

## A Tribute to David Darling

Dear Friends,

This past January, 2021, we lost a great friend, and long-time Consort colleague, David Darling.

David had been our cellist throughout the 1970s. He was a musical pioneer, a fellow warrior in our adventures, and a mensch. He was one of the greatest musical partners I have ever had, as well as a treasured friend for over half a century.

In my sorrow, after learning the news, I immersed myself in listening to recordings we had made together, from our albums and concerts.

I came to feel it was important to share this music. Few people know the whole gamut of David's playing. He was an extraordinary fountain of music, and quite possibly the most versatile cellist in the history of the instrument, up to that time.

Since we are prevented now, by the Pandemic, from gathering for a concert to celebrate David's life, I felt compelled to weave a playlist, from all these recordings, and make it available to anyone who is interested.

Perhaps the greatest tribute to David we can make, will be to keep his music alive in the world.

I began writing notes on the pieces, to accompany the playlist, as we have always done with our albums, to share information that might be of interest to listeners. The more I wrote, however, the more the memories of the whole journey David and I shared during those years began to weave themselves together. And reliving this story then became a way of reconnecting with David. But the only way to tell "the story" is to tell the stories. And since all these adventures took place between 40 and 50 years ago, it has taken me a bit of time to reconstruct them. Each time I returned to the music, however, the memories kept arising.

Starting at the very beginning, with this amazing story of how we met David in 1969 in Terre Haute, Indiana, I kept going from there, following the memory trail. The momentum of this narrative propelled me for many days.

I offer this tribute to my departed brother.

Included are:

- "Adventures with David" (34 pages)
- *Consorting with David* (19-track playlist)
- Notes on the recordings (25 pages)

With gratitude,  
For living music,  
Paul

## ADVENTURES WITH DAVID

*“And why not in music ~ yeah Art! ~ in serious music too, a something which comes up from the life of a day, perhaps something that nature does to an Elm Tree, something as of old-time humor, or a sense of hilarity, a jump-upward feeling a boy may have on an early winter morning ~ why not?”*

- Charles Ives

### An Auspicious Encounter

In the summer of 1969, our fledgling Consort, then barely a year old, traveled from New York to Terre Haute, Indiana, for a concert at Indiana State University. The players included Richard Bock on cello; Paul McCandless, English horn; Gene Bertoncini, guitar; Virgil Scott, alto flute; John Beal, bass; Steve Booker, percussion; and myself on alto sax. We were rehearsing in the concert hall that afternoon, and I recall we were playing for the first time a new arrangement I had done of the “Concierto de Aranjuez,” which had been the basis for the classic Miles Davis/Gil Evans album *Sketches of Spain*. At some point I noticed a young guy, sitting on the side of the stage, just listening; and he was there throughout the rest of the rehearsal. Then that night, after the concert, I saw him again, backstage. I think he must have overheard us talking about some restaurant we were going to, and as we were leaving he came to me and asked: “Is it ok if I tag along with you?” And I said, “Sure.”

At the restaurant, the Consort players all sat around one table, and this fellow came in and sat down at a nearby table, by himself, and never said a word. He seemed to be interested in listening to our conversations. And we were all full of ourselves, talking about New York music business stuff and whatever (all the players except myself lived in the City). I remember feeling a little guilty that we weren’t being more welcoming to him and that I hadn’t even introduced myself. As we got up to go, he finally spoke up and asked me: “How would somebody audition for your group?”

I didn’t know what to say, so I asked: “What do you play?” “Cello,” he said. And I thought: cello? Really? This clean-cut WASP kid from Indiana plays cello? I had believed, from my limited experience, that you had to be Jewish and from New York to really play the cello. This guy looked more like a tennis player, to me. (That turned out to be the part I did get right, for he happened to be the champion of his college tennis team.)

I wanted to be polite, so I said: "I don't know, but if you give me your name and address, I'll get in touch if anything ever comes up." So I handed him my pocket notebook, and he wrote it down. I don't think I ever even looked to see what his name was.

Fast forward several months, to early January, 1970. We were booked for a ten-week tour of 49 concerts that was set to begin January 15<sup>th</sup>, and Richard Bock, our masterful 19-year old cellist, had left the Consort in October to join the Buffalo Symphony. I had been beating the bushes for weeks, to find a cellist willing to go with us on this tour, and I was getting desperate. We were contracted to have six players in the band for all these gigs, and many of these presenters already had our first album, in which cello was featured prominently, so I couldn't just substitute some other instrument. I had finally come to the realization that I just needed someone who owned a cello, regardless of whether they could play or not. And I thought about this guy from Indiana.

