

Art, Information, Interviews:  
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**MULTI-PLATINUM RECORDING ARTISTS, CASTING CROWNS,  
HEADLINE MULTI-GROUP CHRISTMAS TOUR**

**"Casting Crowns Christmas Celebration"**

**With Special Guests Natalie Grant, Denver & The Mile High Orchestra,  
Avalon, Michael English and pureNRG**



(Nashville, Tenn.) September 11, 2008 - Grammy winning, multi-platinum recording artists Casting Crowns, who sold 450,000 tickets in more than 80 cities during its last outing, will headline the 14-city "Casting Crowns Christmas Celebration" with a full orchestra and choir touring this November and December, performing songs from their first and highly anticipated Christmas Album, *Peace On Earth*. The tour, billed as Casting Crowns Christmas Celebration, will feature special guest, three-time GMA Dove Award winning Female Vocalist of the Year, Natalie Grant, Denver & The Mile High Orchestra, Avalon, Michael English and new music from Radio Disney favorites, pureNRG. "I want to see people rediscover the worship that Christmas songs have in them," says Mark Hall, front man and principal songwriter for Casting Crowns. "A lot of times, when we sing carols, we sort of shift into Christmas carol mode—singing songs that we've been singing for so long, we might not be hearing what they're really saying." Casting Crowns hopes to share the deeper meaning of songs sung for generations, many which were written from a place of searching and pure desperation. *Peace on Earth's* featured single "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," which features a Chattanooga, Tenn.-based boys choir personifying the bells, was originally penned by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The poetic lyrics document how hope emerged from a crisis of faith the writer experienced

after he lost his wife in a house fire and soon saw his son crippled in the Civil War. Hall explains, "He wrote about how every year when these Christmas bells ring, it reminds him that there's peace on earth, good will toward men. The verses change, and suddenly he's saying, 'But there is no peace. There's war, and there's hate. And this hate mocks the song of the bells.' He's working through his understanding of Christmas. And as the bells keep ringing, he just has this moment when he realizes God is not dead, nor does He sleep. Good will prevail. God is going to save the day." The timelessness of the song's potent hope-filled message is glaring to Hall—especially in light of today's world events. "This generation needs to hear this song," he says. "My kids need to hear this song." So when the people of God are here, there's peace, because there's hope that God can change anyone's life."

Casting Crowns, with lead singer Mark Hall, recently led the 39th Annual GMA Dove Awards with seven wins including Group of the Year for the fourth consecutive year, and Song of the Year for its No. 1 hit "East to West." The group's third studio recording *The Altar and The Door* achieved an historical debut at No. 2 on *The Billboard 200* chart with 130,000 first-week copies sold, making it the highest debut in the country that week and the second highest CD seller of any kind in America. The album sailed to RIAA Gold status in 10 weeks. Casting Crowns was the No. 1 top-selling Christian music artist of 2007 and won its first American Music Award in November of 2007.

Lead singer Mark Hall is a full-time youth pastor, serving his 17th year in youth ministry as a student pastor at Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in Atlanta. All seven band members remain active in student ministry in the Atlanta area and tour part-time around their local church duties. [www.castingcrowns.com](http://www.castingcrowns.com)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
11/28/08	7:30pm	The Berry Center	Cypress	TX
11/29/08	7:30pm	Nokia Theatre @ Grand Prairie	Grand Prairie	TX
11/30/08	7:30pm	BOK Center	Tulsa	OK
12/1/08	7:30pm	Century Tel Center	Bossier City	LA
12/2/08	7:30pm	John Q Hammons Arena	Springfield	MO
12/4/08	7:30pm	Family Arena	St. Louis	MO
12/5/08	7:30pm	The Bank of Kentucky Center	Highland Heights	KY
12/6/08	7:30pm	BJCC Arena	Birmingham	AL
12/7/08	7:30pm	Philips Arena	Atlanta	GA
12/8/08	7:30pm	BankcorpSouth Center	Tulpeo	MS
12/9/08	7:30pm	ASU Convocation Center	State University	AR
12/11/08	7:30pm	Charleston Civic Center Coliseum	Charleston	WV
12/12/08	7:30pm	Greensboro Coliseum	Greensboro	NC
12/13/08	6:30pm	The Sovereign Center	Reading	PA

**\*\*all dates subject to change\*\***

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#### **About Natalie Grant**

Considered a powerhouse vocalist, heart-gripping songwriter and charismatic performer, Natalie Grant's most recent recording is *Relentless*, her seventh album and first studio recording in nearly three years. Grant is a three time GMA Female Vocalist of the Year, an author, popular speaker and performer on Women of Faith's "Revolve Tour" for teen girls. She was one of the first artists to open the eyes of the Church to the atrocities of children around the world forced into

the sex trade, Natalie created The Home Foundation in 2005 to raise both awareness and financial support for this important fight. <http://www.nataliegrant.com/>

#### **About Denver & The Mile High Orchestra**

A one-of-a-kind big band ensemble, amidst the landscape of today's Christian music scene, Denver & The Mile High Orchestra is comprised of Denver with three trumpet players, three saxophone players, two trombone players and a rhythm section. The group's power-packed sound is infectious, with brass horns flashing back and forth, swinging to a toe-tapping retro beat. With three studio recordings and a Christmas album under their belt and a nearly non-stop touring schedule each year, audiences across the country can attest firsthand to the excitement of a live Denver & The Mile High Orchestra performance. Career highlights for the band include performances at two Olympics—Salt Lake City's Winter Games in 2002 and the Summer Games in Athens, Greece, in 2004. <http://www.denvermho.com/>

#### **About Avalon**

Avalon, considered the premier Christian vocal group, formed in 1996, setting a high standard in contemporary Christian music. Reviewing its 2006 project *Faith: A Hymns Collection*, *All Music Guide* noted "the vocal efficiency and personalized stylings that place Avalon among the elite singing groups in contemporary Christian circles." To date, the quartet has sold more than three million albums, charted 20 No. 1 singles, and won an American Music Award plus numerous Dove Awards such as the 1999 Pop/Contemporary Song of the Year for "Testify to Love." That song, a listener favorite, has also been specially re-recorded for Avalon's ninth recording, **Another Time, Another Place**, giving new voice and a debt of gratitude to various landmark faith-driven songs of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s.

<http://www.avalonlive.com/>

#### **About Michael English**

The sound that Michael English pioneered in the 1990s, after emerging from his apprenticeship with the Gaither Vocal Band into the light of his solo career, pointed contemporary Christian music in a fresh direction. His influence was enormous and his accomplishments; multiple Dove Awards, No. 1 singles in Christian and Adult Contemporary charts, two consecutive Top 5 albums, impressive, commercially and artistically. The title of his latest effort, *The Prodigal Comes Home*, actually graces two achievements: his upcoming CD and his memoir, published by Thomas Nelson on April 10. <http://www.michaelenglishmusic.com/>

#### **About pureNRG**

A favorite with Radio Disney audiences, pureNRG burst on to the scene in 2007 with a top-selling Fervent Records debut, two DVD releases showcasing their vocal skills and complex choreography and followed with sophomore release, "Here We Go Again". The three youths of pureNRG are rapidly becoming one of the most popular young acts in both mainstream and Christian circles, racking up touring miles as opening acts for MercyMe, BarlowGirl and Skillet as well as Jump5. The winning combination of high-octane energy combined with lyrical integrity, directed at spreading the gospel, is the root of pureNRG's success. The threesome will release **A pureNRG Christmas** on 9/23/08. [www.purenrgonline.com/](http://www.purenrgonline.com/)

