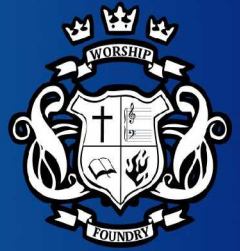




On The Anvil

The Worship Foundry Newsletter



APRIL 2009 – IN THIS EDITION:

In The Studio – the drum and bass tracks for three songs are in the bag

NeoPsalmist – the humble beginnings of the Event tab page

Worship Leader Profile – a chat with Gaby Coppez

Now Playing – worship albums to add to your collection

The Written Word – worship books worth reading

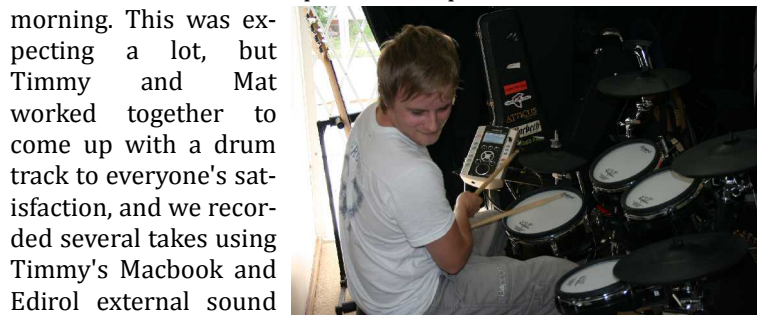
In The Studio

A few weeks ago I played at a Saturday wedding at church. After the service was finished I packed up my gear and began to walk across the covered courtyard to my car. As I neared the church gates, I heard some live music coming from across the road in Callow House. I wandered in and discovered one of the youth worship teams rehearsing for the worship event later that evening. The song they were singing really caught my attention. As I hadn't heard it before, I strolled over to look over a music stand at the chord sheet, and noticed a name at the bottom of the song – Mat Dennis, the worship leader. I told Mat I'd be interested in recording the song, said goodbye to the band, and went home. A few days later I received a message from Mat, confirming he was keen to workshop his new song with me and begin recording work on it. And so, after a preproduction meeting a few days later where we recorded a concept track with vocals and guitar, 'Awake In Your Salvation' was added to the The Worship Foundry song list.



Having learned last month that recording drums first is an easier approach, I arranged a Saturday morning meeting with Mat at Timmy Price's home in Kirstenhof. I had hoped that we would be able to work the drum part to completion and record it that morning. This was expecting a lot, but Timmy and Mat worked together to come up with a drum track to everyone's satisfaction, and we recorded several takes using Timmy's Macbook and Edirol external sound card. I also picked up the two drum tracks for Jono Moore's songs that Timmy had recorded a few weeks ago.

The drum tracks for Jono's two songs were fairly easy to set up in Cubase SE, the recording software I use, but the drums for Mat's song presented a slightly bigger challenge: There were four different takes, each with some great parts, but also with some parts that were better in another track. So the goal became to pick the best sections of each track and reconstruct the best possible drum track from the four takes. This isn't quite as simple as just cutting



and pasting things around on a screen, and ended up taking a considerable amount of time and careful cross fade editing. But the end result flows well throughout.

If you think this kind of thing is cheating, you'd be horrified at the shortcuts and fixes they use in a commercial studio to save time. When you're paying R1000.00 an hour, it's probably easier not to feel that strongly about it.

Next on the instrument list was the bass guitar, and both Jono and Mat said they would like me to play the bass for their songs. For the recording I borrowed a guitar from Tyrone Wilson, my bassist in the Sunday night team I lead. He recently purchased a Cort Action V, a great five string bass with a solid feel.

After a few hours of playing through each track, I began recording the bass guitar parts. A temporary setback occurred when an obscure software setting changed without my noticing, and I could no longer hear the bass guitar while recording. A good night's sleep and a few minutes in the Cubase help file the next morning sorted it out.

There are many approaches to playing bass, but in this case I was aiming for a smooth and full style that stuck closely to the rhythm of the drums, specifically the kick drum. This technique means that the notes played have an extra thump when played in time with the kick drum. Combining bass and drums in this way produces a good rhythm foundation upon which to build the rest of the song arrangement.

In the next few weeks, I'll be bringing both Mat and Jono back into the studio to record their acoustic guitar parts and throw around some more ideas about what they'd like to hear in the song.



Recent weeks have been almost entirely focused on song production and recording work, and as a result there has not been much progress with the NeoPsalmist project. The most I've been able to get to is a basic design of the user interface (the stuff you see when working with the program) for the Event Index.



The concept is similar to the Song tab page – events in the database are displayed in an index, with buttons to open, edit, or delete each one. My guess is that people will usually want to look for past events according to the date, and so that is the primary sorting method. Events can also be sorted by their title (to view all events of a specific kind), their venue (to view all events that took place at a specific location), or their song count. Using the drop down combo box in the top right of the toolbar, the user will also be able to specify a period within which they wish to view events, as short as the past week, or as far back as 5 years. (I'd be flattered if NeoPsalmist was still being used 5 years after it is launched).

