

A MUSIC MAGAZINE FOR BELIEVERS

THE CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN

YOU ARE

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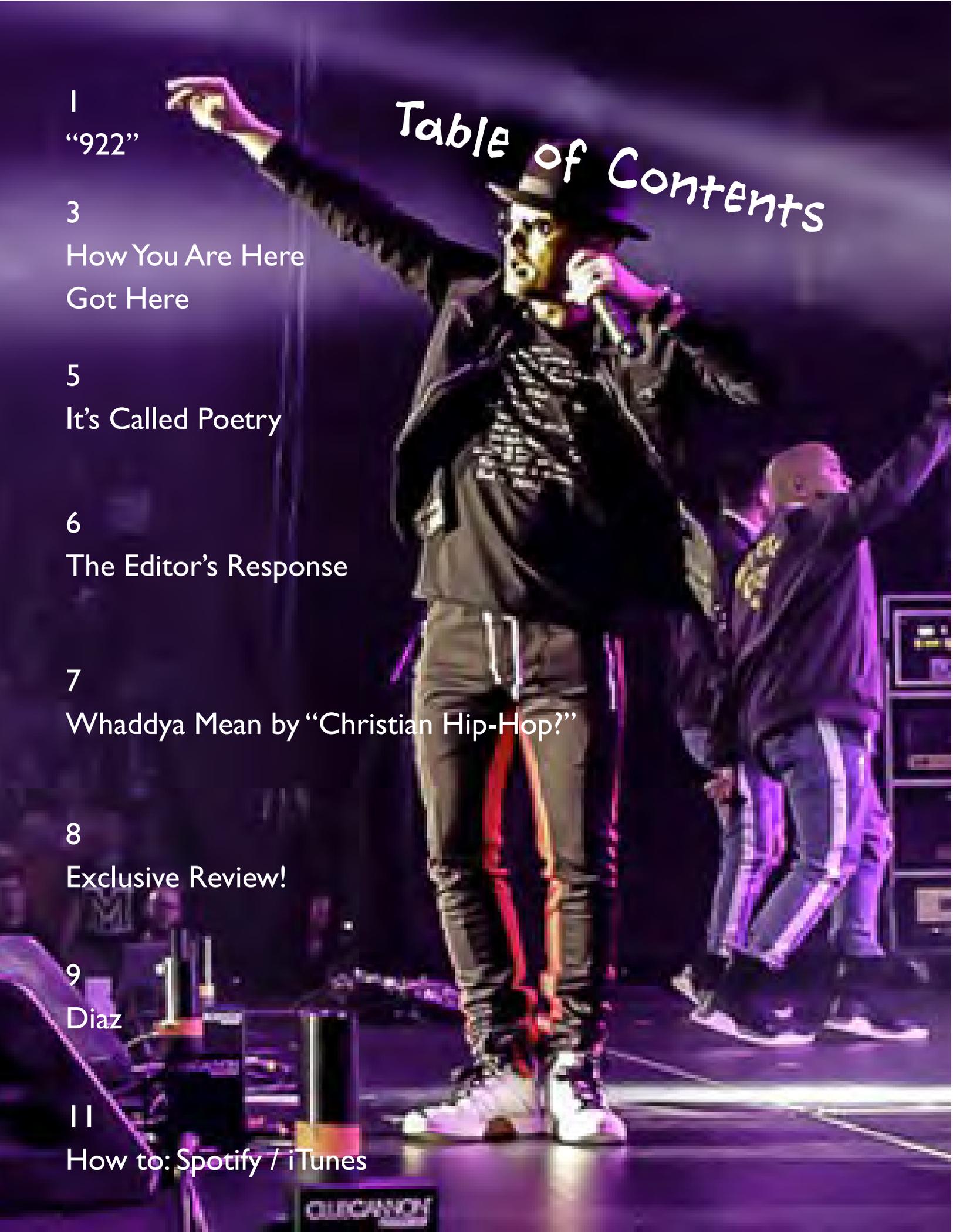


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922

by Caleb North

Maverick's feet pounded the ground furiously. Small clouds of dust, the bullets of the Crosskiller's gun, sprang up around him. Maverick spotted a vent in the concrete wall, skidded to a halt, and swung in as he slammed it open. He gasped for his breath. Outside the opening, the Crosskiller dropped a small clicking ball. A boot nudged the ominous sphere deeper into the vent.

