

Mike Farris - Glory Unleashed

Contributed by John Cutliffe
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I am not a big fan of religion, but I do like the songs. Now that is a bit of a blanket statement some might say. But since I was a boy I was influenced by music that directly came from one religion or another. I was born into a mostly catholic community and when I was a boy I was in the Buncrana Male Voice choir, which consisted of mostly boys and men from the town who seemed to only sing at Christmas and Easter.

At Christmas we would all sit on a bus with one microphone and an old speaker on the roof and be driven around our town and the nearby countryside singing Christmas carols while other volunteers walked along and collected money in buckets for some charity or another. At Easter we would sing in the local Chapels through those very serious long Easter Masses. Even then I was torn. At Christmas the songs were a little light and happy and jolly but being a teenage boy I loved the aftershow party where the choir got to go to the local hall and drink lots of juice and eat cakes and sweet things. But at Easter, despite the excruciatingly long sermons and way too much standing, the songs were better. They were about death and suffering and the melodies were stronger, sadder, all minor keys and they grabbed me a little more. Lets face it, I was a teenage boy living in a beautiful seaside town, swimming in the sea all summer long, climbing the beautiful hills around us and playing freely without a care in the world; I could identify with dark deep suffering.

Later when I was so hugely influenced by the roots music of America I realized how much of it came from strong religious beliefs. From the joyous Gospel music of the African American churches to the simple acoustic folk music of the tiny mountain churches that sing of salvation and bad men finding the light. Powerful emotions always make good music and a genuine belief that we are fighting these demons inside us on a daily basis makes for some good listening. One of the most powerful live bands I have ever seen, The Lee Boys, came from a family band playing in The House of God Church in Miami, Florida.

Mike Farris and the Redemptive Power of Music is another band that is taking music with a strong religious bent and bringing it to an audience much wider than a handful of true believers. Mike is a man still struggling with his own demons, a history of chemical and alcohol dependency, he is two years clean and uses his music to purge those bad times and turn his life around. And what a turn around it is. The band started in Nashville and continue to play the "Sunday Night Shout" in the wonderful Station Inn. But word quickly spread about the power of the shows, the great songs and the frontman on a real mission to save himself while taking his growing fans on a musical rollercoaster ride.

Mike says the Sunday Night Shout series is "to provide musical manna to the hearts, souls, and minds of the good people of Nashville and beyond"; Our wish is for every person to leave us on Sundays to go back into the world feeling excited, delighted, and loved.

His latest album Salvation in Lights has been gaining critical acclaim since its release last year and now he is taking his band and this explosive show to an eager new audience all over the U.S. So I advise even the most hardened atheists among you to catch one of these shows in the coming months. You may not come away believing in God, but you will certainly come away believing again in the ability of music to sucker punch you right in the soul.

Salvation in Lights is available on INO Records or check out Mike's Website at

<http://www.mikefarrismusic.net/>

Upcoming Tour Dates:

6/13/2008 Manchester TN Bonnaroo Music Festival
6/14/2008 Tyron NC Blue Ridge Barbeque Festival
6/15/2008 Nashville, TN The Station Inn "Sunday Night Shout"
6/17/2008 Nashville, TN Music of the Spirit with Orchestra Nashville
6/20/2008 Gaylord MI The Big Ticket Festival
6/22/2008 Nashville, TN The Station Inn "Sunday Night Shout"
6/28/2008 Pocono's PA Creation Fest
6/29/2008 Nashville, TN The Station Inn "Sunday Night Shout"
7/4/2008 Marietta IL Cornerstone Festival
7/12/2008 St. Louis MO Off Broadway
7/13/2008 Washington, DC Grace Presbyterian Church
7/14/2008 Washington, DC Ebenezer's
7/24/2008 Seattle WA Creation Fest
7/31/2008 Santa Monica CA Santa Monica Pier Twilight Dance Series
8/11/2008 Highland Heights, KY WNKU's Studio 89
8/14/2008 Kingsport TN Twilight Alive

9/28/2008 Austin TX Austin City Limits Festival
10/4/2008 San Francisco CA Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival
10/8/2008 Wausau WI Artsblock: Grand Theater
10/9/2008 Madison WI Overture Center for the Arts

11/7/2008 Murray, KY Lovett Auditorium

Photos By Ed Rode