

# Riley Clemmons – Riley Clemmons: Review



*A music review by Luchae*

*Williams*

American singing sensation, Riley Clemmons, released her self-titled debut album on August 4, 2018. The 18-year old Christian-pop crooner was discovered at a school pageant in Nashville at the tender age of 13, but chose to continue with her schooling, while writing songs and honing her craft. And now, five years later, the songstress is newly signed to independent label, Maxx Recordings, with a debut video raking in more than 16 million views on Youtube earlier this year.

## **Broken Prayers**

The album's debut single, **Broken Prayers**, was released in December 2017 and peaked at No. 17 on the Hot Christian Songs chart. In a 'behind the song' story posted on Youtube, Riley explains that the song came from a space of deep brokenness. "The song came from a place of truly finding peace in the fact that God takes you at your most broken, at your lowest place and at your roughest. And not only does He take you there, but He delights in it. And He genuinely loves you in that place." The album features a piano version of the song as well, which nicely shows off Riley's impressive vocal range and rich tone.

Second single, **Better For It**, has become a firm favourite and

is already in regular rotation on Radio Disney. The track is a catchy, pop-infused faith song that basically speaks about God turning your ashes into beauty for your good and His glory. This one really had me hooked from the get go! It has a jivey hook and a fun element to it, which really makes it memorable.

This fresh faced singer has received quite a lot of attention on Youtube. Her third music video, for the song **Hold On**, accumulated more than half a million views in less than two weeks. The song is definitely more of a contemporary dance track, aimed at a younger audience.

I was instantly drawn to ballade, **Broke**. It best highlights the singers smokey, textured vocal and I love the soulful, almost sultry sound of the song. The melody is really beautiful and the message behind the song is quite powerful. She sings: "With you/I don't need to hide/that I'm a little broke inside/you love me when I'm broke inside." This is a must listen!

Another ballade that really moved me was the piano driven **Drop Everything**. The song is both skilfully written and composed and Riley adds just the right amount of drama and depth, vocally. The song speaks about quietening external voices, to hear from God. Riley sings: "I've been talking too much/Now I'm listening."

Other songs worth noting include the EDM-infused **Running After You** that speaks about chasing after God. **You First** is a funky, soul-filled ode to God, that says "I love how You love me/At my best and worst/...I've got scars/But you call them beautiful..."

With a strong start, Riley Clemmons introduction to the Christian music arena is definitely one to take note of. Well written songs that feature incredible vocal performances and really fun, catchy compositions are what you can expect from this offering. If Christian-pop is your scene, you should

definitely give this one a go. If not, her ballades are worth a listen! I am looking forward to hearing more music from this songstress.

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## Wife of Christian rock star appeals for prayer after his seizure on stage



Annie Lobert and Oz Fox who had a seizure while performing in Las Vegas on Saturday August 12.

*Originally published in [Premier](#)*

Oz Fox, from Christian rock band Stryper, had a seizure on stage and partner Annie Lobert has set up a page to raise money for his recovery.

On Sunday August 12, Fox collapsed during a gig in Las Vegas playing for another band and was taken straight to hospital.

The Californian band Stryper released an [official statement](#), saying: “After performing an MRI, doctors discovered an area of concern near his brain which they are now running a biopsy on. The doctors have instructed him not to drive or fly for 90 days. No additional information is available at this time. We appreciate your thoughts and prayers and we will communicate additional information as it becomes available.”

They add that he still plans to tour with them but in the meantime a Go Fund Me page has been set up by his wife, Annie Lobert, as he doesn't have health insurance.

The page says: “We don't know how much the brain biopsies will cost, nor what will happen when we get the results back – whether he will need more surgery to remove any tumours or treatment plans for healing.”

Annie Lobert wrote on Facebook that “this has messed me up!” but added that she was reminded of *2 Chronicles 20: Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.*

Lobert appealed to his fans: “So here is what I'm asking all of you to do – believe that God is good – worship with us and pray with us as we head into this battle.

“We trust God no matter what. This is how we fight our battles – it may look like we're surrounded but God is surrounding us.

“Oz says he just wants to get home and play his guitar – get better and get back on stage.”

Stryper formed in 1983, making music that was openly Christian and receiving mainstream success, being the first band to ever have two songs in MTV's Top 10 simultaneously with their hits *Free* and *Honestly*.

