



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Acclaimed International Artist Releases Most Personal and Reflective CD To Date:  
JONATHAN BUTLER Looks to the Future and a **BRAND NEW DAY****

**Release Date: June 5, 2007**

**New York, NY, April 16, 2007** – Jonathan Butler has led a life few could imagine. Born under the shadow of South African apartheid and raised in poverty, Butler, while still in his teens, became the first non-white artist to be played on white mainstream radio and appear on national television. Nelson Mandela credits Butler's music as having inspired him during his long days of imprisonment. With three decades of international acclaim under his belt, Butler is a testament to believing in one's self and refusing to let circumstance decide fate. Now with the release of **Brand New Day**, Butler focuses his talent and voice on the world of gospel music.

Born the youngest of twelve children, Butler's childhood home was a cardboard and corrugated-metal shack in one of the most impoverished townships of Cape Town. Music was an integral part of the Butler family life, giving them creative and emotional release as well as adding to their meager income through their musical performances.

While barely more than a toddler, Jonathan was presented with a homemade, one-string guitar. Little did his father realize, in that moment, he was changing the direction of his son's life. Years later, around the age of seven, Jonathan, while sitting round a campfire listening to his family sing, suddenly joined in. His previously unheard voice, clear and melodic, delighted and astonished the Butler family.

Jonathan's musical gifts, encouraged by his parents, grew by leaps and bounds. In his early teens, Butler won a local talent contest, affording him the opportunity to perform with a touring musical company throughout South Africa, playing in ramshackle roadhouses to black audiences as well as concert halls reserved solely for whites.

When Jonathan was thirteen, Clive Caulder, the then president of London-based Jive Records, heard him perform. Soon after, Caulder signed the young singer-musician. Butler immediately began an intensive study of English (his first language is Afrikaans). A year later, the label released Jonathan's debut, self-titled album, which was an instant success, later going Gold. The album also introduced him internationally and he scored his first Grammy nomination for the pop hit "Lies." An instrumental, "Going Home," earned him another Grammy nomination and the mid-tempo ballad, "Sarah, Sarah," confirmed Butler's place in popular music.

While Butler was an admirer of South African stars like singer Miriam Makeba, he was also greatly influenced and inspired by American soul and jazz artists, including Stevie Wonder and George Benson. Because of Butler's enormous success in the jazz world, he is often referred to as a jazz artist, which isn't really the case, since his laid-back approach to R&B/pop has earned him a lot of supporters in the urban contemporary, adult contemporary, quiet storm as well as smooth jazz/NAC markets.

A stream of diverse albums followed one after the other. Through them and extensive concert tours, Butler solidified his presence in the 1990s with a body of music that crossed color and age lines. Jonathan also moved to England, with his wife, Barenese, and their children. Says Jonathan, "I came to the West seeking artistic and personal freedom. While my albums have always offered vocal cuts and instrumentals, for me it was never about creating music for a particular format or type of audience. That's too narrow and restrictive. For me, it's about surrendering to the will of the music and just letting it flow through me, whichever direction it may go."

The Butlers' time in England lasted 17 years before Jonathan realized a complete change was needed, both in physical environment as well as creative climate. In 1996, the family moved to Los Angeles. Reinvigorated creatively and spiritually, Jonathan quickly found himself writing some of the most inspired songs of his already formidable career.

Butler's entrance into Gospel music began with a worship tune, his mega-hit with Kirk Whalum, "Falling In Love With Jesus." His first all-Gospel project and **Maranatha! Music** debut, *The Worship Project*, continued where "Falling in Love" left off and allowed the artist to spread his wings on a series of beautifully-penned and highly reflective tunes. He was also featured in the critically-acclaimed Gospel Goes Classical project, recorded live with Juanita Bynum, backed by a 75-piece orchestra and a 100-voice choir. The Billboard-charting CD, with renowned arranger/conductor, Dr. Henry Panion, III, at the helm, allowed Butler to revisit "Falling in Love" and to duet with Bynum on the worshipful "I Don't Mind Waiting."

Now Butler will release his second Maranatha! Music project, *Brand New Day*, a collection of uplifting and empowering Gospel songs. Co-produced with **Luther "Mano" Hanes** (CeCe Winans, Andrae Crouch, Israel Houghton), the CD brings a new sound to Jonathan Butler, yet never veers too far away from the classic styling he's best known for. The title tune "**Brand New Day**" is an invigorating, exciting jewel.

The rock-edginess of "**Gonna Lift You Up**" helps to celebrate the comfort and joy of his faith. Co-written with **Israel Houghton** (Israel & New Breed), the track is accented by a memorable chorus and a lavish feast of driving instruments. "**You Are My Everything**" contains beautiful guitar work and sweet, solemn vocals.

Butler shines on the reflective and emotive "**Mercy**." Performed with his daughter Jodie, the lyrics speak tenderly of one of God's most notable characteristics. The artist's love affair with the guitar shines through on the smooth, silky notes of "**Tell Me (Do You Still Love Jesus)**." The sparse instrumentation and Jonathan's deeply moving vocals plead for an answer on this introspective cut.

*Brand New Day* is a wonderful expression of the faith that has helped Butler get through the many long and dark points in his life. Reflects Butler, "It's amazing to look back on my life, at the way it has unfolded. The hardships, the set-backs, the triumphs, all of it. It makes me grateful...grateful for my life as it is now, but also grateful for the journey. For being given these extraordinary life experiences. For making everyday, for me, a brand new day."

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