

Sight & Sound

MUSIC

Bands Unite for Worship Series

Ardent Worship

By Skillet, All Together Separate and Satellite Soul

Ardent Records (Forefront).

In a day when new praise and worship recordings are hitting Christian

bookstore shelves faster than the worship-buying market can keep up, Ardent Records' three-CD collection, Ardent Worship, stands out as an assortment of pure and simple reverence.

Comprised of three Ardent artists—Skillet, Satellite Soul and All Together Separate—Ardent Worship does not try to outdo

other worship projects, but rather sheds a new light on some classics, as well as creating new songs through which the listener is propelled to the place of simple, intimate praise and adoration.

The three albums, recorded live in the respective hometowns of the three groups, approach praise and worship from slightly different perspectives, as the three bands showcase glimpses of their own styles of worship.

All Together Separate's tight blend of soft rock 'n' roll and jazzy vocals, courtesy of lead man Dex Alexander, provides a delightful taste of what the band refers to as a "West coast worship experience."

Kicked off by a distorted guitar and crashing drums on "Not By Power," the song is quickly followed by the old favorite "For the Lord Is Good," once made popular by Ron Kenoly. Other highlights of this project are the recently popularized worship chorus "Did You Feel the Mountains Tremble" and the echoing "He Reigns (Holy, Holy, Holy)."

Recorded live in Memphis, Tenn., Skillet's album is more musically driven than vocally, providing more time for the listener to create his own time of worship and communication without being distracted by prearranged lyrics.

Satellite Soul brings worship back to the coffeehouse feel that has become so prevalent today, expressing a tight atmosphere and a feel of simple acoustic worship. The combination of Tim Suttle's soothing lead vocals, guitar-driven choruses and even an occasional harmonica make for an expression of worship that is pure and simple.

Ardent Worship—which was birthed when the three groups’ desire to create a worship album caught the attention of executives at Ardent Records—compels its listener to the heart of worship. This unique praise experience is certain to become a hit that, like some of the cuts on the albums, will last through decades of church music.

—Elisabeth Munizzi

Staying Power

You Can Make It

By Shirley Caesar, Myrrh Records.

The First Lady of Gospel Music,” Shirley Caesar, reaches a milestone

in her musical career that spans nearly four decades with her latest release, *You Can Make It*. The album marks Caesar’s 35th recording and the follow-up to her Stellar Award-winning *A Miracle in Harlem*. Her secret to longevity in gospel music has been her trademark sound and dynamic ministry that has touched many lives through the years.

You Can Make It kicks off with an explosive start with the high-energy “Rejoice,” featuring background vocals from

labelmates New Direction. It also includes Spirit-charged tracks such as

“The Armor of God” and the uplifting “What Joy,” which features some jazzy horns and the premier vocals of Bobby Jones and the Nashville Superchoir.

Caesar also uses her gifts in ministry in the ballads on You Can Make It. Songs such as “It’s Under the Blood” sends a message of redemption and forgiveness, and the splendid “It’s a Blessing” ministers thanksgiving and praise.

The true gem of You Can Make It is the soulful ballad “I Am God.” Excellent string orchestration, piano accompaniment and Caesar’s seasoned vocals create a musical tapestry that ministers the omnipotence and great power of God.

You Can Make It proves Caesar can adapt to the timely changes in music. With the album destined to garner public acclaim, Caesar shows no signs of slowing down. –Twanna Powell

Giving God Her All

All I Have

Rita Springer, Floodgate Records.

All I Have is Rita Springer's first studio project on Floodgate Records

and serves as a follow-up to the live recording Created to Worship. If you're unfamiliar with Springer's work or her previous independent albums, she has a special ability to take people to the throne room through her songs and music.

Produced by Andy Piercy (Matt Redman, Kim Hill, Delirious), the sound is edgy, modern and passionate. The music is full of guitars, stringed instruments and fun loops resulting in an adult contemporary rock feel, but it likely will appeal to listeners of all ages.

Springer sings as if she owns the lyrics. And it's no wonder. She penned nine of the 11 songs on the album. Standout cuts include "Phenomenon," "Between Your Shoulders" and "You Said."

Springer has a rough, textured voice that demands repeat listening. All I Have is a fantastic album, highly recommended to anyone who loves worship or great music.

—Margaret Feinberg

Timeless Treasures

Hymns: A Place of Worship

By 4Him, Benson Music.

No matter how contemporary listeners' tastes for praise and worship offerings become, there always seems to be a special place in their hearts for the songs found in the hymnals. With the classic hymnal as the

cornerstone of their inspiration, the ever-popular vocal quartet 4Him has released Hymns: A Place of Worship.

Hymns is a collection of traditional songs with a synergy of modern and classic arrangements. The vocal elements not only inspire but reflect some of the best harmonies in the industry. Some tracks, such as "O Sacred Head Now Wounded," mix contemporary elements with traditional. Others, such as "It Is Well," only hint of the originals, yet capture the strength and virtue of the classic.

