

Laura Story – Open Hands: Review



Music review by Luchae

Williams

Contemporary Christian songbird, Laura Story, released her seventh studio album, titled ***Open Hands***, in March 2017. The singer songwriter is no newbie to the Christian music circles, having scooped a Dove award in 2002 for track *Indescribable* and a Grammy in 2012 for the popular worship ballad, *Blessings*.

The new album is opened with a stunner of a track, which some are lauding as the “one to look out for”, called ***Death Was Arrested***. Complete with Story’s sugar-sweet, but compelling, vocals and lyrics that speak about our victory through Christ’s work on the cross, I immediately found myself drawn in. Another beaut, that definitely deserves a listen if you’re a Laura Story newbie, is worship song ***Whisper***.

Title track, ***Open Hands***, features Third Day front man, Mac

Powell. This modern worship track has a catchy chorus that speaks about surrendering all to “the one that’s strong”. My favorite part says: “Jesus I surrender all/Every victory and loss/Take it all/Take it all/Till all I have is open hands!”

Other more contemporary worship ballads include ***You Came Running*** and ***For The Love Of My King***. The latter was written in modern hymn style, complete with poetic verses and a more contemporary-sounding chorus.

I found ***Give You Faith*** to be an interesting addition to the album. The song, clearly an ode to Story’s children, speaks about choosing to leave them with a faith in God, more than wisdom, money and material possessions. The lyric so beautifully says: “I wanna give you faith, I wanna leave you hope / That you would know a love that never lets you go.”

Elements of pop can be found in songs such as ***Every Word You Breathe*** and ***Extraordinary***. The album finishes with a stunning, piano-driven worship track called ***Grace Abounds***. This song is one for the disheartened, in need of hope and a reminder of the power and beauty of grace. It is simple, classic and deep.

My introduction to Laura Story’s skillful songwriting was definitely a pleasure! She is able to turn Biblical concepts and principles into beautiful, poetic odes to and for God. Give this album a go if you love pop-inspired Christian music that is more than just a one hit wonder. Laura Story is the real deal.

Free tickets on offer for

Dewald Gouws concert in Cape Town on Saturday



Christian music artist Dewald Gouws is performing at a free concert at ChristGen Church Parow (Opposite the Ajax Football Club in Parow) on Saturday April 7 at the end of a Cape Town tour to promote his new song *But God*.

You can secure your free seat by contacting Ina Murison-McGowan on 082 850 4559. making sure to WhatsApp her your name so that your place is saved. Tickets are strictly limited.

“This song [*But God*] really has put Dewald right up there among the very best Gospel artists, not just here in South Africa but in the world too,” says Mighty Men Western Cape’s Piperjames.

He says that during his Cape Town trip which has included visits to schools, radio stations and local Christian, Dewald has also tirelessly promoted the upcoming [Mighty Men Western Cape Conference](#) at Moreson Farm, Malmesbury from October 5 to 7.

Breakthru Worship launching live album at Kingdom Come SA



Grant Clifton leading Breakthru Worship during the recording of their first live album.

“We want to make music that is a backtrack to revival!” says Grant Clifton, worship director along with his wife Bernice, at Breakthru Life Church in Johannesburg. Recently, Breakthru Worship, as they call themselves, completed their first live album recording and are excited to launch it at the Kingdom Come Conference in April.

Grant shares their story here about how this project came into being: “Last year, towards the end of September, we hosted our annual Spring Conference here at BLC. We were honoured to have Dan Mcollum and Keith Ferrante from California with us. They both prophesied over us and the team, saying that God was going to release new songs for our nation and beyond from BLC.

Songs of hope and vision with an African feel

“With the prophecy burning in our hearts we decided to dream about the possibility of recording an album and releasing the music at the Kingdom Come Conference. At that point we had one song written, but we felt a stirring to write more and see what God could do in such a short space of time. We intentionally tried to write songs of hope and vision, with an African feel as well, because we strongly believe in the sound that is in our nation.

“As the project was developing, each song came out of different encounters with God, messages that were being preached at BLC, and even prophetic artworks. We wrote a theme song for the conference, called Kingdom Come. The song is a song of hope, crying for more revival in our land. We felt a strong stirring in the Spirit as we sang it for the first time.

