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by Shirin Shaikh, On March 18, 2015 11:30 EDT

BLOWING ROCK, NC—United Methodist house-of-worship FaithBridge is a young and growing contemporary church in a Blue Ridge Mountain valley outside Blowing Rock, North Carolina. After several years of using a Behringer XENYX 24-channel analog mixer and a stack of outboard processing at front-of-house, Faith- Bridge’s A/V team sought a digital mixing solution to best suit the needs of their large college town demographic, significantly populated by nearby Appalachian State University.

“We bought an affordable \$700 Behringer for cost-efficiency reasons and it met our needs—at first,” explains FaithBridge Worship/Music Director Kyle Sigmon, who approached me to help them transition to a new PreSonus StudioLive 24.4.2 Ai. The Behringer developed performance issues after its warranty period, Sigmon recalled. “Around the same time, our whole team attended a sound engineering workshop featuring the StudioLive in demos. We were all just drooling over it. For just one example, it was amazing to see how easily we could EQ for the room in such a visually-based system.”

Having commissioned two different StudioLive evaluations for *Pro Audio Review* over the past year or so, I was eager to see a real-world example of what such an upgrade can provide a growing, tech-friendly HOW.

Sigmon, A/V technical staff member Ben Caviness and I were soon completing a trouble-free, leisurely three-hour mixer trade-out. In short order, all non-DAW functionality of the 24.4.2 Ai was working and already easily understood by Caviness—just in time for the next day’s 11 a.m. service.



**The PreSonus 24.4.2 Ai streamlined FaithBridge’s FOH signal flow, providing an overall cleaner sound out of the box.**

In setup, Caviness and I discussed StudioLive-to-iMac connectivity. He had already utilized his late-model iMac’s dual Thunderbolt ports: one for a simple digital video camera input and the other as a most crucial input for ProPresenter, a lyric and media presentation program feeding the church’s video projection screen. The iMac offered no FireWire 400 or 800 ports, thus they ordered a \$29 Thunderbolt-to-FireWire adapter and figured out a USB-based connection scheme for the ProPresenter program.

“We’ve just been recording the sermons with a stereo mic on the video camera,” explains Sigmon, now quite excited about the possibilities of better-sounding audio-for-video. “Now sermons that we share on You- Tube, plus other audio ventures we’re considering like podcasts, will sound a lot better than what we’ve done before.”

The learning of StudioLive’s intuitive workflow came fast and furious. Prior to the next day’s pre-service band rehearsal with FaithBridge’s seven-member, four monitor-mix configuration, Caviness quickly mastered the mixer’s Fat Channel Copy/Load functionality, completing EQ settings for service with no manual referenced. In a word, the StudioLive is “intuitive,” offered Caviness.

StudioLive’s built-in graphic EQ easily replaced the former solution, a XENYX-paired Samson D-2500 graphic EQ. Also removed from the

signal chain were four channels of Behringer graphic EQ; noise floor reduction overall was obvious, commented on by all present as well as members of the congregation the next day. “I heard comments from many people agreeing that the sound improved immediately,” recalls Sigmon. “Just that first day, it was said everything sounded clearer.”

Upon the arrival of audio mixer Dale Henries the next day, “he dove right in,” notes Sigmon. “The second week [after the install], he brought his iPad and was showing us everything he could do.”

In setup, we configured aux/monitor mixes 1-4 for stage wedges. It was discussed that 5-10 could be used for iOS monitor mixes at a later date, and as the operators learned PreSonus’s QMix-Ai software. Clearly, it didn’t take long to learn. “Just this past Sunday, he was granting us access to our monitor mixes through our iPhones,” said Sigmon. “Rob, the drummer, and I were immediately adjusting our monitors. We could identify the names of the channels—instead of channel 5, it was Kyle’s Vocal, or something like that. Dale has picked up on the iOS features quickly and easily.”

The DAW-based capabilities—the “studio” half of StudioLive—promise FaithBridge a variety of solutions for new ways to share its services and sermons, adds Sigmon. Sigmon and Caviness were also excited about the potential of Capture 2-enabled “virtual soundchecks,” allowing the band to listen back to performances for detailed critiques.

“We’re really looking forward to using the PreSonus’s recording aspects. Often our band will do original takes on a [public domain] hymn, which are things we have the rights to give away online with downloads— lots of possibilities there.”

**FaithBridge**

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