

God's Word

Christian rock meets alternative hip-hop when dcTalk hits Reed Arena

BY CARINO CASAS
The Battalion

earned respect for each other as writers. Collaboration is a tough thing, but a beautiful thing."

The effort paid off. *Supernatural* debuted at No. 4 on the Billboard Top 200 chart, the highest spot any contemporary Christian album has debuted on the chart. The album was sandwiched between *Psycho-Circus* by KISS (once called Knights in Satan's Service by their detractors) and *Mechanical Animals* by Marilyn Manson (whose second album was called *Antichrist Superstar*).

In the remix of the Doobie Brother's "Jesus is Just Alright" on their third album, *Free at Last*, McKeehan raps "I'm kicking it Jesus-style/To the ones that think they heard/I did use the 'J' word/'Cause I ain't too soft to say it/Even if DJ's don't play it."

But DJ's are playing it here in the Brazos Valley. Mix 104.7 (KKYS-FM) has been playing the intimate ballad "Consume Me." Without knowing it comes from a Christian band, the track sounds like a sensual love song to a significant other. But band member said the chorus that says, "You consume me/Like a burning flame running through my veins" is speaking to God.

"We view our relationship with God as very personal," McKeehan said in a press release, "and some people might get upset because the relationship in 'Consume Me' is so passionate and real rather than ritualistic. We wrote this as a spiritual song because to us, faith is a passionate, personal, committed love relationship with Jesus Christ."

John Paul Russell, concert chairperson for Aggie Men's Club and a junior management information systems major, said the organization wants to use dc Talk to spread the message.

"The main reason we brought them over

is more as a ministry, because it crosses over from not only Christian, but it crosses over to the secular charts," he said. "We were hoping to bring in some secular people to this concert and also use it as a word-of-mouth for Christianity."

Aggie Men's Club, a Christian fraternal organization founded in 1984, raised \$73,000 from private donations to bring the band to A&M.

Russell said all proceeds from ticket sales after expenses will go to Project Unity.

This concert is expected to attract the

largest audience for a Christian act in the area.

Mary Helen Bower, associate director of Reed Arena, said she expects dc Talk ticket sales to exceed 4,000. Bower said the main reason the audience will be larger is that, before Reed Arena, there was no venue larger than Rudder Auditorium, which seats 2,500.

Tickets are available for \$15.50 at the MSC Box Office. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. The opening acts for dc Talk will be Jennifer Knapp and The W's.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DC TALK

Toby McKeehan, Michael Tait, and Kevin Max of dc Talk, have crossed over to popular charts but have kept their Christian mentality. They will play at Reed Arena on Sunday.

The Battalion



Supernatural
dcTalk
Forefront/Virgin Records

After the surprise change to the grunge sound of *Jesus Freak* from the hip-hop of their first three albums, listeners anticipated the follow-up CD to see how dc Talk would reinvent itself again.

The long wait for dc Talk's fifth album, *Supernatural*, was well worth it. Not as hard sounding as the previous album, *Supernatural* offers a sampler plate of what is hot in pop music.

Two songs really stand out. "Consume Me," which generated air play on non-Christian radio stations, has attracted attention with its passionate lyrics that tell God, "Without you I'm incomplete/I'm hopeless/You consume me."

The other song has left Christian music listeners, a probably artists, thinking. "My Friend (So Long)" tells of a fictitious fourth band member who leaves the group to find secular music fame.

The song reminds of artists like Amy Grant, Jars of Clay and others who have tried to cross over from Christian to secular pop music.

The song affirms that dc Talk will never deny Christ to make it up the music ladder, although their fictitious friend did just that.

dc Talk fans who have failed to buy this record should run to get it. They will definitely enjoy it. Those not familiar with the group who are looking for very listenable music with substance-filled lyrics would not think their investment wasted. (Grade: A)

— Carino Casas

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