

Cornerstone

When Hillsong releases a new project, listeners pay attention. The music arm of Hillsong Church in Sydney has been supplying the worship soundtrack for churches around the world for the past two decades.

Although it would be easy and unsurprising for the group to repeat its classic sounds of the past, *Cornerstone* showcases a sound that is ever-evolving for modern listeners.

More than being influenced by the high-energy, gospel-tinged Hillsong anthems, the new release seems to take its cue from the wildly popular youth arm, Hillsong United. The result is an album leaning more toward moody, introspective pieces such as “I Surrender,” which builds into a melodic rock testimony, and the title track, which is a reboot of the hymn “On Christ the Solid Rock,” a la Passion’s “Jesus Paid It All.” *Cornerstone* introduces a new chorus to the hymn’s familiar verses. “Beneath the Waters (I Will Rise)” is a determined proclamation of redemption and justification.

Though intimate, personally affecting songs are featured, *Cornerstone* is not devoid of loud, rock-infused anthems. “Hope of the World,” included on the disc in both live and studio versions, is a modern pop call to worship. The bouncy opener “Endless Light” engages the crowd and listeners with a light rock feel, and “Running” uses strong percussion to keep the enthusiasm going.

With a sound targeted toward younger ears, *Cornerstone* fits nicely among the ranks of emotional pop rock from Passion and Hillsong United. The inclusion of the studio track also hints the group is tuning its ear toward further expanding its base through radio airplay.