentioned above], **Melodie Malone**, and even **Louie Giglio**—they're my heroes and my friends. So, it's just been amazing just to learn from them—not just by shaping the church in the way that we sing to God today, but by their impact on my own life, personally. I'm just really grateful for all of them.

CCM: Since you mentioned it, Kristian, in your opinion, what is a worship leader? What is it that you're supposed to do?

KS: You know, Jesus has got to be the thing people walk away with. He's really what changes people. So, I think what a great worship leader does is take people to Jesus. At the heart of every worship leader has got to be the prayer, "Jesus, be exalted; Be front and center—Jesus, be everything." I think a worship leader can take the moment, and the songs, and bring people into the presence of God—to help them see Jesus. For me, I want people to walk away saying, "Man, I was just in the presence of God."

CCM: It's crazy to think that Passion is now twenty years old! How did this ministry impact your life before you officially became a part of it?

BY: Kristian and I grew up together, and we have been friends since we were about fourteen years old—so we go way back. As we played in bands together throughout high school and all of that, we eventually became exposed to the Passion movement, its music, and

even guys like Chris [Tomlin] was leading at our summer camps. The way God moved in those moments when Chris and Louie [Giglio] would be leading, it really made an impression.

When I was a college student, I would go to the Passion conferences, and that's when I would hear for the first time that God is all about His own glory. It's also where I learned that I wanted significance in my life—I wanted it to count for something. What we say at Passion [and its consistent, enduring message] is, "It's the name of Jesus. His name and his renown are the desires of our souls." In response, I want my life to be about the name and the fame of Jesus. The songs and this movement, it really marked my life and changed my direction.

CCM: What's your story on entering into the Passion fold?

BY: Because of the impact of the Passion movement on my life, I knew, in some way, I wanted to help facilitate that in others people's lives. I love worship music, and I love songwriting. From a distance I would just try to learn from those in the movement, and within a few years time, God planted within the heart of **Louie & Shelley Giglio** to plant Passion City Church. All of a sudden, they all moved to Atlanta, and I got to spend a good amount of years standing next to and leading with all of these people that looked up to and had watched for so long.

Over time now, I have been able witness their humility; I've watched their leadership; I've seen their work ethic as they would pore over these songs, and serve people. It's just been a real privilege to be able to stand alongside these heroes, and I'm just so grateful for them.

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CCM: In short, what has working with Louie Giglio meant to your life?

KS: My introduction to Passion came when I was about sixteen years old when someone told me, “You really need to go listen to Passion’s 1999 album, *Better Is One Day*.” So, I went and bought it, and had never sensed the power of God through music like that ever before. I thought, “Man, I don’t know what ‘Passion’ is, or who these people are, but something powerful is happening there.”

From a distance, I tracked along with what Louie was doing. I found him to be an amazing teacher of God’s word, and I watched him as a visionary lead Passion from the beginning. I got a chance to get to know Louie in 2004 when he spoke at a conference where I was also leading worship, and we kind of struck up a friendship. It then developed into him becoming more of a mentor. Then, around seven years ago when Passion City Church started, Louie became my pastor and my leader.

Being under his leadership—and for him to be my pastor—has meant so much for us. The way that he cares for people; The way that he cares for our team; For Passion City Church [and the community]—it really is an amazing thing to be under. For Kerri and I, the Giglio’s leadership in our lives have helped us through some really hard days, and celebrated with us on the brightest days—they have been steadfast. After all these years, I can say without a doubt the hearts of Louie and Shelley are for people seeing Jesus—to make Him famous. That is still at the core of Passion, and I think that’s why God continues to breathe into it. I love being led by Louie.

CCM: That's one thing that has always been really interesting to me—the fact that the Passion movement hasn't swayed from its initial message rooted in Isaiah 26:8.

BY: You're right, we have not changed our theme over the years, and that verse is our anchor verse, but it's not just a "Passion thing." As you look throughout scripture, it's an ongoing theme. It's all about the glory of God. The entire world, all of history, all of humanity is made for, created for, and is to amplify the glory of our Creator. That doesn't get old—it can't get old.

