

# Coffee in the Swarm: Adric Williams

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

graceland, congregation, church, Graceland, people, community, Cheville, arizona, music, write, year, soundtracks, student, background, swarm, major, freshman, band, composer, composing

## SPEAKERS

Josh Mangelson, Julie Wheaton, Mike Hoffman

### **Josh Mangelson** 00:17

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

### **Julie Wheaton** 00:34

Welcome to "Coffee in the Swarm", our *Project Zion Podcast* production coming to you from the Lamoni, Iowa campus of Graceland University. The Swarm is our on-campus restaurant in the Newcom Student Union. This year is being co-hosted by student chaplain, Julie Wheaton, me, and Mike Hoffman, campus minister.

### **Mike Hoffman** 00:51

Hi there.

### **Julie Wheaton** 00:51

It's where we interview students at Graceland who are connected to Community of Christ.

### **Mike Hoffman** 00:55

Julie, how are you today?

### **Julie Wheaton** 00:57

I'm good. Really good.

### **Mike Hoffman** 01:00

What can you tell us about our guest today?

### **Julie Wheaton** 01:02

This is Adric Williams.

### **Adric Williams** 01:03

Hello.

### **Julie Wheaton** 01:04

Adric is on Cheville now. He is a freshman. And he does a whole bunch of things here, don't you?

**Adric Williams** 01:11

Oh, yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 01:13

So that's part of, I think, why we decided to have Adric with us. Adric actually works on the campus ministries team. But so, we're going to ask you a few things about yourself. So, Julie said you're a freshman. So, I know a little bit about your major. So, how would you describe your major that you're pursuing?

**Adric Williams** 01:30

My hobby for a long time has been composing music. So here at Graceland, I am majoring in what's called interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in composition, which is the music staff and I basically assembled my own major, basically, where we could pick all the classes that would suit and put them all in, and it was like a build your own major, which is cool.

**Mike Hoffman** 01:54

Well, you know, that's what, that, that's sort of what the interdisciplinary major is.

**Julie Wheaton** 01:57

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 01:58

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 01:58

Well, very cool. Where are you from originally?

**Adric Williams** 02:01

So, I am from Chandler, Arizona. Shout out to all my Arizona homies. I was born in Arizona. When I was like three, I moved to Oregon, to Bend for a couple years. I was there for like five years and moved back to Arizona when I was like eight. So, I'm basically in Arizona boy with a little touch of Oregon.

**Julie Wheaton** 02:19

*[Inaudible]*

**Adric Williams** 02:19

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 02:20

So, what was it like for you in the church, let's just say in Arizona. I mean, what was it like in that area?

**Adric Williams** 02:26

The Church in Arizona is very, very welcoming. It's very casual, and anybody can show up and be themselves and express themselves. We've had whole loads of people at my congregation. It's very accepting. There's like a very wide range of ages in our congregation. We have a lot of older folks and also a lot of younger little children who are just absolute delights who, before I moved to Graceland, I would play with after church, and play tag and overdo myself, and make myself sore for the next week. It's a very, very, very loving congregation.

**Mike Hoffman** 03:06

And you're talking about which congregation?

**Adric Williams** 03:07

This is Chandler congregation?

**Mike Hoffman** 03:08

Chandler.

**Adric Williams** 03:09

Yeah, which, by the way, has a really cool new building with some really good audio visuals. Shout out to my dad.

**Mike Hoffman** 03:17

And you went to camp at Whispering Pines?

**Adric Williams** 03:19

I did.

**Mike Hoffman** 03:19

Okay.

**Adric Williams** 03:20

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 03:20

Very cool.

**Julie Wheaton** 03:21

Yeah. Cool. So, I know that you mentioned you're into composing music and things, and so, with that, was there like people at the music faculty that reached out to you to come to Graceland, or why did you choose to come here?

**Adric Williams** 03:34

So, first of all, I'm a fourth generation student. My family's been here for a long time, fourth generation on my dad's side, third generation on my mom's side. So, my parents have always talked really highly of Graceland my whole life growing up. It was basically just my dream college. And my whole time

growing up I was like, man, I want to go to Graceland. And I heard all these amazing things. I'm like, so excited. I'm just like, oh, I want to, I want to be on Cheville and do all this crazy crap.

**Mike Hoffman** 04:03

Anything else that brought you to Graceland?