“Jumping ahead to 2018, by February, miraculously we had seven songs ready for recording – seven songs filled with hope, joy and vision for South Africa.

KINGDOM COME



“We were also informed that Sean Feucht, the main worship leader from the USA, who

was meant to lead most of the worship at the Kingdom Come conference, would no longer be available due to the expected birth of his fourth child. The conference organisers felt then instead of pursuing the option of getting another worship leader from abroad, that we need to rather have a local flavour when we worship together at Kingdom Come. Hence, every person in the worship teams at the conference is from our beautiful continent. This also set up a great opportunity for us to release the album and share songs of revival for South Africa, with South Africa.

“Early in March, we did the live recording at Breakthru Life Church. God’s presence was powerful as we sang words like ‘Bhodla Konyama ya kwa Judah, Phesukwesiswe (Roar Lion of Judah over this nation)!’

“With just two days of post-production, the album was sent for final mixing and mastering, and will be ready to be launched at the Kingdom Come Conference.

Grace for creativity and acceleration

“What astounded me with this project was to feel God’s hand on the process, and His grace for creativity and acceleration. In all the projects I’ve been involved with before, I’ve never seen something of such quality and presence come together so easily and quickly. All I can see is that God is in this, and that His heart to see worship rise from Africa, worship that’s passionate and celebrates the diversity of what He’s doing in our land. We can’t wait to share the music with this nation!”

For more information, please visit www.breakthru.life.co.za or follow Breakthru Life Church on Facebook. The music will also be available on digital platforms after the Kingdom Come Conference.

‘This is Roar Worship – a new, rainbow nation, sound of heaven’



The Roar Worship movement was birthed out of the unifying of the citywide church, representing all cultures, denominations and races.

Port Elizabeth songwriter, arranger Alison Gooch shares on the journey of a citywide worship movement from dream to ready-to-show-the-world what they have been passionately pursuing for more than a decade.

Have you ever had a dream to make a significant impact for the Lord with your life? Mine has been to release a world class sound. It's been alive inside of me since I was a young girl. At first, in its articulation, it would have probably sounded a little immature and self-focused, but as my gracious, loving Father has patiently journeyed with me, it has now materialised into a picture of something that I believe would make Him proud, serve His purposes and give Him glory.

This is Roar Worship. This is a movement of musicians who love to worship their King, who believe that excellence reflects Him, but that His Presence is our ultimate pursuit. Who believe that God delights in a heartfelt unity, as well as an understanding and honour of diversity. This last sentence depicts God's heart for South Africa and it should be captured in the sound we release to King Jesus.

Impact of Burn 24/7

There's been a momentum of more than 10 years building towards this moment where we find ourselves announcing an expression of Heaven through our city's musicians! Much of this momentum has been established through the global movement of Burn 24/7. The Burn 24/7 movement has made such a significant impact on our citywide relationships, owing to the fact that we gather under its banner to release worship over Port Elizabeth. Our combined passion for this powerful purpose has drawn us as musicians into this place of combining our creativity and offering it up as a unique expression. We thank the Lord for the day He brought Sean Feucht (Global leader of Burn 24/7) to Port Elizabeth.



The entire process was a journey of faith, trusting in the promise that was to come and being fully convinced that God would provide within His perfect timing.

In terms of the quality we were trusting for and achieved, the budget for this album should have been around R200 000. But, we lacked the resources, expertise and equipment to make this happen. All I personally possessed, was a prophetic word given to me in 2014 about a live album with people from many churches on the front cover, that this album would be fully funded, make His renown known in Africa and reach the United States of America. The word also mentioned that there would be a song on this album that would cause so much life all over the world. But, this word remained in me for two years before the time came to act upon it. As we embraced the season of the manifestation of this word, we began to invite those worshippers and musicians who God earmarked to join us (my husband and I), as we sought Him for the songs and the sound to be captured. God blessed us with a team comprising of representation from 12 churches!

Precious assignment

Shortly after the rehearsals begun, we met a woman who gave me a word about a heavenly sound she felt was to be released from Port Elizabeth. She also saw a picture of cogs on the back of a clock. She felt that the Holy Spirit was cautioning me to carefully respond to the "clicks" of His instruction in order to not miscarry this precious assignment. This word became a life source and a reminder in the following season. Because, as prophesied, not one instruction would come until the previous one had been fulfilled.