The Church has been going on for 2,000 years around the same idea, you know? So, for us, were just trying to do what we can do to raise our voice and our influence to glorify God. It's not even really about "Passion," for us—just Jesus. To see wave after wave of students coming alive in Jesus, giving and leveraging their lives to begin to sacrifice and to somehow bend their lives around the glory of God—again, that just doesn't get old. For me, I haven't gotten over that yet, and don't think I ever will.

CCM: Passion conferences seem to evolve year after year, and 2016's edition was no exception. This year, the conference experimented with simulcasts, but then took it to the next level—tell us more.

BY: In total, 40,000 students representing 1,600 universities all coming from 51 different countries made it out this year. Passion 2016 was different than any other gathering than we've ever done. We've met in Atlanta, and we've met in Houston—really, we're kind of on a two-year build-up to gathering everyone at the Georgia Dome for Passion 2017 (January 2-4, 2017). But we also wanted

everyone to be “together” this year, so in order to do that we were in three arenas in two different cities—Phillips Arena and Infinite Energy Center here in the Atlanta area, and the Toyota Center in Houston, TX. Obviously, we didn’t broadcast from one location with “overflow” arenas [laughs], every band and speaker was in every arena at some point over the course of these days. Every worship moment and every message that was given happened in one arena, and was then broadcast to another one—but those all happened in the different locations and were going on all of the time. All the venues benefitted from incorporating live preaching and worship elements.

It was so crazy. But even crazier than the traveling and the miracle of technology was the Holy Spirit. The uniting these 40,000 students together on this journey toward the cross, Jesus, and united in making His name famous in this world—it was an amazing couple of days together. Just powerful.

KS: Our team kicked off in Houston, TX (Toyota Center), then we traveled to Gwinnett, GA (Infinite Energy Arena) on Sunday afternoon/night, then finished at Phillips Arena in Atlanta on Monday morning. It was a trip—a blast—I loved doing it! Obviously, its nothing we’ve ever done before, it was new territory for all of us—we have to give props to our amazing production team that made all of that possible.

What was really beautiful was the unity we felt between the three different venues. You would think with all of us flying all over and setting up in different places, that there would be this disconnection—but it actually had an opposite effect. We all felt like we were leading and doing something together. We would roll into one arena and would be reaping the harvest the previous

worship leader or speaker had planted there, if that makes sense. For example, Chris [Tomlin] led in Gwinnett all day Sunday—taking the people to a beautiful place of worship—then we come in right behind that and feel the foundation of what had been established there. It was a really cool thing—and wild! I didn't see Chris, Christy [Nockels] or Matt [Redman] one time! I remember thinking, "It's kind of weird doing Passion and not seeing these people!" On the other hand, we felt really linked together.

CCM: How did this year's conference compare to previous gatherings?

KS: Again, we've never done anything like this before, and it was cool to see the different personalities between the three venues. In a lot of ways, however, it really felt like we were all traveling down the same road. When our team left Houston, we immediately flew to Gwinnett—we get in there, begin leading, and it was just an extension of what we had done the night before in a different state. Somehow, it all linked together and it felt like we were all doing one thing. And, yes, the response from the people was also pretty amazing. Usually, we're in one spot and we get to track together—kind of have this runway with people and we go somewhere together—although it was different this year, it was still amazing.

CCM: Do you think Passion will ever do something like that again?

KS: I don't know, man, you should never say "never," but not right now [laughs].

CCM: Brett, tell us more about the single “Remember,” and you’re involvement in it.

BY: I in my studies, I came across that moment in Deuteronomy when the nation of Israel is about to cross into the promised land, and Moses said, “Remember how God delivered you. Remember that He provided for you, and is leading you into the promised land.” That led me to ask the questions, “What’s going to help me today—in 2016? What do I need to remember?” For me, there is no greater thing to remember than the resurrection of Jesus. So, I had this line come out that stated, “I’ll remember the empty grave...” I would then go into songwriting sessions with this line bubbling around my heart, so we eventually began working on this idea.

