

Music Review

Journey to inspired music:

Local artist sings about the path of faith on compilation album

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The Catholic Sun

Faith is a journey. That concept is one Paul Hillebrand clearly expresses and understands on his newest album, "Journey to You."

Not only is the music featured on the album indicative of Hillebrand's journey with music and the Lord — it is the "greatest hits" of his last 10 years — but the thematic elements of "Journey to You" also cover an enormous range of issues encountered on each person's journey to Christ.

In planning and recording the album, Hillebrand tried to find his best 13 pieces of music that "people could sing during liturgy, at home or in the car on the way to work," he said. "It's important that as we go on this daily journey that we take the time to recharge our spiritual batteries so that we don't find them drained when we need them most."

"Journey to You" includes a wide variety of music for a broad array of listeners. Psalms, praise, laments and even a Christian wedding ballad surface on the album in styles that span from traditional to contemporary.

"Some of these songs have been used as seasonal theme songs written for a certain liturgical season," said Hillebrand, director of music ministry at St. Patrick Parish in Scottsdale. "The style of music is mostly contemporary, but there are also some lyrical ballads, some rock and a very pleading psalm for Palm Sunday."

"Journey to You" provides a tremendous collection of music. More than half the songs on the album sound more liturgical and all of the tracks are good. The



To purchase "Journey to You," visit the Web at www.paulhillebrand.com.

lyrics are strong throughout the album and the melodies are sung with a convincing fervor that takes "Journey to You" far beyond the average CD.

"I'm Always with You" — a new take on the traditional "Be Not Afraid" hymn by Bob Dufford — is the strongest track on the album, also Hillebrand's personal favorite.

The fresh composition of a powerful verse is unforgettable. One will find the song running through his or her head for hours after listening to it.

Other highlights on the album are "We Know Your Presence," a slow and prayerful eucharistic song Hillebrand wrote for the 25th

anniversary of St. Patrick Parish, and "Let Us Sing Your Song," an upbeat and joyful track.

The strength of Hillebrand's voice makes "Journey to You" stand out above other worship albums. On some tracks the power of his voice sounds similar to the climactic performance in a musical, a unique and enhancing quality present throughout the album.

However, Hillebrand's is not the only voice that contributed to "Journey to You." A large array of Phoenix musicians — many fellow music ministers in Catholic parishes around the Valley — recorded for Hillebrand's album. This creative exchange became a highlight of the recording process for Hillebrand.

"The best part of this album was having so many good friends help on it," Hillebrand said. "I am very fortunate to know a lot of great musicians here in the Valley and their talent shined forth on the album."

Hillebrand shared the microphone instrumentally and vocally with Tom Booth, Carl Herrgesell, Jaime Cortez, Chris Muglia, Craig Colsen, Aaron Thomson and Dr. John Pennington, among others.

"The best part of this album was taking the time over the past year and a half to get all these great friends, musicians and ministers of music together to sing and play on my album," Hillebrand said. "It is an honor to have them be on this collection and be a part of my life."

Ultimately, "Journey to You" is a reflection of Hillebrand's personal journey in faith, life and music. The songs are catchy yet moving, and it is hard to find a track that would merit skipping.

Beyond the music, the themes of "Journey to You" are ones that nearly anyone, and every Catholic, can relate to and reflect on.

Hillebrand hopes that people

who listen to the album will be inspired to continue their individual faith journey.

"Whether it's as a lawyer, a teacher, a student or a homemaker, I pray that they will all find the strength from the journey that comes from taking time away to listen and hear the voice of peace in their hearts, calling them to be the best person they can be on that day," Hillebrand said.

He hopes people will not worry about the past or the future, "but focus on what is the best way I can be like Jesus in every situation that I am in right now, to live in the present moment of our journey — seeking Him and finding Him." *