

STEPHANIE SMITH

- Discovered by tobyMac at Agape Fest in Summer 2005
- Compassion International spokesperson
- Official tour correspondent for Winter Jam 2009
- Spokesperson for the non-profit organization Soles4Souls that facilitates the donation of shoes to the hurting worldwide (soles4souls.org)

Hometown: State College, PA

Discography: December 23rd, 2008 -- *Not Afraid* retail debut

Radio Singles: "In My Eyes," "Superstar," "Not Afraid," "You Alone," and "Renew Me"

Music Videos: "Not Afraid" with viewing on the Pulse TV Rock channel (Video On Demand service) alongside of videos from Coldplay, Pink, Weezer, The Killers, as well as on their Christian Channel.

Books: Crossroads: The Teenage Girl's Guide to Emotional Wounds (Zondervan/Youth Specialties) which chronicles her journey towards choosing forgiveness and compassion over bitterness and despair (2008).

Touring and Conferences: Winter Jam 2009, Rockfest, Ichthus, AtlantaFest, Music in the Park, Kingdom Bound, Riverstages, Agape Fest, BelieveFest (Canada), Feedback Conferences, Secret Keeper Girl Tour, Pure Freedom, the Asphalt Assault Tour, One Life of VA and the Freedom Experience, SuperWow Camps with illusionist Brock Gill.

Media Coverage: Billboard Magazine, Brio Magazine, CCM Magazine, Christian Single, Essential Connection, Gospel Music Channel, CBN's One Cubed, Stars & Stripes, FamilyNet TV's "Everyday with Marcus and Lisa."

stephanieisagirl.com / gotee.com

High Resolution Photos: <http://media.gotee.com>



STEPHANIE SMITH

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Billboard

January 31, 2009

Not Afraid

Stephanie Smith is a pop/rock tour de force with a vibrant voice brimming with personality and an arsenal of potent tunes that get under your skin. The catchy title tune is a survivor's anthem replete with crunching guitars and a singalong hook in the chorus. "Superstar" is an empowering rocker teeming with attitude. She slows it down on "You Alone," a gorgeous ballad that really showcases every nuance of her engaging voice. Smith also shines on the poignant "What if I Made a Mistake" and the exuberant "Love Out Loud." Supported by a relentless tour schedule, Smith's stellar Gotee debut should thrust the talented singer/ songwriter into the spotlight in 2009. —Deborah Evans Price



Stephanie Smith is Not Afraid

January 2009

When [Stephanie Smith](#) got her first glimpse of the father she'd desperately missed all of her 14 years, her heart was in her throat. She waited breathlessly as he greeted her mother and her brother, and then finally turned to Stephanie. But his words were anything but the healing she'd dreamed of for so long. He said, "And this must be Priscilla?"

In the aftermath of that meeting, Stephanie processed a great many life lessons. Following a spiritual reality check she experienced while singing with a rock band she joined during college, a fateful door was opened for Stephanie to travel overseas. "I ended up going on a missions trip to Guatemala. If anyone is struggling with pride or self-righteousness," she laughs, "you need to go haul cinder blocks up a mountain. The hard work will cure you!"

Her compelling redemption story drives the hope-drenched lyrics and gutsy honesty of *Not Afraid*, a debut album overflowing with solid pop rock anthems, all written or co-written by Stephanie.

NRT's new contributor, Andrew Funderburks, recently had the opportunity to talk to Stephanie about being transparent on her debut album and how her faith with God is stronger than it has ever been.

Hi, Stephanie! Welcome to NewReleaseTuesday.com. Thank you for doing this interview with us!

Hi! Thanks for having me!

I've recently read about many of the hardships in your life. Can you talk about how your music has reflected these hardships?

It took me about a year to write and record this record, and I feel like we captured the entire journey from having to wait on the Lord's timing, to broken hearts and restoration. It resulted in many anthems for girls and beauty. The entire album is really just an autobiography of the past year of my life, but I'm also pulling from life experiences over the last 25 years. It is my hope that the kaleidoscope of my music is made up of hardships, victories and even failures that I've personally experienced.

