

Christian Songwriter Matthew West Sings Life Stories

✖ When Matthew West was 13 years old, he came across a Billy Graham Crusade on television. Being a preacher's son, he had his share of church services, and typically would change the channel. But something was different this time.

"My mom, who's an amazing woman of God, came downstairs to the family room where I was watching the Crusade and she knew something was up because I wasn't watching a baseball game," he recalls. "She sat down with me and asked me if I wanted to pray and accept Jesus into my heart."

It was right at the time when he remembers the song, "Just As I Am," was being played, and he watched people leave their seats to come forward.

"I felt like the Lord was doing a work in my life, even as a 13-year-old kid, and I said, "'Yeah, I wanna pray.' I'll never forget. That was the moment I accepted Christ into my heart and made the most important decision of my life."

These days, the Matthew West/Billy Graham connection has come full circle. Over the past few years, West has partnered with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in ministry. He has shared a platform with Will Graham at Celebration events, participated in Operation Christmas Child shoebox distributions, and has been involved with television specials and other video projects.

His next BGEA ministry project is more of an intimate one: on June 23 he will perform in "An Evening at The Cove" at the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville, N.C. The concert will be a mix of older, more familiar songs from the radio, as well as songs from his latest album, *The Story of Your Life*.

“As a songwriter, every song has a story behind it, and I am excited to play in an intimate setting like The Cove, because I’ll get to dive in to some of the amazing stories that inspired these songs,” he explained.

West’s hopes and prayers for this “Evening at The Cove” go far beyond music and entertainment. It’s about the most important connection a person could ever make””a connection with God.

“I think people go to concerts in the hopes of being moved. People want to feel something. Music can do that. And that is my goal, to make that connection with the audience,” West said.

“But what makes Christian music different is that the connection is not only between me and the audience, but more importantly I hope to connect the audience with the One who’s love can move even the most stubborn heart. That’s what I hope and pray will be accomplished at the Cove. I’m excited!”

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