

newsboys | GO

Recently, Peter Furler and his bandmates found themselves in a far off place, countless miles away from all they knew and the comforts of home. They were in Israel, near the Sea of Galilee, just miles from the spot where bombs would be falling only months later. The newsboys were making their very first visit to play their very first show there, for five thousand people who had never heard of them. The crowd was a mixture of cultures, races and creeds, from Buddhists to Muslims to Jews - anything but the typical newsboys audience. One might think that a band in this position would feel intimidated to the point of faltering...

But they found themselves right at home.

“The Israeli festival changed us, to say the least. It was one of the most powerful moments I have ever experienced,” says newsboys frontman Peter Furler. “Not only was it a mixture of many different backgrounds, but a mixture of beliefs as well. I didn’t preach or even share, but I began quoting a passage from memory--more in a spoken word style than anything else--during the middle section of one song. This ‘jam’ went on for awhile, and as it did, I knew something was happening. The crowd’s entire countenance shifted from skepticism to sort of a biblical worship dance, and this wave--I don’t know what else to call it--swept over the crowd.”

As Furler speaks of the event, you can’t help but believe that something holy is behind this story. Beyond Grammys, gold records or merchandise sales. Beyond the comfort of domestic market success. The newsboys have developed a genuine love for those abroad. Say what you will, but this is a unit of men who have pushed past mere industry accolades to an international fulfillment of the Great Commission.

This is who they are, at this moment in time.

On *Go*, their new release (and first pop record in four years), the band has committed to continuing outward on this journey, completing the circle they began etching across the nations two decades ago.

Fourteen albums ago, long before a separate culture was established to house the bands which would follow in their wake, the newsboys began with a singular motivation. They sought to play music infused with life and hope for all who would listen, for all those who most needed to hear it. It was dimly-lit bars and seedy night clubs where they first performed for open ears in their native Australia. And it was in this environment that a vision began which would carry newsboys across international barriers of language, culture and race.

“We played a show in Morocco not long ago for about 15,000 Muslims, and it was like something out of Indiana Jones,” recalls Furler. “Snake charmers, people eating eyeballs, etc. This is a place where the name of Jesus will get you killed! Nevertheless, His name went out subtly through our songs, and when it did it was probably the loudest His name had been spoken there in ages. It’s a dark place, for certain. But we were able to love these people by just *living* with them for a few days. That’s what it’s about.”

For inspiration when writing *Go*, Furler didn’t turn to his record collection, the radio or even MTV. Instead, he just wrote music, alone, in his own headspace. And if you ask him about this unique approach, he will tell you that his biggest influence after fourteen albums is himself: his experiences, the journey he has traveled. According to Furler, there can be nothing more stimulating than this. The aforementioned stories have provided more than enough backdrop.

“If you aren’t making music from the right place, then it won’t be authentic, people will not connect with it, and your record will be sitting on a shelf. On the other hand, if you write from that place of true passion, without trying to make something commercial or forced, then the result will be natural. People will be drawn to it,” Furler explains.

Go, though pop in structure and sensibility, is a very rhythmic approach to the newsboys sound. Beat, bass and melody drive these songs. There are subtleties of urban influence, with the memorable choruses you have come to expect from this quintet. This is the band at their most confident; the record sounds like guys who are as excited as they have ever been to play, to sing. It is as if they have just begun...

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On “Beautiful,” Furler makes this mantra clear: *I wanna start it over. I wanna start again. There’s a new beginning, one without an end. I feel it inside calling out to me.* And on the title track, he speaks of being sent from above to befriend the distant: *GO...From the top of the world, to the bottom rung. ‘Til the work is done, I wanna send you. GO...From the break of the dawn, to the age’s end. Somebody’s needing a friend. I wanna send you.* They have found a brand new peace, a joy in touching the wounded. Just listen to the words of “Wherever We Go” for evidence. *Wherever we’re led, all the living and the dead wanna leave their zombie mob. It’s a touching scene when they all come clean. God help us, we just love our job.*

You might just as easily catch the newsboys opening for REO Speedwagon, James Brown or John Fogerty these days as find them at a Christian market event. They have even shared the stage with Styx since releasing their previous effort. With willing hearts, there seem to be more open doors on the near horizon. Though they are CCM staples--and will most likely continue to be--their focus will remain in branching out as far as this music takes them.

Go.

And they will...

“It seems to me there are three types of believers in this world,” Furler concludes. “There is the judgmental guy who spends most of his energy pointing out what is wrong around him and doing very little about it. There is the backslidden guy, who wallows in his own failures. Then there is the real guy, who just tries to love other people and be about the kingdom more than anything else. I want to be the third guy. I want to be known for loving others of different backgrounds and different beliefs no matter the cost.”