

## Chasen Bio

Things that last are often those that are allowed to grow naturally, organic talent that develops over time, nurtured along by the love of family and friends, spread by means of a grassroots effort and word of mouth.

That's the story of Chasen. Born and raised in Greenville, South Carolina, Chasen Callahan had a gift that was honed during nearly a decade as a worship pastor. He built a following one person at a time, playing youth camps and conferences.

Each summer, he'd recruit students to play alongside him, but in the fall Callahan's makeshift band would inevitably head back to school while the demand for his unique brand of worship continued to grow. Enter: Evan Silver and Aaron Lord. With a full-time band in place, Chasen began recording and selling their music, and a career grew naturally from there. Bassist Jared Barber joined the threesome in May 2009 to round out their sound.

Through it all, Callahan continued to lead worship for his home congregation, Marathon Church, which attracted about 5,000 each Sunday. "I was content to lead worship on Sunday mornings," Callahan says, "but I felt God saying, 'I want you to get beyond these four walls and reach people for Me.'" Chasen experienced solid radio success with two songs, the Top 5 "Crazy/Beautiful" and "Drown". "At that point, INO Records called us," says Callahan, "We always respected INO's ministry and creative focus. It's a great fit for us."

There were others who helped along the way as well. Fellow artist and Greenville native Edwin McCain is a good friend – "he helped me get started when it came to labels" – and there's a growing music scene nearby that includes acts like Needtobreathe. Other inspiration came from outside of South Carolina. Callahan looked to Switchfoot's Jon Foreman as an example of lyrical excellence and David Crowder's worship leading style and personal approach made a mark as well. Then there's Hillsong, the Australian church and worship powerhouse. The draw was so strong that Callahan almost headed Down Under for college to experience the movement close-up. Instead, he took online courses from Berklee College, devoting himself to studying melody among other things.

All of this preparation led Callahan and the band that bears his name to where they are today: on the eve of their major label debut, *That Was Then, This Is Now*.

Many of the tracks have a very personal story behind them. "Slow Down" was written with Sam Mizell and inspired by a conversation Callahan had with his mom on a rough day. "She's a pastor's wife and there's a lot that goes into that, and there were some financial struggles, and my brother was ill. She was just bawling her eyes out. The only thing I could give her was to remind her of that verse in the Bible that says, 'be still and know that He is God.'"

“Airplanes” is a song about loss, inspired by the untimely death of one of Callahan’s friends, while “On and On,” the album’s first radio single, is a stirring anthem penned by Callahan and Hawkins in just two hours.

Other tracks, like “There Is Love” are even more personal. The last song Callahan wrote for the record, it came about as he was sitting in front of a fire at a friend’s house in Nashville missing his wife and little boy. “I said, ‘God, I haven’t seen them in nearly a month and a half except for a few days,’ and I was asking Him how to cope,” Callahan explains. He wanted to communicate his love to them, but the words “I love you” didn’t seem big enough. Then inspiration hit. “I felt like John Denver for a moment there, like I was on a mountaintop somewhere,” he recalls. “God took my words and love for my family and then turned it around, saying ‘the love that you have for your wife and son is what I feel for all of my children. I know you feel out of place sometimes, but run to Me.’”

Despite all the new opportunities, Callahan’s worship roots still run deep. “I get asked by people to record a worship album, and I probably will at some point because that’s where I started and who I am,” he says. In the meantime, fans find a worshipful quality to almost everything he writes. “On and On” wasn’t meant to be a worship song, but as the band plays it night after night they see an audience with hands raised in praise.

There’s a definite appeal to Nashville, and Callahan & Co. will most likely migrate there eventually, but for now Chasen is staying put. With a wife and young son at home, Callahan knows it’s beneficial to have the support of family nearby. Also, South Carolina provides a sort of respite from Nashville’s faster pace. “When you’re in Nashville, it always feels like work work, work, work, work -- which I do anyway,” Callahan says. “Home almost feels like a vacation, a place where I can punch out and take some time away.” With all the promise this new album holds for Chasen, Callahan will need that break more than ever.