

# Hallels

## Favorite Worship Albums 2016: A Half Yearly Review

By Timothy Yap Jun 29, 2016 01:15 AM EDT

Six months of the year 2016 have passed, this year we have a slew of worship albums released. Here's our top 10 favorite worship albums released this year each tagged with a snippet and a link to our original review.

### 10. Jesus Culture "Let It Echo"

"Let It Echo" is different from their preceding records, in the sense that it wasn't recorded at their large concert settings. Rather, the individual songs were recorded during their worship services across various Sundays. And the repertoire between the leaders and the congregation certainly add a refreshing layer of warmth, acceptance, and enthusiasm to this album.

### 9. Bethel Music "Have It All"

Surrender is the pulse that undergirds the entire record. Copious songs give exposition to this theme, most prominently the title cut "Have It All" led by Brian Johnson. Starting off with an acapella-esque introduction, the slow pensive ballad finds a vulnerable Brian Johnson emptying his soul before God in utter surrender. Though Leeland is an esteemed singer-songwriter in his own rights, he easily blends in with the team in offering what is the album's most catchy burner "Lion and the Lamb."

### 8. Passion "Salvation's Tide is Rising"

*Salvation's Tide is Rising* is released just in time for this year's conference that features speakers such as Giglio, John Piper, Ravi Zacharias, and others. This disc itself presents 9 newly written worship songs plus Kristian Stanfill's cover of HouseFire's "Good Good Father." Speaking of Stanfill, he opens up the album with the anthemic title cut "Salvation's Tide is Rising." With grunting blasts of electric guitar over a bombastic blow-up chorus with lots of synth riffs, "Salvation's Tide" is a clarion call for God to break down the walls of our sinful rebellion and do his work of revival. In our climate of spiritual lethargy, this song is indeed prophetic.

### 7. Audrey Assad "Inheritance"

"Inheritance" is Assad at her creative and heartfelt best. This album of hymns and a few originals is brilliantly polyglot: here Assad gorgeously blends together the language and sounds of her liturgical high church traditions with the palatable expressions of a modern day coffee house singer. As a result, Assad has created a modern sounding hymnal with sonic threads of ancient sensibilities.

### 6. Vital Worship "Songs for the Living King 2"

Despite the deluge of worship albums coming from megachurches, there's something refreshing about Vital Worship's brand new set *"Songs for the Living King Volume 2."* Rather, than just allowing one church team to dominate an entire record of songs, Vital Worship gathers songs from growing church worship leaders as well as more established church teams. With each team contributing just one song each, they have submitted the cream of the crop for this album's inclusion. As a result, coming from individual churches of various sizes, the songs don't appear to have the manufactured gloss as some worship albums these days.

## 5. Travis Ryan "Until My Voice is Gone (Live)"

"Until My Voice is Gone (Live)" is the perfect showcase of worship songs that flex with theological muscles. They are not only meaty in their lyrical depths, but they are musically sturdy, anthemic, and exhortatory.

## 4. Mike R. Schuster "Singalongs and Pseudohymns"

There's not a hint of hyperbole in the title of Mike R. Schuster's new album "Singalongs and Pseudohymns." You don't have to be a tunesmith in any sense of the word and you will find yourself singing along to these 12 offerings in no time. In a sonic milieu where the melody has often played second fiddle to polytechnics and the hippest guitar riffs, this is one of the few albums out there which thrive of great and memorable melodic structures.

## 3. Paul Wilbur "Forever Good"

Borrowing traditional Jewish instruments like the shofar with Yiddish-influence tunes augmented by Hebrew phrases lifted from the Hebrew Bible, Wilbur shows us that worship music should be informed, influenced, and compelled from both the New as well as the Old Testament. Thus, listening to Wilbur not only opportune for us moments of worship, but it also enhances our appreciation of the Old Testament.

## 2. Keith and Kristyn Getty "Facing a Task Unfinished"

Hailed as the Charles Wesley of the 21st Century, Keith and Kristyn Getty have resourced the church's worship with vocabulary that goes beyond a hook and five repeated lines. On the other, the hymns of the Gettys are not old fashioned and jaded, mummified in the musical noirs of the Victorian era. Rather, they are musically engaging and refreshingly contemporary. As a result, churches of both the liturgically-driven as well as the more contemporary ones have embraced the couple's hymns such as "Speak, O Lord," "In Christ Alone," "By Faith," and many others. Now, they are back with their album of new and non-festive material since 2012's "Hymns for the Christian Life."

## 1. Steven Curtis Chapman "Worship and Believe"

The accolades lauded on Steven Curtis Chapman are just staggering. With 5 Grammy Awards and 58 GMA Dove Awards won, 10 million albums sold, 46 Christian #1 songs, and to say Chapman is a veteran is a mere understatement. However, after 22 studio albums released, it's a surprise that Chapman hasn't released a worship album until now. "Worship and Believe" is thus a much anticipated endeavour as this is Chapman's first and foremost worship record. Ardent fans who have grown to love Chapman's acoustic guitar based CCM pop need not fret as the album still bears all the licks and quips of a signature Chapman record. Rather, what's different this time is twofold: first, the lyrics are all directly vertical up to God with lots of horizontal encouragements to engage with our Master and Friend. Second, the songs here are far more inviting cordially drawing us in to singalong with Chapman as he leads us in worship.

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