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# Pat Barrett – Pat Barrett: Review



*Music review by Luchae*

*Williams*

Prolific singer and songwriter, Pat Barrett, of Housefires fame, released his self-titled debut album on July 20 2018.

You may remember the worship leader as a primary vocalist and songwriter for the Atlanta-based worship ensemble, Housefires. He also co-wrote award-winning worship song, *Good Good Father* and has penned a children's book, with the same name, with Christian music super star, Chris Tomlin.

Barrett was signed as a flagship artist on Tomlin's new record label, Bowyer & Bow. He shared: "As a worship leader and songwriter, Chris has been such an influential person in my life and to have him be a guiding voice as I take these next

steps is really meaningful. My heart in all of this is that these songs would help all of us lift our eyes and connect (or reconnect) with God in a way that impacts our real, everyday lives.”

“I’m excited to have a song that’s singing Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and that also acknowledges doubt and fear, without giving it the platform.”

### **Into Faith**

Barrett’s piercing vocal hit me square in the heart, with the opening lines of the first track, ***Into Faith I Go***, saying: “I’ve never been good at change/ If I’m honest, it’s always scared me/But I can’t deny the stirring deep inside me/And I know it’s time to stop resisting.” I was immediately so impressed by the quality of the singer’s vocals… wow! The track is a reflective, profound ballad that speaks about holding on to your faith even when it’s not easy.

I love Barrett’s take on the traditional, classic refrain “God is so Good”. Titled ***God Is So Good (You Are Worthy)***, the track starts off with a funky bass and percussion intro, followed by a sturdy first verse that leads us into the popular chorus: “God is so good/He’s so good to me.” My absolute favorite part of the track is when Barrett shoots off into free worship, the longing and passion in his voice so evident, as he sings about the goodness of God. Goosebumps!

First single, ***The Way (New Horizon)***, hit No. 12 on the Christian Airplay chart. This ballad is through and through a beautiful devotion and will have you singing the actual Word: He is the way, the truth and the life! Again, Barrett’s vocal totally brings this one home, with just the right amount of soul, grit and earnestness, adding a depth to the song.

Other interesting worship moments on the album include the melodic, guitar driven ***Everything Is Sacred*** and the emotive, ***Better***, that says: “Your love is better than life/You are the

well that won't run dry/I have tasted and I have seen/Oh, You are better than all these things."

If you're looking for the more congregational track, you'll enjoy *Build My Life* and *My Hallelujah*. Other notable tracks include contemporary Christian song, *Sparrows and Lillies*, which features a memorable hook and a bluegrass sound.

I was also really impressed with duet, *Sails*, featuring Bethel Music girls, Steffany Gretzinger and Amanda Cook. This quiet, spiritually deep ballad speaks about being vulnerable before the Lord. Gretzinger and Cook add another layer of excellence to Barrett's already impressive vocal game, and you can't help but be blown away by the sheer beauty of their voices. The song's melody is catchy, tender and easy to remember. The lyrics are profound and probably something you'll put on repeat when you're going through a particularly challenging season.

Pat Barrett's self-titled debut offering is definitely one to take note of! The big songs are impacting and commanding and the quiet ones are powerful and passionate. Pat Barrett's 15-year long journey of digging spiritual wells, in the music industry, has certainly paid off! His voice is impeccable and his writing style is impressive. I highly recommend this album!

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**Men of Nelson Mandela Bay  
uniting for 'Hour of Power'**



Men's Ministry Network (MMN), a new movement that hopes to unite men across church and race lines in Nelson Mandela Bay, is hosting an "Hour of Power" – a praise and worship event – at Ebenezer International Church in Algoa Park on Thursday August 2 from 6pm to 7pm.

Doors to the event – the first to be hosted by MMN – will open at 5.30pm and there will be time for coffee, tea and interacting with other men until the service starts at 6pm. In addition to praise and worship there will be time for prayer and a brief word of encouragement.

With all the negative publicity that men have been getting with movements such as #menAreTrash, it is now time for men to take their stand and be the leaders that God called them to be, said Pastor "J" (Lingelihle Jadezweni) who was one of the organisers of a successful Men of Hope conference and men's march in New Brighton in May.