I walked blindly, but confidently, from rehearsals with the musicians, to recording the sound, and then into the filming... Not knowing before the final moment where, when and how each

of these processes would be accomplished. And yet today, I stand with the finished product before me, remembering the Scripture which says: *He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.* – *Ephesians 3:20*

This entire process wasn't smooth sailing. There was an intense spiritual battle which ensued over people's life choices and over my own health. I now understand the weight of carrying something that you think might "sound like a great idea", and yet really be so, so much more than that.



Roar Worship's first live recording was recorded and filmed in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Now, we are at the place where we are launching this movement and letting the world see what we've been busy with. We don't know what the Lord wants to do with this exactly, but we once again follow Him by faith, knowing that He is more trustworthy than any other. It is a marvelous thing to see gifting that your Heavenly Father places within you, produce miraculous and exceptional fruit. Even this departure point is beyond anything I could have conceived, and for this, I boast in Him.

The quality of this rainbow nation release: percussive, infused with harmony, lyrically provoking and structurally pioneering in its prolonged tracks and gear changing thematic movements, has been crafted with an ear to the ground.

May you hear the roar of our King over South Africa bleeding through every note and nuance. Come, Lord Jesus... Do a new thing in this nation!

The first single release *Refiners Fire* from our live worship recording will be coming soon to all music platforms. Our citywide launch event details will be released soon.

Connect with Roar Worship

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter: @RoarWorship

Subscribe to our Youtube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz-TA05Bqm_2304w-3d9Hyg

Follow the Burn Movement: @Burn247Global | @burn247pe

Top 25 Gospel Praise Songs: Decades



A music review by Luchae

Williams

Maranatha! Music released their latest instalment in the Top 25 album collections and probably one of my favorites to date: ***Top 25 Gospel Praise Songs Decades***. The 2-CD set is a compilation of Maranatha! Music's best Gospel praise and worship songs, past and present. Featuring music from legends such as Johnathan Butler, Bishop Joseph Garlington and Morris Chapman, the collection hosts a plethora of Gospel music's finest moments in worship, performed by voices of today.

The jazz infused ***Brand New Day*** by South African crooner, Johnathan Butler, kicks the album off. With a catchy rhythm and encouraging lyric, the track speaks about forgetting all your troubles and leaning on the Lord.

Butler features quite a few times on Disc 1 of the compilation. One of my faves, from the local worship leader is the praise anthem, ***Gonna Lift You Up***. Everyone's favorite worship ballad, ***Falling In love with Jesus***, is also featured. Other Butler tracks included are worship songs ***I Love To Worship***, ***We Need You*** and ***Love Never Fails***.

If you enjoy sultry rhythm and blues, have a listen to the old school funky ***Let Me Be Like A Tree*** by Scott V Smith. The song speaks about Psalm 1:3; being planted by the rivers of waters, bringing forth fruit in due season. And if you're looking to go even further back into Christian music history, check out ***Pass Me Not***, which was originally arranged by Bishop Joseph Garlington. Complete with a church organ and a sing along quality, this melodic offering was originally released in 1985 but it certainly has not lost it's depth!

Christian music legend, Morris Chapman is also featured a few times on the collection with tracks ***The Family Prayer Song (As For Me And My House)***, ***The Reconciliation Song*** and ***Jesus Your Name***.

You might be familiar with Rick Found's upbeat offering, ***Lord, I Lift Your Name On High***. This golden oldie can be found on Disc 2 of the compilation. With a catchy hook and a verse that simply says "Lord I lift Your name on high/Lord I love to sing Your praises/I'm so glad You're in my life/I'm so glad You came to save us" it'll have you singing along in no time.

I quite enjoyed ***Yes, We All Agree***, ***Joy, Joy, Joy*** and ***He Knows My Name*** by Gospel songwriting legend, Tommy Walker. Both have a choral element to it and are definite must listens.

