

Times of Refreshing

If there's one thing that comes through on *Times of Refreshing*, it's that Stephen Hurd is a sincere musician who enjoys encouraging others. This live recording from Hurd's home church in Maryland hits the encouragement mark.

Though many of his asides and introductions seem aimed at worship leaders, almost anyone can take something from this generously long (nearly 70 minutes) album of pop-infused gospel and praise and worship songs that feature superior musicianship and solid vocals.

Yet, sometimes this disc seems less of a performance and more of a gathering of friends—both a strength and a weakness. For instance, when Hurd—who wrote or co-wrote more than a half-dozen songs on the album—launches into a medley of old hymns, listeners will feel as if they're in his living room.

It's simultaneously wonderful and a little too cavalier. This album has plenty of upbeat numbers that are great, but its second half is dominated by tunes that are occasionally a little boring. But when Hurd is at his best—singing, encouraging, talking, imploring—this album is not only refreshing but entertaining, too.

Buy it: