

= Matthew West =

Matthew Joseph West (born April 25 , 1977) is an American contemporary Christian musician , singer @-@ songwriter , and actor . He has released five studio albums and is known for his songs , " More " , " You Are Everything " , and " The Motions " . He was nominated for five Dove Awards in 2005 , two of which were for his major label debut album , Happy . West won the 2013 American Music Award for Best Contemporary Inspirational Artist .

Starting as an independent musician in the late 1990s , he released three independent albums before signing with Universal South Records . With the release of his Dove Award @-@ winning debut album , Happy , released in 2003 , his first radio single , " More " , stayed at No. 1 on Christian Adult Contemporary charts for nine weeks and received two Dove Award nominations . His second album , History , was followed by a 2006 re @-@ release of the originally independent album , Sellout . In 2007 , he faced vocal issues that threatened his career with two months of prescribed vocal rest . His third studio album , Something to Say , also enjoyed chart success with No. 1 hits , " You Are Everything " and " The Motions " .

In addition to his main solo career , West has worked as a songwriter for many Christian musicians and groups such as Point of Grace , Mandisa , Natalie Grant , and Casting Crowns , as well as mainstream country acts , Rascal Flatts , Billy Ray Cyrus , and Vince Gill . In 2013 , his second single , " Hello , My Name Is " , from the album , Into the Light , was released and reached at No. 1 for a record @-@ breaking 17 consecutive weeks on the Billboard Christian Songs chart .

= = Early life = =

Matthew West was born on April 25 , 1977 in Downers Grove , Illinois . As a child he was a fan of his hometown baseball team , the Chicago Cubs , and wanted to eventually have a career in baseball . He played baseball throughout high school at Downers Grove North High School , becoming team captain as a senior . He was hoping for a college baseball scholarship but instead ended up receiving a four @-@ year music scholarship at Millikin University in Decatur , Illinois . He graduated from Millikin in 1999 .

= = Musical career = =

West wrote most of his first songs in the sanctuary of his father 's church while he was at home during college breaks . According to a statement by West at the 2013 Winter Jam (March 23 , 2013) : at a 1997 Steven Curtis Chapman concert at the Assembly Hall in Champaign , Urbana , West has said that he was crying profusely , making his friends ask him what was wrong . He said that he was being led by Jesus to pursue a career in singing and songwriting . He was a songwriter and independent musician from 1997 to 2002 , releasing three albums : September Sun (1997) , Every Step of the Way (1998) , and Sellout (2002) . In October 1997 , he went on a three @-@ city tour to support of the release of September Sun .

Just before graduating from Millikin University in 1999 , someone from the college recommended that West attend the GMA Music in the Rockies event for aspiring musicians . Although West was not interested at first , he attended after learning that other people signed him up and paid his entrance fee . He met a representative from Word Publishing at the event who took interest in him and kept in contact until he graduated . West landed in the finals of a songwriting competition and was offered a songwriting deal in July 1999 , five weeks after graduating . After penning songs for well @-@ known musicians like Billy Ray Cyrus and Rachael Lampa , he began touring the United States as an independent artist in 2000 and 2001 .

On July 26 , 2002 , only a week or two before signing a record contract with Universal South Records , West had an injury to his left arm which threatened his musical career and guitar playing . He says , " I locked myself out of my house . But I 'd done that before , and I had a way of breaking in through a window . But this time , I had a really hard time getting the window open . I started pushing up on the window really hard and my hand broke through the glass . Blood starting spewing

out of my left arm everywhere and I ran down my street screaming for help . After seeing so much blood , I went into shock and just blacked out in the middle of the street . The next thing I can remember is some construction workers praying over me in Spanish and then being taken to the hospital . " West was told that the chances were low of regaining the full use of his left arm , having come very close to severing a major artery . He recovered after the accident , however , and was able to continue playing guitar and record for his first studio album .

= = = Happy (2003 ? 2004) = = =

After signing with Universal South Records on August 23 , 2002 , West released his first non @-@ independent studio album , Happy on December 26 , 2003 . The album 's producers Kenny Greenberg and Jason Houser co @-@ wrote the song " More " with West . The track was his first and most successful radio single to date , staying at No. 1 on R & R 's Christian Adult Contemporary chart for a record @-@ breaking nine weeks . It was the most played Christian AC song of 2004 and went on to be labelled as the Christian Song of the Year by ASCAP . Two additional songs , " The End " and " You Know Where to Find Me " , were also released as singles off the album . Beginning in late September 2004 , West joined Avalon and Mark Schultz on a 40 @-@ city fall tour , which concluded at the end of November . In 2005 , he was nominated for five Dove Awards , including " New Artist of the Year " and " Song of the Year " . He won the " Recorded Music Packaging of the Year " Dove Award for his debut album Happy .

In early 2005 , he was on the WinterJam 2005 tour , hosted by NewSong , with tobyMac , Building 429 , Tait , and Rachael Lampa .

= = = History and vocal problems (2005 ? 2007) = = =

With Kenny Greenberg and Jason Houser once again as producers , Matthew West began recording for his second studio album in early 2005 . History , co @-@ produced by West , was released on June 21 , 2005 on Universal South Records . The first single off the album , " Next Thing You Know " , was released June 20 , a day before the album 's release . The theme of the title track " History " was inspired by a R & R music news headline " Matthew West Makes History " , in reference to his first album , Happy . " It 's not every day you read a headline like that with your name in it that calls you a history maker , " he said . Beginning on September 14 , 2005 , he kicked off the 30 @-@ city History 101 tour , his first headlining tour , which included guest musicians Shawn McDonald and Paul Wright . He then joined tobyMac 's Winter Wonder Slam tour , beginning on December 1 , 2005 , along with John Reuben , BarlowGirl , GRITS , and DJ Maj. Two additional songs were released off History as singles : " Only Grace " and the title track " History " .

