

## Culture: Music

# Rick Wakeman and Amazing Grace

*The progressive rock musician and composer, Rick Wakeman, will release in June his album of favorite Christian hymns along with a DVD featuring his daughter, vocalist Jemma Wakeman.*

By Martin Barillas 

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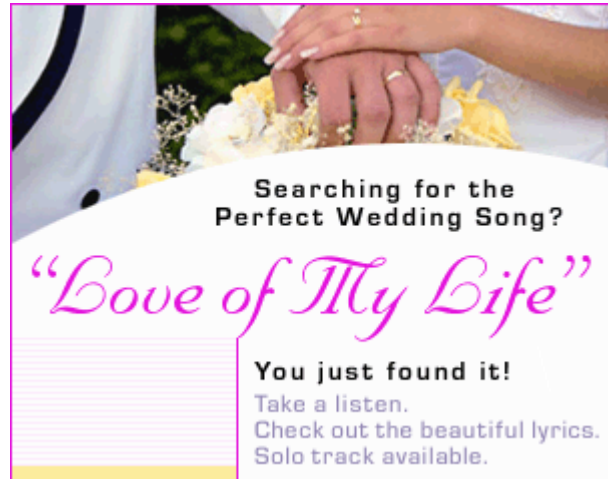
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Rick Wakeman, rock keyboardist and committed Christian, will release his arrangement of "Amazing Grace" on CD and DVD in the North American market on June 5. They were released in the United Kingdom April 4.

During his salad days in the 1960s and 70s, Wakeman collaborated with artists such as Chaka Khan, Elton John, David Bowie, Lou Reed, and Cat Stevens. He was also notable as a composer and keyboard player for the progressive-rock band "Yes" and the folkie "Strawbs". He has since recorded several solo albums.

Wakeman's next CD promises instrumental arrangements of traditional Christian hymns, featuring variations on popular melodies and themes. The album is arranged and performed by Wakeman, while the associated DVD features a live studio performance of Wakeman on the piano and backed up with visual imagery. Also featured is a bonus vocal track, also arranged and performed by Wakeman with vocals supplied by his daughter Jemma Wakeman and The English Chamber Choir.

Wakeman's newest release will feature not only "Amazing Grace", but also "All Things Bright and Beautiful", "Jerusalem", "Abide with Me", and "Ode to Joy". Ageing baby-boomers will probably also relish hearing Wakeman's new recording of "Morning has broken" that he once famously recorded in 1971 with Cat Stevens selection of internationally celebrated hymns," the release states.

According to a media release, Wakeman said "Some of these melodies are so well known that they easily convey the spiritual message quite beautifully when simply performed without words." Wakeman, who has recorded an interpretation of the Gospels, also expressed his love of Christian hymns saying "I just love what they stand for and

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the fantastic role that they play in our worship. I also consider the hymn to be an important part of outreach, especially at Easter and Christmas. Not only do some have lyrical and meaningful words that help us all with our worship and understanding, but the melodies are some of the most beautiful ever written."

Wakeman will be featured in a BBC-One TV Easter Special in the UK called "Amazing Grace - The True Story Of The Song," tracing the history and appeal of one of Christians' favorite hymns "Amazing Grace" on both sides of the Atlantic. Rick also celebrates Easter Sunday this year with presenter Aled Jones on BBC Radio 2's 'Good Morning Sunday Show' in the UK. Wakeman will perform "Amazing Grace", composed by John Newton in the 1770's," the release states.

Info: RWCC

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