"We need to understand that not all men are trash – there are men of hope out there, but if the men of hope are silent, the society tend to think that all men are the same," he said.

Trevor Jennings of Transformation Christian Network said MMN would like to see men's ministries established in every ward.

"A lot of churches already have established men's ministries. So we encourage all the men from different churches in the



city to all come together once a quarter to worship together,” he said.

He said a goal of the movement was for men to encourage each other in their walk. Moreover, men needed to break down the racial and cultural walls in the churches – trying to do away with the so called “white church” or “black church” or “coloured church”.

“To encourage churches, especially the white people in the churches, they need to be able to worship and praise God in other African languages”, said Jennings.

Andrew Auld, who leads the annual Kingdom Manne Kamp said the heart behind MMN was to grow men’s ministry in the city in a coordinated way so that men could stand together with a common vision.

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## **WATCH: ‘Madiba Wethu’ song released to highlight anti-gangsterism campaign**



A music video featuring a tribute song about the late Nelson Mandela and sung by a group

of 60 musicians headed by Loyiso Bala and Elwira Standili, was released yesterday in support of a campaign to fight gangsterism in the Cape Town area.

While the song, *Madiba Wethu*, is a tribute to Mandela who would have turned 100 yesterday, its main purpose is to support Join Bands, Not Gangs, a new NGO that is raising funds to give musical instruments to Cape Flats residents, said Karien de Waal, a Cape Town musician, Christian and Berklee College of Music graduate and Fender endorsee, who wrote and produced the song.

The Zulu lyrics were written by fellow Berklee graduate, Phakamani Pega.

Karien partnered with Julita Kok from Nuelight Productions on a 3-month journey of connecting musicians around the world to work on the song. The prestigious Berklee College of Music Indian Ensemble, the Cape Town Youth Philharmonic Orchestra and the Sekunjalo Delft Big Band, conducted by Brandon Phillips, a 15-piece South African choir and 5-piece rhythm section, all worked on the project for free.

The song was mixed by Los Angeles-based mixing engineer, Will Kennedy, who has mixed tracks for U2 and One Republic. The mastering was done by Jett Galindo from The Bakery, LA. Her credits include mastering films like *La-La Land* and songs for Barbara Streisand and John Legend.

Karien said today that the *Madiba Wethu* song which they hope will go viral and attract visitors to the [Join Bands, Not Gangs website](#), marks the launch of their campaign.

“We are also currently making a documentary, focusing on the Community of Scottsdene in Kraafontein. The community is riddled by gang violence and it’s absolutely shocking. Between my first and second interviews in the area, which was 2 weeks apart, six people got murdered. It’s a daily warzone. The

community features in the music video.”

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## Katy Perry says her mom prays for her to ‘come back to God’ but says she never left



Katy Perry poses on red carpet.  
(PHOTO: Reuters)

*Originally published in [The Christian Post](#)*

Katy Perry revealed that her mom has been praying for her to “come back to God” her entire pop star life after her transition out of the Christian music industry. Though the singer said she never left God, she is now focused more on “spirituality.”

In a recent [Vogue Australia](#) interview, the 33-year-old said her change comes now that she is in her 30s.

“My mom has prayed for me my entire life, hoping I’d come back

to God. I never left Him, I was just a little bit secular, I was more materialistic and more career-driven," she admitted. "But now that I'm in my 30s, it's more about spirituality and heart wholeness."

Perry was raised by Christian parents and started her singing career as a Christian artist but after not making it in that industry, she turned to pop music. Her parents, Mary and Keith Hudson, are travelling Pentecostal ministers who have asked fellow believers to [pray for their daughter](#) rather than judge her. Though they do not agree with some of her music, including the 2008 hit *I Kissed a Girl*, they have supported her throughout her career.

### **Rejected traditional Christian beliefs**

Over the years, the popular artist has rejected traditional Christian beliefs, including Heaven and Hell. She has often shared that she was shielded from a lot in her childhood because of her religious upbringing, which turned her away from the faith.

In a [2013 interview with Marie Claire](#), Perry said she believes in a "higher power bigger than me" but she rejected Christianity.

"I'm not Buddhist, I'm not Hindu, I'm not Christian, but I still feel like I have a deep connection with God," she said.

Recently, Perry has been singing a different tune and focusing more on her spiritual side.