The assassin's footsteps faded away and a worried Maverick stared at the now rapidly ticking ball rolling slowly toward him. He recognized the image of a cross with a big red X plastered across it. Then it detonated.

Right as the ball exploded, Maverick shoved himself backwards. A bright flash illuminated the entire duct. Air rushed passed his body and it occurred to him that he was falling. Maverick's descent was temporarily interrupted and the jarring sound of metal bending echoed around him. Whatever was beneath him broke and he fell into a pile of clothes.

He did not know where he was. Maverick ducked deeper into the clothes right as someone entered. It was another Crosskiller, with the infamous dictator himself, Alasdair, following the killer. Maverick heard footsteps approaching him, and he held his breath. He was suddenly propelled backwards and a horrible squeaking noise began, accompanied by the bin vibrating. Maverick was being rolled along, probably to the washing area, since most of the clothes had stains and colors he would rather not identify.

Maverick glanced out a grommet on the side of the bin. He could spot a few Crosskillers by the equipment attached to their thighs. Everyone else must be civilians. But this deep underground? Maverick's short ride stopped jarringly.

"Is dat da load Alasd'r wanned in da special wash?" someone asked.

"Yes. Bring it back by 1500 hours.", the Crosskiller replied in a stark voice. Maverick knew he must be in training, because Crosskillers usually didn't do lowly tasks like pushing the supreme leader's laundry around. Maverick saw a chute through the grommet labeled TO SURFACE CLOTHES and decided it would be safer to think out a plan there. He waited for the laundry person to walk away, then Maverick risked it. He sprang out, ran, and landed in the basket beneath the chute with little more than a soft whoosh.

Comforted by the clean, warm clothes, Maverick laid still and heard nothing but his breath and the hum of the lights for a minute or two. While he waited, Maverick examined the small tattoo on his left arm that said "922". He was the only person in the entire Cross to have this exact tattoo, even though everyone had a number tattoo. It was for identification, especially in situations where a medical patient was unconscious. Maverick heard footsteps and suddenly the wheezing of the laundry person followed by the click of a button. A panel slammed shut, deafening Maverick. And the basket began to go upward.

Maverick sat idle in the basket while the light seeping through the edges of other chute doors appeared and disappeared. When the basket finally ground to a halt, a panel opened in front of him and he was tipped forward and out onto a conveyor belt.

He rolled off the conveyor and sized up his surroundings only to be stopped by a door opening. He turned toward the door and saw a Crosskiller with a surprised expression identical to Maverick's. Maverick heard a metallic click and dared to turn around, his deepest fear confirmed. Another Crosskiller, ranking below only Alasdair himself by the markings on his suit, pointed a gun at his chest. A grin crossed the Killer's face and he gestured to the first Crosskiller. Then Maverick had a bright idea.

Maverick swung his foot upwards, knocking the high-ranking Crosskiller's gun upwards and out. But the Crosskiller did not drop his gun as expected. The other Crosskiller, who had begun to swing a heavy baton, could not stop himself when Maverick dodged and the baton smacked the high-ranking one's belt. A small circle popped off. It began to hiss. History repeated itself, and the ball rolled over to reveal a black cloud.

Both Crosskillers instinctively yanked gas-masks off their belts and the high-ranking one pressed a red button on his radio, triggering an alarm. Maverick took this opportunity to escape, beelining toward the door. He heard a thunk behind him, and the sound of a fan whirling. The air unit had turned on, which would only spread the fatal gas faster.

