

JAMIE GRACE

ready to fly

“So Amazing”---This was written by me, TobyMac and Chris Stevens. It’s a prelude that opens the record up by saying: “I want to write the songs that make the whole world sing along. Initially I was a little nervous because I didn’t want people to think that I was saying, “I’m a great songwriter” but ultimately it’s just that I’m going to write songs all the time no matter what and I would love for the songs to be ones that encourage people to worship God.

“Beautiful Day”---When we finished “Beautiful Day,” it was definitely a moment! After hearing the finished product of that song everyone thought, “Yup, that’s the first single!” Chris Stevens and I were in the studio when he started a guitar/drum track and I went to the mic and started improvising some melodies. After we had a concept of “it’s a beautiful day,” we started talking about what makes the day beautiful and what it truly means to worship. TobyMac came in the studio as the song was building and later my sister Morgan came in to write as well. We continued to talk about how anything the Lord creates is beautiful. Every single day is His and we should worship Him because of His greatness. Even if we wake up and our day just feels miserable or if things aren’t coming together the way we planned, God is still greater and is still in control and we have to choose to focus on Him so we can enjoy the “beautiful day.”

“Just a Friend”---I wrote this with Manwell from Group 1 Crew. A lot of people have asked who we wrote it about but I honestly didn’t have someone in mind. I’ve always been very vocal about all of my love songs being about my relationship with God and though coming from a different angle, this song is no different. Though I trust that God will send me my husband someday, I haven’t spent the first few years of my 20s dating. I didn’t grow up waiting for a certain age to start dating but was always taught that everything I did should be with intention. So when God has me in a place to be intentional, everything will work out from there. In that mindset, I wanted this song to be an encouragement to young people who may, in some sense, be where I am. I wanted to remind others, especially young girls, that yes, we may have these feelings but we don’t have to just immediately act on them right away. Essentially I wanted to say that we may all come to that place where we want a relationship to happen and be incredible from the start, but ultimately the only relationships that will truly thrive are those that are based on what we have in Christ. “Just a Friend” is a reminder to all girls, guys and to me, to follow the Lord and everything else will fall into place.

“Fighter”---I was 14 when I started a foundation for teens with Tourette syndrome (like myself) that is now called I’m A Fighter. I spent a good bit of my high school and college years traveling and speaking on behalf of my foundation and doing a lot of YouTube videos to encourage and inspire others who may be facing difficulty. I’ve grown up trying to learn how to cope with this condition [Tourette syndrome] and learning how to cope with something that you can’t control. As I’ve gotten older, I’ve come to realize that that’s not something you learn by only having Tourette. I really wanted to encourage people and share the inspiring stories of kids with cancer or Tourette syndrome or single moms or hard working fathers. I wanted to take their stories and write a song for them that represents not only their resilience in being fighters but that thanks them for inspiring me to be a fighter as well.

“Little Ol’ Me”---My family and I have always loved Newworldson. When I found out I was going to write with Joel Parisien, I called and asked if my sister Morgan could join and he said he also had a friend who wanted to come by. His friend was Juan Otero who has written some of my favorite songs and the four of us had a great time from the minute we all sat down. We started this song completely from scratch when my sister pointed out something that I tend to say in interviews a lot – “little ol’ me... how could God use little ol’ me?” From there Morgan and I started storytelling, going back to when our dad started our church and when it met in a doublewide trailer... when I started realizing I could sing... when God started opening doors in my life for me to sing and share His word. Even now, I’m still blown away by everything God has done and it’s incredible to think that He allows me to be even a small part of His huge plan. So now, every time I walk out onto a stage or sit down for an interview, I continue to thank God for the doors He has opened and the ones He will open in the future because at the end of the day, I’m just little ol’ me.

“To Love You Back”---I wrote “To Love You Back” with GabeReal and Dave Wyatt of the DiverseCity band. Gabe started telling me about this concept from the second I walked into the studio and I was immediately anxious to get started. From the moment God created us, He loved us, cherished us and made plans for us. Now that we’re here on earth, we finally have the privilege in getting to love Him back. I know that I’ll never be able to love God enough or even close to how much He loves me, but it’s truly an honor that I finally get to love him back.

