

Addison Road takes a ride into Christian music_122203

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Addison Road takes a ride into Christian music

By Leann Callaway

Special to the Standard

RICHARDSON-With a fresh sound and youthful enthusiasm, the worship band Addison Road is breaking new ground as they make their way into the Christian music scene.

While attending Baylor University, Jenny Chisolm (lead singer) and her then boyfriend Ryan Simmons (guitar) realized they shared an interest for making music and decided to do something about it. They wrote and performed their own songs and even booked shows-only to soon realize they needed a band. Their friends and fellow students, Ryan Gregg (lead guitar) and Travis Lawrence (bass), joined the band. Chisolm and Simmons were married in 2002. A year later, drummer Joshua Anzaldua joined the group.

The name does not derive from a street in North Dallas, as some Texans might surmise.



Addison
Road is
Jenny and
Ryan
Simmons,
Travis
Lawrence,
Ryan
Gregg
and
Joshua
Anzaldua,
who is not
shown.
Hear a
clip from
their song
“All I
Need is
You” in
Real
Player
format
[here](#).

Gregg explains the origin this way: “We got the name Addison Road after going through hundreds of names we couldn’t agree on. We were playing in chapel at Baylor and offered \$50 to anyone who wrote down a band name that we liked enough to pick. We got hundreds more names and didn’t like any of them. Then, the sound guy backstage said he just named his son Addison. So we liked that, and I think there is a C.S. Lewis poem called, ‘Addison’s Walk’ which we thought sounded cool, but we liked ‘road’

better.”

Today, as Addison Road is growing in popularity, they are performing at concert venues, churches, youth rallies, coffee houses and college campuses. The band also has opened for popular Christian recording artists such as Big Daddy Weave, David Crowder Band and Shane Barnard.

Despite their busy schedule, the band remains dedicated to serving the local church. Each week, they lead worship at First Baptist Church of Richardson’s new 11 a.m. praise service.

“God has opened so many doors for the band and has shown that he will provide,” Anzaldua said. “We thank God for the opportunity to lead worship every Sunday at First Baptist Church of Richardson.”

Wherever Addison Road performs, their desire is to bring people into a closer relationship with God.

“We feel called to let people from our generation know that God has a purpose for them,” Jenny Simmons explained. “Our real purpose is ministry. If all we do is simply put on a fun show and write cool music, then we’re not doing anything worthwhile. It is our prayer that God uses us to convict, change and encourage people’s hearts.”

Her husband added: “We want to be an encouragement to the people we come in contact with. We really just want to be ourselves, and we want people to know that God loves them. Hopefully, we can step out of the way and let God work through us.”

Band members also said they want to help build bridges for local churches to use as a tool for attracting youth and ministering to their needs.

“We want people to leave with excitement about the message they have received,” Lawrence said. “Jenny does a great job explaining the meaning

behind our songs, and if one person comes to know Christ through us being there, that makes everything worth it.”

To help youth further understand the message behind their music, Ryan Gregg and Jenny Simmons have written a 12-week devotional book, which they hope will be published. The book coincides with each song on their new CD, “Breaking Beautifully,” which was produced by Barry Blair, a founding member of the Christian rock band Audio Adrenaline.

“We put a lot of thought and time into the devotional book,” Simmons said. “It’s been read and edited by several ministers and is ready to go, so hopefully we can get the finances soon to get that rolling. We have really seen the need for youth to have a devotional book written by people who are young enough to understand them but old enough to challenge them. We feel this is something that will be an asset to their daily walks with the Lord.”

Ministering to teenagers is especially important to Addison Road, because of their backgrounds in Baptist churches around the state. Ryan Simmons grew up in the music ministry, and his father is music minister at First Baptist Church of Weatherford. Jenny Simmons was raised at First Baptist Church of Duncanville, where her mother worked in the youth ministry.

“Growing up, I watched so many of my friends in church who were ‘playing church,’” she said. “They never understood God or the concept of an intimate relationship that could change their lives. That makes me so sad, and I think it’s an epidemic the modern church faces.

“If kids are just going to church to hang out with their friends and socialize, then they are really missing the point that church is supposed to edify our personal walks. I feel called to relate the message to youth that there is a huge difference between going to church and knowing God on a day-to-day, heart level. We get to use music as a platform to share that message. We

hope to encourage youth by sharing our struggles and weaknesses, being real with them and connecting to them through the lyrics of our songs.”

As a solid foundation has been laid for Addison Road, they are trusting God to direct their paths and are hoping that leads to a record label.

In July 2003, Addison Road was selected out of hundreds of bands for the Grassroots Music Sampler CD, which will have a 20,000 unit national circulation through Christian bookstores, colleges and radio stations. This summer, they will lead worship at LifeWay’s Centrifuge Camp in Panama City, Fla., from May 15 to Aug. 7.

“I have no doubt that God has paved the way for us to be playing music,” Gregg said. “There’s just too many things that have happened to feel otherwise.”

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.