Have you come out of the past year with a stronger faith in God than when you started writing this record?

Yeah, I have. I really believe that our God doesn't make us go through things just because He feels like it. He has a plan and a reason, and we may not understand that reason in this lifetime. I

trust Him because I know that He is good. Although I've walked through some stormy seasons, I can always look back and see His hand in that time. I can see His provision and grace, and I come out the other side a stronger person.

What Bible verse has helped you to pull through these painful circumstances that you have been through?

Well, there are several. In [Psalm 68](#), God says that He will be a father to the fatherless. I believe that God's Word is 100 percent true. His heart breaks when ours does. If we take Him at His Word, then even when there is an earthly father absent, there is a heavenly Father present.

As a new artist, how are you preparing your relationship with Christ to keep up with the hectic schedule of constantly being put in the spotlight and being on the road so much?

I've lived and learned that I don't do well without Him. I need Him. I don't want to be going on stage and ministering to whomever comes to my shows if I'm not immersed in His Spirit and His Word.

One of the ways I hold myself accountable is to invite my best friend to come on the road with me. She is the voice of reason, my accountability and my prayer warrior. As my road manager and jack-of-all-trades, she assists me, serves me and loves me. I really desire that comradery and accountability that she brings. We pray together and if I'm struggling, I can pull her aside and she just prays over me. We are blessed that we can really be there for each other during this season.

It's good to have people to connect with that can keep us grounded and honest.

Yes, it is.

Let's talk about how you got started in music.

I was doing praise and worship in youth group and that evolved into a search for a college where I could study music. I really feel like God instilled this passion for music in me, and I knew this was something I could do for His glory. So I went to Greenville College to attend their CCM program and while I was there, I met tobyMac, [who started Gotee Records]. I won a Battle of the Bands competition and got to play at this festival that he was playing at. The entire process was really just the Lord and His ordaining.

The title of your debut project, along with the first single, is *Not Afraid*. Where did the inspiration of that title come from?

"Not Afraid" came to be at the same time that I was entering into this new season with the Lord. God had identified some areas in my life that were a little distracting. He'd been challenging me to spend a couple of months just loving on Him and focusing on some of the things that He'd laid before me. For example, I was writing a book and I was finishing a record. I knew I would

never have a second first record. There's just your first record and just your first book. I felt like I needed the time to just give Him all of me and that meant walking away from a few things, one of which was a relationship. I felt like God said, "It's hard to move in and out of seasons of life. You are not alone." We're constantly moving on, and moving into different places. Different people are continuously crossing our paths. But we are not alone in that journey. I think that's a pretty universal comfort to a lot of people no matter what situation they are facing.

"Superstar" is another single off *Not Afraid*. Tell us a little bit about this song, what it means and what place it holds in your heart.

"Superstar" is special to me. I sort of claim it as an anthem to my girls. I was speaking at a conference with about four to five hundred teenage girls, getting some quality one on one time with them throughout the weekend, and a re-occurring theme I was hearing from them was "I'm not worth it." That just lit a holy rage in my heart because we are children of the living God and we're not perfect, but we wear His redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ. So I wrote this song, basically saying, "Your identity as a child of God is a superstar." Whether you're a dentist or a rock star, you know that God doesn't care, we've all been thought out by God Almighty! It's special to me to be able to sing in these arenas and really believe that every person that sets foot in that place, everyone that my crosses my path, had a story that God knows intimately. He's thought it out and He's involved in it!

What a powerful reminder of God's constant presence in our lives. I also want to talk about your song, "You Alone." It has such a beautiful lyric and melody and presents a wonderful worship experience. Tell us what inspired the writing of this song.

