

sound all match up really well." Because of the thoughtful writing and specific story behind "Ode to G.K.," Sam claims it as his favorite on the album, with the energy of "Open Up My Doors" running it as a close second.

While I won't share the story of "Ode to G.K." today, interestingly enough, when talking with Casey about the challenges of creating the album, I uncovered a piece of the story behind another song. It was revealed one song specifically proved to be the most challenging and almost did not make the cut. He claims, "I think 'Used to Wonder' was our most difficult song to record. Thomas really wrestled with even putting the song on the project." Thankfully, with it's "vital message today," the song made the list. The line Thomas sings in the chorus, "Remember how you use to wonder, Remember. . . " is something we all need to remember. Casey explains, "In a world filled with forgotten and broken dream, constantly beaten down by circumstantial defeat, remembering what God has put in our heart is pivotal to the *Upside Down Kingdom*."


Ethan Oltremari, Thomas' manager, also highlights Thomas' songwriting ability and the profoundness of his work in saying, "When Thomas writes something, he means it. That's



what makes him and his work so genuine and real." Ethan says his hope is "to see as many people as possible hear the lyrics that God has put on Thomas' heart."

Overall, the album displays the work of a man whose heart is so on fire for the Lord, and because of that passion and his

unique ability and gifts, *Upside Down Kingdom* contains such a testimony to be heard. A testimony through lyrics that I believe contains the power to rekindle that same fire in another's heart. However, I encourage each of you to not just take our word for it, but to listen for yourself. It just might flip pieces of your heart and your views upside down too.

Thomas' album can be found at iTunes, Spotify, and Amazon Music. 

Mary Day is a review writer for River Records LLC in Greenwood, Mississippi.

CANTON June 30

The **6th Annual Balloon Chase Run/Walk & Bike Ride** is part of the 2-day **Balloon Fest** that includes



Balloon Glow at sunset. The morning bike ride begins at 7 a.m. and the evening 4-mile run/walk begins at 6:30 p.m. Family friendly entertainment and concessions all day. 501 Soldiers Colony Road. ballooncanton.com

CRYSTAL SPRINGS June 30

The **20th Annual Tomato Festival** takes place at Railroad Park from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, this is a family friendly festival with kid activities, live music, and exhibitors. cityofcrystalsprings.com or 601.892.2711

GRENADE June 6–10

The 25th anniversary **Thunder on Water Safe Boating Festival** sponsored by Grenada Lake Association. 9 a.m.–6 p.m. with something for everyone. Concessions, carnival rides, arts and crafts. thunderonwater.net or 662.226.2571

HATTIESBURG June 9-23

FestivalSouth® is multi-week, multi-genre arts festival, offering both free and ticketed events to local residents and cultural tourists. Presented by the Hattiesburg Concert Association, it offers music for every age range and musical taste. FestivalArts brings craftsmen, artisans, and tourists together. festivalsouth.org

June 16

The **Dog Days 5K and 2-Mile Walk at Festival South** will benefit the Hub-City Service Dogs program. Prizes and age division from children to 70+. hubcityservicedogs.org or 601.596.4495

JACKSON June 10 – 23

The **International Ballet Competition** returns with top dancers from around the globe. 601.973.9249 or usaibc.com

LIVINGSTON June 7 – July 12

The **Livingston Farmers Market** returns each Thursday from 5–8 p.m. at the corner of Highway 463 and Highway 22. Fresh produce from local growers, featured chefs, craftsmen, live music and activities for the kids. thetownoflivingston.com



PEARL June 16

The **Ranch House Opry** monthly concert 6:30 p.m. at the Community Room in the Pearl municipal complex. Traditional country, bluegrass, and gospel music. \$5 admission. 601.259.1781

RIDGELAND June 9

The Bike Crossing of Ridgeland will host its 6th annual **Mayhem Century Ride**, a benefit for Methodist Rehabilitation Center's Wilson Research. Registration includes a pick-up party the evening of June 9, post-ride lunch, and karaoke contest on Saturday and raffle and door prizes.

racesonline.com/events/bike-crossing-mayhem or 601.856.0049

June 16

Ridgeland Recreation & Parks sponsor the **22nd Annual Father-Child Fishing Tournament** at Old Trace Park on the Ross Barnett Reservoir. No charge to participate. Prizes awarded. 8–10 a.m. 601.853.2011

TUPELO June 6 – 10

The **20th Annual Tupelo Elvis Festival** features regional, national, and local artists along with a Sunday Gospel concert. Features include local food vendor a pet parade, 5K run, movie poster exhibit, Elvis souvenirs, and more.

Tupeloelvisfestival.com 