He opened the door and was engulfed by a sea of civilians. A few people were already coughing, mainly the elderly, and Crosskillers yelled through bullhorns to try to calm the people. The alarm did nothing to help. Tall, menacing figures stood in the corners and looked around, most likely seeking Maverick out. The Elite. He had heard of them before, the select few Crosskillers that could find and eliminate an individual without anyone else knowing. He tore an extra coat off of an unsuspecting civilian and disguised himself. Maverick squeezed his way along with everyone else forward toward double doors labeled AIR LOCK. It felt like there was flem in his throat and Maverick began to have a small wheeze. More people were coughing and an elderly man collapsed. Maverick squeezed in with a group of people into the airlock. A vacuum sucked at the group, and a fine mist was sprayed all over them. Then the doors were opened.

People scattered left and right into a grass field bordering a thick forest. More Crosskillers were outside, directing people toward a concrete pad with hundreds of jet-black helicopters. Maverick also saw helicopters patrolling the area. This was going to be difficult. He pulled out a compass, found northwest, and split from the group. Shouts and guns sounded off behind him. Something stung the back of his leg. Maverick jumped the fence separating the field from the forest and ran.

Three hours later, Maverick drug himself along. He collapsed, trying to stay awake. He was wheezing, coughing, and vomiting. Whatever the airlock did to him failed to work. He closed his eyes and heard people. Maverick thought the Crosskillers had followed his blood trail from the gunshot in his leg. He cried out anyway. As Maverick lost consciousness, he could feel himself being picked up and the thud thud thud of a helicopter. Shouts for a medic was the last thing Maverick heard before blacking out.

The old man finished his story with a "the end". His little grandkids stared at him, eyes wide with interest.

"Tat's it?"

"Is Mavik gonna live?"

And all the old man did was smile and look down at the faded tattoo of the numbers 922 on his left arm.

3

HOW YOU ARE HERE GOT HERE

BY CALEB NORTH



Pastor Keli Williams looked over her desk at Joe Roberts and Grant Williams, who were both quietly waiting. She retrieved a few sheets of paper from a metal drawer and handed them over. The only sound was quiet breathing and papers rustling. Joe and Grant examined the sheets, then looked up and grinned at Pastor Keli. She instantly knew this was the right thing to do.

Pastor Keli is the lead singer for Highpointe Church in the little Alabama town of Enterprise. She has been singing since she was four and has recorded a few albums with her father when she was young. She was also in a handful of albums in college. Pastor Keli had never thought of herself as a good singer, but realized she had to be good when she was in albums with singers she admired.

Fast forward a couple decades, she became the first (and only) singer when she and her husband, Pastor Derek Williams, started Highpointe. Over time, as Highpointe and the praise team grew, Pastor Keli began singing songs in her own style to lead people deeper in worship. However, she never realized she had was doing this until she reflected on it, which was spurred by people suggesting the church release its own album.

After deciding to make an album, Pastor Keli worked with two people only: her son, Grant, and a staff member, Joe. The small team of three began the album making process over 2 years ago. First, they looked over some sheet music Pastor Keli had written and hand-picked the songs they wanted. Then they began the writing process starting with a song called *You're Alive in Me*. Going forward, the team did not just write their own songs; they also re-wrote the bridge of *King of My Heart*. In the end, they wrote *You're Alive in Me*, *My Victory*, and *Always* and also sang *Waymaker* and *King of my Heart*. Pastor Keli made sure with these songs that the message of the album was 'God is here, let's thank God for what He has already done instead of asking Him to do more'. Now it seems everything is ready to record.

Pastor Keli, Grant, and Joe decided to make the recording live so they could really share the environment of worship at Highpointe. It was scheduled for Friday night, May 11, 2018, but was close to being cancelled because Pastor Keli had laryngitis the week before! And by the grace of God, she recovered, and the show went on as planned. When the recording started, everything was going great, despite Pastor Keli's slightly hoarse voice. The people were deep in worship, and the worship team was on top of their game their game. But suddenly, the click track went out! The click track is a metronome broadcasted to small, transparent earbuds all the praise team members wear to keep their timing correct. Despite the setback, the album recording continued



splendidly. The praise team had successfully recorded their first album! Afterwards, small edits were made to correct any off key bits, fix any instrument's off-tune notes, and lower the volume of anyone yelling into the crowd mics.