After the chorus had been developed, I played it for Louie [Giglio] and Kristian. They were so affirming of it, but they said, “Your verses aren’t quite there yet.” So I went back to the drawing board, and just kind of kept working on it over and over again. As we were getting the songs ready for Passion 2016, [David] Crowder brought in some ideas that really helped get this song to the next level. What I love about its message, is that it’s for those moments in life when circumstances cause us to forget the goodness and faithfulness of God. We’ve all been there—heartbreak, losing a job, cancer, sickness, or even losing a loved one. For some going through things like this, they might even think that God has forgotten about them. The purpose of this song is to call us to remember God’s goodness and faithfulness—to remember that the grave is empty today.

No struggle could be greater than the power of Jesus to defeat sin and death, by rising from the dead—nothing can ever be greater than that. So, if I can find remind myself of that, you know what, “The grave is empty, so I’ll be OK. I’m going to make it! Jesus is alive, He is living in me, and He has brought me to life.”

CCM: In the past, Passion would release live albums highlighting the most recent gathering. This year, it releases *Salvation's Tide Is Rising* before the 2016 conference. Your thoughts on this change, and its instant success across the sales charts?

KS: Leading up to this year, we talked a lot about taking new steps—sonically, how the songs would be approached, production, what kind of lyrics we would write, where we've been and how to move into where we are going. Making a studio record was part of that process. When you're creating something in the studio that you know is going to go out to the people, there's a much different kind of electricity and excitement around that versus working on the live recordings. When you're in the studio, anything is an option—you're creating from a blank space. "What are the sounds we want to use? What are the parts we want to play?" I want to keep pushing forward and blazing ahead for new ground with every creative moment we have as Passion, and I think this album has allowed us to continue that.

You said it—it was definitely a new step for us to have the record out before the conference started, and that was a really beautiful step to take. People are usually learning the songs as we go, then they have to wait a couple of months for the album to come out. This time, everyone had the opportunity to listen to the songs on their way to Passion, and we definitely felt like there was an instant connection, even though the songs were new.

CCM: What was your favorite moment from Passion 2016?

KS: If I'm honest, it was the opening moment of the conference. We had this brilliant opening video that told the story and history of the whole world, along with the story of God, from the beginning to where we are now. Sounds impossible, and people might say, "Don't do that!" But we did, and it was all packaged into an eleven-or-so minute piece. It was such a powerful moment, and then it landed at the victory of the resurrection.

So, you had this whole story of God, this whole story of creation, and it all comes down to Jesus on the cross—He dies, goes into the tomb, but then: "Death, where is your sting?" The resurrection happens, then we launch into "Forever," which was a song from *Even So Come*—and it was an explosion of worship. We were in Houston, but were also being broadcast to the other two locations for that particular moment. Again, that was something I had never experienced before, to be leading people in worship across two different states and knowing we were all linked together celebrating the risen Jesus—I thought I might fly out of the building! It was super memorable—something I'll never forget. CCM

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Weak & Weary People: The Salt & Light of the Earth

BY BENJAMIN "BINO" AND CHELSEA PECK

Picture this—Saturday night in Seattle, a married folk-duo, an album release party, songs about following Jesus, a packed audience filled with both believers and non-believers, and a dimly lit bar. Which part doesn't belong? Before you give the obvious answer and say the dimly lit bar, we should let you know that this is a trick question. They all belong.

Mr. & Mrs. Something

Last November, we released our first full-length album, ***Setting Sail***. So why did we decide to do our album release party at a bar? In short, because we are the salt and light of the world. Why did so many Christians decide to spend their Saturday night with us at the bar? They are salt and light, too.

We could have just as easily—perhaps even more easily—have held this event at a church. In fact, we often perform at churches, and love to. Chelsea and I both grew up in church-going Christian families and attended Christian school for the most part. We are extremely grateful to have been raised, taught and loved by believers. We will always be a part of Christian community—and pray that we will be salt and light to the believers around us.

