

Former pop music star, songwriter teamed up to glorify God

November 20, 2009

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—As a member of the Wilson Phillips pop group, Chynna Phillips achieved international fame with radio hits that sold more than 10 million copies worldwide.

As a successful singer/songwriter in her own right, Vaughan Penn's songs have been prominently featured in more than 100 films and television programs, including *Grey's Anatomy*, *Criminal Minds*, *Boston Public*, *Numb3rs*, *The Hills* and *Laguna Beach*.

Now, the two have teamed up to sing for God's glory.

Within the last few years, they each recommitted their lives to Christ and discovered God's plans for their lives were greater than they ever imagined.



Chynna Phillips and
Vaughan Penn

"I accepted Christ when I was 14, and it seemed like God had imparted to me a gift to write songs," Penn said.

"In college, I was in a band that was sponsored by the Baptist Student Union. ... We made a couple of records and went around raising money for missions and sang at churches. During this time, I really felt like I was 'walking the walk.' However, after college, I had some times where I didn't really fall away, but I was a little confused about some things ... so, I had

some stretching and growing times and searching for some answers.”

Then, five years ago, Penn experienced a life-threatening medical condition and spent almost two months in the hospital. Realizing God had spared her for a reason, she was inspired to write songs that specifically would encourage others to develop a relationship with Christ.

“During that time, I said: ‘God, when I get out of this hospital, I want to use my gifts for you as much as I can. I’d love to make a Christian record,’” she said.

Not long after making that commitment, Penn received an e-mail from Phillips’ stepfather that led to the two of them striking up a friendship, along with a singing and songwriting partnership.

Phillips had accepted Christ as her Savior through the influence of schoolmates when she was in the seventh grade. Previously, Phillips said, she believed God existed, but she had no idea what it meant to have a personal relationship with him.

“That was such a powerful experience for me because I wasn’t raised in a religious family,” said Phillips, whose parents, John and Michelle Phillips, were founding members of The Mamas & the Papas, a 1960s rock band.

“For me, this was a huge wake-up call—to acknowledge that God was ready to love me, heal me and be there for me whenever I needed him. That was a huge piece of the missing puzzle for me. But then as I got older, I didn’t have support at home, and I sort of fell off my ‘Jesus wagon.’”

Phillips went on to achieve a successful musical career. About six years ago, she had an overwhelming sense God was tugging on her heart.

“I got down on my knees and started praying. I said to God: ‘I need you in my life again. I’m ready to fully commit my life to you. I want to live for you

and worship you, but I need to know who you are. It needs to be crystal clear.’”

That experience marked the beginning of her renewed commitment to Christ, and Phillips desired to create music that would lead others to a relationship with him.

“I started working on songs with songwriters, but they weren’t really into using the word ‘Jesus’ in songs. I kept telling them: ‘You don’t understand. I want to make a Christian record. I have to tell people about Jesus.’ I couldn’t find the right people to work with who would write songs about Christ.”

That changed after Phillips and Penn wrote their first song together.

“There was one night where my husband was up really late and just couldn’t sleep,” Phillips said. “When I asked him what was wrong, he said, ‘I keep thinking that this Chynna Phillips and Vaughan Penn thing is way bigger and way more special than the Chynna Phillips thing. ... I think the sound and energy that you guys have is really something special, and it’s something that I think you should explore.’

“I slept on it and prayed about it, and the next morning, I woke up and thought, ‘That’s what I need to do,’ and gave Vaughan a call.”

Their debut album, [One Reason](#), conveys themes of redemption, forgiveness and hope with a musical canvas of harmony-rich arrangements.

“We named the record One Reason because we felt the Lord leading us together for one reason—to glorify him and help other people increase their faith,” Phillips said.

“The lyrics of (the title song) ‘One Reason’ ask us to put the Lord first, amid the craziness, and remember that he is our one reason for life.”

Even before the release of their debut album, their music already has started having an impact on lives.

“We were playing the song ‘One Reason’ for a friend, and she said: ‘Before I listen to your song, I want to remind you that I’m an atheist. I’m just telling you before you play your ‘God-song,’” Penn recalled.

“Well, I put the song on, and she started closing her eyes. By the time the second chorus came on, my friend was starting to cry. When the song ended, she said: ‘My mom has been trying to get me to go to church with her for a long time, and I think I’m going to go. I love this song, and I can’t wait to go to your concert.’

“That gave me cold chills—to see that the music is touching someone who isn’t yet a believer. I just think this is our calling, what we’re supposed to do.”

”