In a short period of four months the album was edited successfully and published under the name *You are Here*. A another staff member, George Webster, did the artwork. Since then the album has skyrocketed. There have been over 100,000 streams total on Spotify alone. The song *Waymaker* makes up 50,000 of those streams. *You Are Here* is most streamed from Dallas, Atlanta, and LA. However it is not just being listened to in the US. Countries all over the world stream *You Are Here*. What a massive impact a little church in a small town could make.

And yes, they do plan to release another album.

Poetry

There once was a Son of man
 No, His name was not Sir Stan
 That was a good rhyme, you'll have to admit
 But I'll get to the story before you have a fit

There once was a Son of man
 He came to save our hams
 From the sin we threw ourselves into
 But first something special had to go down

There once was a Son of man
 Grew up in the place of a child
 But on the flip side He was never terribly wild
 Impressing the temple leaders by twelve

There once was a Son of man
 He said "Follow me" to a fisherman
 And in reply the fisherman began
 to do just that, and follow

There once was a Son of man
 He healed everybody's everything,
 He cast demons into a herd of pigs,
 And even taught a lesson with figs!

There once was a Son of man
 He was prosecuted unjustly and sentenced to death
 While a criminal was set free to spread his wrath
 The Son of man was beaten and tortured, basically a blood-
 bath

There once was a Son of man
 He hung on the cross silently
 He was set in his tomb, peacefully
 But God wouldn't let His Son die

There once was a Son of man
 The ground shook defiantly, wowzas!
 And He rose to live again, and taken up after 40 days
 As you can guess, the Son of man is Jesus

M.U.S.I.C.

Magical, almost, the power of sound
 Unbeliever, even, would listen and appreciate
 Sound of the songs, the lyrics, they actually
 matter

Invigorating, awe-inspiring, invoking all emotion
 that is great

Christian songs, devoted to the witnessing of
 His Word

The Boy Who Once Flew

The Boy Who Once Flew
 There once was a boy from Pi
 Who would always dream he could fly
 He heard some Christian songs
 He played it on some gongs
 And in turn he learned how to fly

Editor's

Response

How Do Professional Musicians Make a Living?

Asked by Dr. Robert, Ph.D.

Thank you for the letter inquiring how professional musicians make a living. Here are a few of the many ways. The first one is selling their music. The amount of money an artist makes for their music might depend on how popular they are as well as the terms of their recording contract. A second means of income is selling merchandise.

Some musicians say it provides invaluable revenue; however, the average artist only receives 2% of their pay from merchandise. Artists may sell merchandise on multiple websites for a wider audience. A third way is working a part time job. They might be a music teacher, a waiter, or some other job that has light hours. I hope this answered your question.



WHADDYA MEAN BY “CHRISTIAN HIP HOP?”

Christian hip-hop / rap is a genre that appeared recently and is gaining popularity rapidly. Several artists dominate the field, namely NF, Lecrae, Andy Mineo, and Trip Lee. Some artists produce softer hip-hop music and are not considered a Christian rapper; however, others are. Take TobyMac and Andy Mineo, for example. TobyMac creates Christian pop music, and only parts of the song have rap. Andy Mineo produces songs where the majority of the lyrics, if not all, are rapped.

But why listen to this style of music? If you don't like it, I won't force anything on you. But hear me out. Christian rappers don't talk about money and drugs but about resisting peer pressure, trusting in God, etc. That's a no brainer, they're Christian! Well, there are a handful of Christian rappers that are a bit gray (Andy Mineo, I'm looking at you). If you feel unsure about a song's lyrics, you can always check them on someplace like genius.com. I've got a list of popular rappers/hip-hop artists for you to check out and start enjoying this amazing genre.

NF, Lecrae, Andy Mineo, Trip Lee, KB, Tedashii, Derek Minor, Bizzle, I I 6 Clique, Thi'sl, Swoope, Aaron Cole, KJ-52, Gawvi, Da' T.R.U.T.H, DC Talk,



EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

Have you ever heard of Christian rap? Many people have not, despite the fact that hundreds of artists are out there. This review will focus on KB, one of the most popular Christian rappers in the world.

