

# Worth Dying For

## *Live Riot* Album Release

Some bands are artistically innovative boundary breakers with an unwavering ability to cast their nets wide and attract an audience that literally spans all walks of life. Others put their focus exclusively on unabashed praise and are so anointed they can literally usher listeners into the presence of God with a single strum of a chord. And while Worth Dying For certainly fits both impressive character profiles, the California-based troupe of praise purveyors is actually something much grander in the form of an all encompassing movement spanning worship, the arts and the church as a whole.

On the musical side of the coin, Worth Dying For is currently readying the release of *Live Riot*, its third national long player and fitting follow-up to 2011's *Love Riot*. The collection of 10 brand new songs and a few live versions of already familiar material was culled from a praise service at the Ammunition Conference, which the group hosts annually to unite worship leaders and speakers from all the world over. However, the members of this ministry team don't just serve on stage but literally roll up their sleeves in the trenches, as evidenced in their forthcoming FEARLESS church planting efforts in Los Angeles.

"Worth Dying For is a faceless army of worshippers that's not about certain people in a band or ministry," explains co-founder Christy Johnson. "We really believe in investing in people and raising them up. We don't use people to make ministry happen. We use ministry to make people happen and we love seeing when someone starts out as an intern and is later able to get up in front of people and usher thousands into the presence of God."

Indeed, the journey of all Worth Dying For's facets is an unconventional one, dating back to 2007's self-released debut *Ammunition* and winding through 2008's self-titled label debut on Integrity Records (which found the troupe leading worship on Creation Festival: The Tour). Come 2011, the group returned to the self-releasing route on Ammunition Records, the home of both *Love Riot* and *Live Riot*, the latter of which features original members Christy Johnson, Josh O'haire and Sean Loche, as well as new worship leaders Dalisha Turner, Deanna Joven, Nick Morris, Rochelle Leguern and Sarah Agbayani.

"What we want people to experience whenever we play or when they listen to *Live Riot* is not a band that wants to get up there and perform for people, but one that's all about making His presence known," continues Nick. "Our hunger personally is for God to resonate and I think people catch onto that. You can't take people anywhere you haven't been."

Adds Sean: "Our goal is to always disappear and remove ourselves from the equation. We hear testimony after testimony about someone who wanted to end their life and get

connected to God, someone who had a broken leg and was healed, or someone who had their purity restored. The last thing we want with this album is to feel like it was a concert and just a lot of fun. We want people to encounter the power of God, fall more in love with Him and change their life for the better.”

In order to help facilitate those goals, it doesn't hurt that Worth Dying For just so happens to be a razor-sharp musical collective with some of the most intriguing sounds of any musical scene. Perhaps Christianity Today.com described it best: “Taking the adrenaline up a notch while bursting through all the worship clichés—all while remaining reverent—makes for an assertive and musically alluring album. Even with the vertical lyrics, the band would easily fit modern rock radio, switching between synth-spiked pop, power ballads and screamo.”

Although the moments of worship are deep, high-energy praise songs like “Freedom Is Rising” and “One Love” keep listeners on the edge of their seats, while modern worshippers will also be drawn in by ballads like “Risen from the Grave” and the prophetic style of “Spirit of God.” The album also includes explosive new live versions of already established fan favorites, including “Savior,” “Higher” and “Love Riot.”

“We'll go from a song that has driving guitars, loud drums, and screaming in one song to a soft, melodic, ballad in the next. You can hear our musical influences which range from As I Lay Dying, to Coldplay, to LeCrae,” continues Sean, before Christy interjects. “And sometimes there are very spontaneous moments of worship led by the Holy Spirit where a song can stretch out like nine, ten or even fifteen minutes. We've never captured that on a CD before until now and it's a very powerful account of the raw passion we're all experiencing.”

Worth Dying For also draws comparisons to other seminal modern worship collectives including Planetshakers, Jesus Culture and Hillsong United. Indeed, much of those similarities stem from their shared format of being a worship team, church community and forum planners, which is where the Ammunition Conference comes into play.

“Long story short, my husband and I started a camp to coincide with Spirit West Coast Festival six or seven years ago under a tent with music and speakers,” recalls Christy of the venture she spearheaded with her husband/pastor Jeremy Johnson. “It grew to the point where we were attracting students and pastors from all over the nation so we thought ‘why not have a conference in our home church in February in addition to the camp in the summer?’ Ammunition Conference started two years ago and last year it doubled in size to about 3,000 people. We wound up stopping the camp aspect to put all our efforts into Ammunition and we're currently in the process of branching out to various locations across the nation.”

Opportunities for Worth Dying For's unique ministry umbrella are sure to grow all the more as 2012 finds the church plant FEARLESS getting off the ground with a mission that's just as bold as the group's soul stirring musical expressions. “We were traveling to an event with our team to lead worship and Jeremy heard God speak to Him,” unveils

Christy. "For him, although the team was loud and having fun, the sound drowned out to dead silence in his mind. At that moment, he heard God speak, 'In 5 years, you will plant a church with this worship team.' It happened that my dad is the pastor at Calvary Temple where we were serving and 5 years later, he released us and the team to go into L.A."

For the first year, the group will build a ministry team throughout L.A., then love on the city in general with the goal of salvation, in turn, creating the need for a physical church and subsequent service. From there, FEARLESS will be officially up and running with Worth Dying For leading worship alongside a full-fledged multi-media team for maximum ministry impact.

"We want to create a church that's not just powerful or relevant but both where the anointing in the room can't be denied. Even if you're on drugs or alcohol, you can come out changed by the power of God. We aren't planting a church in L.A., but we are planting a team of 30 people. This team is going to love on that city and out of the love of God that is shown, the church is going to be born. That's what the disciples did and that's our plan to see culture changed," shares Christy, followed up by Sean. "That's where the name FEARLESS came from. We're going into one of the biggest cities in the world to give them the gospel, shake the fear off and do what God's called us to do. We want to impact culture and reach this generation for Him."

Adds Pastor Jeremy: "We are called to build the church that God put inside us, not the church that we found in a leadership book or we have seen work somewhere, but simply the church we would love to attend. In all honestly, I don't have all the answers to how this movement will look a year from now, all I have now is the 'go.' I feel like I'm running at a mountain that I really don't know how to get up, at least not yet! However, as with everything God calls us to do, the only way to find out is to run at it full speed."

In fact, that faithful following of God's will all tie back around to the whole *Love Riot/Live Riot* theme, which Christy so eloquently sums up. "It's about turning a city upside down, not just telling other people to do it, but literally infiltrating a city with the love of Christ. There are so many riots of discord and racism in so many cities, but if we could just change that to be a riot of compassion and love, we will literally change a city and empower an entire generation to turn their voice into a weapon against the works of darkness."