

Amy Grant Releases First Studio Album in 10 Years

Amy Grant has found a new label home in Capitol Christian Music Group. Her first full studio project in 10 years, *How Mercy Looks From Here* (Sparrow Records/Capitol Christian Distribution) releases May 14.

Where did the project's title come from?

I believe the title was [label President] Peter York's idea. I love the title because I think it sums up the feeling of the record. During the last 10 years, I have had to bury several dear friends and my beautiful mom, Gloria Grant. Yet in spite of those times of real grief, I have felt God's presence and have also felt genuine joy at how life continues to unfold. At age 52, it is nice to have lived enough to really know that God is present in good times and bad and that His mercy continues to make all the difference.

Are there one or two songs that are special to you on this album?

It is hard to pick one or two songs on this project. The inspiration for the entire project was based on one of the last lucid conversations I had with my mom. I had stopped by to spend some time with her before catching the tour bus for the "2 Friends" tour with Michael W. Smith. When it was time for me to leave, I told my mom that I had to go sing. She looked at me with genuine surprise and asked, "You sing?" My mom was the first person I ever sang a song to as a teenager and the fact that she didn't remember that I was a singer put a huge lump in my throat.

I swallowed hard and said, "Yes, mom, I do." She asked me what kind of songs I sang and I told her songs about life, love, family and faith. She asked me to sing something before

leaving and so I started an old hymn that I knew she had sung a hundred times before. About halfway through I asked her if she remembered this song. She replied, "No, but I love it! Please keep singing!" So I swallowed another lump in my throat and finished the song. When it was over, I kissed her and said I needed to leave. She looked me in the eye and said, "When you get on that stage to sing, will you do me a favor? Sing something that matters." All of the songs on this record really matter to me.

What was it like working with producer Marshall Altman?

I had never met Marshall before, but upon first meeting him, I felt an instant familiarity. I immediately related to his sort of creative organized chaos, and his warm and open personality made me feel safe as an artist. We started this project by meeting once a week. I would show up and play him some songs and he would critique them and then we would discuss them. I really respected his artistic opinion, but also appreciated that he wanted me to push back and fight for what I believed in. We met every week for several months pulling together the songs we thought were special.

We wrote together and tore apart existing songs to recast them in very different light. When it came time to record the record, we had already done so much pre-tracking work that we had a strong sense of what we wanted the album to sound like. What I also love about Marshall is the creative community he surrounds himself with. Every day there are people stopping by the studio—artists he has worked with, writers, musicians, friends—and he welcomes them all. I loved making the record in the midst of all that creativity.