During her recent stint on *American Idol*, she has commented on faith on [social media](#) and in the [competition](#).

Over Easter weekend, she displayed her Jesus tattoo and wrote on Instagram, "My brokenness + God's Divinity = My wholeness."

### **Only God's grace**

Last year in June, Perry launched a marathon weekend of

livestream events to promote the release her latest album, *Witness*. During a live therapy session that week, she tearfully talked about her upbringing, feeling “ashamed” of having had suicidal thoughts in the past but admitted that it was only God’s grace that helped her through.

The session shed light on a low point in her life after she split with her ex-husband, Russell Brand, and battled thoughts of suicide. She admitted channelling her feelings into her 2013 song, *By the Grace of God*, which talks about God intervening.

She elaborated in an interview with [Glamour](#) this year:

“I have had a lot of those thoughts, and I’ve written a lot of songs because of those thoughts. I would say that all of my best songs, or what I think are some of my better songs – *By the Grace of God*, *Roar*, *Firework* – are basically motivational pep talks to myself. They’re my soul speaking to me, saying, ‘Come on. We can do this. One foot in front of the other.’”

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## **Planetshakers – Legacy: Review**



*Music review by Luchae Williams*

Australian worship collective, Planetshakers, released their **Legacy** CD and DVD project in September 2017.

The 12-track collection comprises live worship recorded at Planetshakers worship concerts in Manila, Melbourne and Kuala Lumpur. The project was first released in two parts on the *Legacy Part 1: Alive Again* and *Legacy Part 2: Passion* EPs. Four more songs were recorded live in Melbourne and added to the collection. This release also includes a digital deluxe version, a songbook and 10-track live DVD.

The ministry celebrated its 20th anniversary last year. Talking about legacy and what legacy means to Planetshakers, Senior Pastor Russell Evans shares: "If people get in the presence of God and they encounter Him, He can give them a dream for their life. Then, out of that, they go and change their world."

### **Legacy**

The band is well known for high energy praise and vibrant worship, and this album does not fail to deliver on real

Planetshaker-style worship! It kicks off with a typical Planetshakers anthem, this one called ***Alive Again***, talking about the love and goodness of God. Praise tracks, ***Through it All*** and ***Drawing Closer*** have a similar vibe. Both seem to be aimed at a younger crowd of worshipers, but are fun and deep enough for all ages to get into.

I also found myself bopping along to the honky-tonk contemporary dance track, ***Passion***. This is a song of surrender and I'm sure it will find itself on many youth set lists.

I enjoyed the powerful theme in the track, ***Prophesy***. The song speaks about stepping up to act as God's mouthpiece and has a more modern/contemporary feel than the first two tracks. The lyrics say: "The word of the Lord in my mouth/To bring about the change/Full of Your power/I step out/Declare aloud Your praise!"

Another song that tackles the often overlooked topic of the prophetic is worship ballad, ***We Speak Life***. This track speaks about the faithfulness of God and has some really powerful moments with a memorable chorus that says: "Our God is more than able/Our God will never fail/He is always with us/He is faithful till the end."

Other favorites include ***Be My Vision*** and ***Here's My Life***. Both the penmanship and composition of the songs are really impressive, clearly written by a team who are firmly rooted in Christ. The melodies are likeable and easy to learn and most of the tracks on the album would do well in a corporate worship setting.

Power ballad, ***You Call Me Beautiful***, is such a stunning reminder of our true identity in Christ. I love that it shares the revelation that God sees a masterpiece when He sees us. Another notable worship moment is provided by ***All On The Altar***. This track speaks about surrendering, laying it all on the altar and allowing God's all consuming fire to refine us.

With a ministry span of more than 20 years, and 34 albums under their belt, this team has done the hard work – laying a solid foundation in the Spirit that now blankets everything they put their hands to. Planetshakers fans will be pleased to add this album to their collection. If you're new to Planetshakers, I would highly recommend that you have a listen to some of their earlier releases too. Younger worshipers and those who enjoy EDM worship will enjoy this one.

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## Planetshakers set to shake South Africa



Internationally-acclaimed Australian band, Planetshakers have arrived in South Africa to host worship events across the country kicking off in Cape Town with the Planetshakers Conference hosted at Every Nation Church, in Goodwood from Friday to Saturday.

