



With over 11 million units in career sales and six GRAMMY® awards, TobyMac shows no signs of slowing down as he delivers a deeply personal record that celebrates the richness that comes from collaboration, diversity and vulnerability. Drawing directly from his faith in God and personal experience, *This Is Not A Test* is an essential reminder that we only have one shot at life.

“What hits me now more than ever is that you really don’t get a practice run at life,” explains Toby. “This is it. In my friendships, raising my children, loving my wife, loving people, performing with my band and stepping on stage at arenas, I want to make every moment count.”

For Toby, making every moment count is about more than just saying it out loud. Whether he’s at home with his wife and five children, mentoring new artists, recording in the studio or on the road with his band Diverse City, Toby’s heart for collaboration is rooted in his belief that no matter where we’ve come from, we are better together than we are alone.

“Collaboration takes us deeper,” said Toby. “There is a profound richness that happens when we come together and take the time to learn from each other’s perspectives—the diversity of our upbringing, the color of our skin and the things we are drawn to. If you can work through the differences you enter into a world of richness that is unparalleled. It’s helped me recognize that someone is not wrong just because they don’t think the same way I do. Our life experiences cause scars. Getting to know each other helps heal and soften some of those scars and makes us more receptive to each other. At the end of the day that equals loving each other well.”

The power of collaboration and power of diversity is poured out in every facet of this 13-track record produced by Toby, David Garcia, Chris Stevens and Brian Fowler. The perfect blend of rock, pop, hip-hop and soul, *This Is Not A Test*, is the follow-up to his No. 1 Billboard debut *Eye On It*. The record features diverse group of artists, including for the first time in a decade, his DC Talk band-mates Kevin Max and Michael Tait, and newer artists like Capital Kings, Ryan Stevenson, and Hollyn.

But loving each other well isn’t always easy. Whether taking care of a sick parent (Toby lost his father in the spring of 2015), mending a broken relationship, or just raising a family, real love pushes us out of our comfort zone. It can heal us, transform us, empower us and stretch us to our limits. But it’s in those moments when we feel like we have nothing left that we discover the richest blessings. It’s this picture of love that Toby describes in the line “empty never felt so full” in “Love Feels Like.”

“Love Feels Like” has a deeper meaning for me personally,” said Toby. “I didn’t try to write a song about how love can be beautiful, hard and fulfilling, but it just poured out of me.”

Featuring Kevin and Michael of DC Talk, the song relates to the universal theme of loving others and the power of being loved when you are in the trenches.

“I thought, who could help me tell this story,” Toby shared. “Michael, Kevin and I lived together in the trenches for so long and have this beautiful history. They are two of the best singers and understand my heart as well as anyone else in the world. I thought I would lean into them and make it a moment for this song. It could just as easily be about what we went through together as it could be about anything. I love music that has dimension to it.”

Grounded in that same message of loving God and loving people well, songs like “Lights Shine Bright” and “Feel It” showcase the musical diversity that makes Toby and Diverse City so unique. “Lights Shine Bright” is beautifully laid back and ethereal while “Feel It” is a driving mix of funk and soul—the music is complex but the message is simple and powerful.

“I really got into live horns on this record with “Feel It,”” said Toby. “We were vibing off my favorite Michael Jackson record *Off The Wall*. We tried to capture a little bit of that in the track. I don’t want to overthink faith because I want to know God’s work. I want it to be passion and spirit more than knowledge, so the lyric is really simple ‘I feel it in my heart, I feel it in my soul. You take our brokenness and make us beautiful.’ That’s how I know. Let’s just focus the fact that we are broken and somehow He puts us together and makes us beautiful.”



With many years in the business and so much success, one might think that Toby has his life and career all figured out, but it’s his unmistakable vulnerability and the realization that he didn’t have to be perfect that led to the overarching theme of the album and the single “Beyond Me.”

“I’m a perfectionist by nature. Growing up I was taught that we should be able to look in the mirror and say “I got this. Give me the ball and I’ll shoot the three,” said Toby. “But I’m learning like never before that I have to be brave enough to look in the mirror and say “God, I don’t have this. I’m in over my head. I desperately need you. So take me to a place where I know I need you because that’s when I’m at my best.”

It’s with the same vulnerability that he fights the urge to become jaded.



“I beg God,” Toby says laughing. “When I walk into write a song with other people we open with a prayer. I ask God to hollow me out so that He can breathe something in me that is beyond me. Something I’m not poetic enough to write, not smart enough to pen, but something that will turn eyes to Him. I still dare to believe that God can use a song to awaken someone to love. I still dare to believe that with every song I write and every concert I play. When you recognize

your need for God—that is the sweet spot—that’s where I want to be. When you know you are in over your head and you know you can’t control the situation—that’s when God does something glorious.”

At the end of the day, it doesn’t matter if it’s a song, a show or a 30 second preview on iTunes, Toby hopes that through the messages of collaboration, diversity and love that are the cornerstone of *This Is Not A Test*, people will feel like they can tackle this thing called life.

“I want them to walk away saying “I feel good. I feel like I can love my spouse well. I can love my friends. I feel like I’m even open to having a conversation about who God is. I want them to know love is worth everything you put in. If that happens, then I’ve done what I wanted to do.”

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