At the same time, we have noticed that Christian community, when isolated from the rest of the world, can easily turn into a bowl that hides its own light *from* the world. To be a light in darkness, we need to go to dark places. How about a dimly lit bar?

We wrote and released *Setting Sail* in faith, that if we put ourselves and our music out there, God would enable us to encourage and challenge everyone—believers and unbelievers alike. Like sailing, we trust that God would provide the wind. Keyword: God would enable; God would provide. As it turned out, the night of our release party, we knew we didn't have the energy within ourselves—or the accomplishments to be worthy of being called "the salt of the earth," much less "the light of the world"—but God had been teaching us.

Rewind to last May. Two very weary musicians landed in Nashville, TN to record an album. We had just finished a tiring, hectic season in life. Chelsea's last day as a foster care and adoption caseworker was a 13-hour marathon, followed by a dear friend's wedding. Chelsea was in the wedding party while I prepared and performed the music. Then, with three hours sleep, we flew to

Mr. & Mrs. Something

Nashville. To make an album.

Still, we wanted to be perfect. We wanted to perform everything impeccably, and there we were feeling far from that. Drained. Tired. Salt and light? We were weak and weary.

Enter producer **Mitch Dane**. Mitch didn't really care much about a perfect performance. In fact, at times he even preferred our less-than-perfect takes. He showed us that it's not always excellent technical execution that makes great music, though it can certainly help. Rather, sometimes it's our humanity, our imperfections and our vulnerability that make great music. Mitch's perspective drew us back to what God told the apostle Paul: "My power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:19).

Back in Seattle, I was reading a familiar story from Mark's Gospel, when I saw something I hadn't caught before (isn't it funny how God does that?). The disciples had been out preaching, driving out demons and healing the sick. Chelsea and I have never walked from town to town in sandals, without food, money or a jacket, preaching, driving out demons and healing the sick—but it sounds exhausting. When they returned and had finished filling Jesus in on what had happened, Jesus said, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

Their attempt at rest was quickly spoiled by a gigantic crowd of people. Jesus had compassion on the crowd and began teaching. After a while, the disciples found themselves in a predicament, trying to figure out how to feed this massive bunch of hungry people (and all this time they still hadn't had any rest). Jesus said to his disciples, "You give them something to eat." As many of you already know, the disciples gave what little they could muster up, and Jesus made it into plenty for everyone. Not only did Jesus provide enough food for the multitudes, but each disciple left with his own basket full of food.

Mr. & Mrs. Something

I couldn't help but relate this story to our own lives and to the lives of all our fellow believers. We, like the disciples, have been sent out to be salt and light. Even in times when we need rest, we are still salt and light. As believers, this is not just our calling, but it's who we are. As we step out in faith, like a sailboat depending on the wind, God meets our needs. Through His grace, His power is made perfect in our weakness. [CCM](#)

PASSION

Salvation's Tide Is Rising

(sixstepsrecords/Sparrow)

FOR FANS OF:

Chris Tomlin, Crowder, Kristian Stanfill

WE LIKE: "All We Sinners"

★★★★



Eschewing the typical live conference approach for the studio turn, the newest **Passion** worship release has thankfully trimmed the fat. Recent releases were certainly worth checking out, but the time felt right for a change. Too much of a good thing, and all.

Salvation's Tide is Rising sits at a svelte ten songs, and the approach allows each artist and offering to stand tall. The end result is a stellar set of nine new songs and one remake ("Good Good Father"). **Crowder, Chris Tomlin, Christy Nockels, Matt Redman, Kristian Stanfill**—the familiar sounds are all there. Fortunately they made room for one newcomer, Jimi Cravity, whose synth(etic) approach throws a nice sonic curveball on "Surrender."

"Simple Pursuit" is a strong, simple refrain from **Melodie Malone**. "All We Sinners" resonates with the listener long after the song closes out. The same could be said of "I Turn To Christ," "Remember" and the title track and, really, every song for that matter. This is easily the best Passion worship release in several years.

