

# Francesca Battistelli, Chris August Earn Top Dove Honors

Chris August, Jason Crabb and Point of Grace were the big winners during last night's 42nd Annual Gospel Music Association (GMA) Dove Awards.

They pulled down three Doves apiece at the event, held at Atlanta's historic Fox Theatre—the first time the show took place outside of Nashville. For the second year in a row, Battistelli took home Female Vocalist of the Year honors, and she also won the fan-voted Artist of the Year and Pop/Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year for “Beautiful, Beautiful.”

A first-time nominee, August was named New Artist of the Year and Male Artist of the Year, and was recognized with the Pop/Contemporary Album of the Year for *No Far Away* (Fervent Records/Word Distribution).

Crabb won Song of the Year for “Sometimes I Cry”; Inspirational Recorded Song of the Year for “Joseph”; and Traditional Gospel Recorded Song of the Year for “Go Tell It On The Mountain.” His father, Gerald Crabb, won Songwriter of the Year.

Point of Grace took home Country Album of the Year for *No Changin' Us* (Word Records/Word); Christmas Album of the Year for *Home for the Holidays* (Word Records/Word); and Country Recorded Song of the Year for “There Is Nothing Greater Than Grace.”

For the second year in a row, Needtobreathe won Group of the Year and Rock/Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year for “Something Beautiful.”

During the show, Casting Crowns leader Mark Hall, Third Day

and Steven Curtis Chapman—who has won more Dove Awards, 56, than any other artist—performed together, singing Third Day’s “Children of God.”

Longtime female vocalist Sandi Patty was honored for her lifetime achievements. Several singers, including Battistelli, Natalie Grant, Audrey Assad, Kerri Robert, Janet Paschal, Brit Nicole and Laura Story, each gave a rendition of Patty’s past hit songs. Patty then joined the seven singers and sang with them.

Presenters included Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow; Super Bowl winner and Green Bay Packers wide receiver Greg Jennings; singer Ruben Studdard; and actress Kim Fields.

Hosted by Sherri Shepherd, co-host of ABC’s The View, the Doves Awards were taped live for broadcast Easter Sunday, April 24, on the Atlanta-based Gospel Music Channel.