

For Immediate Release

Michael W. Smith Headlines Saturday show at Unity 2011!

“We can hardly wait!” This was the exclamation that accompanied today’s announcement of many of the artists in the Saturday lineup for Unity 2011, by Festival Director Kevin Newton. “We are so excited to see this year’s festival coming together as a fantastic time of music and worship”, Newton said. “The quality and variety of the artists booked so far is setting the stage for a wonderful weekend!”

Announced as the headline act for Saturday, August 13th, the final day of the 4 day festival in Muskegon, was Christian legend and Unity favorite **Michael W. Smith**. 2011 will mark the 3rd Unity appearance by Smith, one of Christian music’s most popular and enduring artists. “Michael W. Smith is a true giant in Christian music and an artist that has continued to write and record amazing songs for nearly 3 decades”, Newton explained.

Throughout his 28-year career as a recording artist, **Michael W. Smith** has amassed an impressive catalog of achievements. His prior 21 albums have garnered multiple honors including an American Music Award, three GRAMMY ® Awards (from 13 nominations), 44 GMA Dove Awards (in addition to 1 nomination in the 41st Annual GMA Dove Awards) and 33 No. 1 radio hits. In addition, he holds 16 Gold, 7 Platinum and 2 Double-Platinum albums for career sales approaching 17 million. *Wonder*, Smith’s 22nd career album, released Sept. 28, 2010.

Smith, who was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 2009, has scored several film projects, written 12 books and has been featured by media outlets including “Hannity,” NBC’s “Today Show,” ABC’s “Good Morning America,” “NBC Nightly News,” “Larry King Live,” “FOX & Friends,” “Hannity and Colmes,” The Associated Press, Billboard magazine, USA Today, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, has been named one of People magazine’s “Most Beautiful People” and has presented multiple times on the GRAMMY ® Awards show. His tours consistently rank among the best attended in the country, and he has performed to capacity crowds throughout the world

It wasn’t his impressive resume, though, that convinced Unity Festival officials to bring him back as the 2011 Saturday headline act. “We want to have an atmosphere of fun, but also of worship at Unity”, Newton said. “Michael’s new “Wonder” album is an amazing new set of worship music and we know that Michael’s live show (though always good) is at it’s best when he is leading worship and not just performing. This will be an incredible ending to the festival and we are eagerly looking forward to it!”

Also announced for Saturday's lineup was first time Unity performer **Francesca Battistelli**. "We are very pleased to have Francesca coming to Unity's Main Stage", Newton commented. "She is one of the bright young talents in the industry and has a unique and engaging voice and style." Her hits include "Free to be Me", "I'm Letting Go" and the recent "Beautiful, Beautiful".

Opening the Saturday show will be two other newer artists; both of whom were high on the "wish list" of Unity Facebook and email fans. **Chris August**, whose mega hit "Starry Night" topped all the charts in 2010, will make his Unity debut, followed by the return performance of Dove Award winning **Sidewalk Prophets**. "We are committed to bringing the best new artists to our events and giving fans a huge variety of artist, genres and musical styles", Newton said. "**Chris August** is a hot new talent and **Sidewalk Prophets** have put out a string of hits in their first two years on radio. Both are excellent live performers who will get the Saturday show off to a great start."

Unity 2011 had earlier announced the return of the wildly popular \$10 ticket pricing, that was introduced last year during Unity's 10th Anniversary and produced all time record crowds. Over 60,000 people attended the festival in 2010, over the 4 days span and huge crowds are expected again for 2011. Unity will be held August 10-13 at Heritage Landing Park in Muskegon and as always will include much more than just the Main Stage.

"Unity is known for being family –friendly in both atmosphere and pricing", Newton said. "Being able to offer the \$10/day tickets again this year is a huge bonus to our fans and the hundreds of families who make Unity the #1 Christian event in Michigan. We truly believe that there is not another event of this quality that is also so affordable" Festival entry also includes the Unity A-stage, with alternative and indie artists each day, a free kids area with games and activities for all ages, Camp Unity, the Unity XChange Seminar Tent with free speakers on many life topics, merchandise, ministry displays and much more.

Newton noted that many more artists are to be announced in the coming weeks as the Unity lineup is completed. Artists previously announced for "Day Zero", the totally free Wednesday, August 10th concert include **Reilly, Barlow Girl and Kutless**.

Unity 2011 tickets are on sale now at all Startickets outlets, including most Meijer stores, by calling 1-800-585-3737 or online at www.startickets.com

For more information and frequent updates, visit www.unitychristianevents.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND PHOTOS:

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