

# Local singer's work captures Christian audience

## Dan Macaulay's record wins national awards

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Worshippers around the globe are singing the praises of Brantford native Dan Macaulay, who recently won two of Canada's top Christian music awards.

The 31-year-old was named male vocalist of the year and his debut CD, *Captured Again*, won worship album of the year at the Shai Awards in Calgary on Jan. 25. Canada's gospel people's choice awards allow fans to vote for their favourites online.

"It feels great to be recognized," Macaulay says in a telephone interview from Freelon, outside Hamilton. It's a convenient home base for the performer, who travels to shows by highway or airplane most weekends.

"You hope people are listening to and enjoying your music and this tells you that a lot are. It's neat."

Though released in 2004, *Captured Again* was eligible for the 2007 contest because the Shai awards — formerly called Vibe — had taken a year off and then extended their entry dates retroactively.

That worked in the singer-songwriter's favour: "It takes a while, especially as an independent, to build up momentum. If I had just been starting out, no one would have known me."

Categorized as contemporary Christian pop, Macaulay's music offers melodic hooks and fresh lyrics — with a strong focus on worshipping the "incredibility" of God.

"I hope to inspire people to search and to find him themselves and to open their hearts and see what He would want to do in their lives."

Playing piano since he could reach the keyboard, the musician has been performing full-time for three years ([www.danmacaulay.com](http://www.danmacaulay.com)). Sometimes, his shows are all-out music, with a backup band and a rock vibe; other engagements are more worship-oriented, with lots of participation from the crowd.

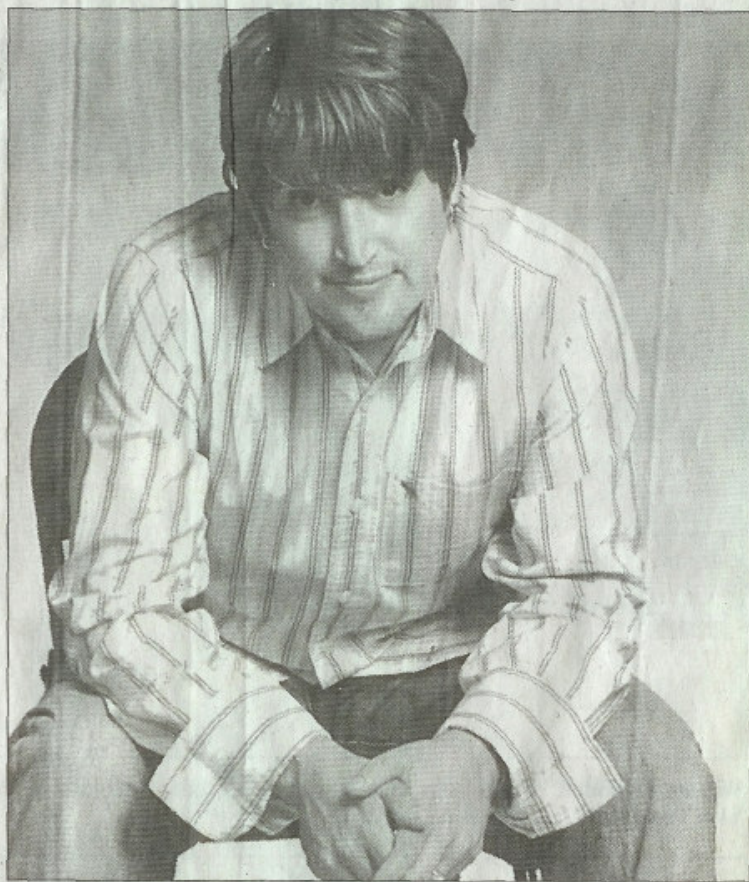
### YOUTH LEADER

Those career roots started sprouting back at Brantford's New Life Pentecostal Church, where Macaulay led a youth group and began incorporating his own songs into their programs.

After graduating from North Park Collegiate, he moved on to Bible college in Peterborough and wrote more songs. Now, like musical missionaries, Macaulay's compositions are reaching Christians all over.

"(Someone) came up to my mother-in-law one day in church and told her he'd been in Chechnya and heard them sing *Amazing* in Russian.

"It has been really cool," he says of how his songs have spread, partly by fellow Bible school grads who have taken them to their own churches. "It's like a viral thing. You can't keep a good song down."



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*Amazing*, in particular, has been a hit: it has been recorded by other artists, including a singer based in Jerusalem.

While that's an honour in itself, the songwriter also receives royalties for his work through an organization called Christian Copyright Licensing International. It administers music use for churches and pays a modest fee back to songwriters.

Christian music is a booming genre in Canada, says Macaulay, who has

charted a couple of No. 1 hits on Christian radio. And his speciality, worship music, is experiencing "phenomenal" growth.

As one of a few full-time performers, Macaulay is a bit of a trailblazer on the scene. Wife Danielle has even left her day job to handle his bookings and administration.

"We work together as a team. And things are snowballing and growing enough that we're excited: we see a lot of possibilities for the future."