KCU Alum to Lead Audio Technology Program & Recording Studio

by Larry Monroe, Vice President of University Advancement

When KCU prays that God will send us men or women to fill a staffing need, He very often far exceeds our mortal expectations. Such was the case when KCU Alum Steve Hoffman applied for the sound production position at the University. Steve’s story is remarkable and reminds us that God is often “upstream” from us, working to bring about a chain of events resulting in blessings beyond our wildest expectations.

Growing up in Ashland, KY, Steve and his family attended Old Orchard Christian Church. The minister at the time was KCU alum Art Marcum (’62) and the choir director was KCU alumna and Music Professor LaVern Karns (’54). Both had a huge influence on Steve’s life and were instrumental in his decision to enroll as a student at KCU.

Steve played the guitar growing up and while at KCU he found many opportunities to use his talents in ministry. He was a part of a traveling singing group of five singers and two instrumentalists that was the forerunner of Destiny. He played bass guitar for the Watchmen Quartet and for nearly 15 years was a part of Operation Evangelize as their studio engineer. Steve also did sound for Summer In The Son for over 15 years. Soon it became apparent to him and those around him that sound engineering would become Steve’s career niche and what would catapult his future in directions even he could not imagine.

As his skills as a sound tech developed, so did Steve’s reputation. He was working with well known groups in Christian and country music, both in the recording studio and on the road. He did studio sessions for Exile, Steven Curtis Chapman, First Call, and band members from Barbara Mandrell’s band, Alabama, Whiteheart and many more. He has travelled the road doing live sound for a long list of artists such as Highway 101, Mark Lowery, Rich Mullins and John Conlee, just to name a few. He traveled for eight years for the country band Exile as their tour manager and sound technician.

Through it all, Steve had an aching in his heart to be working somewhere in the Lord’s church, using his skills for Kingdom work. He recalls a specific conversation that took place in the late 90’s with then KCU President, Keith Keeran. “I recall just casually talking to Dr. Keeran one day about the possibilities of me doing something at KCU, but opportunities just never developed. So, I just kept praying through the years that God would open a door.”

In the fall of 2011 Steve received a text message from KCU Adjunct Faculty member Clancey Hatfield that simply said, “Call me.” Not long after this, Jeff Greene, KCU Director of Alumni and Church Relations was at Bridges Christian Church in Russell, KY where Steve and his family attend. Jeff mentioned an open position at KCU and encouraged Steve to apply. “I thought,” recalls Steve, “okay God, what are you trying to tell me here? Could this be it? Could this be what you want me to do at this time of my life?” Steve inquired about the opening at KCU and when he learned about the University’s plans to add a recording studio to facilitate a new sound recording program, he was hooked!

Among his many duties as General Manager/Producer for the KCU School of Music, Steve will teach Audio Technology as an Adjunct Instructor, something he has been doing at Ohio University, Southern Campus (Ironton, OH) for the past 10 years.

And so, KCU welcomes home one of her own. The journey that brought him to us is amazing, but in some ways it is almost as if he never left. Steve Hoffman is a fantastic addition to the School of Music. His skills and abilities, his experiences and knowledge have all prepared him well for his new assignment. When asked if he thinks he will ever miss the travel, the lights and the road, Steve smiles and replies, “I am so happy doing what I am doing at KCU. And hey, my folks now breathe a sigh of relief because in their minds I finally have a ‘real’ job!” 🎉

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