I hasten to add that this is just a first attempt at the user interface, with almost no code to make anything work yet. I'm hoping to give a little more attention to programming this month in the moments I'm not tied up with studio work.

Worship Leader Profile

People sometimes view worship leaders as immaculate saints who are temporarily absconded from heaven for a few hours on a Sunday to lead the music in services. But what's it really like being a worship leader?

In the next few editions of On The Anvil, we'll be interviewing several individuals to hear a bit about their lives and their experience of leading worship.



We kick off this month with **Gaby Coppez**.

OTA: Where did you grow up?

GC: Cape Town, or more specifically The Republic of Hout Bay

OTA: Haha, Republic? I'll bring my passport if I come visit you there. How about your favourite food?

GC: Sushi, sushi, sushi, chocolate...and sushi

OTA: Right, so it's sushi then. Okay, name the last movie you watched and loved.

GC: Slumdog Millionaire, what a winner movie!

OTA: How about your bookshelf.

What book are you reading right now? Answering 'The Bible' will not score you extra points.

GC: I'm afraid that'll have to be books and the answer is: *Everything Must Change* by Brian McLaren (a book I'd recommend everybody read – it will definitely give you a lot to think about) and *Otherland* by Tad Williams.

OTA: Yeah, Brian McLaren has some provocative ideas that have stirred up lots of discussion. Any hobbies or pastimes you're into?

GC: Running, dancing, yoga, reading, baking and stamp-collecting (ok, not really stamp-collecting)

OTA: Nothing wrong with stamp collecting. What instruments do you play?

GC: Cello and guitar

OTA: And voice if you count that as an instrument. When did you start leading worship, and how did that process begin?

GC: I started leading worship in 2002 when I was part of a worship team at Christ Church and Jess, the worship leader of that team, started getting me to lead different songs in the set. She slowly let me lead more and more until I was leading the whole thing and then began leading my own team. It was something that I'd felt the Lord calling me into for a while before that and something that He's been growing me in ever since.

OTA: So you've been leading worship for seven years. You must have learned a fair amount of worship songs in that time. What song has been really significant in your life?

GC: There have been many along the way, but for the last while I've really been loving *Hosanna* by Brooke Fraser. I find the bridge of this song SO powerful:

*Heal my heart and make it clean
Open up my eyes to the things unseen
Show me how to love like You have loved me.
Break my heart for what breaks yours
Everything I am for your Kingdom's cause,
As I walk from earth into eternity.*

It really is the cry of my heart - that God would align my heart with His, that I would surrender everything of myself to Him to move His kingdom forward in every area that I am, to change things, to let others see God's relevance in every area of our lives.

OTA: Good stuff, we should all be praying that. Have you written any worship songs yourself?

GC: Yes, I've written and recorded 2 worship songs. This is definitely an area that I want to be growing in.

OTA: Most of us have had some worship leading horror moments. Can you recall any embarrassing ones?

GC: Hmm...I'm sure there have been many, but I seem to have effectively blocked them out of my memory.

OTA: You know, denial only worsens things. What do you normally do when you get home after leading worship?

GC: I normally have a good debrief with my housemate, Sarah, and then we generally watch an episode of something, *Grey's Anatomy*, being a favourite and *How I Met your Mother* a close second, before going to sleep.

OTA: Worship music aside, name some of your favourite bands.

GC: I warn you - I have very eclectic music taste, but here goes: The Muse, Blindside, Civil Twilight, Benjamin Gate, Radiohead,

OTA: You weren't kidding. Bowie? Yikes. Let's talk about the difficult side. What has been your biggest challenge as a worship leader?

GC: I think it has been growing in confidence to be able to musically lead my worship team, learning how to move the sounds that I want to hear from my head to a team of musicians. It's an ongoing growing process, but is always great fun.

OTA: Another misconception about worship leaders is that we have our song selections emailed directly from heaven. Can you briefly describe the process do you go through when preparing to lead worship?

GC: I set aside times during the week before I lead to sit with the Lord and listen to His heart for the service and let thoughts and ideas brew. At the 7pm service, we've organized and encouraged the preacher, pray-er, worship leader and service leader being in contact during the week before the service and this always brings up ideas and thoughts and themes for the service. I will then typically set aside a song choosing time and take all the thoughts I've had and what I've felt God saying to me about the service and choose songs from that. Once I have the set outlined, I spend time working through the arrangement of each song and writing notes for the practice before the service as well as just playing the songs, being open to anything that God wants to say to me during that time.

OTA: Leave us with this thought: What is the most important thing a worship leader should strive for?

GC: I think that in all ministries, worship leading included, everything stems from a healthy, intimate relationship with God. Yes, we're not always in a fantastic place with God and I do believe that there is grace for that, but I believe that it all comes out of that heart place, that relationship that we have with God. For me, worship leading is about taking that relationship, taking the truth that I know about God and setting it to music and inviting others to enter into that place with me, a place of declaring the truth about God, a place of committing ourselves to the Lord, a place of letting the Lord speak to us. So in terms of striving, I'd say that yes, there are practical skills and playing your instrument is important, but for me the place of growth of a worship leader is sitting at the cross, spending time with Jesus, getting to know God more and then sharing the heights and depths of that in music.



