

DAN BREMNES

Right now - 2013 – is an exceptional moment in time for Dan Bremnes.

With two critically praised releases, a boatload of awards, marquee gigs, a swelling fan base and heaps of radio support on the CV, the singing/songwriting pastor's kid from tranquil Salmon Arm, B.C. is showing serious momentum.

And yet the past doesn't begin to adequately tee up Bremnes' future. Though he's far too humble to admit it, Bremnes is about to go global. It honestly couldn't happen to a nicer – or let's just say it: more talented - guy.

"This is what I live for, what I feel I was born to do. And I love doing it," Bremnes says. Though his pop gains gravitas both from his deep Christian faith and his diverse background as a lead and backing singer, drummer, guitarist and songwriter, it is also sparkling, soaring and ridiculously hooky.

"I really love people and I feel so blessed. It's an honour to be able to share my stories and my music and to just share life, really."

To be sure, the path from church choir to entertaining tens of thousands at Australia's massive annual Easterfest – as he did last March - wasn't sprinkled with rose petals. "When I started I wondered, 'Does anybody out there want to hear me or even care that I am doing any of this?'" Bremnes chuckles.

"But once that ball starts rolling, you can't stop it. I didn't know if I would ever come to this spot. Right now, I'd describe my mindset as excited about the future, passionate, overjoyed, and thoughtful. And thankful. I couldn't be happier."

Which makes sense given all he's achieved in a scant few years, albeit by working like a madman.

When Bremnes released his debut, *Your Strength* in 2010, he knew he'd made a solid introductory statement. But he couldn't have predicted the ensuing acclaim which included - but was not limited to - six Covenant Award nominations including Male Vocalist of the Year, a finalist position in the John Lennon Songwriting Competition and buckets of love from Canadian Christian and pop radio.

Light My Way, Bremnes' EP from 2012, continued apace, racking up an additional two Covenant Award nods courtesy the Gospel Music Association of Canada. The song 'Hear Your Voice' flew to the number three spot on iTunes Canada.

Then came the five-week, full-band tour of Australia "playing every type of show between Melbourne and Brisbane." Plus acoustic dates in New Zealand. And, oh yes, let's not forget ecstatically received concerts alongside superstar acts Jars of Clay and MercyMe.

Bremnes scored thrice in the worldwide Christian Song Competition, netting 2012 wins in the Worship Song category (for 'You Are') and the Open Song category ('Beautiful') while emerging as the Overall Grand Prize winner. Amid all this, he has purposefully paid it forward, twice abetting Christian child sponsorship organization Compassion International in trips to the Dominican Republic.

And Bremnes has continued touring. "I really want to make sure it doesn't seem like I am disappearing in the meantime," he says, confirming that his sights are trained on the next record, to be cut in Nashville and tentatively scheduled for spring 2014 release.

"As I go along I have to be sure that what I am doing next is better than what I have done before," he offers, adding that "My best friend is probably my iPhone with its voice recorder which can capture little song ideas that I'll later flesh out."

Bremnes continues: "Lately, I have been going back to the drawing board to ask myself, 'What can I bring creatively to the table that's new and still reaches into people's lives and speaks to them as only music can do?'"

The answer to that question, judging by some of the as-yet-unreleased material, is: Bremnes brings a ton. That's evident in the infectious, propulsive corker 'On My Heels' and 'Won Me Over,' a massive, chiming, pop suite "written in the van between venues." Like much of Bremnes' music, both songs jubilantly celebrate God's presence in the singer's heart and are buoyed by his crisp, soulful vocals.

"I love writing songs within a Christian context and I love writing songs that are just purely about life, though obviously through the eyes of someone with faith," he says. "There are so many common-ground areas that people can relate to, and I love doing all sorts of flavours of music.

"I've always admired bands like Switchfoot or MercyMe or Jars of Clay - Christian bands with songs that have reached beyond that circuit and become universally known and relatable. That's something I've always looked towards and hoped for.

"As I keep moving forward, I hope that I am able to write something that anybody can love," Bremnes says, "and can feel like it's their song."

Only a fool would bet against him.