This was the last song we wrote for the record. The one thing this project was missing was just a vertical love song to God. We had a pretty rocking set of songs but there was only one ballad out of ten, so we were thinking we needed to just slow it down a bit. I sat down with my producer, who co-wrote this song with me, and we had an entire discussion about singing "I love You, Lord" during praise and worship on Sunday mornings. Do we love Him because He blesses us? Do we love Him because we're supposed to? During the conversation, we resolved that we love Him, because He is who He is. He's good and so He does give us things, but that's not why we love Him. We love Him, because He is love. That's where "I love You/For You/And You alone," came from. It's not for what He gives me.

In your song "First Words," you portrayed the painful relationship you had with your father. Did the forgiveness that you refer to in this song come easily for you?

Well, the situation wasn't easy, but it was sort of a "do or die." When I was 14, forgiveness didn't come as easy because I didn't fully understand what I was going through or dealing with. I had a lot of depression, and it was certainly affecting me. When I was 19, I met my father for just the second time, and I felt like God was clearly telling me that I had a choice to make: I could strap on the wounds, carry the bitterness and anger and justify my right to be miserable. But I knew I would carry it into my marriage someday, or into my relationships and dreams. My other option was to lay this depression at the foot of the cross and say "I forgive, and I'm going to walk in the freedom of that forgiveness." It sounds like an easy choice. It wasn't. But was it worth it?

Absolutely.

You've had to have some strong influences in your life for you to be able to make that choice of forgiveness. Who has been an inspiration to you?

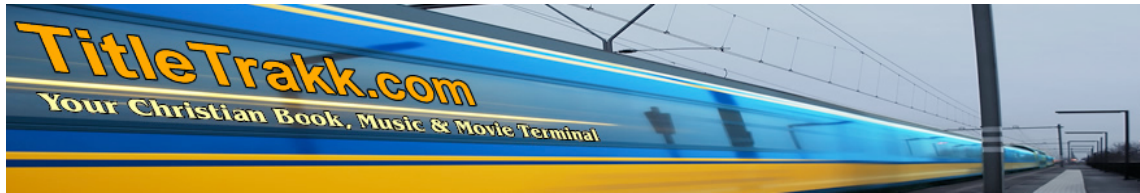
My mom. She's one of my best friends. I got to grow up watching her love the Lord. I got to watch her desperation for His provision, and He always came through. So she's just one of my heroes.

If someone is reading this interview right now and is facing a difficult situation in their life, what single message would what them to read?

A single word that God has been laying on my heart is hope. I think it's really important to always hope. Hebrews talks about faith as being sure of what we hope for. I think it's always good to have something that we're hoping for because without hope, something dies. If you're in a hardship, or if life is not that great for you right now, just know that it will not be like this forever. Root your identity in your hope in Christ because everything else will let you down.

Stephanie, thank you so much for doing this interview with NRT! May God bless you and your music ministry!

Thank you!



Stephanie Smith Interview

January 2009

By Tracy Darlington

"I had given up music because my pride had blindsided me as a freshman and I didn't want to have anything to do with the person I had become in my pursuit of 'fame.'" --Stephanie Smith

Stephanie Smith is a new Gotee artist who's song "Superstar" hit the airwaves with a boom. She's since released several other singles off her album Not Afraid, including the title cut. Stephanie's music is uplifting and energetic.

I sat down with Stephanie and talked to her about her album, her coolest answered prayer, some tough situations she's dealt with, and more.

Tracy: How did you know God was calling you to a career in music?

Stephanie: I remember a specific evening in my youth group just before my senior year of high school. One of our leaders spoke on the topic of "What is your passion?" It was the first time I realized that I really was passionate about music and singing, and as I laid it before the Lord, I sincerely felt released to pursue it for His glory!

What do you know now that you wish you'd known when you first started in music? It has to be all about Him. No man was wired to step on a stage and receive any glory- it is the Lords.

