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CASTING CROWNS PROMISES WORSHIP EXPERIENCE

American band Casting Crowns is heading down under in January for a series of events in Sydney, Brisbane, and New Zealand's famed Parachute Festival.

Guitarist Juan DeVevo says the concerts are an interactive "worship experience".

"We put the lyrics of our songs on the big screen, so that people can participate and sing along," Juan says.

"We want people to get connected with God. We'll meet you and shake your hand after the event, but during the concert we want you to meet God. If you've never met him, we want to introduce Him to you. If you already know Him, we want to encourage you."

Casting Crowns will perform at Sydney's Hillsong Church on January 22, Brisbane's Gateway Centre on January 23, then at the Parachute Festival (January 23-26).

SIMEON PARTNERS WITH CBM 4 NIGER PROJECT

Melbourne band Simeon releases its new radio song - *Not Calming Down* - as a physical single this month to create awareness of the extreme poverty in Niger, arguably the poorest country in the world.

Lead singer Simeon Shinkfield says the song is about practical action, and frustration with self.

"I'm sick of thinking that life is about living for me!" says Simeon.

"I must act in response to what I see. I must persist until I see change in this world, until I see change in me."

Simeon and his band believe *Not Calming Down* needs to be more than a song, so they have partnered with CBM, the world's largest disability organisation, working with more than 18 million people each year in 122 countries.

"My prayer is that we will all grow through this project: grow in our sensitivity to the needs of others, grow in the extension of ourselves to help others and most importantly grow closer to the Creator; the One who initiates relationship with us and chooses to use us in His amazing work!" says Simeon.

More details at www.cbm.org.au and www.simeononline.com

MERISE'S HOT MIX

Sydney singer Merise (pronounced Myrrh Reece) releases a new version of her song *Just See* as a digital only single this week.

Merise is one of the first Australian artists to issue a digital only release.

The original version of the song was released earlier this year on her highly acclaimed *Scars And Tears* album.

Hillsong's Andrew Crawford remixed the song for radio and iTunes. Andrew recently remixed songs for Matt Lucas which has contributed to his national radio success.

Just See follows the national success of her song *Broken* and the regional success in Sydney and Newcastle of *More Than Good*.

More details: www.merise.com.au