

## Willow Park Church Uses E6 Omni Earset Mics for “Living Nativity” Holiday Show

Written by Frank Hammel  
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KELOWNA, BC, Canada — In late 2012, Willow Park Church presented the 21<sup>st</sup> annual “Living Nativity” holiday production. Along with the efforts of more than 500 volunteers, the annual presentation has long relied upon Countryman Associates’ E6 Omni Earset microphones. The mics are also used for the church’s weekly worship services.

More details from Countryman Associates ( [www.countryman.com](http://www.countryman.com) ):

For more than two decades each Holiday Season, Willow Park Church has staged their Living Nativity. For this year’s 21st annual endeavor, they pulled out all the stops: music, dance, and ancient history came together to tell a Christmas story that was unparalleled. Here, the audience witnessed the story of Jesus, was able to partake in an interactive town depicting Bethlehem at the time of Jesus’ birth, and they experienced a Victorian themed room of live mannequins in various displays along with holiday treats served by folks dressed in period costume. The total production relied on the generous support of over 500 volunteers and countless hours of preparation. Audio quality was crucial to the Living Nativity’s success and, to ensure the highest level of vocal reproduction, the show relied on multiple E6 Omni Earset microphones from Menlo Park, CA-based Countryman Associates.

Chris Neufeld serves as Technical Director at Willow Park Church. Tasked with providing leadership to those volunteering within the technical ministries, including sound, lights, and media across the four locations within the church network, he is also responsible for the purchasing and maintenance of the church’s equipment. Neufeld reports that Countryman E6 earset microphones have been a staple for both weekly services and the church’s special presentations for approximately ten years.

“Our services can best be described as contemporary with an emphasis on music and a Bible focused message,” Neufeld explained, “so the Countryman E6 Omni Earsets are a very effective microphone choice for both weekly services and our various productions. We use E6’s on all our preaching pastors, as well is in any drama productions we do for Christmas and

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Easter. This Christmas, we had nine E6’s on stage and, in past years, we’ve deployed as many as sixteen. Our first E6 purchase dates back to within weeks of its initial release to the public, so we have considerable experience with the microphones.”

Neufeld discussed those attributes that make the Countryman E6 microphones such a viable choice for the church’s varied activities, “The thing that attracted me to using an earset mic initially was the excellent high gain before feedback it would provide. Until the E6, I couldn’t get a pastor to wear a headworn mic. Now that we’re using the E6, I have come to appreciate the consistency in the volume when the pastor looks up, down, and around—as compared to a traditional lavalier mic. Because it rarely feeds back, the E6 requires very little EQ and, therefore, sounds far more natural. With the E6, we encountered no issues at all having Mary (mother of Jesus) singing an emotional solo, which really added to the quality of our production.”

As an earset microphone, the E6 carries the advantage of remaining in a fixed position relative to the user’s mouth and, as such, provides excellent consistency of sound. And because of its close proximity to the mouth, the microphone also affords superior isolation from ambient sounds. These characteristics have made a strong impression on Neufeld. “In the drama setting,” he said, “we used to have a lot of challenges with one actor’s mic picking up another actor in close proximity. When actors were close together, such as shepherds around the fire or Joseph nose to nose with the innkeeper, we would get into a feedback situation quickly without warning. This never happens with the E6.”

For Neufeld, the E6’s replaceable cable is yet another important feature, “I consider the replaceable cable on the E6 a very important feature. Fast costume changes in the dark can cause some pretty bad abuse. I have tried competitor’s microphones, and when that cable gets damaged in a costume change, the mic becomes garbage. With the E6, I simply keep a couple extra cables back stage, so a damaged connector takes only a second to swap out, and the show goes on!”

When queried about the Pastor’s use of the E6 earset mic, Neufeld offered the following, “Our current senior pastor interjects a lot of humor during his sermons, so he uses the E6, as he feels it makes him look more dignified and less like a stand-up comic. None of our pastors would consider using the bulkier headsets that were commonly available prior to the E6.”

Before redirecting his focus to forthcoming events, Neufeld summarized his experience with the

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Countryman E6 Omni Earsets. “I occasionally get asked to help other churches in the area with their sound issues,” he reports, “and, typically, they want me to help them upgrade their loudspeaker system. I always take an E6 with me, and once they hear how their pastor can sound with a proper microphone, they often decide against costly upgrades. A good microphone may seem expensive on the surface, but money spent on the right microphone is always money well spent. When we bought our first E6, I would carefully place it on the actor with the most lines, or the one who sang a solo. Now, I wouldn’t consider using any other microphone on any actor, which is why we had nine E6’s in use this year.”

To learn more about Willow Park Church, visit them online at [www.willowparkchurch.com](http://www.willowparkchurch.com) .