

Ryan Stevenson

Holding Nothing Back. More than the compelling title of singer/songwriter Ryan Stevenson's debut EP on Gotee Records, it's the theme of his life these days. Unafraid to bare his heart before the world, the Boise-based artist is quickly gaining acclaim as a transparent songwriter, adeptly balancing hardship and hope with a beat. And among his growing legion of fans is TobyMac himself.

The multi-platinum artist and co-founder of Gotee Records first discovered the power of Ryan's pen through the song "Speak Life," a track he co-wrote with Ryan and producer Jamie Moore which is featured on his GRAMMY®-winning album, Eye On It.

Ryan's Holding Nothing Back EP, produced by Moore, offers four songs—including an acoustic version of "Speak Life". While the title-cut marries smart, confident production with Ryan's earnest prayer for an undistracted life, his vulnerable approach marks every song on the project, especially "The Human Side."

"I know what it's like to struggle with your identity. That's very real for everybody. We're all just people. This song gives me comfort in knowing that Jesus isn't shocked by my failures or surprised when I fumble around. We are human and yet we are loved in spite of all our failures."

Growing up in rural Oregon, Ryan was steeped in the life and music of the church. Although he sang from the old hymnal on Sundays, he was rocking out to the King of Pop the rest of the week. "When I was in kindergarten, my sister somehow managed to sneak home a tape of Michael Jackson's Thriller, and I'll never forget it," Ryan recalls. "When I heard "Billie Jean" and "Beat It," I specifically remember it immediately resonating with me and making sense."

Fast forward to his days at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon. His musical pursuits further budding, Ryan honed his songwriting skills among an impressive group of friends that included Shawn McDonald and Gotee alumni Paul Wright. A few years later Ryan and his wife Kim settled in Boise, Idaho, and he returned to school and built a new life as a paramedic. While he still wrote songs and played local coffee shops, he was ready to put his dreams to rest. "This guy asked my band to play the Idaho State Fair for a Christian Battle of the Bands. He asked, 'Do you want to do it?' I thought, "No, I don't.' But we signed up anyway, and we won."

The win provided Ryan with some pivotal opportunities, radio airplay and tour dates with established artists. He was finally living his dream, or so he thought. "I felt the Lord saying, 'There's so much noise right now in your life, Ryan. You're so distracted. Can you just get to a place in your life where I'm the only thing that truly matters?' And that's when I began writing "Holding Nothing Back."

"Ryan is an impressive songwriter who understands the delicate balance of writing songs about his faith and walking it out in a cold, cold world," says TobyMac. "He never shies away from a 'Jesus' lyric, 'cause he is fully aware of where his strength comes from."

Although the growth curve has proven difficult at times, Ryan Stevenson is clearly standing on a firm foundation of trust in God these days. With TobyMac in his corner, a home at Gotee Records and a meaningful new single, things are definitely looking up. While the realization of the hopes and dreams he'd long prayed for is one of Ryan's greatest blessings, he knows he can never lose sight of what brought him this far.

"In this journey I've been on, God just keeps showing up and telling me, 'You can trust Me. I really do have a plan for you, and when you just follow Me, you don't need to know where you're going. I'm leading you so just walk.' Sometimes it's crazy and we don't always have answers, but He is good and His ways are much higher than mine."

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