

CCM MAGAZINE'S HISTORIC STEP REDEFINES CHRISTIAN MUSIC

CCM Magazine, the flagship of Contemporary Christian Music over the past 29 years in America, has changed its definition of "Christian music" with its May 2007 issue to raise the profile of independent and general market artists of faith.

CCM Editor Jay Swartzendruber says the shift marks a "historic step" for the magazine, as well as the fans and the industry it serves.

"We're going to start mixing indie and general market Christians such as The Fray, Mary J. Blige and Sufjan Stevens in with artists with traditional Christian label affiliation," Jay says.

"Rather than define 'Christian music' just by its label or distribution, we're now defining it as Christian worldview music.



"CCM Magazine has always taken its role as a leader seriously, and we believe this is the way of the future," he explains.

During the 70s, CCM Magazine played a leading role in branding the spiritual pop and rock 'n' roll that was known then simply as "Jesus Music".

As the grassroots contemporary Christian music scene mushroomed into a billion dollar industry, "Christian music" has become widely regarded as a genre, even though it includes rock, pop, hip-hop, punk, hardcore metal and other styles of music.

As a result, many artists of faith who are reluctant to have their music defined by the Christian market have chosen to bypass it.

The "CCM" acronym – which has stood for "contemporary Christian music" for most of the magazine's 29 year history – now takes on new meaning this month as revealed by the front cover tagline: Christ € Community € Music.

Industry experts are waiting to see whether the radio interests of CCM Magazine's parent company (Salem Communications) will mirror the magazine's approach.

The Salem Radio Network syndicates talk, news and music programming to approximately 2000 affiliates. It also owns and operates approximately 100 radio stations, including stations in 23 of the top 25 markets.

AMY SWITCHES LABELS AFTER 30 YEARS

Christian music's most successful artist, Amy Grant, has signed a worldwide contract with Sparrow Records.

The deal includes rights to Grant's 30-year A&M and Word catalog, plus the option to work on future recordings.

Sparrow will issue remastered editions of 17 albums on 14 August, including a new greatest hits package.

Grant has sold more than 30 million records, plus won six Grammy Awards and 22 Dove Awards.

Amy recorded her first LP in 1977 for Myrrh Records, a label originally founded in 1972 by Billy Ray Hearn who also founded Sparrow in 1975.

Today, Billy Ray's son Bill Hearn is the CEO of the EMI Christian Music Group which owns Sparrow.



Amy Grant

AUSSIE LEGENDS COMPLETE QUEENSLAND TOUR

Steve Grace is a vibrant Australian singer songwriter with a heart for world evangelism.

Twenty years ago, he was driving trucks.

Since answering the call of God, he has pioneered a concert ministry that has taken him to hundreds of cities and regional towns throughout Australia, plus developed into an international ministry with more than a hundred opportunities each year to perform at concerts, festivals and crusades before thousands of people in the USA, Thailand, Solomon Islands, Philippines, New Zealand, New Guinea, Israel, Holland, Finland and Canada.

After performing at AGMF in Toowoomba last month, Steve has completed the first stage of his Motorcycle Mission Tour with God Squad founder John Smith to the drought-stricken communities of Queensland.

For Steve, this has been an adventure led by God, and strongly supported with huge steps of faith from his family.

Another tour is being planned for later this year.

Steve recently released his ninth album *Better Days Ahead* which includes a version of *Blessed Assurance*.

Next year marks the 20th anniversary of the release of his gold selling CD *Children Of The Western World*.



Steve Grace with John Smith (foreground)



SONS OF KORAH LAUNCHES NATIONAL TOUR

Internationally acclaimed Australian band, Sons of Korah today announced its national tour to start in Wagga on 31 May.

The Bible Society NSW will sponsor the first leg of the tour.

If you haven't heard Sons of Korah before, this is an ensemble with a unique acoustic sound.



Sons Of Korah

Each concert takes audiences on what has been described as "a timeless musical drama exploring the Biblical Psalms".

Sons of Korah's leader Matt Jacoby says the Psalms "portray spiritual life in all facets and dynamics".

"Our music is an honest and meaningful entry point to explore the sometimes complicated world of faith," he says.

Bible Society NSW Events Manager Amiee McCahon says Sons Of Korah are "destined to touch many lives".

NSW tour dates

Wagga	Thursday 31 May	7.30pm	Wagga Wagga Christian College
Canberra	Friday 1 June	7:30pm	Kippax Uniting Community Centre
Wollongong	Saturday 2 June	7:30pm	Gateway City Church (Regent Theatre)
Taree	Tuesday 5 June	7:30pm	Manning Entertainment Centre
Newcastle	Wednesday 6 June	7:30pm	Citilife Church
Northern Sydney	Thursday 7 June	7:30PM	Pittwater Uniting Church
Northern Sydney	Friday 8 June	7:30PM	Northside Community Church
South Sydney	Saturday 9 June	7:30PM	Menai Anglican Church

For further information, visit www.biblesocietynsw.com.au/sonsofkorah

SMS

The band whose song *Breathe Into Me* won this year's Dove Award for Rock Song Of The Year sees a song from its Grammy nominated album *End Of Silence* used on US TV this week when CBS uses its song *Let Go* to promote *Without A Trace*.

Jody McBrayer, the founding member of Avalon, has announced that he will be leaving the foursome due to illness. McBrayer has been diagnosed with a heart condition known as Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy.

A reminder that the UNITE conference is on this weekend at Crossway Baptist Church in Melbourne. The conference features Steve McPherson (Hillsong), Marina Prior, Roma Waterman, the Melbourne Gospel Choir, Michael Paynter, plus the worship directors from CCC Whitehorse, Careforce, Crossway Baptist, City Life Church and Gateway. Please see www.myspace.com/unitecreativearts for a downloadable brochure. Reggos: \$40 a person. You can register at the event on Friday night from 6.30. Starting time is 7.30 on Friday and 9AM on Saturday.