

# STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN

## THE GLORIOUS UNFOLDING

“I know this is not anything like you thought the story of your life was gonna be...but there's so much of the story that's still yet to unfold.” Few people know the pain and the promise in that statement better than **Steven Curtis Chapman**. The past few years have been an incredible journey that Chapman wouldn't have chosen, yet has taught him so very much. Those lessons permeate every song on Chapman's new album *The Glorious Unfolding*.

Lyrically the album is teeming with the substantive lyrics that have made Chapman the most awarded artist in Christian music with 57 Gospel Music Association Dove Awards, five GRAMMYs, 47 No. 1 singles and approaching 11 million albums sold. Musically there's a sense of adventure that reflects Chapman's ongoing willingness to experiment and leap out of his comfort zone. He's never taken the gift of music for granted and approaches each new project both excited and humbled by the possibilities.

“I'm very, very grateful to be given the opportunity to make music and share the things that I feel like God has entrusted to me,” Chapman says. “I don't take it lightly. I pray: ‘God, I want to know You and I want to make You known.’ God has continued faithfully to reveal Himself through dark places and reveal His mysteriousness. I get the sense that He's telling an amazing story. He's not confused. He's not biting his nails worrying if the plan is going to turn out okay the way I do. He's fully confident of His plans and He's in control. That's been something that I've held onto.”

*The Glorious Unfolding* is Chapman's 18<sup>th</sup> album and his first studio album of all-original material in seven years. However, now, more than ever he felt it was time to express these steadfast messages of faithfulness, while successfully blending his trademark sound with musical creativity. “Musically, I really wanted to find those ways to make something that felt very honest and true, and yet very fresh and relevant,” Chapman says. “I felt like this had to be a little bit more exciting and energetic and I was ready to crank it up. It felt like this is the time to do that and celebrate. With this music, you will hopefully hear that and get a sense of the excitement and joy in this record.”

The album's lead single, “Love Take Me Over,” is an exuberant anthem with an infectious melody that inspires listeners and gives the instant urge to hit repeat. “Even though it's in the guise of a very fun, up-tempo sing-along-at-the-top-of-your-lungs song, it's a message and a lesson that I have continued to be in the process of learning,” Chapman says of the song. “I need to be filled with love so that I can be loving in the way I respond. I'm still learning that the only way I want to love others well in my life is when I come to terms daily, sometimes hourly, sometimes in 15 minute increments, with the fact that I am loved fully and completely, not as I should be, but as I am. That drives me, then, to a place of living a life of love for others when I realize that I am loved first. We love because He first loved us.”

One of the many highlights from the album is “Together,” a beautiful song that Chapman wrote for his wife Mary Beth. “In October, we celebrate our 29<sup>th</sup> anniversary,” he says, acknowledging that the past five years, since their youngest daughter (Maria Sue) was killed in a tragic accident, have been especially trying. “Statistics show that 90% of marriages don't survive the loss of a child. The fact that we are together celebrating 29 years of marriage is a testimony to God's faithfulness and God's grace.”

Chapman delayed playing this song for Mary Beth until it was completely finished, recorded and mixed. “I sat her down and played this for her as we held hands and wept together through this celebration of God’s faithfulness,” he adds, “I’m really hopeful that this song will encourage and minister to people in a deep way.”

*The Glorious Unfolding* also includes a special song, “Only One and Only You,” written to encourage his daughter Shaohannah. “She’s 13, which tells you a lot of what you need to know about her,” he says with a grin. “It’s that wonderful, incredibly awful time to try to be a young lady in this world and culture. I’m just very, very proud of her and I wanted to just write a song to tell her how amazing she is.”

Other standout tracks include “Something Beautiful,” an up-tempo, forward-thinking song about the unfolding and promises of God, and watching Him turn broken things in life into something good as He’s promised. “Take Another Step,” is another high-energy declaration that talks of taking those steps of faith in times of uncertainty, when the road ahead is completely dark, whether it be good or bad, and fully trusting what God has in store.

Whether encouraging those he’s closest to in this world to see themselves as God sees them or inviting an arena full of fans to sing along in celebration of God’s faithfulness, Chapman has spent his life creating music that makes a difference. *The Glorious Unfolding* continues that impressive legacy. In listening to the project, it feels like a landmark album, being musically inventive, yet bursting with truth, integrity and emotional gravitas in much the same way as *The Great Adventure* did when that ground-breaking album released in 1992.

The latest album installment is his second record since signing with Provident Music Group in 2012. His label debut, *JOY*, served up holiday classics alongside his engaging original tunes. It became the latest entry in the Paducah, Kentucky native’s beloved Christmas catalog and provided Chapman and co-producer Brent Milligan a chance to explore different sounds in the studio. On *The Glorious Unfolding*, Chapman and Milligan reveled in the chance to experiment further to provide a fresh framework for these new songs, utilizing different textures and techniques to expand on Chapman’s signature sound.

Recorded at Chapman’s home studio, he enlisted son Will Franklin to play drums on six tracks on the album and also engaged other musical pals such as Delirious? alum Stu G on guitar and acclaimed fiddler Andy Leftwich, a member of Ricky Skaggs’ band, Kentucky Thunder, and a key creative force in the making of Chapman’s Cracker Barrel release, *Deep Roots*. On “Sound of Your Voice,” Chapman recruited surprise guests, wife Mary Beth, daughters Emily and Stevey Joy and daughters-in-law Julia Chapman and Jillian Edwards Chapman to sing background vocals.

Recording *The Glorious Unfolding* was a labor of love for Chapman, helping him give voice to his own joys and challenges and he’s hopeful it will do the same for others. “The theme was this idea that God will complete the story and in fact, He already has completed it and knows the ending,” Chapman says. “Yet a part of the mystery is that He is revealing it in our lives and it’s this unfolding, incredible tale of His love for us. This album gave me a chance to tell that, to celebrate loss and hope and new life. For all of that, I’m really grateful. It really is my hope that people will hear the sound of God’s voice whispering to them: ‘I know the plans I have for you. Will you trust me? Will you trust me through the hard seasons and through the good seasons? The story is good. Will you trust me and watch it unfold?’”

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