—Matt Conner

MEREDITH ANDREWS

Deeper

(Word)

FOR FANS OF:

Francesca Battistelli, Laura Story

WE LIKE: “Hands That Are Holding Me”

★★★★☆



The phrase, “more of the same,” applies to all facets of **Meredith Andrews’** latest album, *Deeper*. In every way, that’s a good thing.

Andrews’ fans should expect more of the same inspirational pop music they enjoyed on the acclaimed singer’s last release, *Worth It All*. The artist herself should expect more of the same accolades and awards that followed that release—the strong reviews, the Dove Awards, the hit singles. All of it.

Deeper was largely birthed during a season of transition and frustration for Andrews, who has publicly discussed marital difficulties amid myriad changes during the recording of the album. Fortunately the tough lessons learned have given way to impactful songs like “Soar,” “I Look To The King” and “Hands That Are Holding Me.”

While already a successful recording artist, Andrews has yet to breakthrough to true stardom, but *Deeper* might do the trick. The songs are here, as well as the stories. It’s more of the same from Andrews, and we wouldn’t have it any other way.

–Matt Conner

NEWSBOYS

God's Not Dead

The Greatest Hits of the Newsboys

(Inpop Records)

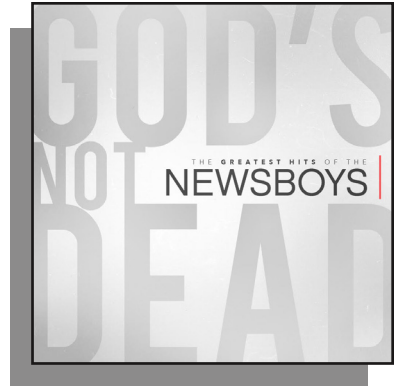
FOR FANS OF:

Audio Adrenaline, The Afters,

Matt Redman

WE LIKE: "Something Beautiful"

★★★



Given a history that dates back to the late '80s, there are countless **Newsboys** compilations in the marketplace with the latest piggybacking off the platinum sales of the smash single turned movie ***God's Not Dead***. After leading off with that faith-fueling anthem, the collection switches between several of the group's infectious pop/rock hits ("Born Again," "Something Beautiful," "Wherever We Go") and a few straightforward worship covers. Though it showcases both current singer **Michael Tait** and previous leader **Peter Furler**, the fact that it only goes as far back as 2006's *Go* means smash songs such as "Entertaining Angels," "It Is You" and "He Reigns" are excluded, along with the entire **John James** era ("Shine," "Breakfast," "Not Ashamed"). In actuality, *God's Not Dead - The Greatest Hits of the Newsboys* should be subtitled *Volume 2* or labeled with the years it encompasses, rather than being mistaken as even remotely comprehensive. However, those who seek out this collection as simply a second chapter summary are likely to find that both as a band and a brand, the Newsboys are just as energetic and inspiring as ever.

—Andy Argyrakis

RICARDO SANCHEZ

Grand Symphony

(Difference Media Group)

FOR FANS OF:

*Israel Houghton, TobyMac,
Salvador*

WE LIKE: "Life"

★★★★



Ricardo Sanchez is no stranger to Christian music with a plethora of projects permeating both the contemporary pop and modern worship scenes, but believe it or not, **Grand Symphony** is his first ever full-length studio recording. Though his vertically-inspired songwriting remains, the singer/songwriter/guitarist explores a wider sonic palette than ever before, asserting co-production credit alongside heavy hitters **Israel Houghton** and **Mark Townsend**. The resulting landscape is a melodic blend of electronic pop, Latin rhythms and world beats over themes of praise ("All Power," "Breathe Your Name"), surrender ("Take Over") and starting anew ("Forgiven," "Redeemed"). Though he's previously mastered the art of live recordings, Sanchez proves he's just as capable conveying bountiful beats and uplifting messages in the studio environment.

–Andy Argyrakis



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