**Adric Williams** 04:05

It was mainly that and it also helps that there wasn't really any universities back in Arizona that particularly appealed to me.

**Mike Hoffman** 04:12

Okay.

**Adric Williams** 04:13

Yeah, I didn't feel like going to ASU and being one of millions of students.

**Julie Wheaton** 04:19

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 04:19

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 04:21

So, did you go to SPEC too?

**Adric Williams** 04:22

I did.

**Mike Hoffman** 04:23

Okay. Okay.

**Adric Williams** 04:24

Yeah, I was at SPEC my freshman year and my senior year, with COVID splitting up my SPEC experience...

**Mike Hoffman** 04:30

Oh.

**Adric Williams** 04:30

...but my first year, freshman year, the morning of the flight, I woke up at like two in the morning with a foot infection. My foot was completely swollen. I had a 104 degree fever. So, I missed my flight, went to the ER, had a bunch of tubes in me, but we were able to like move around the tickets where I was able to go later. But I was stuck in crutches the whole time, which stunk *[inaudible]*.

**Mike Hoffman** 04:52

The whole time you were the whole time you were at SPEC?

**Adric Williams** 04:54

Yeah. Eventually got to the point where I'm like, I'm sick of this. My foot is fine. I could kind of hobble. On the second to last night, there was this, it was called the silent disco where it's like this big rave party thing where everybody's wearing headphones. And there's a photo of me circling the internet somewhere where I'm just like dancing. I'm holding my crutches in the air just like, yeah!

**Mike Hoffman** 05:14

Gosh, oh my gosh, that's crazy.

**Adric Williams** 05:18

Yeah.

**Julie Wheaton** 05:19

I know, you know, you were on Stewart Manor for a little while, like a semester. How has the house system and like, being a part of jazz band, stuff like that, like how is being a part of that stuff helped, or encouraged your Graceland experience?

**Adric Williams** 05:35

Yeah, I'll definitely say it definitely pushed me to grow as a person and stretched who I am, I guess, because I came here not knowing anybody, except for one person from my congregation. Hi, Angel.

**Mike Hoffman** 05:49

We hope she's listening.

**Adric Williams** 05:51

So, I came from like, in Arizona, the bands have this very, in my experience there, like bands have always had, everyone in band has been like really chaotic, very, not really caring about what other people think, and very out there. And that's kind of like the social environment I kind of grew up in. When I got to Graceland, it wasn't exactly that. It was less flamboyant I guess, and that was kind of a shock to me. And it really took me a while to get settled in and find who my friends were, and just like figure out how to act, who to be in these environments. There was a period of time where I just kind of just became really quiet. But I've kind of come out of that. And now I'm just like, slowly being myself, more and more easing into it.

**Mike Hoffman** 06:38

Okay.

**Adric Williams** 06:39

Yeah. And it's definitely helped me with learning about starting over, making friends and all of that sort.

**Mike Hoffman** 06:47

So, it's not uncommon to switch houses. But why Cheville?

**Adric Williams** 06:51

So, I had heard a lot about Cheville. Actually, it's funny enough, both of my uncles were named Scott, their birthdays are one day apart, they're both scientists, both of their middle names are Allen, a bunch of crazy coincidences, and they were also, I believe they were both on Cheville. I know, one of them was for sure, Scott Miller. I've heard a lot of stories about Cheville and stuff growing up. And I was like, this sounds like definitely the house that I feel like I fit the best in. But when I was filling out the paperwork, I was like, you know, I really don't know a lot about the houses. Maybe there's one I'd be a better fit, so I kind of left it blank. It was just kind of like, throw me in wherever you think I best fit. They put me in Stewart Manor, which is where my dad was, and I didn't really have the best experience in Stewart Manor. It wasn't bad. It was just a very different social environment and lots of football players and I'm a band nerd and I may have been going to like every football game in high school for the past five years, but...

**Mike Hoffman** 07:47

They didn't really ask the sorting hat to put you into Cheville then.

**Adric Williams** 07:50

Yeah, basically.

**Mike Hoffman** 07:52

I mean, that's, yeah.

**Adric Williams** 07:54

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 07:54

And I'm making a reference here to you know, Harry Potter but housing system selection process is interesting, because, you know, it includes everyone. Well, good. So, you think you're going to like Cheville?

