

= Coming Up to Breathe =

Coming Up to Breathe is the fourth studio album by Christian rock band MercyMe . Released on April 25 , 2006 , by INO Records , the album was intended by MercyMe to be edgier than their previous albums . Coming Up to Breathe sold 58 @, @ 000 copies its first week , MercyMe 's biggest sales week at the time . It debuted and peaked at number one on the Billboard Christian Albums chart , number five on the Rock Albums chart , and number thirteen on the Billboard 200 . It also appeared on the Alternative Albums chart in 2007 , peaking at number thirteen . Coming Up to Breathe was certified Gold by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) in 2007 , signifying shipments of over 500 @, @ 000 copies .

Coming Up to Breathe received positive reviews from critics . It was also nominated for Best Pop / Contemporary Gospel Album at the 49th Grammy Awards , and for Pop / Contemporary Album of the Year at the 38th GMA Dove Awards . The song " Bring the Rain " was nominated for Song of the Year at the 39th GMA Dove Awards .

Three singles were released in promotion of Coming Up to Breathe . Lead single " So Long Self " peaked at number one on the Christian Songs chart , spending four weeks atop that chart . The second single from the album , " Hold Fast " , peaked at number three on the Christian Songs chart . The third and final single from the album , " Bring the Rain " , spent one week at number one on the Christian Songs chart . " So Long Self " and " Hold Fast " also appeared on the Adult Contemporary chart , peaking at number sixteen and number twenty @-@ seven , respectively .

= = Background = =

According to lead vocalist Bart Millard , MercyMe had started as a rock band and had wanted to make a rock record . Following the success of their breakthrough single " I Can Only Imagine " , a ballad , they were advised to " duplicate [' I Can Only Imagine '] on the next two records " . Millard says they felt that they were at a point where " we are known more for ballads than the rock band we wanted to be " . With the consent of their label , which felt there was a trend towards heavier music , MercyMe decided to make an " edgier " record . In particular the band focused on up @-@ tempo songs , trying to put more edge into what they were making . Millard noted that while the songs are still pop rock songs , the band tried to put a bit more edge into them . Additionally , the band decided to work with producer Brown Bannister , who had produced the group 's Christmas record and Millard 's solo album Hymned No. 1 , as opposed to Pete Kipley , who had produced the band 's previous three albums . Bannister 's producing style was different from Kipley 's ; while Kipley was a hands @-@ on producer , " involved in every part of the song " , Bannister would wait until the band had " run down all [their] avenues " before giving input . The band felt Bannister was an " amazing encourager " and were satisfied with the Christmas album Bannister had produced with him ; although they felt Kipley did a great job on their previous records , improving themselves as a band and as songwriters , they felt it was " time for a change " . Another factor in the decision to use Bannister was his previous recording experience ; Bannister had produced one of Millard 's favorite albums , White Heart 's 1989 album Freedom . The different approach the band took with Bannister resulted in a sometimes " radical " approach , with the band " taking songs apart , putting them back together and , at times , totally reinventing them " . One song , " Something About You " , shifted from " an aggressive rock song to a soaring anthem " .

The tracks on Coming Up to Breathe were recorded in Allaire Studios in Shokan , New York ; the studio had previously hosted artists such as Norah Jones , Tim McGraw , and David Bowie . Overdubs were recorded at Oxford Sound in Nashville , Tennessee . Strings were recorded at Abbey Road Studios in London , England by the London Session Orchestra . Recording sessions at Allaire started in October 2005 , and lasted a month .

= = Composition = =

Although Coming Up to Breathe possesses an overall heavier tone than MercyMe 's previous

albums , it has been described as an extension or a shift in presentation rather than a total departure . The sound of the album has been described as epitomizing the genre of modern rock . Guitars and guitar solos are more prominent on the album .

As a whole , the album does not mention Jesus directly by name ; the only song to do so , " Bring the Rain " uses his name in the refrain " Jesus , bring the rain " . " I Would Die for You " is also a tribute to a teen who died after serving on a mission field . " One Trick Pony " is a response to MercyMe 's critics who argue that the band recycles the same song over and over . " So Long Self " is about bidding farewell to sinful nature , while " Hold Fast " is a reminder of God 's presence through difficult times . " Something About You " and " 3 : 42 a.m. (Writer 's Block) " both relate to the difficulty of writing a song about an omnipotent God .

