



## Music & Media Artists Moved to Action: Switchfoot

*Inspired by the cultural phenomenon of global activism, Millennia has initiated a campaign we call "Music & Media Artists Moved to Action." Increasing numbers of individuals and artists are pursuing creative ways to address critical world issues. The global village continues to shrink, opening new opportunities to work with local communities worldwide. The potential for positive change is limitless. We hope to pass our inspiration on to you and nurture your ideas with an interview with Artists Moved to Action: Switchfoot*

**Switchfoot** is a Grammy-nominated alternative rock band from San Diego, California... According to Jon Foreman, the name "Switchfoot" is a surfing term. "We all love to surf and have been surfing all our lives so to us, the name made sense. To switch your feet means to take a new stance facing the opposite direction. It's about change and movement, a different way of approaching life and music.

Switchfoot first gained mainstream recognition after the inclusion of four of their songs in the 2002 movie A Walk to Remember. This recognition led to their major label debut, in 2003, "The Beautiful Letdown", under Columbia Records/Red Ink. The record represented the band's evolution from the predominantly lo-fi, indie rock sound of their early albums, toward a more layered, synth-influenced sound that helped launch the band to mainstream popularity. It went on to sell over 2.6 million copies and produced the band's best-known singles, "Meant to Live" and "Dare You to Move".

The Beautiful Letdown has since been certified double-platinum, and went on to sell more than 2.6 million copies. The album, Nothing is Sound, debuted at #3 on the Billboard 200 albums chart, an all-time high for the band. Switchfoot's album, Oh! Gravity, was released on December 26, 2006, earning considerable critical acclaim. It entered the Billboard chart at #18 and peaked at #1 on iTunes' Top Albums chart.

On August 10th, Jon Foreman revealed that the band had severed ties with Columbia Records in order to release music as an Indie band. "I think for us, the reason why we signed with Columbia was because of the people that were there. So it's very understandable when all those people are gone, you don't hold any real bad feelings or good feelings towards a company name." Later in October, the band announced that they had created a new record label called Lowercase People Records, in order to better make a direct connection with their fans.

With their new status as an independent band, Switchfoot embarked on their 2007 fall tour, playing shows with Relient K, and Ruth. The tour, dubbed the "Appetite For Construction Tour," was designed to benefit Habitat for Humanity, with the bands donating one dollar per ticket sold to the cause. In addition Jon Foreman worked with Relient K's Matt Thiessen on the song "Rebuild" in conjunction with the theme of the tour to raise additional money for Habitat. By the end of the tour, the bands had raised over \$100,000 for Habitat for Humanity. Since March 2008, the band has been on a short national tour (the Up In Arms Tour), partnering with the organization To Write Love on Her Arms. The tour will end in May 2008, soon after which the band will begin recording the new studio album.

Other humanitarian causes, include DATA, the One Campaign, the Keep a Breast Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, and Invisible Children. The Annual Switchfoot Bro-Am Surf Contest is a benefit contest and concert run by the band to raise money for Care House and Casa de Amparo, organizations serving homeless kids the band's hometown of San Diego.<sup>1</sup> Also, before recording Nothing Is Sound the band made a trip to several South African villages, which inspired the album's song "The Shadow Proves the Sunshine". Seeing things like an orphanage filled with infants who all lost their parents to AIDS, palling around with orphans in the streets, and getting involved with a children's choir called "Kuyasa Kids" moved them to start an ambitious organization called Lowercase People. The organization publishes a quarterly online magazine for music, arts and social justice. They have also produced a CD by the Kuyasa Kids to help raise money for the children's communities.



The band also recently wrote and recorded a new song called "This is Home" for the upcoming film, *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*. It will be included in the official soundtrack for the movie, and was released as a single on April 25, 2008, along with an accompanying music video.<sup>1</sup>

We finally caught up with Tim Forman while on tour with a few questions.

1. How are you using Millennia gear? latest projects? on the road? Any on-line MP3 examples of your music recorded with Millennia gear?

*A better question might be what AREN'T we using Millennia gear for. These have become our go-to mic pre's for almost everything these days. Jon has been especially busy over the past year, releasing 4 solo eps, and a full-length collaboration with Nickel Creek's Sean Watkins.*

*The Origin STT-1 is our secret weapon, and our complete one-stop signal chain for most single-input situations, including vocals. The HV-3, Origin STT-1, and TD-1 can all be heard on the Jon Foreman EPS, available at jonforeman.com and iTunes. We've also begun work on our seventh Switchfoot record, to be released sometime in late '08/early '09.*

2. We were excited to see Switchfoot involved with more than just music. Tell us more about your social activism and the inspirations behind some of the initiatives you have created and are involved with.

*Many of our musical heroes (Dylan, U2, Cash) are people who never saw a disconnect between art and action. That's an awareness that we've been gradually growing into as a band the past 10 years or so. These songs come from a very honest place, trying to make sense of this planet, and wanting to see things change.*

*We've done a lot of touring over the years, seen some amazing places, and met some incredible people. But at a certain point, you begin asking the question, "what are the footprints that we're leaving with our music?" Many times, the answer is surrounded with lots of intangibles -- a moment, a feeling, a conversation.*

*These snapshot moments are a huge motivator for us, and certainly a big part of why we do what we do. But we wanted more than just intangibles. We've recently refocused our touring around specific goals -- causes that we can sink our teeth into, grab hold of and see change taking place right before our very eyes.*

*In the past year, we've been heavily involved with Habitat for Humanity, and we are planning a summer/fall tour in support of them called the Music Builds tour. We've also been working closely with To Write Love on Her Arms, IJM, and the ONE campaign.*

*LowercasePeople.com, our own non-profit, has become a safe place for people within the art community to talk about these causes, along with other important issues*

*surrounding social justice and community. Lowercase People has also become a facilitator for us to think outside the box, and to launch events such as our Annual Switchfoot Bro-Am charity surf contest (now in its 4th year).*

*It's exciting to see what can happen when an entire community rallies together for a cause much larger than itself. We've merely planted a few seeds here and there within our small sphere of influence, and the people around us have responded in a big way. I think this is just the beginning.*

3. The trend toward global social activism, what Paul Hawken recently called the "largest and fastest growing movement in history," is emerging without charismatic leaders, grand theories, or defining events. What are some ways people can become authentically engaged for global good especially in the recording or music industry?

*Creating good, authentic art that targets thoughts and questions that are important to the artist will almost always resonate as a good catalyst for change and motion. In fact, this is not a new concept at all. If you want to be a part of music that shakes things up, then be prepared to reach deep in your artistic endeavors. We've had a saying for a few years now within the band: "If you're not cryin', why are you playin' it?"*

4. We see you have a new label - what direction are you going there?

*We always had a vision within Lowercase People for intersecting beauty and truth, art with action. We've had the opportunity to shine a spotlight on some artists that are doing great things artistically as well as socially. Now that we are an independent band, we're excited about the possibilities of lending our own music to this vision.*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the inspiration your music has given us, as we take new footing facing the opposite direction as well, realigning life goals and embarking on new social ventures. A wave of change is breaking – catch it!



<sup>1</sup> This section is licensed under the [GNU Free Documentation License](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switchfoot). It uses material from the Wikipedia article <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switchfoot>