

# BUILDING 429 IRIS TO IRIS

Some artists are a slow burn, quietly honing their skills while churning out albums of craftsman-quality tunes, and slowly building an intensely loyal fan base through commitment and perseverance. Other artists seem to drop into the public consciousness fully formed, their debut project so perfectly crafted that you wonder where they came from ... and where they could possibly go from here. Then, occasionally, you find an artist like Building 429, who epitomizes both traits – the proverbial ten years in the making overnight success.

The band was formed by frontman and primary songsmith, Jason Roy, while still in college. After playing nearly 200 shows a year as an independent endeavor, Building 429 burst onto the scene with its first project on a major label. Crisp rock sensibilities and finger-on-the-pulse lyrics combined to produce the band's debut record-breaking single, "Glory Defined." The song topped eight separate charts and was declared BMI's Christian Song of the Year, while Building 429 went on to capture the Dove Award for New Artist of the Year. Its follow-up project, *Rise*, challenged the presupposed sophomore slump with chart-climbing singles "Fearless" and "I Believe," and the group toured both nationally and internationally in support of the album.

Of course, nothing succeeds like success, so when it came time to write for the band's new record, Jason did what he had always done – got by himself and started cranking out as many new songs as possible. And while the songs were good, they just didn't seem to work – not for this band, not for this project. With its current lineup of Jason (guitar, vocals), Michael Anderson (drums), and Jesse Garcia (keys, guitar), the group sensed that God was calling them in a new direction.

"We have always been a strong-willed band," Jason muses. "But suddenly that will was broken. When it came down to us three, we realized it had to be God's will, not our will."

Deeply unsettled in his spirit about the direction of the songs that he was writing, Jason hit his knees. The answer he got was not the one that he expected. "I felt like God said, 'Sing to Me,' and when we yielded to the possibility of writing from a strictly vertical perspective, the songs just started to flow. It was the easiest, most fulfilling, and most fun songwriting process we have ever experienced."

The eleven tracks that make up *Iris to Iris* yet again reveal Building 429's ability to craft songs that are infused with pop smarts and embellished with rock details. Rather than overwhelming its listeners with stock emotionalism or witty wordplay, the band offers up a solid collection of compelling songs that shift the focus off of them and onto God.

"*Iris to Iris* is just a record," he continues, "but it is also our whole heart, our whole life story. It is as if, for the first time, we realize what we were made to do. We realize what we are supposed to sound like. We realize what we are supposed to be writing about. It is about being eye to eye with God. It is about being so close to the Father that there are no distractions."

Producer for the project, Brown Bannister (MercyMe, The Afters, Steven Curtis Chapman, Third Day), agrees that the band was in its element. "If I had to use one word to characterize working on the new Building 429 record, *Iris to Iris*, it would be 'joy,'" says Bannister. "These are a great group of guys, wonderful spirits, great hearts, and great talent. I am proud of these guys. I am so pleased that they are figuring out who they are, and discovering the vision of what God has called them to. If you are familiar with their discography, I would describe this record this way: If 'Glory Defined' had an entire album recorded to compliment the quality of that song, it would be this album."

Jesse points to “You Carried Me” as a classic example. “That song really hits home. It reminds me of all the canyons I’ve crossed and all the muddy water I’ve walked through. But no matter what I’ve gone through He has always carried me.”

“Constant” is another song that Michael points to as spiritual reference point for the band. “With all of its textures and nuances, it is the song that best represents where we all are both spiritually and musically, in a small package,” he says.

In addition to writing with Michael and Jesse, Jason had the opportunity to work alongside superstar songwriter, Chris Eaton (Amy Grant, Point Of Grace, Jaci Velasquez, Vince Gill). The combination of Jason’s southern drawl and Chris’ British worship sensibilities produced some of the album’s most memorable moments.

The Jason Roy/Chris Eaton-penned “Power of Your Name” combines intense guitar-driven grooves with heartfelt worshipful lyrics, a perfect backdrop for Jason’s southern rock vocals. Their collaboration on “Singing Over Me” produces a melody so memorable that it is hard not to sing along, while “Incredible” is a nod to the band’s rock ‘n’ roll roots.

Not only did making *Iris to Iris* result in a stunning collection of new songs, but it also served to breathe new life into Building 429’s earlier work. “Songs that we have been playing for years like, ‘Glory Defined,’ ‘The Space In Between Us,’ and ‘I Believe’ have taken on a whole different meaning,” explains Jason. “And now we have an album featuring a number of equally powerful worship anthems that we don’t even have to sing. We can just get out of the way and let God move.”

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