

## Famed tunesmith John Mandeville sings, writes, performs, produces and mixes solo debut

Avalon, Point of Grace songwriter turns deeply personal yet worshipful

For Immediate Release- After writing hit singles for the lauded likes of Avalon, 4Him, Point of Grace and Tammy Trent (amongst a whole host of others), troubadour John Mandeville is turning his pen to a more personal side of the paper. His solo debut *We Belong To Heaven* finds the tunesmith simultaneously addressing a series of personal, even vulnerable themes, tied around an undeniably heartfelt approach to praise and worship. All the while, the multi-faceted artist also sings, writes, plays keyboards and guitar, plus produces and mixes the project (with mastering by five time Grammy Award winner Richard Dodd).

All those impressive ingredients are a natural extension to the veteran's ten-plus years as an acclaimed contemporary Christian music songwriter turned worship leader in the Orlando area. Yet now more than ever, Mandeville seeks intense connection with listeners in both private and public settings, tied around his own encounters and unabashed adoration of our Creator.

"The process of writing the songs for *We Belong To Heaven* was actually a welcome journey home to simply putting my heart on the page, whether the songs were 'hit singles' or not," he relates. "I actually felt led to just sing to the Lord for most of the year before I started writing anything down. I needed to make that offering to Him, and step away from the music biz critic within that was always thinking about charts and markets. I needed to return to the centered place of just expressing my love and gratitude to Him, and Him alone. My writing taking this turn was reflective of a similar trend in my life across the board- a fresh understanding that ultimately as believers, we truly belong to heaven. Eternity is the origin and the destination and writing this project documented the realization of that awakening in me."

Armed with an uplifting, guitar centered sound along the lines of Chris Tomlin with the electronic elements of the David Crowder Band and tender piano reflections, *We Belong To Heaven* is a remarkably humble but instantly attachable album for a variety of life's seasons. Despite being written during a time of uncertainty and wrestling, the project points back to ultimate praise of the Lord and surrender to His perfect will.

"Nearly all of the songs on this CD were written in direct response to some impossible circumstance in our life," continues Mandeville, citing challenging family circumstances. "We were going through some severely difficult times when I was working on this CD, and worship was the only thing that brought us through. It transformed me, my marriage and our family. We chose as a family to worship through the impossible until He made it possible. This was the beginning of the LifestyleOfWorship vision and an entirely new direction for our lives."

Take for instance key cuts such as “Who Do You Say I Am” and “Free,” the former of which discusses humanity’s attempt to live up to Godly standards (with grace bridging that great divide), while the latter speaks of unceasing hope, letting go of past bondage and finding ultimate freedom in Christ. And for those who carefully study the liner notes, the disc’s back tray card also communicates the equally essential message “it isn’t just for Sundays anymore.” The statement again corresponds with Mandeville’s LifestyleOfWorship mentality, suggesting a daily dose of praise over merely quick fixes during a Sunday morning service.

“So many people are living lives of defeat and have an anemic Christian experience, because the only time they spend directly in the presence of God is for an hour on the weekend, if that,” he asserts. “This was true of me and then we wonder why our lives are incongruent, defeated and not lining up with what we say we believe on Sundays. We are continuously connected to God and His presence is always available- it’s up to us to commit to staying tuned in. Over and over, we have watched as we choose to worship rather than worry- God showed up miraculously and began to transform our lives.”

And as a result of that openness and direct application, Mandeville hopes to inspire listeners to a similar way of life filled, replacing problematic situations with peace and feelings of powerlessness with praise. “I just hope that through putting my own failures, my own wrestling with God and myself on the page, that people will find hope in their humanity and comfort in a God who is foreign to the idea of not loving us,” he sums up. “Once we understand that we are only loved, that there is no failure too great to be redeemed, that there is no one who is ‘too far gone’ to be restored, then how can we not worship a God like that? Why would I ever want to be disconnected from the only source of life and hope that there is? Once people really experience the change in their lives that only comes from living intimately connected to God, there’s no going back.”

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