Hymns may not completely satisfy those who believe the traditionals should remain untouched. But for those who yearn for excellent sound, production and worship based on songs that have stood the test of time, Hymns: A Place of Worship may be exactly what they have been waiting for. □—Doug Joseph

* BOOKS

Peretti Helps Mend Wounded Spirits

The Wounded Spirit

By Frank Peretti, Word Publishing, hardcover, 220 pages, \$.

With more than 9 million copies of his books in print, including This

Present Darkness and Piercing the Darkness, Frank Peretti has turned his pen in a new direction: nonfiction. In *The Wounded Spirit*, the best-selling fiction writer reveals his own traumatic childhood story to encourage others who have spiritual and emotional wounds.

Most fans will be surprised to discover that due to an injury at birth, Peretti was left with a black, scabby, oozing, bloody tongue that hung out of his mouth. As a smaller child who had to make regular trips to the hospital and undergo multiple surgeries, he became an object of harassment during his school years.

But the book is more than a graphic, heart-touching testimony; Peretti goes a step further by linking his experience to larger issues of bullying, defending the weak and the

Columbine tragedy. Several chapters are laced with the author's trademark storytelling skill, but other chapters are more straightforward, so the book lacks an evenly paced flow.

Though this isn't Peretti's best writing, it's one of his most powerful books.

—Margaret Feinberg

Positive Parenting

Raising Heaven Bound Kids in a Hell Bent World

By Eastman Curtis, Thomas Nelson
Publishers, paperback, 225 pages, \$.

Eastman Curtis' book on parenting is a winner. Pastor of Destiny Church

in Broken Arrow, Okla., and a former youth minister, Curtis offers parents tools to help their children discover their purpose and work through the challenging teen years.

Written in an upbeat style, each of the bite-size chapters

covers a variety of topics including self-image, discipline, open communication, sibling relationships, pursuing destiny, drugs, sex, faith—just about everything a teen may face in life. Each chapter also includes affirmations to be spoken by the reader and the reader's child, as well as relevant Bible verses.

While Curtis recommends that parents start early with the principles he teaches, he maintains that it is never too late to turn the ship around if it's headed in the wrong direction. He also assures readers that there are no perfect parents or perfect children, and they shouldn't go on guilt trips about past failures. However, he is clear that parents must take responsibility for their mistakes and make the necessary changes to set good examples for their teens.

The short chapter format is appealing not only to those who have short attention spans, but for those with limited time for reading. It could easily be read a chapter or two a day as a devotional. This is a great resource for families to ensure their kids are heaven-bound.

—Deborah L. Delk

Releasing God's Joy

Releasing the Glory: The Secret of Joy

By Judson Cornwall, Fire Wind,
paperback, 181 pages, \$.

For those who fear that God is a cosmic killjoy in the sky,
here is some good

news. Judson Cornwall's *Releasing the Glory* brings refreshment
to the fearful heart, like a drink of cool water on a hot day.

As *Releasing the Glory* explains, joy is much more than the
temporary emotion of happiness. Joy is a powerful supernatural
force—part of the character of God. For believers who have the
Holy Spirit, joy is always available as part of their
inheritance. But believers need to appropriate and release
that joy through faith.

Cornwall does an excellent job of describing God's joy through
the Scriptures and teaches how we can experience that joy to
the fullest. Designed with study questions at the end of each
chapter, this book would be great for either personal devotion
or group study.

Releasing the Glory should be highly recommended to anyone who
needs his thoughts renewed on the true nature of God. Those
bound in stale legalism, who still see God as a severe
taskmaster, need to be set free by the truths in this work.
This joy is healing, life-giving and contagious. □—Deborah L.
Delk

To Sammy Ward, worship is a way of life. A new artist with 40
Records, a modern worship label co-owned by dcTalk's Toby

McKeehan and Bill Gaither, Ward says worship is not just a song or a message, but a daily walk with God.

“Worship is how you live your life,” he says. “That is what I want to get across.”

The 26-year-old’s debut album, *My Passion*, which released in August, is a pop/rock-flavored praise and worship album that features several modern worship staples as well as four original cuts penned by Ward.

Influenced by his love for rap and hip-hop music, the Atlanta-area native has been singing since his teen years and frequently tours at colleges and youth events. “I see a lot of youth [and] college-age people who are thirsty, starving to be fed by the church.

“We as Christians have been somewhere between disobedient and lazy in equipping the sons and daughters of lot of churches don’t have a college want to be a role model in some of these [youth] to not just preach it but to live it.”

Though Ward sees modern worship as a trend that may eventually ebb, he’s glad to be a part of what God is doing now.

“My constant prayer has been: ‘Here I am, Lord. Send me.’ I’m just happy to be part of what He’s doing. I want to let the world know what God is up to.” —Adrienne S. Gaines

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Developing a Lifestyle of Worship

With God, a thousand years is as one day...

On January 1, 2001, we mark the beginning of the third thousand years since men and women literally walked in the presence of God. Could this be the third day, which was foretold to come by the Old Testament prophets—bringing God's ultimate move of power and blessing?

Let Pastor Sammy Rodriguez lead you through the Scriptures, past renewal and revival into life in the very presence of God—as together, we move into God's miraculous Third Day.