

mae (m)orning

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” — Howard Thurman

In 2003, three friends from Norfolk, Virginia shared a spark that gave life to MAE and ignited a music revolution that continues to burn brighter everyday. As they explain, “From the beginning, MAE has been about making music and using our voice to help serve as a bridge to connect people and build community.” Although music has always been the fundamental means of their expression, MAE’s greater purpose has always been to provide something more—a Multisensory Aesthetic Experience designed to cultivate growth and welcome possibility. That purpose, embodied in the band’s name, permeates everything they have done and everything they continue to do.

Dave Elkins, Jacob Marshall, and Zach Gehring, along with Mark Padgett and Rob Sweitzer, banded together to live out their passion with the 2003 release of MAE’s debut album, *Destination: Beautiful*. International acclaim fueled MAE’s continuing success and prompted the release of a collection of live and rare recordings compiled on *Destination: B-sides*. By 2005, the spark from which MAE had begun had grown into *The Everglow*, the band’s sophomore effort. *The Everglow Special Edition* followed with previously unreleased songs, a new interpretation of the concept album’s original artwork, and a “teaser” DVD. From Toledo to Tokyo, the band’s first full-length DVD, documented the group’s first years on the road as they fanned the flames and demonstrated world-wide appeal. The quintet followed up in 2007 by signing with Capitol Records to release their major-label debut, *Singularity*.

After five years together, national and international tours with the likes of The Fray, Weezer, and Foo Fighters, as well as the departure of two the band’s members in 2008, the remaining three—Dave Elkins, Jacob Marshall, and Zach Gehring—paused to reflect. Soon thereafter, MAE decided to leave Capitol and blaze their own trail.

As they move beyond the smoldering embers from their first five years, MAE looks to 2009 as a new beginning. They continue to redefine themselves after lineup changes, but as MAE evolves, they retain Elkins’ masterful melody, Gehring’s incendiary guitar, and Marshall’s intricate, driving percussion. Ultimately, MAE draw upon their unique talent to create moments of timeless experience when it feels as though anything is possible. This year, MAE has resolved to move forward with renewed vigor and a bolder sense of purpose—to take what once seemed only a possibility and use it to make a difference.

Each month this year, MAE will release a new song on their website, www.whatismae.com, for a minimum donation of \$1. All of the profits from each online donation will go to benefit a humanitarian cause. For the band’s first project, MAE has partnered with Habitat for Humanity to build a house for Rhonda Floyd and her family in Newport News,

Virginia. The band explains, “There is strength in numbers. There is power in community. However, community is only as strong as the individuals that create it. That is why we believe this project will work; because you are here . . . right now. The power to make a difference is here in your hands.” With your help, their immediate goal is to raise over \$60,000 for Rhonda’s House, and they are well on their way after the release of the year’s first single, “The House that Fire Built.”

The quick succession of 2009’s releases presents a creative challenge for MAE. Rather than shying away, however, MAE is stoked by the organic, evolving concept fueling the project, and if “The House that Fire Built”—a new anthem of sorts—is any indication of things to come, MAE is up to the challenge. Within the song’s 6 minutes and 27 seconds, MAE has demonstrated their ability to outperform the most urgent elements of *Singularity*, the conceptual cogency of *The Everglow*, and the refreshing novelty of *Destination: Beautiful*. It is safe to say that MAE is committed to delivering—and improving upon—the caliber of deliberately crafted songs for which they have gained the well-earned respect of their current fans and by which they are sure to reach new audiences.

Ever striving for more and discontent to settle—even for the already titanic task they have undertaken—MAE also seek to raise awareness for other causes. As the singles are released throughout the year, they will come to form three EPs—(m)orning, (a)fternoon, (e)vening. Each EP will illuminate related concepts to which the band wants to draw attention. (m)orning represents the beginning of the day, the beginning of the year, and the beginning of a life. It is our childhood. It is our fresh start. It is our new hope. It is the empty canvas of our minds and the beginning of our story. It is the season to focus on youth and help instill appreciation for music and the arts. (a)fternoon represents the middle of the day, summer turning into autumn, adulthood, parenthood, and the time in life to take control and write the story we want to leave behind. This is the season to consider the challenges we face as adults. (e)vening represents the end of the day, the return of winter, looking back from the end of our life, and preparing for death. This is the one time in our lives where our perspective is clearest and we see the arc of our story as a whole. This is the season to step back and see the bigger picture.

MAE exist to rekindle connections, to create timeless experiences, and to realize potential beyond anyone’s best imaginings. They are doing what makes them come alive, and they are asking you to do the same. They warmly welcome you to join them—and each other—as they tour nationwide to fan the flames so that everyone can “finally feel the warmth of the Everglow”—together. Look for them on the road in a town near you, or find them online at www.whatismae.com for new music each month and to see and share ideas on meaningful ways to get involved and spread the fire.

