

withLove



It wasn't too long ago that Baltimore rose in frustration in response to systematic injustices devastating our country. Despite the city's reputation since the uprising, there are young people who have been called to unify using their gift of music. The name of the group is called withLove and they are on a mission to magnify and glorify the Lord while bringing the body of Christ together. Started in 2013, withLove is a dynamic ensemble of millennials on fire for the Lord, blessed with exceptional musical gifts. Their music, rooted

in the Gospel and Contemporary Christian genres, is fresh and creative, flaunting the same racial and musical diversity that make up the ensemble. Their new sound, which includes splashes of alternative rock, along with a fresh approach to the Gospel message can be found on the ensemble's upcoming CD release self-titled *withLove*.

The new CD, set to drop in the summer of 2016, is a blend of the many influences of the group members. Lovers of contemporary worship from groups like Israel & New Breed, Hillsong and Gungor, withLove is forging a path that's all its own. Songs like "Worth It All" and "My Heart Cries Out", two of the album's forthcoming singles, showcase the amazing songwriting and vocal talents within withLove. In addition, it's hard to overlook the incredible musicianship – not typical of most bands – easily heard from the first note. Clearly a God-focused record, each song touches the heart in a powerful way. Other moving songs like "Something Beautiful" and "Set Us Free" are unforgettable as well. It's apparent that this group is delivering something special to music lovers.

David Warren, withLove's founder and visionary, was passionate about finding a group of young people who would serve the Lord through song. He found it in Stephen Waddy, Lana Matthews, Lauren Jenkins and Jordan Williams. The five-some creates an amazing musical collective that's quite different than anything on the Christian music scene today. Warren says, "When I was given the vision for withLove, it was to create a multi-cultural, diverse worship band that embraces the needs and hearts of communities around the world, especially here in Baltimore in light of the recent Freddie Gray uprising. We want to be part of the healing process of our city and across the world - reconciling people's hearts back to Christ".

Warren is familiar with raising up his voice in worship to the Lord. A pianist for the last 20 years, David studied with a classically trained pianist by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the late Mrs. Theresa Parcells. Initially, he trained himself by ear and at the age of 10, he was playing for the children's choir in his church. He got his start in his youth group's worship band leading worship through CCM and GoGo Music, a genre created in Washington, DC, at Rainbow Family Christian Center. He continued his musical journey at University of Maryland, College Park when he played for the University's Gospel Choir. He continued to serve as a worship leader at several churches before forming withLove. "withLove is not just about singing great songs. It's about loving God and loving people," shares Warren. "Our goal is to be a

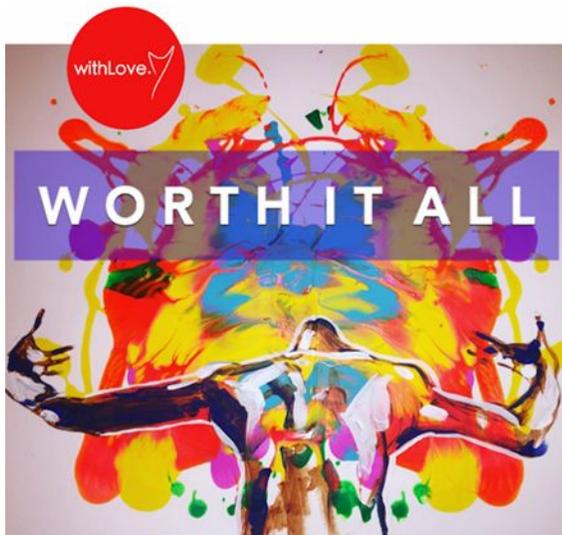
diverse group that creates music to reveal the truth of who Jesus Christ is through life, culture, and God's love world-wide," he says. Part of David's drive to reach all people with his ministry is his own unique heritage. He's bi-racial and that fact alone pushes him to break down barriers that divide people and that divide the body of Christ.

Every group member feels that same calling. Stephen Waddy, who plays electric guitar and who arranges and produces for the group, feels excited about being a part of withLove and their unique mission. "I love to work with everyone in the group," he shares. "One of the reasons I love being a member is the great music we create together," he says. A pianist as well, Stephen didn't start playing in church but took private jazz and classical piano lessons. Now he lends his musical talents to two local churches.

Lauren Jenkins is the newest member of withLove and like her fellow group members, music was a large part of her upbringing. In college, she sang in Black Voices, the University of Virginia's gospel choir and led worship at a Charlottesville, VA church. She knew she had been called to music ministry when the director of the Largo Community Choir, Pastor Jeremiah Murphy, called on her to sing Judith McAllister's "Hallelujah You're Worthy". Since that time, she's embraced her musical talents – singer, songwriter and pianist – fully. Years ago, she connected with David at one of withLove's Love Sessions and became an informal member of the group until September 2016 when she officially joined the ensemble.

Jordan Williams, the group's drummer, has been an instrumentalist since he can remember. Hailing from a musical family, he began playing drums at the age of 3 and got his first drum set at 6. He honed his skills in high school and went to college at Musicians Institute. Currently, he plays locally at several churches and musical venues spanning the DC, Maryland and Virginia area.

Lana Matthews claims that she "blossomed late" musically when she started to write poetry and spoken word before finding that she had a talent for writing music. She and David met when they both were members of the University of Maryland Gospel Choir. A songwriter in withLove, Lana says she loves the fact that the ensemble "inspires and uplifts people in the name of Jesus, not just through music, but through community service."



When the group isn't jamming, worshipping, or praying together, they are hitting the streets, ministering to the needs of people. Periodically, they hold "Love Projects" where they engage the community by serving the sick and shut-in and feeding the homeless. They pour out their lives as mentors to those who have none and give back to a community that desperately needs them. Outside of the Baltimore region, they have been on mission trips to the UK, Romania, Hungary, and Turkey and sponsor a child in Veracruz, Mexico through Compassion International. The group also holds "Love Sessions" where they provide a platform for people to express their artistic skills during the group's musical performances. David feels that it's important that withLove provides inspiring music, but

even more he wants the group to inspire this generation of believers and non-believers around the world through simple acts of love.

That's why he named the group withLove. His goal is that everything that the ensemble does is an active expression of love to God's people. He also believes this is what God is all about and what the Bible

ultimately comes down to. David says, "I believe that God meets us there – right there at the place where we are loving God and loving one another, no matter the cost," he says.