If you're looking for a compilation album that has an old school flavour, power packed with Gospel songs that have carried a whole generation from glory to glory, do check out the Top 25 Gospel Praise Songs Decades collection. While the sound definitely steers away from the more contemporary Christian genre that this generation is currently consumed with, it definitely brings a breath of fresh air and a depth to your worship time. I thoroughly enjoyed it!

Rend Collective – Good News: Review



Music Review by Luchae

Williams

Irish folk worship ensemble, Rend Collective, released their newest studio album in January 2018. Aptly titled **Good News**, the album is a hodge-podge of vibrant melodies, expressive lyric and percussive tones.

Band member Gareth Gilkeson shares: "There's a lot of bad news out there, but no matter what, we have good news, and that good news has a name: Jesus Christ."

Album opener, **Life Is Beautiful**, is an eclectic array of sounds. From catchy banjo to melodic flute, we are immediately reminded of the band's explorative, experimental element which has made them so popular. The song encourages listeners to rejoice – in the sunshine and in the sorrow – free in Christ!

Another fun addition is praise track, **I Will Be Undignified**.

With raspy, powerful vocal and an animated violin accompaniment, lead vocalist Chris Llewellyn's sings about dancing as David danced – undignified, leaving all pride and ego behind! This really is a great listen!

Lead single, **Rescuer**, is undoubtedly one of my favorites, with a classic anthemic feel, complete with shouts of “hey” in the chorus! Llewellyn's vocal on this album is passionate, endearing and engaging. His rich and breathy baritone perfectly complements mid-tempo track, **Counting Every Blessing**. The song has a catchy chorus that speaks about the Lord's goodness and a bridge that says: “Surely Your goodness pursues me/Surely your heart is still for me/I will remember Your mercies/All my days/Through every storm and gale!”

Other fun dance songs are **True North** and a vibey **Marching On**, which features popular Australian youth collective, Hillsong Young & Free. The latter is a cheeky anthem, complete with synth lead piano, speaking about singing Hallelujah “for all of Hell to hear” and shouting Hosanna “above every fear”.

Some of the more worship-inspired tracks, such as **Hymn Of The Ages** and **Nailed To The Cross**, carry the same strong percussive folksy/country feel. But this is definitely missing from the melodic **Weep For Me** – a beautiful duet that speaks about praising God regardless of our circumstance. It's probably one of my favorites on this album.

If you're a Rend Collective fan, this album will not disappoint. It is filled with exciting musical experimentation, passionate praise and worship unto our King and an element of creative fun. Rend Collective newbies, this is definitely one to take a chance on! I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Chapel and classroom – Hugh Wetmore



Worship conversation with Hugh

Hugh Wetmore is a songwriter and student of worship trends. He invites you to join the worship conversation by commenting on his monthly column.

“Some of the best worship songs are like a chapel and a classroom at the same time,. They teach you something about God, and they give you space to reflect and respond to that.” (Matt Redman – quoted by Chris Molyneux in his 31.8.2015 *Music Musings*.)

“The Chapel and the Classroom”. Matt is a prolific worship-song writer – his songs are sung all over the world every Sunday. This is his unusual way of describing “worship songs”. But very valid.

This captures so well the two dimensions of all Congregational Singing: The vertical (chapel) and the horizontal (classroom). Praise and thanksgiving, directed vertically to “God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (chapel). Instruction and correction, directed horizontally to “one another” (classroom).

Foundational Scripture

Matt’s model illustrates a foundational Scripture that must control all our singing in church: *Colossians 3:16* – *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

Colossians 3:16 refers to “the chapel” when we are told that it is “to God” that we “sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in our hearts.” That is vertical praise and thanksgiving.

Colossians 3:16 refers to “the classroom” when we are told to that it is “one another” that we “teach and admonish with all wisdom as we sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”. That is horizontal instruction and correction.

The two dimensions belong together. Matt says that it is “at the same time” that they “are like the chapel and the classroom”. So don’t separate them. Don’t spend all your singing-time in vertical praise and worship songs. Don’t spend all your singing-time in horizontal instruction and correction songs. Thoughtfully, “with all wisdom”, blend these two purposes into your Sunday service.

What is the perspective that holds the vertical and horizontal together? What is the architecture that ensures that the chapel and the classroom are actually one building?

Colossians 3:16 gives the answer: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.* It is the word of Christ that integrates the vertical and horizontal.