At 14 you first met your father with your mother and brother. What was that meeting like for you? It was exciting and heartbreaking at the same time. Exciting because I had dreamt of that moment for years, and heartbreaking because it didn't go how I had anticipated at all. My father didn't know my mother, brother and I would be at his grandmother's funeral, and out of nerves and surprise, he accidentally called me by the wrong name. He was flabbergasted just to lay eyes on his children for the first time, and had no time to prepare an introduction. But I had daydreamed about our first conversation for years and the whole situation left me a little shellshocked.

After that first meeting, which left you wounded, how did God bring you through the healing process? He lead me to a great counselor who helped me understand where my dad was coming from and who helped me sort through some of my own emotions. He also directed me to music for the first time, and I started to pursue that as an outlet and passion.

Talk about the vital life lesson you had while you were on a trip to Africa. I spent a semester in Africa when I was a Jr in college. I had given up music because my pride had blindsided me as a freshman and I didn't want to have anything to do with the person I had become in my pursuit of "fame." As a result, I did a 180 and changed my major- to undeclared. In that time I became really interest in the world outside of my college bubble, and thankfully my school (Greenville College) offered a semester abroad program that allowed me to explore the world while still studying. I was privileged enough to live, serve, and establish community in the country of Mozambique. I saw real need. One part of the semester entailed living in an impoverished rural town for 3 weeks while meeting with host families through a translator. I knew I would return to my comfortable dorm room in a matter of months when the semester was over, but I couldn't leave an experience like that and not be changed. I saw the world through an entirely different lens, and I could no longer claim ignorance. If anyone has wrestled with self-centeredness, I suggest you serve. It's not about you anymore when you serve.

Your song “Not Afraid” has a compelling redemption story behind it. Can you explain? “Not Afraid” was the 2nd song recorded for the record. I really feel like I caught my momentum with that song. The Lord had made it pretty clear that this season was His. I would never have another 1st record and He had a specific plan for it so there was no room for distraction. That meant walking away from some things that had been distracting me, but there was no fear in that obedience because it was His leading. His plans are always better, He never leaves us out to dry- especially when we are following His lead! He is with us, we are not alone.

What’s special to you about your album *Not Afraid*? It really is an autobiography of the last year or two of my life. I don't think I could have worked any harder with the tools and experience I had at that point in my life. It's the best 1st record I could make, and I will make the best second record I possibly can and I hope its better than the 1st.

What message do you hope people will come away with when they listen to your album? I hope they are encouraged or inspired in their walk somehow. I hope they feel it’s authentic and relatable and it reflects Christ.

What’s your favorite song on *Not Afraid*? “In My Eyes”.

Was there ever a time in your life where you really had to trust God? Everyday. I am in desperate need of Him everyday.

What advice would you give to someone trying to reach their friends for Christ? Love them at their point of need. Serve them in love, they will see the difference and be much more open to hearing the Good News you have if they see it lived out in your own life.

What’s the biggest obstacle in your life God’s helped you overcome? Myself.

What’s the coolest prayer God’s ever answered for you? He provides everyday so it is really hard to think of the

coolest, but one thing that is really special to me is my van. I knew it was time for me to buy a van, but I had no money for one. I started praying that He would a.) provide the van and b.) provide the funds. I found this van online and felt really good about it, but I wouldn't be able to look at it for nearly a month because I was on the road. The Lord gave me a peace that if it was the van for me, it wouldn't sell. I looked at the van a month later and loved it, but I still didn't know how I was going to pay for it. I called my mom slightly freaked out about the "grown up" purchase I was about to make and sought her advice. She told me that the Lord had given her some money and specifically told her to put it towards my ministry, under the condition that I had to ask. By avoiding inviting my mom into my decision, I almost missed out on a huge blessing out of stubbornness!

Are there any steps you take to stay on track spiritually? I need *at least* a quality half hour or 45 min with the Lord each day. I really feel out of whack when I miss a day or two. He keeps my heart at peace.

If you could say one thing to this generation what would you say? Jesus is entirely relevant.