**Adric Williams** 08:05

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 08:05

Okay.

**Adric Williams** 08:06

Yeah, I came to one of their house meetings last year to kind of see how it was. And everywhere I look, it's just this crazy, this is the most band kid energy I've seen since I got to Lamoni. So, it was like, I want to go here.

**Mike Hoffman** 08:20

How would you describe your church experience while you've been at Graceland so far, which I know you really had only one semester under your belt?

**Adric Williams** 08:28

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 08:28

And we're still coming out of COVID a little bit anyway, so, but how would you describe that? I mean...

**Adric Williams** 08:34

So, my history in the church, for most of the time in there, I'd never really paid a lot of attention. I'd never really participated a lot. I'd always go, but wasn't really getting much out of it. And then like, shortly after I graduated high school, I was like, you know what? I've been in here my whole life and like, what have I gotten out of it? So, I've been working on finding, discovering more things about the Church, and like really exploring the Church. I went to a bunch of camps over the summer. And when I came to Graceland, I was welcomed with open arms by the campus ministries team. That's really the first place where I really felt welcomed, and really felt like myself. I've been talking to Mike a lot about different things and participating with lots of stuff, talking about different things going on, learning more about the Church, learning more about what I want to do in the church. And it's, it's been very beneficial for me.

**Julie Wheaton** 09:23

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 09:23

Yeah.

**Julie Wheaton** 09:24

Yeah. So, I know that you mentioned that your major right now is music composition, right?

**Adric Williams** 09:28

Yeah.

**Julie Wheaton** 09:28

Which is so cool, by the way.

**Adric Williams** 09:29

Well, Thank you.

**Julie Wheaton** 09:30

So, I'm just wondering, what do you plan on like doing with that as your career?

**Adric Williams** 09:36

Yeah. So ideally, in my fantasy world, well, well, so Shakespeare, he got paid by the queen to write whatever he wanted. That would be a really nice gig, but that's never gonna happen. And I don't want to live on the streets or in my parents' basement. So, there's a couple different branches I could go in. There's of course film scoring with people like John Williams, and I'm blanking on his name, dang it, the guy who wrote *Interstellar*. There's writing soundtracks for video games, which I'm personally very

interested in. And then there's also scoring music for, just based off commission, writing pieces for different ensembles to play for, like different events. And preferably, I'd like to go into either the soundtrack writing for games, or the composing for commissions. That's, all of my biggest influences as a composer has come from composers who do write for commissions like John Mackey, Eric Whitacre, if any y'all recognize those names. Those are like my top two composers. And that's what they do. And it's, I think it's the coolest thing. And I would love to do that. I've also been inspired by a composer/game developer named Toby Fox, who wrote and programmed and designed a couple of games with really phenomenal soundtracks, very different from what I write. But I love the idea of filling up a world with my own music and being the one to create all the different themes and motifs that represent different characters...

**Mike Hoffman** 11:06

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 11:06

...and getting to play with them to illustrate different things going on in the story. It's always been the coolest thing to me. So those are the main two paths that I would hope to find success in.

**Mike Hoffman** 11:17

Yeah. So, while you're at Graceland, we've sort of taken advantage of your skills and desires and where you want to go. You and I've talked about this. You're working on some music for an intro to "Coffee in the Swarm", right?

**Adric Williams** 11:31

I am.

**Mike Hoffman** 11:31

Yeah. So, give us a little intro to that. What's it got in it?

**Adric Williams** 11:37

So, the intro for the Swarm?

**Mike Hoffman** 11:38

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 11:38

Yeah. Okay. So, I started that this morning, actually. So, I took a lot of inspiration from the feel and like emotion from probably my favorite hymn, "For Everyone Born", which I wasn't able to use, but one of my favorite tunes, and when you listen to it, you might notice some inspirations from it. But I also wanted to write a balance, where if you listen to it, it's really interesting and engaging, but it won't distract you from what's going on.

**Mike Hoffman** 12:06

Yeah.



**Adric Williams** 12:06

So, I use slower chords, basically. So, it just takes less attention to listen to it, basically. So, it will work in the background. I referenced...

**Mike Hoffman** 12:18

"The Spirit of God Like a..."

**Adric Williams** 12:19

Yes.

**Mike Hoffman** 12:19

"...Fire is burning".

**Adric Williams** 12:21

Yes.