The next leg of the tour will take place in Centurion on Sunday, at 3C Church, followed by an event in Port Elizabeth on Tuesday July 17 at Word of Faith Christian Centre and at the Royal Show Grounds in Pietermaritzburg on Wednesday July



18.

Faith Revival Church, Durban, will host the band on July 20 and they will be in Liberty Church, Randburg, Johannesburg on July 21. The SA tour will end in Pretoria on Sunday July 22 at CRC Church in Ferndale.

Nominated for multiple Dove awards, Planetshakers have thrilled their global fan base with the release of 35 albums since 2000, with songs like *Nothing is Impossible* and *Endless Praise* climbing Christian Billboard charts.

Following the trend of modern worship bands, Planetshakers features a large group of vocalists, who lead worship at the Planetshakers Church, when they're not on annual tours to the United States, Europe, Asia, New Zealand, South Africa and other countries.

The visit to Port Elizabeth on Tuesday will be the Melbourne-based band's first visit to the city, which often misses out on significant worship music tours in South Africa.

"We are very excited about Planetshakers coming to Port Elizabeth and hope to see representatives from every church attend as well as anyone else who is a fan of the band and Christian music," said organiser, Manny Eagle of Word of Faith Christian Centre and Salt and Light Productions.

The concert venue can host up to 2 000 spectators and is expected to fill up fast, he said. Tickets are available at Bonamia Restaurant in the Walker Drive Centre, at Word of Faith Christian Centre in William Moffett Expressway. For more information about the PE worship night, contact event organiser, Manny Eagle, at [manny@wordoffaith.org.za](mailto:manny@wordoffaith.org.za) or on 041 3994400.

Tickets for all the worship nights are also available online at [www.itickets.co.za](http://www.itickets.co.za).

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# Kelontae Gavin – The Higher Experience: Review



*Music review by Luchae*

*Williams*

Gospel music newcomer Kelontae Gavin released his debut album on April 27 2018. Titled ***The Higher Experience***, the album made its debut at No 2 on the Top Gospel Albums chart, with its first radio single, *No Ordinary Worship*, reaching No 14 on the Billboard Gospel Airplay chart in May 2018.

The 19-year-old worship leader shot to YouTube stardom when a 2014 YouTube video of him singing the hymn, *I Won't Complain*, to a cafeteria worker at his high school, went viral. The video reached over one million YouTube views and catapulted

the young singer's Gospel music career.

Recorded live at Fresh Start Church in Atlanta, *The Higher Experience*, is through and through a full gospel album, complete with powerhouse vocals from Gavin, guest artists and a notable Gospel choir. The album was produced by TedyP and star maker, Marquis Boone, who is well known in Gospel music circles for his ability to track down and groom promising young artists.

### **'The Higher Experience'**

The album opens with a stunning acapella intro – a rendition of Donnie McClurkin's *Holy, Holy, Holy*, as the choir delivers an impressive, complex vocal arrangement that honestly requires no instrument accompaniment. But, if it's magnificent musical arrangements that you're looking for, you'll be impressed with the quality of production and musicianship found throughout the album. I especially enjoyed the praise trio *It's Working, He Worked It* and *Praise Break*.

I was also immediately drawn in by congregational praise track, *We Lift You*. The song introduces you to the album's sound and the worship leader's stunning vocal range which is undoubtedly reminiscent of the type of Gospel music made popular by McClurkin and the likes. Electrifying and raw, Gavin's vocal certainly is impressive for someone his age. In fact, you would expect this level of grit and depth to come from a minister twice his age!

The track, *In This Room*, is a call and response worship song, featuring Gospel crooner, Geoffrey Golden. The song points the listener to the King of Kings and flows into a time of ministry, as Gavin preaches powerfully for a few minutes.

Other notable worship tracks on the album include *There's No One Like You* and my favorite song on the album, title track *No Ordinary Worship*. Gavin delivers a solid vocal performance on the latter, commanding your attention. The song itself is a

gorgeous, robust ballad, that says: “This ain’t no ordinary worship/This ain’t no ordinary song/The God I serve is greater than the ordinary/So I’m going to give it all I have in this moment.”