= = Critical reception = =

Coming Up to Breathe received positive reception from music critics . Steve Losey of Allmusic gave the album four out of five stars , saying " In a concerted effort to revert back to the days when they were more a rock band and less of a hitmaking machine , MercyMe delivers . While it 's certainly not heavy metal , the songs definitely keep driving forward . Guitars are more prominent and production leans on a more earthy formula ... MercyMe is able to rock on portions of each song but they always bring it back to a memorable chorus or a hooky verse . That 's the formula that has always worked for them , and it does here , too " . Deborah Evans Price of Billboard noted that " For the most part , MercyMe has built a multiplatinum foundation on compelling power ballads . But on this set , the Texas band rocks out with passion and edgy intensity . It doesn 't stray so far that it would alienate the faithful , but it delivers a powerful collection of pop / rock that should take the band 's career to a new level " . She also praised Millard 's vocals and called it a " landmark album in an already impressive career " . Mark Joseph of CCM Magazine gave the album a B- ; he called the album " enjoyable " but suggesting that a stronger producer or A & R team would have resulted in better lyrics . Tony Cummings of Cross Rhythms gave the album nine out of ten stars , praising the vocals and string arrangements as well as the choir on " Bring the Rain " . Russ Breimeier of The Fish called Coming Up to Breathe MercyMe 's " best album to date " and an " impressive step in the right direction for a band that many have pegged to be too formulaic " , but derided the album 's " simplistic songwriting " .

Lauren Summerford of Jesus Freak Hideout gave the album four out of five stars , calling it " unlike anything we 've heard from [MercyMe] so far " and " undeniably strong project from MercyMe " . She suggested that some of the lyrics off the album are too predictable , but said that " some places [on the album] display some of the best songwriting we have heard from the band so far " . Brian Mansfield of USA Today gave the album two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half out of four stars , opining that it " has the feel of a blockbuster rock album " but suggesting that the Christian songwriting on the record would limit its success .

Coming Up to Breathe was nominated for Best Pop / Contemporary Gospel Album at the 49th Grammy Awards . It was also nominated for Pop / Contemporary Album of the Year at the 38th GMA Dove Awards . " Bring the Rain " was nominated for Dove Award for Song of the Year at the 39th GMA Dove Awards .

= = Singles = =

Three singles were released in promotion of Coming Up to Breathe . " So Long Self " was released on March 18 , 2006 as the lead single from the album . It was added by fifty @-@ two Christian AC stations in its first week , a record for the most first @-@ week adds in the history of Christian AC radio . It peaked at number one on the Billboard Hot Christian Songs chart , spending a total of four weeks at the top of that chart . It also appeared on the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart , peaking at number sixteen . " So Long Self " ranked at number ten on the 2006 year @-@ end Hot Christian Songs chart .

The second single from Coming Up to Breathe , " Hold Fast " was released on September 4 , 2006 .

It peaked at number three on the Hot Christian Songs chart and at number twenty @-@ seven on the Adult Contemporary chart .

The final single from the album , " Bring the Rain " , was released on March 24 , 2007 . It peaked at number one on the Hot Christian Songs chart . It ranked at number five on the 2007 year @-@ end Hot Christian Songs chart and at number forty @-@ nine on the decade @-@ end Hot Christian Songs chart . An album cut , " No More No Less " , spent one frame on the Hot Christian Songs chart , debuting and peaking at number thirty .

= = Release = =

Coming Up to Breathe was released on April 25 , 2006 . Coming Up to Breathe sold 58 @,@ 000 copies in its first week , debuting atop the Christian Albums chart and at number 13 on the Billboard 200 . The album beat out MercyMe 's previous best sales week (56 @,@ 000 copies) , which came following the release of their 2004 album " Undone " . " Coming Up to Breathe " also peaked at number 5 on the Rock Albums chart and number 13 on the Alternative Albums chart during its chart run . Coming Up to Breathe ranked at number 6 on 2006 year @-@ end Christian Albums chart , and at number 14 on the 2007 year @-@ end Christian Albums chart . In 2007 , the album was certified Gold by the Recording Industry Association of America , signifying shipments of 500 @,@ 000 copies .

An acoustic version of the album , Coming Up to Breathe : Acoustic , was released in late 2007 and peaked at number 22 on the Christian Albums chart .

= = Track listing = =

(All songs written by MercyMe)

= = Personnel = =

(Credits lifted from the album liner notes)

= = Charts and certifications = =