**Mike Hoffman** 12:21

Right, right, right, right.

**Adric Williams** 12:22

I used that hymn. So, the idea is, it's at this point in the intro song, it's going to be in the background soft, soft and quiet. And you hear this hymn play majestically in the background by trombones, French horn and trumpet and going at half the tempo. And I wrote it so, I wanted it to feel like it's soaring. I put it over this chord progression I used earlier in the intro, if anybody knows how that is, where basically I took material that I had earlier in the intro, and I put this melody over it, had it kind of soaring above, with percussion going in the background, creating this soundscape with these different rhythms that don't entirely match up. It's a really cool technique that, I love it when pulled off, right. I'll still reference Graceland University's alma mater in there...

**Mike Hoffman** 13:08

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 13:09

...with an instrument called the celeste.

**Mike Hoffman** 13:10

What is that?

**Adric Williams** 13:11

It's similar to xylophone or glockenspiel.

**Mike Hoffman** 13:14

Oh, okay. Okay.

**Adric Williams** 13:15

Yeah, it's basically if you combined those two.

**Mike Hoffman** 13:16

Okay.

**Adric Williams** 13:17

So, the main inspirations for this intro was, "For Everyone Born", it was Graceland alma mater, and the "Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning".

**Julie Wheaton** 13:26

Yeah. That's super cool...

**Mike Hoffman** 13:29

It is.

**Adric Williams** 13:29

Why, thank you.

**Julie Wheaton** 13:30

...to hear about the process.

**Mike Hoffman** 13:31

Yeah.

**Julie Wheaton** 13:32

So, I know that you had mentioned that you go to Chandler congregation in Arizona, so speaking of Community of Christ, what do you want to see come from Community of Christ? What do you want the future look like?

**Adric Williams** 13:45

Ooh, I've been putting some thought into this one. I've been thinking about my congregation and the biggest weakness in my specific congregation is that there's, we have a lot of adults, we have a lot of like really young kids, but there's not really anybody in between. It's basically me. There's my friend Angel, who also goes here, and, and then that's about it.

**Mike Hoffman** 14:03

So....

**Adric Williams** 14:04

So...

**Mike Hoffman** 14:04

...so more young adults.

**Adric Williams** 14:06

Yes.

**Mike Hoffman** 14:06

Okay.

**Adric Williams** 14:06

So, what I want to do is I want to bring in more young adults, and I want to give people a reason to come every week. And I had this crazy idea. I don't know if this is gonna work out when I graduate from Graceland, move and back home, I'm hoping to start experimenting with some of these ideas. But I have just crazy, bonkers idea where what if the Church was just on like, every Sunday it was just open all day and you could come in at any time, and there's couches everywhere, and there's like pool tables and cards, and there's a TV, and basically make it like, instead of a church, make it a community center where people would come whenever they're free and spend some time there, make friends, talk to new people, really have a community. And then maybe on Friday or Saturday nights have a weekly game night or something of the sort that brings people in. If there's like something that breaks the ice between new people coming in. And something I've always wanted to do at my congregation is to do a community arts display, where you invite youth from like all over the neighborhood to create whatever art they like doing, whether it's making a sculpture, making a painting, or a drawing, or making something cool out of Legos.

**Mike Hoffman** 15:23

So, do you have a background in art?

**Adric Williams** 15:25

I am a very creative man. My creativity is mostly in music writing. Every now and then I'll sit down and do a little bit of visual art...

**Mike Hoffman** 15:34

Okay.

**Adric Williams** 15:34

...and it's not the work.

**Mike Hoffman** 15:36

It's just like all of a sudden, this art idea, which I think is really cool. Absolutely cool, yeah, so.

**Adric Williams** 15:41

'Cause my thought behind this is when I was a freshman in high school, I was writing all this music, and I was so excited about it, I loved it, and there wasn't really anywhere to take it. And I'm like, envisioning, what if, once every, like six months or something, the whole community came together and everybody showed off all this art they did? And you could have a little open mic recital, where anybody who writes music can sing their songs or play something on piano or violin, or whatever their instrument is, and anybody can express themselves in any way they want.

**Mike Hoffman** 16:12

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 16:12

And I think that would be a great way to bring the community together.

**Mike Hoffman** 16:16

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 16:17

Everybody would have this common interest in creating things.