OTA: Great advice. I've heard more than one person comment that they can really see that heart response on your face when you lead.

Thanks Gaby.

Looking for a good book on worship to read? Christopher Fry has written a short review of *Worship and Grace* by Dave Billbrough (New Wine Press):

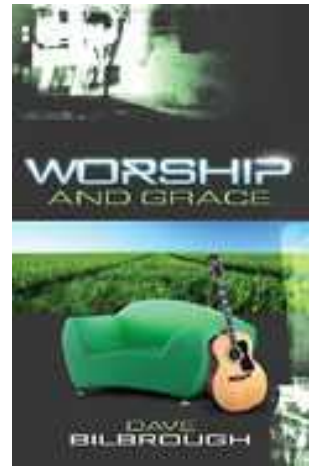
"This book is the first of a 3 book series, where Dave explores various aspects of what it means to live a life of Worship. In this book, he explores the concept of God's Grace, and how it is absolutely essential in our daily lives.

There are 2 things that stand out in this book. Firstly, Dave includes a multitude of vignettes in the book, and it makes for light, enjoyable reading. These stories he recalls give you a sense that he writes from the heart, and that his experiences of God's grace are authentic. This makes this book applicable to all who long for a deeper understanding of God's grace.

Secondly, the book is very short, which makes for light reading. It also gives you time to write the truths Dave speaks about on the heart, and meditate on it without worrying about finishing the book in good time.

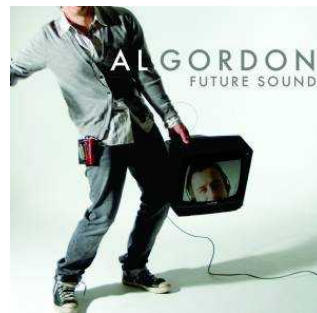
I was really blessed by this book, and I'd gladly recommend it to anyone seeking a deeper relationship with God."

Chris.



Now Playing

Future Sound - Al Gordon



Al Gordon works with Tim Hughes in London where they lead the worship ministry at Holy Trinity Brompton as well as the rapidly expanding Worship Central organisation. I first heard Al on the Worship Central podcasts where he and Tim Hughes became legendary for their humorous presenting style.

This is Al's first worship album (as far as I know), and was released in 2008, a 7-track CD published under the Emerge series of the Survivor record label. I appreciate the scripture references printed for each song in the CD sleeve. Al also appears to thank my father, although I'm pretty sure he is referring to another Tom Smith.

The album opens with 'Morning Star', a song about the beauty of Jesus and his return one day. Anglicans will recognise a few lines - *Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again* - from the communion liturgy in the song, and this song references the album title as well.

Track 3, 'Glorious', uses some great imagery to describe God's glory and overwhelming beauty.

*King of glory, King of light
I see you, I see You
Shining in the face of Christ
Your beauty illuminates
with brilliance brighter than the sun*

While the fourth track, 'Worship The Lord', has a fairly difficult

rhythm to the melody line, it has become a favorite at our church. The lyrics encourage us to live for the One above all others, and to come before him in awe and reverence. The bridge is a simple but powerful expression of God's greatness.

*You are high and lifted up
High and lifted up
High and lifted up*

It's hard to write a worship song that acknowledges the realities of suffering and injustice while offering hope at the same time, but the fifth track, 'How Long', attempts this well. The song is framed by questions to God.

*How long 'till we gaze upon your Face?
How long 'till You wipe these tears away?
How long 'till there's justice on the earth?
How long 'till we hear the victory roar?*

As it's a smaller scale release, you might struggle to find this one in CD stores. If you'd like to buy it I recommend purchasing the album online like I did. I think it cost in the region of 7 pounds.

ONE LAST THING...



Last month I received a confused email response to one of my comments about music piracy. In case others were wondering what I meant: it's okay to listen to a CD in a store before buying it. I was referring to downloading music illegally with the half-hearted intention of buying it. Sorry for any confusion.

All the studio work with the new songs has really reminded me of the need to keep working on my own songwriting, and I've decided it's never going to happen unless I set aside at least one day a month to capture and craft my song ideas. I'll be experimenting with some useful songwriting software I recently purchased called MasterWriter. I came across

it while looking around Paul Baloche's website, and was impressed at some of the useful features: a rhyming dictionary, phrases dictionary, word families, alliterations, and a whole lot more. It's fairly pricey, but is a good investment if you're going to get serious about your songwriting.



I hope to have information on the first training event by the end of this month, so keep checking the Worship Foundry page at www.christ-church.org.za/worship-foundry/ for updates. As always, I'm at the mercy of what I can get done in the limited time I have for The Worship Foundry, but I look forward to putting something together soon. I'll also send out an email to everyone on the mailing list, so send an email to tim@christ-church.org.za if you'd like to automatically receive this newsletter and other Worship Foundry communications – I promise not to spam you or give your address out.

Tim