If Jesus were coming back tomorrow, how would you spend today? I'd like to say just like any day, because we need to live in that urgency everyday- He will come like a thief in the night, and no man knows the day nor hour, so it may be tomorrow- but may our hearts be burdened for the people who don't know Truth yet.

If Jesus were not coming back in our lifetime, would you do anything differently? No, He is the love of my life and the reason I do what I do is to direct people to Him.

If you weren't doing music, what would you be doing? I would probably be a hairdresser or a car salesman.

What's the most memorable place you've ever played? I opened for Toby for one date on the Winter Wonder Slam tour last year in Nashville, and it was a dream come true for me. I dreamt of that as a little girl, and for one evening, I lived my dream!

What are two things people might be surprised to know about you? 1.) I have an extra bone in my foot--it's small, not freakish or anything. 2.) I love cars ;) when I had spare time, I would go around car lots and look at the different makes and models.

When you're not singing, what do you enjoy doing? I have some of the greatest friends in the whole world, so if I'm not recovering from the road by sleeping in, you can find me on a zip-line in my friend Brock's back yard, or at a bonfire, or eating chocolate, or riding on an impromptu hay-ride around the city square.

What did you have for breakfast this morning? Coffee (of course) Kashi cereal, rice milk and raspberries.

Three things always found in your refrigerator: Coffee creamer, green olives, and carrot sticks.

You're next in line at Starbucks. What are you ordering? Tall coffee with room.

What's currently in your CD player/iPod? Children 18:3

Is there anything else you'd like to say to TitleTrakk.com readers? Follow hard after Jesus. Fall in love with Him more and more everyday!

Wire 52

October 2008

New Artist to Travel to El Salvador With Compassion International

Nashville, Tenn. – October 8th, 2008 --- After initial raves with her itunes release earlier this year, pop-rocker Stephanie Smith is poised to unveil her debut album Not Afraid at retail stores this December 23rd. Along with her continued work with the non-profit organization Soles4soles, Smith will travel to El Salvador with Compassion International in early December.

Cmcentral.com has raved about Not Afraid by saying, “Opening strong, moments of electronic whomping foretell an edgy momentum...Smith’s fierce vocals lay out restorative encouragement to those uncertain of their own worth.”

On the marketing front, a new radio single, “In My Eyes”, is currently going for adds at Rock radio. A music video for the title track “Not Afraid” was also just recently shot and will be widely available in the upcoming months.

Smith, a new face on the music scene, has been touring non-stop this year as momentum builds and people take notice of the 24-year old. Her packed out schedule found her making the rounds at music festivals as Rockfest, Ichthus, AtlantaFest, Music in the Park, Kingdom Bound, and Riverstages, as well as a return to Agape Fest, the original stage that lead her to meeting TobyMac and eventually signing a deal with Gotee Records. Smith has also performed as part of various conferences that have included Feedback Conferences, Secret Keeper Girl Tour, Pure Freedom, and the Asphalt Assault Tour, as well as the upcoming One Life of VA (10/20 Vansant, VA), and the Freedom Experience (various dates Aug-Nov. www.reachyourcity.com). In addition, she joined illusionist Brock Gill as part of the Florida-based SuperWow Camps, where nearly 350 individual youth groups attended weekly. Fans can anticipate more live performances by Smith as she joins the upcoming Winter Jam tour, headlined by TobyMac and running January 8th- March 15th, 2009



June 2008

Stephanie Smith

Not Afraid

www.myspace.com/stephaniesmithmusic

Review by Kevan Breitinger

Stephanie Smith tells her unique story well through the 12 rocking tracks of her Gotee debut *Not Afraid*.