**Mike Hoffman** 16:19

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 16:20

And then, you know what? Maybe there's a bunch of musicians here, and maybe we'll want to make a cool little, at home, Afterglow band, you know.

**Mike Hoffman** 16:27

Yeah. [*inaudible*] and may not be familiar. Afterglow is our Wednesday night worship, which is now our primary worship on campus now, and it is led by a student band that Julie participates in. And have you been involved?

**Adric Williams** 16:43

Not yet. I plan to.

**Mike Hoffman** 16:44

Okay, okay, cool. And it's got, I don't know, six or eight people, and it rotates, and singers, and your idea is to have Afterglow back in your home congregation then.

**Adric Williams** 16:53

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 16:54

Sort of like that.

**Adric Williams** 16:54

Yes, something of the sort.

**Mike Hoffman** 16:56

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 16:57

And like, it doesn't really have to be that. It could just be a little community band...

**Mike Hoffman** 17:00

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 17:01

...that may be, every now and then, could come in and play at our church services. And then kind of bring that new voice into it.

**Mike Hoffman** 17:08

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 17:08

And then that would also bring in other younger folks.

**Mike Hoffman** 17:10

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 17:11

You know.

**Mike Hoffman** 17:11

Yeah, yeah. Which is the whole purpose of where you [inaudible], so.

**Adric Williams** 17:14

Exactly.

**Mike Hoffman** 17:15

So, yeah, so.

**Adric Williams** 17:17

Yeah. Oh, and why not the cherry on top of this crazy idea, would to be, to have an espresso machine, and teach all the pastors how to make espressos. And somebody could come in, and there would always be like, there's always two pastors or priests there at a time. And they could like, show you around, kind of introduce you to anybody who's there, show you where everything is, and then make you a nice cup of coffee. And then you can maybe do some homework, or you can just sit and talk on the couch.

**Mike Hoffman** 17:43

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 17:43

Do, you know whatever?

**Mike Hoffman** 17:44

Cool, very cool, yeah.

**Julie Wheaton** 17:46

These are really cool ideas, by the way, super cool.

**Adric Williams** 17:48

Why, thank you.

**Julie Wheaton** 17:49

So, if you could sit down with the president of Community of Christ, what do you think you would say to him?

**Adric Williams** 17:56

Ooh, that's a good question. If I sat down with him, I would tell him that I want, that we should reimagine what church is and expand on the ideas. 'Cause part of where the idea came from was when I was a kid, the church service would end. I'd be like, Mom, Dad, let's go. I don't want to be here. There's nothing to do, while they're all talking and socializing with all their friends, and if we made every church a place where people would want to be, where kids would want to be, where young adults would want to be, and older adults, then...

**Mike Hoffman** 18:31

Yeah.

**Adric Williams** 18:31

...that would bring people in, you know. I want to reimagine our churches and congregations as somewhere that you don't want to leave after church.

**Julie Wheaton** 18:39

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 18:39

Yeah.

**Julie Wheaton** 18:40

That's a good point. Yeah,

**Mike Hoffman** 18:42

But not just older people, everybody wants to stay.

**Adric Williams** 18:43

Everybody.

**Mike Hoffman** 18:45

So, is there anything else you'd like to share with us today about Graceland, about the Church, about you and your future?

**Adric Williams** 18:51

I mean, if anybody's looking to commission some music, you could email me at [adric.j.williams@gmail.com](mailto:adric.j.williams@gmail.com). But in all seriousness, but *[inaudible]*.

**Mike Hoffman** 19:03

We've already, you and I have talked about maybe working on a piece for baccalaureate at the end of the year...

**Adric Williams** 19:08

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 19:08

...or something, so yeah, so. Well, it makes sense to me. Like you've come to Graceland, any student comes to Graceland, and we need to try to match up what you want to do with learning about it here, you know.

**Adric Williams** 19:20

Yeah.

**Mike Hoffman** 19:20

And so, we appreciate you being here. Thank you.

**Adric Williams** 19:22

I, thank you guys for inviting me.

**Mike Hoffman** 19:25

So that wraps things up for this episode of "Coffee in the Swarm". Thanks for listening. This is...

**Julie Wheaton** 19:30

This is Julie.

**Mike Hoffman** 19:31

...and Mike signing off until next time. Thank you.

**Adric Williams** 19:33

And have a bright future.

**Josh Mangelson** 19:43

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