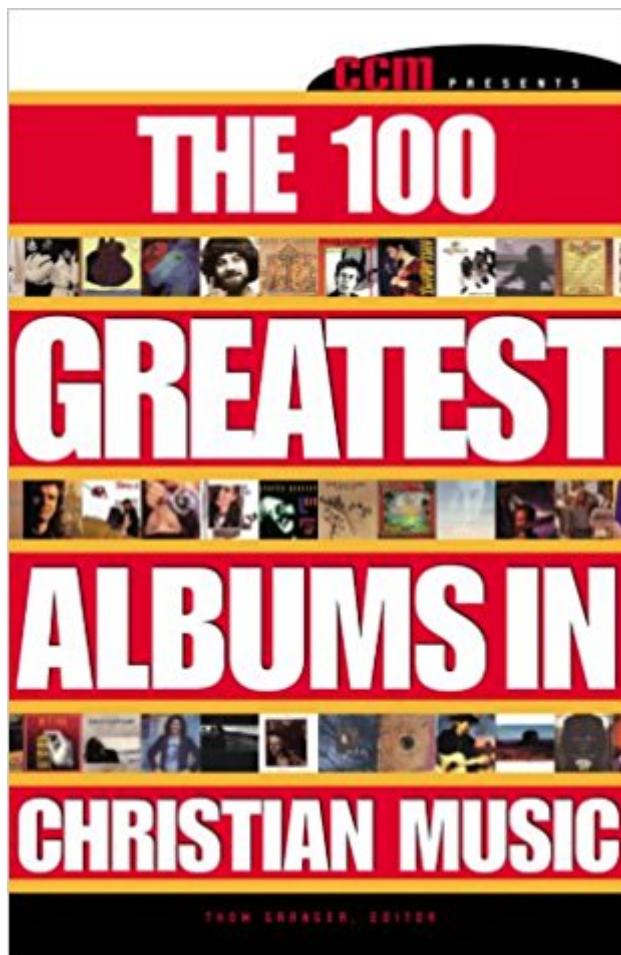


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The 100 Greatest Albums In Christian Music (CCM Presents)



Synopsis

Great book!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Great book!

This is a critic's choice of the greatest Christian albums of the 1970s - 1990s. People will not agree with every choice here (I'm personally not sure about the inclusion of U2, for instance) but the reviewers' critique of each choice is well thought out and deserves a read. For any fan of CCM, and particularly for those who grew up with these albums, this book is a good trip down memory lane.

A great read! A must have, if you wish to look back at the start of contemporary Christian music. I still refer to it on my bookshelf.

I am a music fanatic and committed Christian who had always had a bias against contemporary Christian music because of the "elevator" quality of the music I had been exposed to. I am a fan of the Beatles, Bob Dylan, the Clash, U2 and Johnny Cash; and the world of Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith held no appeal to me (unfortunately that is what I thought all Christian rock sounded like).

One day I picked this book up in the bargain bin at a bookstore out of curiosity and it quite frankly opened up a whole new reality of Christian music for me. I discovered that there are committed artists that have the integrity of their faith, and yet have freedom and vision in their music to create anything as beautiful and strange as other artists. I believe that Michael Roe and Larry Norman are musical geniuses and have remained underground precisely because they are identified as Christian music. I digress, simply check this book out and explore the music of Norman, 77s, LSU, Adam Again, Lost Dogs, Stonehill, the Choir, Mark Heard, Daniel Amos and many others . . .

OK, we have a problem here. No way that Amy Grant's "Lead Me On" is the #1 greatest Christian album of all time. In her wildest dreams she never put out anything as good as Leslie Phillips' "The Turning" (which is #8). In fact, Amy's best album IMHO, "Unguarded", didn't even make the list. My pick for the best CCM album of all time is Randy Stonehill's "Welcome to Paradise", which made #13. If you just hear it once, you'll agree with me. I'm sure of that!Of course, my disagreements with the selections, and the order thereof, does not detract from the value of this book one iota. The very purpose of a book like this is to provoke discussion, awareness, and appreciation of the subject matter. And the editors of CCM Magazine know this subject backwards and forwards. The write-ups on these albums whet one's appetite to track down and purchase some of these fine recordings. Unfortunately, some are out of print (just try to find the album at #4, "Second Hand" by Mark Heard. I know some of you are saying "Mark who?"). The intro makes it clear that these aren't just critical favorites, but popular impact is also taken into consideration, therefore these are the "Greatest" as opposed to the "Best". That's how, for example, "The Champion" by Carman made the list (at #99), because if you've read CCM Magazine over the years, you know the critics don't exactly have a love affair going with Carman, which is made fairly clear in the book as well.I believe one of the most interesting sections comes at the end where each contributor gets to list some of their favorites that didn't make the final cut. Maybe it would have been informative to make it a Top 200. Even then, some of the personal favorites of yours and mine would probably be left off. Oh, well, this book is still great for anyone wanting to build a definitive CCM collection or to fill in the gaps of their existing collection. Or to hope and pray that someday all of these musical offerings will be available once more.

CCM first published a list of the 100 Greatest albums in their 20th anniversary issue back in 1998. For this book they went back and re-worked the original list, adding newer deserving albums and considering oversights from the original 100.As with any list of greats there will be controversy.

Newer Christian music fans will wonder why some of their favorites aren't included. Conservative fans will debate whether groups like U2 should appear (they place two albums). Mainstream fans will puzzle over the inclusion of some projects that had more critical significance than popular acceptance. And fans of specific artists will debate whether the selected albums really are the best that artist had to offer. Yet in spite of all of that, I can't argue with too many of the choices. Most of the true greats are here, and any criticisms I can offer are more minor than serious. Some albums I would've liked to have seen included are Whiteheart's *FREEDOM*, Michael W Smith's *i 2 (EYE)*, and Susan Ashton's *WAKENED BY THE WIND*. With each selection comes a write up that summarizes the historical context and significance of the project more than reviews it. The contributors are all heavyweights, like John W. Styll and Brian Q. Newcomb, and their essays were interesting and nostalgic. My only real complaint is that they didn't write enough. I would've loved to have seen some hard core research and information presented, a la the work of Fred Bronson in his *Billboard* books. Sometimes they don't even fill the given page. But that aside, this is a fantastic resource for long time CCM fans as well as newer fans who desire to gain a better understanding of the history of the genre. Now if we could only get the record companies to re-release many of these projects that are out of print. Four and a half stars.

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