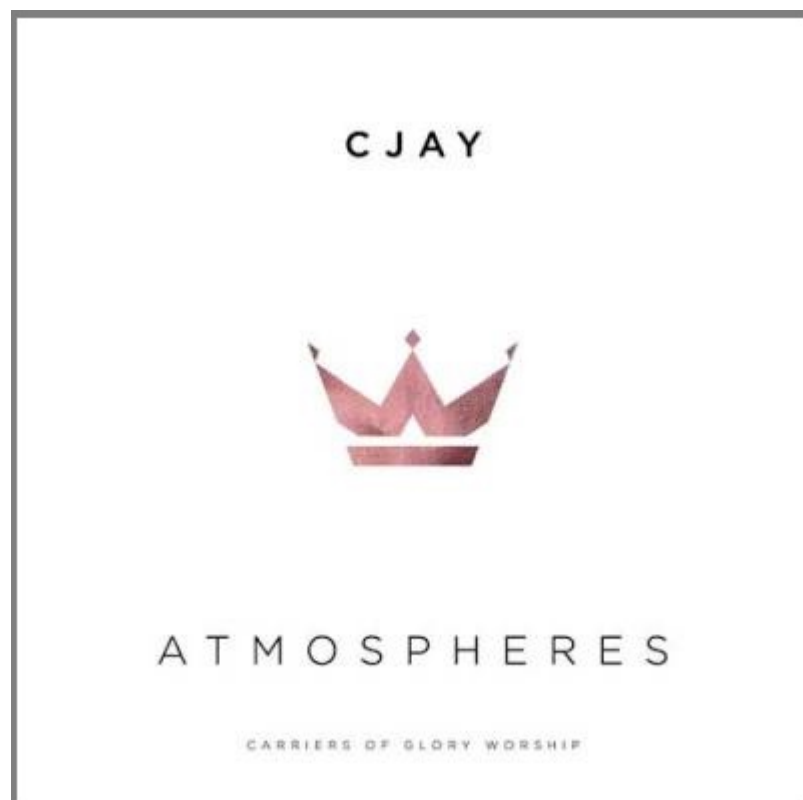
If we are filled with “the word of Christ”, this will “richly” enrich our choice of songs, so that they will express our praise and thanksgiving vertically to God, and they will also instruct and correct us who sing them, to become more Christlike in our daily lives.

Make sure that you carefully compile your Sunday song-list to include both vertical and horizontal songs. Make sure each song is based on the word of Christ (not on your own feelings, preferences or experiences, or on the current flavour of the day).

Such worship songs, says Matt Redman, will be “some of the

best worship songs”!

CJay – Atmospheres: Review



Music Review by Luchae

Williams

South African contemporary Gospel star, CJay Jansen, released his dynamic new offering, ***Atmospheres***, in September 2017. The award-winning singer-songwriter, well-known for his success in the Christian hip-hop circles, dubs the new album as “a journey of the last five years”.

Better known for the mark he has made on the local Christian rap scene, Jansen explains that he did not expect to be singing on his new album.

“I remember sitting in a meeting where the man of God came to me and said: “The Lord has not just called you to rap, He has

called you to sing. When I heard that I thought this man is crazy because you would never hear me singing!”

“So many times we get into a place where God is doing big things and everything is going so well and we forget to realise that with this God we move from glory to glory because God has more in store.”

Atmospheres

Atmospheres serves as a testimony of this, comprising 10 original songs, all featuring a crooning Jansen.

“This new music is so different to what I’ve done before, but it shows the journey and the growth as an artist and as a believer in our faith.”

Title track, ***Atmospheres***, shares the worship leader’s heart – to see the glory of God move among His people.

“Throughout my music career, my desire has always been for the presence of God to be felt, not just in my quiet time but in my music and when we perform it live.” He explained.

The overall sound of the album is evident from the get go. Opening track, ***Fall Afresh***, is an easy listen, with uncomplicated musical compositions and CJay’s pure vocal making it easy for the listener to sing along.

Fans of Rhema worship leader, Janine Price, will be pleased to know that the songbird is featured on the album. Worship song, ***Higher Deeper***, was penned by both Price and Jansen and speaks about wanting to go deeper in the presence of God.