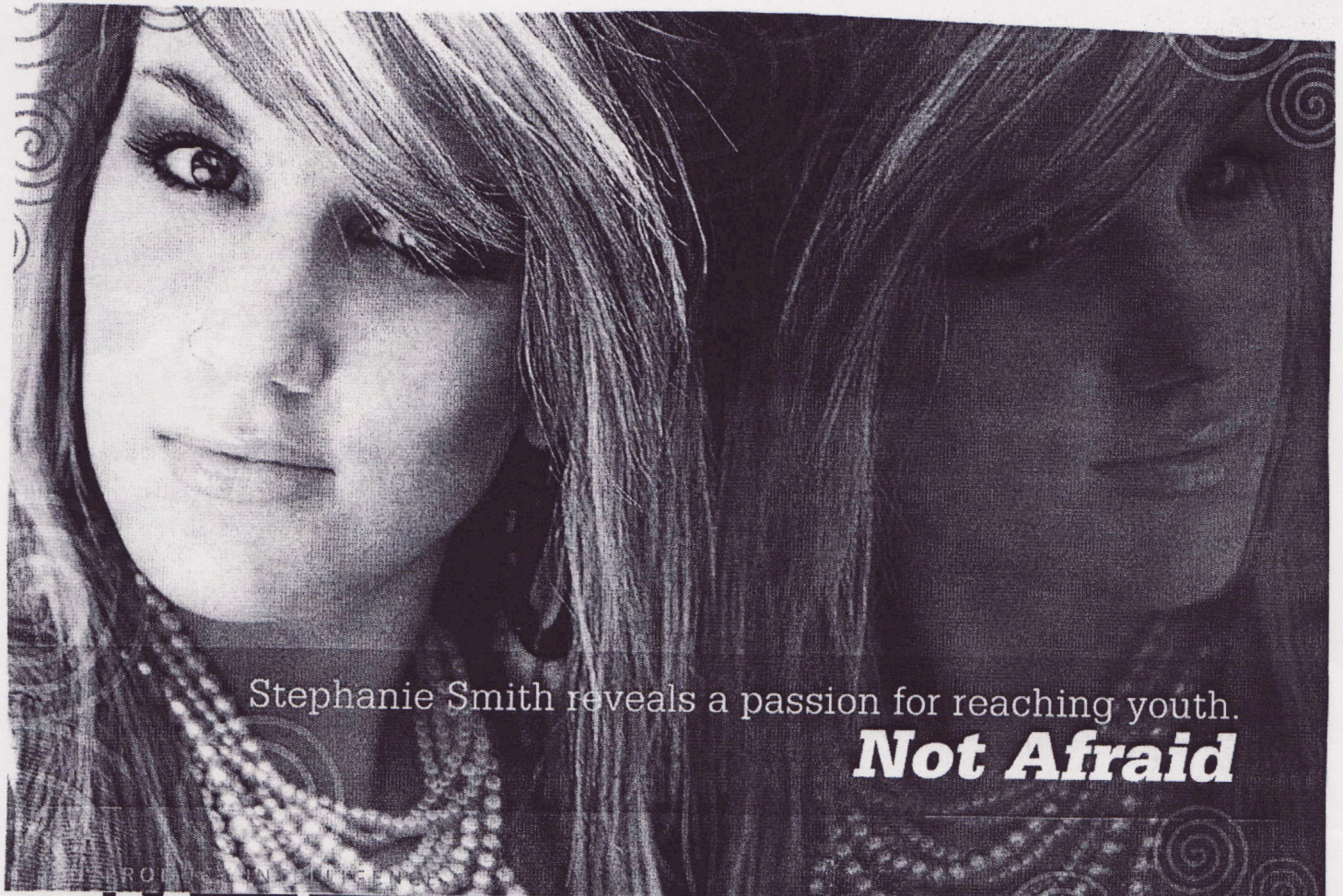
Directed toward her target audience of teenagers, especially hurting teens, the edgy pop-rock tracks overflow with messages of empowerment and affirmation.

Opening moments of throbbing electronics foretell an edgy momentum, fully realized in "Superstar." Smith's fierce vocals lay out restorative encouragement to those uncertain of their own worth, a theme that shines richly through *Not Afraid*.

