

Plus One Biography

Long before their remarkable Atlantic Records debut, *The Promise*, went gold, Plus One sang like a *band*, their vocals testifying to a truly distinctive ensemble power. These days, after two years on the road, they look, act, and even laugh like a band. Together, Nate Cole, Jason Perry, Jeremy Mhire, Nathan Walters and Gabe Combs trade quips, finish each other's sentences, break up over inside jokes. It's not just the funkier clothes and sharp haircuts that lend them the air of precociously seasoned musicians. It's something intangible - a tested sense of commitment and purpose.

And while they're grateful for their groundbreaking, out-of-nowhere success — there's no resting on their laurels for these guys. They're cognizant of the fact that Plus One was the top-selling Christian artist for 2000; they appreciate being honored as the 2001 GMA New Artist of the Year. They look back fondly on the 62 cities they visited on their first tour, opening for Jaci Velazquez. Even more thrilling was their own headlining tour, a 40-city venue and the first-ever tour sponsorship by Trans World Entertainment. They remember guest starring on "Days of Our Lives" and "Touched by an Angel," appearing on "Live with Regis and Kelly," and contributing to the *Pokemon 2000 The Power of One Soundtrack*. But what they're really excited about is *now*.

Specifically, they're blown away by the experience of making their new album, *Obvious*.

As Jason Perry explains, "The new album's about being more specific. Getting down to earth. Applying our faith and our message to real life, to the ways that people live everyday."

"It's just much more us," enthuses Nate Cole, "On 10 out of the 12 songs, at least one of us has a co-writing credit. We took a lot more ownership creatively. It's a real move ahead."

"And everyone was really open to the changes. The label's in complete support, as are the producers," adds Jeremy Mhire. "The album's much more personal, down to the fact that many tracks were produced by our co-writers, people who had the best grasp of where we wanted to go stylistically."

Obvious builds on a legacy that was started just a short 2 years ago, and extends beyond it. The record drew together a roster of top-notch producers, including Guy Roche, Matthew Gerrard, Peter Zizzo, Klaus/Jeeve & Miklos Malek, Tedd T., Bernie Herms, Peter Kipley and Howard New. In addition to the stellar list of seasoned producers, Plus One members themselves built on their musical development with Gabe Combs producing a track ("Start To Fly") and Nate producing vocals ("Calling Down An Angel"). The group also lent its talents to the fastidious attention to songwriting and vocal expertise showcased through the project. *Obvious* reveals, in a sense, a new Plus One, a group who has genuinely "come of age."

Musically, with front-and-center guitars and even more infectious beats, *Obvious* strongly displays Plus One's growth. "We experimented a bit more," Gabe comments. "We want to keep our tried and true audience, but also expand. And that's like all good bands - you don't stay the same, you reinvent yourselves."

Lyricaly, that means the new assertiveness of songs like "Kick Me." "It addresses the fact that when people are having troubles," Nathan Walters says, "the tendency is often to pour salt in the wounds instead of carrying each others' burdens."

"Going Crazy," also reflects a new depth. "It's about "going crazy" (personally) if you don't have a strong center, and not being grounded in your faith in Christ," he says. "A majority of our message on this project stems from meeting kids on the road and seeing what their struggles are," Nate then explains. "Their struggles and needs are real, and we wanted to address them and to write songs that bring them some encouragement."

Kicking off with "Camouflage," (a song about not being ashamed of who you are) and progressing through the gorgeous balladry of "You" and "Forever" to the essential honesty of "I Don't Care" and the memorable

"Calling Down an Angel," this is music that not only moves, but matters. As such, it serves as a sort of collective aural autobiography of the group itself.

Indeed, from the yearning power of "Use Me" to the rapturous "Under the Influence" to the questing spirit of "Who Am I," *Obvious* is Plus One not only stronger but more *real* than ever before.

Plus One began as the realization of a vision, a vision of music with a message. Renowned music executive Barry Landis, head of Atlantic Records Christian music division, and manager Mitchell Solarek recognized the individual talents of Nate, Jeremy, Gabe, Nathan and Jason and developed a vocal powerhouse whose values would make them inspired messengers in today's tumultuous times.

"In the beginning," Jeremy reflects, "coming together as a group, our practice came through performance" — at first off-the-cuff gigs in small town churches to quickly playing before stadium-sized crowds." With three of the guys pastors' kids, and the band members' hometowns ranging from Madison, Indiana to Lakeland, Florida, life in the cosmopolitan ambience of the music business was a quick growing experience, but one that is proving to be the basis for a solid group of young men seeking to share their mission and their firmly built hope in Christ.

In the beginning also brought the opportunity for an unprecedented relationship with 14-time Grammy Award-winner David Foster, who brought together a virtuoso production team, and the development of a relationship that would soon prove to be a strong catalyst for a debut year of unprecedented success.

Plus One released *The Promise* in 2000, which soared to RIAA gold-album status in less than 10 months. Of the album's superabundance of highlights, four consecutive radio singles went to #1 on the CCM charts: "Written on My Heart," "God Is in This Place," "My Life" and "The Promise." "Written on My Heart" also became the most requested song on the Disney Channel, while "Last Flight Out" hit the Top 5 at Radio Disney. *The Promise* also paved the way for Plus One's extensive touring and widespread recognition.

Culminating this whirlwind debut year of personal growth and professional success, the content and focus of *Obvious* reminds us that, for Plus One, three qualities have always been deemed essential: camaraderie ("We've always said," insists Jeremy, "that we gotta keep it real, keep it honest"), singing with the utmost of soul, and a clear sense of mission.

Jason Perry elaborates: "Growing up singing in church we learned all about passion. You don't just get up and sing a gospel song, you pour your heart out. You reach for the highest note you can get. As singers, we're concerned about tone, sound, phrasing, whether the rhythm's right 'in the pocket.' But mainly it's about passion." The passion to persuade and inspire - a passion that's only grown as Plus One have progressed. "You start out thinking that singing in front of 10,000 people is the ultimate success." Jason says, "Well, it's great. But what's really significant is singing when you've got something real to say — something from the heart."

That "something" remains a message of hope, of renewal, of new beginnings. Perhaps that message is best conveyed in one of their new songs, the glorious "Start to Fly" - "If you just look past your scars/ you will see that it's not that far/ Don't close your mind/ Let God inside/ Begin to breathe/ Start to fly..."