“Do Life Big”---In John 10, God says, “I have come to give you life to live it abundantly.” ‘Abundantly’ is a little harder to sing, so we (TobyMac, David Garcia and myself) went with ‘big.’ Even though we’re singing it, when I think of what God has called us to do, “Do Life Big” is less of a song and more like a movement that happens to have a melody behind it. I want to live like Jesus does and be like

Him. I know I'm not ever going to be as cool as Jesus, but I will follow Him in the way I live my life. If He was physically on earth right now I'd like to think He'd be doing life big...volunteering at elementary schools, serving at local church, doing missions trips, feeding the homeless, serving, loving, giving and thinking way less of himself and way more of other people. So every chance I get, every day that I live, I want to do life big.

“Every Bit of Lovely”---I have always loved the word “lovely” and it’s always been a huge part of my heart to remind others, especially girls, of their worth. So many times we can feel insecure about the smallest things, but if girls only knew that their identity could and should be found in the arms of her Creator. I wanted to write a song that encouraged girls to think about how God created every single star in the sky, wave in the ocean, every mountain, every beach, every sunset and sunrise; then remind yourself that that same God created you.

“White Boots”---So many songs on the radio or storylines in TV shows and movies talk about and promote what the world is doing. Ever since I was 14 I’ve wanted to write a song about what I’m not doing and hopefully be able to encourage other people in “the waiting” as well. My mom came to my sister and I with this metaphor of white boots and purity. Honestly, it was a moment when your mom tells you something awesome but you’re slightly embarrassed that you didn’t think of it first so you try to play it cool? Ha! Morgan and I soon went to work on the rest of the song and as sisters who have always encouraged each other and who also have a country duo (Harper Still) we figured we should make it a duet, a moment where I’m sharing my heart but my sister comes back and encourages me in the way that she actually does in conversation. When we were in the studio listening back we called mom in and asked her to sing on it too. This message is one that’s important to me but is also one that my whole family believes in so I loved having them as apart of it.

“The Waiting”---I wrote this song in three parts. The first was about 4am when I was having a typical Dear-Jesus-Will-My-Husband-Come-Soon cry. God’s timing is the most important in the whole process but sometimes I feel like I’m simply waiting and when I thought that, I immediately starting singing this song. Weeks later, I found out one of my best friends, Amy, was in a coma. Minutes after I spoke with her mom, I rushed to my guitar and continued writing “The Waiting.” I finished this song with Morgan Harper Nichols, my sister, and one of our role models, Natalie Grant. We all talked about waiting on different things and how God is sovereign and is always in control. Though we will have to wait, He will never let us go. My friend Amy had a very tough medical journey but is currently well on her way to a full recovery.

“My First Love”---When I was seven, my dad told me that the King of the World loved me and in all sincerity I said something like, “Seriously dad, are you kidding me?” It was the best news I’d ever heard! I wanted to write a song with the passion of young Jamie Grace who, if I’m honest, is the same Jamie Grace now. Ha! Minutes after I started singing “The Waiting” for the first time, God gave me this song. He truly used it to minister to me so that I wouldn’t feel discouraged about what I don’t have, but instead I could worship Him and thank Him for the love He’s already given me.

“Always You”---This one was really fun to write! Dave Wyatt and GabeReal of DiverseCity are so awesome and when TobyMac came to join us it only made sense. There was probably more laughing than writing, but I always love working with these guys. Essentially we wanted to write a solid love song to God. A song that just talks about how incredible He is. I talk a bit about my parents and how much they care for me but ultimately they want me to admire Christ and follow Him. Other things in this world may try to compare to Christ, but in the end He’s the only thing that really matters. He’s the only One that can truly love us the way that He does.

“Ready to Fly (Avery’s Song)”---I wrote this song the night before I turned 18. Initially it was about growing up even when I felt like I wasn’t yet ‘ready to fly.’ Years later I heard of a sweet little girl name Avery. At 11 years old, Avery was in love with Jesus to the point where she would stay up late reading Revelation and when her mom would tell her she might get scared she would respond saying how beautiful the story of God coming back for His children was! The last day Avery’s mom saw her rocking out to ‘God Girl’ on the way to school. When Avery got out of the car she turned around to her mom and said, ‘You know, I really am a God girl.’ That afternoon Avery was killed in a car accident. At the funeral of this sweet girl, they played “Ready To Fly” as they carried her casket out of the church. While it breaks my heart that Avery is no longer here on earth, I know that God has used her life to minister to so many people. Her family has started a ministry called Avery Day Ministries and so many people have been led to Christ because of her life! Though we never met, Avery taught me so much. “Ready to Fly” was never about me turning 18. God used Avery’s life to remind that we don’t know when God is going to call us home or open or close a door in our lives. We have to serve Him daily and trust Him always so when His timing is right, we’ll be ready to fly.