I was pleased to find a new studio version of his single, *Higher*, on the album. The track is a congregational mid-tempo song that speaks about abandoning your ways for the things of God. For those who are curious, a version of his YouTube cover of hymn *I Won’t Complain* is also featured on the album.

RnB and Gospel music fundis will appreciate Kelontae Gavin’s sheer grit, vocal technique and the masterful way in which he delivers each song. Gavin’s sound and gifting is definitely beyond his years and it has been such a pleasure to have him minister to me through this album. If you’re looking for a soulful worship experience, this one is for you.

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## Finding God at Fest again



Jesus College Choir, Cambridge

Verena Salzwedel is a retired teacher and has attended the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown for many years. She is always intrigued by the amazing range of God-given talents employed at the biggest arts festival in the southern hemisphere. And this year she found God intentionally on display in various genres. She reports on what she discovered – and what you can still get to experience.

Yes, it's amazing time again – the biggest arts festival in the Southern Hemisphere – on show in Grahamstown from June 28 to July 8 2018.

To quote the chairman of the National Arts Festival board :  
..."we hope you have an inspiring time once more."

Last year, we gave you a mid-fest report on what we found to be inspiring in the best spiritual sense of the word.

This year, to help you to plan to get there, we share some ideas of forthcoming shows gleaned from the programme (refer page nos.), which is available online at [www.nationalartsfestival.co.za](http://www.nationalartsfestival.co.za) To book tickets, you can phone 086 000 2004 or book online.

### **Some suggestions :**

#### Music

Choral music lovers will appreciate the renowned choir of Jesus College , Cambridge in *Choral Connections* (p89). They will also sing in the *Festival Eucharist* at the cathedral, as part of Spiritfest.

Of course, there are many events pointing towards God at Spiritfest. Check out the details on p239-240 of the festival programme: worship, meditation, prayer, music. For example *A Feather on the Breath of God* (p100) is a special classical music concert celebrating compositions by women through the ages. In the midst of the potential for input overload during

Fest, find 40 minutes of peace in the *Be Still and Know* programme of meditative music ( p240)

If you want to rejoice at the incredible musical talent the Creator has given to some and how they have developed it and share it, then see if you can still get tickets for *Classic Blast* with the KZN Youth Orchestra ( p227) , the *Festival Gala Concert* ( p90) and *Souldiers of the Drum* by the Kearnsey College Choir ( p233). If you want your faith refreshed, The Creed a capella group, is a must (p234)

### Creative Workshops

If you would like to further some of your own creative talent ( yes, you do have some !), sign up for one or more of these workshops or lectures ( pp 125-131) e.g. *Breaking through barriers* ( a photography workshop)



‘The Little Prince’.

### Theatre

*The Little Prince*, ( p79) an African adaptation of the famous story is suitable for the family. Use the opportunity to have discussions about man’s search for meaning in life. A poignant production of Ernest Hemingway’s classic *The Old Man and the Sea* ( p180) should be worthwhile, as would *Jam every other Day* ( p173) a drama which aims to help one “discover the joy of a large family and an unconventional life.” A sobering look at

the problem of migration is presented in *When Swallows Cry* ( p190)

For a bit of light relief there's comedy . Much of it has age restrictions and cautionary symbols, but *Abu Pays His Debts* (p203) is advertised as suitable for all ages and encourages "respect for peoples' feelings." At R20, tickets are very affordable.



'Possible Impossibilities'

### What's ongoing

Visual art exhibitions and installations run throughout the festival. *40 Stones in the Wall*, ( p241) at festival for the 5th time and fresh from a debut exhibition as part of the prestigious *First Thursdays in Cape Town*, is a collective of drawings, paintings ,sculpture, photographs, fabric art and lithographic prints – a group exhibition by “a collective of young artists from across the country who explore the relationship between faith and artistic practice.”

Find it in the Cory Room, next to the Long Table in High Street. Another venue is at Fort Selwyn, just outside the monument and Franli Meintjies is also doing a solo exhibition titled *Possible Impossibilities* at Carinus Art Centre ( p246) If you are inspired to worship by being in nature, then

*Palettes in Nature* ( p245) and *Beauty in the Details* (p241) should be worth a visit.

And then , of course, there's dance, film, talks and all that jazz. You can go on your own treasure hunt, right to the outer edge of the fringe. This was just to whet your appetite. Enjoy!