

The “amazing” journey of Stephen Hurd

Written by

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In a few short years, Stephen Hurd has become one of the frontline praise and worship leaders in the gospel music world. His songs such as “Undignified”, “Great Praise” and “Zion is Calling” have become staples in Sunday morning church services. His new CD Times of Refreshing (Integrity Music/ \$13.98 List Price) promises to make the same impact. The up-tempo lead single “Amazing” is catching on at radio nationwide and also underscores just how large a role faith has played in Hurd’s life and career. The CD released in stores nationwide on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009.

When asked what the most amazing thing was to ever happen to him, Hurd’s mind goes back to his sophomore year in college. His late mother and biggest cheerleader, was dying of a chronic lung disease. “When I was singing to my mother in the hospital bed and watched her body become relaxed from the overwhelming fear of not knowing her plight,” Hurd says. “That was amazing to me. I saw peace come upon her. I could tell you many, many amazing moments like that but we don’t have enough time.”

One story he did find time to tell was how he joined Integrity Music. Hurd was a popular praise and worship leader in the Washington, D.C. area and had even recorded two custom CDs. He wasn’t actively seeking a record deal, but a fan passed one of his CDs on to an A&R representative for Integrity Music. The man called Hurd to discuss a contract. “The first time they called, I couldn’t meet with them,” he says. “It was February and I was in the mountains on a retreat and my pastor John Jenkins wanted me to stay on sight. So, I thought I had lost the opportunity.” A year later, Jackie Patillo had become Integrity’s A&R representative and reached out to Hurd herself.

“Several people told me about Stephen,” recalls Patillo who is now VP of A&R at Zomba Gospel in New York. “Al Hobbs [Chairman of the Gospel Music Workshop of America] was the first. Stephen has the heart and soul of a worshiper and it was a privilege to facilitate his music ministry.”

She trekked up to Washington, D.C. to watch him lead Sunday morning praise and worship at First Baptist Church of Glenarden. “It was amazing that it came at that time,” he says. “I had felt like I was at a ceiling with the work I had done and didn’t know how to make my platform more effective.” Soon after, Hurd and Patillo sat down with Hurd’s pastor, an attorney, and hammered out a deal.

That was over five years ago and Hurd’s amazing journey continues. “I didn’t write ‘Amazing,’” he says of the new song. “It was written by my co-producer and friend Justin Savage, a young masterful talent that works with many greats in the industry like CeCe Winans, Israel I was in my office listening to music for the new CD and Justin started singing and playing this song.... and I said, `what is that? I NEED THAT SONG on my project and I LOVE IT.... it’s so powerful and works everywhere I sing it. I believe worship teams and choirs all over the world will sing this song. It’s powerful and marries the scriptures from Lamentations 3:21.... God’s mercies are

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new every morning. And he is so tremendous that when you try to put it in words you bump into ‘Amazing.’” Visit www.integritymusic.com for more information. Houghton, and Donnie McClurkin.