Kevin Elijah Burgess, professionally known as KB, has been rapping since 2010 and has a variety of skills tucked up his sleeve for producing music. He released his first album, *Weight & Glory*, in 2011, which kickstarted his career. Since he has released two albums, *Tomorrow We Live* (2015) and *Today We Rebel* (2017), an EP called *100* (2014), created dozens of singles, and has featured in several other songs. His latest release is a single called “DNOU2” (2019), a continuation of his 2017 single DNOU. Both songs talk about following God and living free from the world, hence DNOU, or **Don't Nobody Own Us**. KB has built up lots of experience, so he knows how to make good—excuse me—great Christian rap songs.

Even though KB has tons of music, are his lyrics worth anything? Are they clean? Do they actually talk about meaningful stuff? The answer would be yes. He talks about almost everything, from all the temptations and difficulties Christians have in this world, to trusting in God and being free of your old life. KB explains the lyrics to his albums *Today We Rebel* and *Tomorrow We Live* in special commentary albums. He never talks about anything suggestive, and therefore is perfect for the whole family.

KB is a strong believer in Christ and clarifies in his songs that the music is not about him but about God (“I Am Not the One”, *Today We Rebel*). He has been around for a while and has gained experience to become one of the top Christian rappers in the world. This musical man of God makes songs perfect for everyone that talks about things that matter. Why is there a reason not to listen to KB?



diaz

By Caleb North

Leo Diaz torpedoed into the living room with a half-crumbled piece of paper scrunched in his hand. He stopped and took a deep breath. Leo stood in the middle of the room for a moment and examined his audience. Just his mom, his two little siblings, and the dog. His father was in the kitchen making all sorts of sizzling and slicing and snapping sounds.

Leo flattened the crumpled paper against the coffee table, stretched it out some, and held it up to the light. He inhaled deeply and then—

“Momgetdaditstheletterfromthemusicgroup!” When he spit it out, his heart began to race.

“Woah, slow down and repeat that,” his mom said. Leo repeated what he said at the same speed, ignoring his mother’s request to slow down. He urgently scanned the paper.

“YES!” Leo shouted, pumping his fist into the air, “I was accepted for to intern at ActOn33!”

His mom beamed and congratulated him. Suddenly, his dad burst out from the kitchen around the corner and grabbed Leo in a bear hug.

“Where is it? I forgot,” his dad asked after dropping him from the hug.

“Chicago,” Leo exhaled.

“Okay . . . that’s a long way away, so start packing!” his dad said.

Leo managed a “Thank you Dad” as he ran to his room and began packing. He was going for a few weeks to intern for Christian music company, ActOn33. It was his dream job.

After arriving at the Raffaello Hotel, he dropped off his bags, then he departed to the ActOn33 Headquarters. Leo walked through the fancy glass doors that matched the shiny marble walls. He sized up the waiting room.

It was total perfection, with a bit too much gloss. On one side bright yellow chairs were arranged around a glass coffee table with magazines like *Reader's Digest* scattered on top of it. Some dark green plants were tucked into the corners on black tables. On the other side behind a granite counter stood a thin man in a white shirt and jeans, awaiting Leo.

"Hello, my name is Tanner, how can I help you?" the thin man said.

"My name is Leo Diaz, and I am the new intern."

"Leo Diaz, follow her!" Tanner pointed toward a woman also dressed in a white shirt and jeans. She led Leo around a labyrinth of doors and halls, onto an elevator. Each door was boldly labeled. 'Mim', 'GodFollowers', 'be4rapture', 'Jone Cynthia'. Leo presumed that behind each door was a special room for each band or artist. The woman opened a door labeled 'Manager' and she guided him to a seat in front of a desk.

The room looked like a standard office, except for the shiny gold microphone stickers plastered haphazardly across the walls. The woman left and the room was silent. Occasionally he would hear a faint cymbal crash from the studio recording rooms. As he waited for the manager, he fidgeted with a small Rubix's cube he found on the desk. The door creaked. Leo jumped and tossed the cube to the desk. The manager, a thick man in a similar outfit to the thin man and the girl, came in and sat down.

"Hello, Leo Diaz" the manager said in a high voice that did not match his appearance in any way.