His independent album Sellout was re @-@ released in 2006 on Universal South Records .

West said that he began to experience " some vocal fatigue " in April 2007 . He said " I had lost some of my vocal range , staying on higher notes and lower notes . I even began having a hard time speaking . " At a vocal check @-@ up in response to the issue , West 's doctors at the Nashville Vanderbilt Voice Center discovered " hemorrhaging caused by some polyps " . He was told by his doctors that vocal surgery was the only option , since a few weeks had passed . The surgery took place on May 17 , 2007 , a process that he said was " career threatening . " Afterward , he was prescribed a two @-@ month period of silence for vocal rest .

A video documentary titled Nothing to Say , directed and produced by Benjamin Eisner , was released in early 2008 , highlighting Matthew West 's time of silence and vocal recovery in 2007 . In February 2008 , the documentary was available exclusively in Family Christian Stores as a CD / DVD combo pack with West 's album Something to Say .

= = = Something to Say (2008 ? 2010) = = =

His next single " You Are Everything " was released in late 2007 . The song was available as a free download from West 's website . He also recorded a duet (" Christmas Makes Me Cry ") with

American Idol finalist Mandisa which was released as a Christmas radio single in November 2007 , from Mandisa 's Christmas Joy EP .

Matthew West 's album , Something to Say , was released on January 15 , 2008 . It reached No. 8 on Billboard 's Top Christian albums chart , and peaked at No. 159 on the Billboard 200 chart , making it his first Billboard 200 album . It was produced by Brown Bannister , Ed Cash , and Christopher Stevens . West said in an interview that all of the album 's songs had already been written and the title " Something to Say " had already been decided " months before I found out that I was going to have nothing to say . " The first radio single released from the album was " You Are Everything " . In March 2008 , the song reached No. 1 on R & R 's Christian AC chart . " Something to Say " , the album 's title track , was also released to radio , receiving airplay in June 2008 .

Matthew West guested on tobyMac 's 26 @-@ city " Boomin ' Beyond Measure " tour along with Jeremy Camp . The tour ran from February 6 through March 21 , 2008 .

He was featured on the Billy Graham television special America 's Dream : Chasing Happiness , which aired in the U.S. on March 1 ? 9 , 2008 . The appearance included a world premiere of his music video for " Nothing Else " , a song from History . On June 29 , West hosted GMA 's 2008 Gospel Dream , a televised Christian music talent competition . " The Motions " was released as his next single , placing at No. 1 on R & R 's Christian AC chart in April 2009 .

He has a song on the upcoming album of country artist Jo Dee Messina , and another under consideration by ? American Idol ? finalist Danny Gokey . In December 2009 , " The Motions " was Grammy @-@ nominated for Best Gospel Song , his first Grammy nomination .

= = = The Story of Your Life , Into the Light and Live Forever (2010 ? present) = = =

The first single from Matthew West 's new album , " My Own Little World " was released on August 23 , 2010 . The album , The Story of Your Life , was released October 5 , 2010 , and according to West , is a response to thousands of life stories his fans shared with him . " The first day , I got 1 @,@ 000 stories . All of a sudden , I was like , ' holy cow , something special is about to take place ' . I rented a cabin in Tennessee , about 25 minutes from my house that felt like it was out in the middle of nowhere . And I spent two months in that cabin reading 10 @,@ 000 stories , " the singer / songwriter reported in an interview with CBN.com. Matthew is also starring in The Heart of Christmas .

In 2011 , West released a Christmas song featuring Country Music Hall of Fame member Vince Gill entitled " Leaving Heaven " .

Into the Light was released in September 2012 . He will be going on an Into the Light Tour in September , October , and November 2013 . West released his sixth studio album , Live Forever , on April 28 , 2015 . He will be part of the Winter Jam Tour 2016 in the central and eastern parts of the United States .

= = Other songwriting = =

In addition to his main solo career , Matthew West has also written songs for other bands and musicians , including Mark Schultz , Mandisa , Jump5 , Sara Groves , Joy Williams , Casting Crowns , Salvador , Natalie Grant , PureNRG , and Point of Grace , as well as mainstream country act , Billy Ray Cyrus . Rascal Flatts recorded West 's song , " The Day Before You " , on their album , Feels Like Today . He co @-@ wrote " Voice of a Savior " by Mandisa and " Thank You " by 33Miles , both of which were released as singles in early 2008 .

= = Acting = =

West also pursues his acting skills occasionally appearing in some Christian television shows starting in 2009 . In 2011 , he made his film debut via appearing on Gary Wheeler 's Christian film The Heart of Christmas co @-@ starring Candace Cameron Bure . It received mostly positive review after premiering in a limited theaters in the U.S.

== Personal life ==

Matthew West currently lives in Nashville , Tennessee with his wife Emily . He married Emily on May 10 , 2003 after proposing to her in September 2002 . They have a daughter Luella Jane (" Lulu ") and a daughter Delaney Ruth . The Wests own a pug named Earl " The Girl " .

== Awards ==

=== GMA Dove Awards ===

== Discography ==