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4HIM

Obvious (1998)



Rating: ★★★★★

Style: Pop / Contemporary

One of contemporary Christian music's staples, and an ever-popular quartet, 4HIM has again broken the molds with *Obvious*. Nearly 20 number one hits, three Dove Awards for Group of the Year, a half dozen full-length albums, and over 2 million album sales have yet to shake the group of their lyrical and musical prowess.

"Let the Lion Run Free" brings in this latest album with the feeling that something new is in the air. It's not a rehash of [The Message](#) or [The Basics of Life](#), but neither has it broken with 4HIM's tradition of powerful harmonies and Bible-based lyrics. Instead, it takes what makes 4HIM shine to the next level, with a return to the quad's famous vocal meshing of old. Oddly enough, I believe I even hear influences of Charlie Peacock in this song, too.

"Let the Lion Run Free" is a wonderfully symbolic song, comparing Christ's ability to free our inhibitions and release our full potential to releasing a lion from its cage.

"Oh, to face a jungle of impossibilities and have no doubt. To trust what I can't see and know that the lion that's in me will lead me out. Oh, I'll take the challenge, go to the great unknown. It's time to wake this giant that's in me - let my inhibitions go. Break these chains, open this cage - let the lion run free. Destiny awaits beyond these gates. Let the lion run free!"

Sometimes God calls us to do things that don't feel comfortable; this song is a perfect anthem for those times. When we listen to that call, though, we build character and learn things about ourselves, and we learn that we can do more than we ever imagined. I've recently committed to teaching my Sunday school class while the usual teacher is out of town, so this is a song I know I'll be leaning on!

You may have already heard the next song on the CD. "Can't Get Past the Evidence" was the first single to be released from *Obvious*, and has been steadily rising up the charts. I'd be surprised if it doesn't reach the top 10 in the next couple of weeks. It, like Josh McDowell's book *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, testifies to the fact that the evidence behind God's love for us is so overwhelming we can't deny it. This is especially apparent as we approach Easter, the time when we traditionally celebrate Christ's death and



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resurrection. Granted His selfless act has as much meaning and truth throughout the year, but Easter seems to make it that much more real.

"Great Awakening" is bound to become an anthem of Christianity today, like "For Future Generations" and "Where There is Faith" were before it. I hear a strong influence from Aaron * Jeffrey in the beginning strains of it, as well as a return to the musical style of 4HIM's first albums.

One of the things that makes "Great Awakening" such a powerful and touching song is that it not only speaks of the church in general - it relates directly to the experiences of the group. 4HIM has just come through the proverbial "seven-year itch," a time of re-evaluating their goals and commitments to each other. Member Mark Harris has this to say: "Just in recent days I've realized that there's this breath of fresh air that's been breathed into 4HIM. I think it's a spiritual renewal. The past year has brought situations that have required a lot of faith, a lot of patience." That renewal has done nothing but strengthen the faith the group sung about in the classic "A Man You Would Write About."

Obvious has certainly built upon the reputation for excellence that this group has built. From the introductory strains of "Let the Lion Run Free" to ending tones of the beautiful and powerful "The Hand of God," it continues the tradition of vocal harmony and powerful, Bible based lyrics. But most importantly, it is an insight into how the hand of God is guiding the group, and how they are responding to His leading. I think their responsiveness to His lead is the one element that has made 4HIM stand out in the crowd. So if you are a fan of quality contemporary music, don't miss this outstanding album. You'll be glad you picked it up.

*Reviewed April 05, 1998
by David Longenecker*

Songs on this album:

1. Let the Lion Run Free
2. Can't Get Past the Evidence
3. Signs and Wonders
4. Great Awakening
5. That Kind of Love
6. Mystery of Grace
7. Obvious
8. Before the River Came
9. Voice in the Wilderness
10. Who's at the Wheel
11. The Hand of God

Reviews of other albums and concerts by 4HIM:

- [The Obvious Tour](#) (1998, Concert Review)
- [The Message](#) (1996)
- [The Ride](#) (1994)
- [Christmas: The Season Of Love](#) (1993)
- [The Basics of Life](#) (1992)