"Please, just call me Leo, Mr—" Leo hesitated, glanced down at the manager's name tag, and finished his sentence, "—Smith."

"Come Leo, I want to hear you sing."

"But what about my internship? Don't I start off doing paperwork?"

"Questions are dangerous. Just follow me."

A confused Leo followed the manager to the elevator, and took a trip to the basement.

The moment they stepped out of the elevator the manager began to talk. "These, boy, are the recording studios!" the manager spread his arms wide.

The expansive space was divided into fancy recording rooms. The whole area must have been at least fifteen feet tall. Instruments, clocks, and more shiny microphone stickers were everywhere. People were bustling all around, and the noise conglomerated to a buzz. Leo began to walk over to one of the instruments when the thin woman walked out of one of the recording rooms. She picked up Leo's target instrument, and returned to the room without so much as a glance to Leo.

"Our workers here are meticulous, focused, and bold, if you haven't noticed already," the manager quipped.

Just as Leo was thinking how overwhelmed and out-of-place he was, the manager tasked him with something.

"Go inside the room labeled '7', stand behind the microphone, and wait for a man in a black suit," the manager said authoritatively.

Leo stood behind the microphone. The room was mostly empty, with the exception of a violin and a guitar.

A man completely dressed in black walked in.

"Hi, the name's Howard," he said in a thin, reedy, voice. "Today I will be recording your first song. The manager gave me these lyrics you sent in."

Leo took the sheets and looked at them. It was a song he wrote. Despite the fact that it was only Howard and him in the room, Leo's palms began to sweat and his heart raced. His only thoughts were he would fail, and that he wouldn't be able to work here. Leo watched Howard in the booth putting on his headphones, and the door shut. Suddenly, the room felt like it collapsed in on itself. Howard gave Leo a thumbs-up, a little red light began flashing.

Leo set the papers down as quietly as he could but they rustled noisily with his shaking hands. He grasped the microphone. Time seemed to slow down in this moment. Leo took a deep breath in and began to sing.

Three Weeks Later

Leo hugged his parents, tears welling in his eyes. He stepped back, took a deep breath, just like he did three weeks earlier.

"Will they let you work there?" both parents looked earnestly at him from the porch where they greeted him just seconds ago.

Leo began to visibly cry, thinking back on all the hard work he had done the past weeks to prove himself worthy for working at ActOn33. How he had overcome his nervousness, and his fear of failure. How amazing it was to work around so many Christians with the same passion as him. He sniffed, then decided not to leave his parents in suspense. He muttered one word.

"Yes."



Spotify®



MUSIC

How to: Spotify / iTunes Music

After learning about all these musical artists, where are you going to put your music? Where will you store KB's songs so you can enjoy? What about *Waymaker*? Whether you use *Spotify* or *iTunes*, this tutorial will help.

Spotify Users (Mobile Only)

Open up **Spotify**, head to **Your Library** and go to **Playlists**. Hit **Edit**, then **Create**, and name your playlist. When you have a good name hit **Create**. You can always change the name later.

Now, go to **Search** and type **The Hamster Dance Song**. Hit the ••• on the right side of the screen that lines up with the song. Hit **Add to Playlist** and select your playlist. Now go back to **Your Library**, then **Playlists**, then your playlist. You have a playlist with music in it now! The playlist's picture will be the pictures of the top four songs in a grid, if you have enough songs.

Open your playlist and hit the ••• next to your playlist picture to **Change the Order of Your Songs**, **Share**, **Rename**, and more.

Apple Music Users (Mobile Only)

Open up **Apple Music**, and go to **Library**. From the dropdown in the top left corner select **Playlists**. Hit **New**, then name your playlist, add songs, and set the picture. Hit **Done**. When playing a song, hit the ••• and select **Add To Playlist** and select your playlist. Done! You can always go into a playlist, hit **Edit**, and change the name, picture, and order of songs.

TIP TIME

These music programs automatically add music to the bottom of the playlist. If you just want to open a playlist and listen to your favorite songs starting from the top, reorganize your newly added songs as you add them and move them to the top. Don't be afraid to take a few minutes and organize your playlist!