Price explains: “It really is a song that changes the atmosphere and creates a space for God’s glory to be manifested in your life.”

I appreciated the addition of mid-tempo track, ***Shake The Earth***. The song has a likeable melody, some cool music experimentation (which is welcomed after the heaviness of the

first few tracks) and features a contemporary-sounding Jansen.

The rest of the album carries the same feel and theme as the first few songs – mellow, atmosphere-stirring worship with simple instrument arrangements and Jansen’s unobtrusive vocal.

Hip hop fans hoping for the rap-driven repertoire that CJay is better known for will be surprised to find not one rap song on this album. Those who prefer deep worship will find the change to be a pleasant one. **Atmospheres** clearly marks a turning point in CJay’s ministry and I’m excited to see what else God has in [store](#).

Burn 24-7 hosting #captured event at NMU campus



Worship movement Burn 24-7 is collaborating with student mission #captured’s first event of the year with a worship gathering at the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) North Campus Auditorium from 7.30pm to midnight on Friday February 16.

Jesus lovers from all over Port Elizabeth are invited to be part of this exciting event where organisers are trusting, that amidst the times of uncertainty in our nation, the gospel will capture the hearts of students and they will encounter the Father’s heart and love for them.

“Let our state and our hearts be #captured only by Jesus!

Everyone is welcome at this event as we carry NMU in prayer and invite the Spirit of God to flood the campus in worship," says Burn-24-7 PE.

And because worship fuels mission, they are also hosting campus outreach events on Saturday February 10 and Saturday February 17. Both events will start at 12pm in the vicinity of Xerox on the South Campus. For more details on these outreaches, contact Sheldon Zam on 061 876 9914.

The Burn 24-7 movement combines worship, prayer and outreach to produce indigenous, creative, prophetic worship among people from every community.

"Regardless of denomination, we gather to cry out to God to see revival in our city, our nation and beyond. All across the world, burning ones are chasing the presence of God, our first love, and we're joining that song here in Port Elizabeth.

"We believe that revival requires the unity of The Church, across denominations, ethnicities, ages and languages. This is an expression of covenant – we love because He first loved us – as well as an expression of mission, because worship, prayer and encounter are at the heart of the harvest," say the burning ones of PE.

Get connected with this event on [Facebook](#).

TobyMac running marathon to bring racial healing to US



Christian musician TobyMac.

Originally published in [CBN News](#)

TobyMac is getting ready to run a marathon to fight racial injustice, classism, and spiritual poverty in America.

The singer will join a racing team called “Run For Hope” to participate in the St Jude Rock ‘N’ Roll Nashville Marathon. The event will take place April 27 to 28.

“Run For Hope is a group of New Hope Academy supporters running in the St Jude Rock ‘N’ Roll Nashville Marathon, half marathon or 5K. We train, party and support each other as we raise funds to support the missional objectives of New Hope Academy in Franklin, Tennessee,” the running group said in a statement on its website. “Partnered with music superstar, TobyMac, we run to help end racial division, class segregation, and spiritual poverty. Together our efforts support a brighter future in which we can ignite our community with hope and lasting transformation.”

New Hope Academy is a Christian school that specifically serves the “least of these” in America.

“We exist to serve low-income families by establishing a solid Biblical worldview, instilling vision, confirming hope, and

preparing each young person for a life of service,” the school’s website reads. “Here, elementary school children and families of all races, economic brackets, and cultures learn, love, and work together in an environment that extends acceptance, hope, and an exceptional faith-based education to every child.”

TobyMac promoted the race on his twitter page with the message, “C’mon y’all! Gonna be a blast!”

This isn’t the first time TobyMac has publicly made a stand against inequality and division in America.

Last year he released a video for his song *Love Broke Thru* meant to show how God’s love can bring the nation together.

“When we started working on the concept for this video we were reminded daily about how divided our nation is,” TobyMac told Billboard. “We didn’t want to make just another pretty music video.”

“The song was written about how God broke through in my life and we thought the video could be a symbolic picture of how we need God to break through and heal our divided nation. There are a lot of voices out there saying which way we should go ... and a lot of dialogue needs to happen but at the end of the day, we need love to break through if we are going to come together,” he said.