Smith is a rock chick at heart, obvious through the thick guitars and crisp rhythms of the catchy title track, a break-up song that reminds us of which relationships are really important. She is exuberant on the bouncy "Get Up," powers her way through "Renew Me," and is nothing short of ferocious on "Over It," a pounding goodbye to an ex.

My favorite track is the beautifully mixed and radio-ready "Waiting," her vocals soaring over a glimmering bridge, glorying in the steadfast care of God. Closing ballad "First Words" tells of her heartbreaking encounter with her sorely missed father at the age of 14. This timely track alone is worth the price of admission, advocating the healing power of forgiveness.

Stephanie Smith spins hard life lessons into helpful gold on *Not Afraid*, predicted to both entertain and help many young listeners.



Stephanie Smith reveals a passion for reaching youth.
Not Afraid

Music //

Reviews

>>> **From her days of singing in a college band,** to meeting her father for the first time at a family funeral, and serving others on mission trips to Guatemala and Africa, Stephanie Smith has learned a lot about life. Those life-changing moments helped Smith craft songs for her debut project, *Not Afraid*, releasing this month on Gotee Records (EMI CMG).



"I was a freshman in college, got in a band, and was consumed by pride and the fame of it all. I had a pretty hard fall. I was questioning music and why I wanted to do it. In many ways, I was running from the person that I saw that I had become," says Smith. "My sophomore year, I had the opportunity to go to Guatemala. God used that season in my life to humble me. I believe that if somebody is struggling with pride or self-centeredness, a sure cure is to serve, because it's not about you anymore."

She sings with that same conviction on "First Words," a song about meeting her father. "It was the freshman year of my high school career/Things had barely gotten underway/Before my innocence would be betrayed/Starting with a phone call a family member died/And at the funeral I looked into your eyes/For the first time, this was a dream of mine/But you didn't know me, you didn't know my name."

As Smith spoke with *CBR Retailers+Resources*, the pop-rocker explained how God has continued to direct her steps by giving her a number of different opportunities, including playing at AgapeFest, meeting TobyMac, and signing a record deal with Gotee.

"God tried to get my attention so many times, and finally, in a big way he just had to say, 'No. This is about me, not you,'" Smith says. "After my college band fell apart, I walked away from music. Two years later, I felt the Lord say to me, 'Your only responsibility is to stand on stage, and keep your eyes on me when you are on that stage.' And as people look at me, they will look where I'm looking. So, the only thing I have to do is keep my eyes on Him. That's the only reason to be on a stage."

Smith admits she has a passion for reaching the youth culture, and she's using what she has learned to make a difference. She's actively involved with the Pure Freedom conferences (www.purefreedom.org) and the Secret Keeper Girl Tours, founded by top-selling youth author Dannah Gresh (*And the Bride Wore White/Moody*). Smith is also a spokesperson for Soles4Souls, an organization that has distributed more than three million pairs of shoes to those in need since 2005. But, that's not all. Smith has written a book, *Crossroads: The Teenage Girl's Guide to Emotional Wounds*, which Zondervan will release in June (review in next month's *CBR Retailers+Resources*). Help reach youth with Jesus' love by cross-merchandising Smith's book and CD.

—Ginny McCabe

ALL ACCESS MAGAZINE

FALL 2007

Stephanie Smith



Stephanie Smith is already turning heads through her debut album isn't slated for release until February 2008. Her first single "Superstar" is gaining momentum at Christian CHR radio with support growing each week.

"This is such an exciting time in my life; I don't want to take that for granted or neglect to give the Lord praise for it," says Smith. "Already he has led me into opportunities beyond what I had dreamt for myself. I know it's just the beginning, but I am so grateful for the chance to share what

the Lord has laid on my heart. It's my hope that my music, and the story the Lord is authoring in my life is something refreshing that people can derive hope for themselves."

Smith is currently in the studio finishing up her yet-to-be-titled album and she is scheduled to perform at the Gospel Music Association's GMA Music In The Rockies in Estes Park, CO, on August 2.