But how to find him? I didn't know his name, but I remembered he had written it down. However, finding that note would be like looking for a needle in a haystack -- I make lots of notes, in little spiral pocket notebooks I've carried since the seventh grade. They produce a lot of clutter, in piles all over, as I never have time to organize and keep ahead of them. But, they have, over the years, served me well. And they did now, once again. Luckily it had only been 6 months, and not six years, since Terre Haute, and after a couple days of digging, I found the note: "David Darling, Indiana State U, Terre Haute" -- with a phone number.

I called the number, but of course it was disconnected. So I called the music department at Indiana State, and asked the receptionist if she knew of a cellist named David Darling, whom I figured was somehow associated with their department. She said "No," but I urged her to inquire of other people in the office, and I heard her put the phone down and call out: "Has anybody ever heard of a David Darling?" and a woman's voice responded: "Yes, he moved to Kentucky, and he's teaching at the university there."

In five minutes, I had his number, from the University of Western Kentucky music department. I called him and asked what he was doing, and he said: "Well, I'm teaching at the University, playing in the Nashville Symphony, doing recording sessions in Nashville, and I have some private students." My heart sank, and I said: "Oh, well then you wouldn't be interested in why I called." David said: "What's that?" and I explained about the upcoming ten-week tour, and that it started in a week. And David said: "I'll go!" I was stunned, so I said: "You're kidding!" (I was thinking -- I already know he can't play, but he must also be crazy, or a pathological liar. How could he be involved in all these things and just pick up and leave on a ten-week tour with us?) But I didn't challenge him. I was desperate. So I got his address, and I sent him fast-pony all our music, with our first Consort album, along with a plane ticket to Deland, Florida, where we were to have our first concert at Stetson University.

### **The First Gig**

We all converged in Florida the day before the concert, so we could rehearse this totally new band, which now had Ralph Towner, on guitar; Glen Moore, on bass, and percussionist Collin Walcott, along with holdovers Paul McCandless, and myself. David arrived, with his cello. We came together that night, in this beautiful little concert hall, for a rehearsal I'll never forget.

Playing for the first time, among these hot-shot players from New York City, David, this ingenuous and humble young "tennis player" from Indiana, totally blew us away. He played all the written parts beautifully, and when it came to the open-ended free-form cello solo from Bartok's "Ballad in 7/8," which Richard Bock had improvised so brilliantly on the first album, David's improvisations were off the charts. And he used his voice, along with the cello, something we'd never heard before. We were just knocked out.

The rehearsal went on into the wee hours, ending with a hilarious, extended Victor Borge-like performance by Ralph Towner on the concert grand piano that had all of us rolling on the floor in hysterics.

It was an amazing night of bonding, through music and humor. A band was born.

Our first concert the next night was a triumph. We were off and running.

And running is what David did. He commuted back to Nashville, in every open window in our itinerary, to try to handle his responsibilities there. He would race to an airport in his rental car, after gigs, and then fly back from Nashville to the airport nearest to where we were playing next.

One night I was awakened in our motel about 2 a.m. by a pounding on my door. It was Collin and Ralph, and they called from outside: "David's in jail. You've got to come." David had been driving at some outrageous speed to get to an airport, and been arrested by the state police. I don't remember how we got him bailed out, but we did.

That whole long tour was like a dream. The band was new, and stellar, and everyone was excited to be part of it. The music was new, and inspiring. Playing concerts was new, for most everyone (Ralph and Glen had only played in clubs before). The audiences were fervent, everywhere. And travelling together was great fun, much of the time a non-stop laugh-a-thon. We were a study in enthusiasm.

New music began to flow, very quickly, especially from the amazing pen (and guitar strings) of Ralph Towner.

In April we headed out again for a series of gigs in mid-America, during which Ralph, one afternoon in a motel in Kansas, embracing a 12-string guitar for the first time ever, wrote a beautiful new piece for the Consort, featuring cello on the melody. We played it in all our concerts over the next several months, under the title "Ralph's New Song," until one day Ralph decided to change the title to "Icarus."

## **Kindred Spirits**

David was the perfect cellist for the Consort. He was a unique combination of someone who had come up through the standard (“normal”) educational paths, getting his degrees and becoming a teacher; but who inside had the wild soul of an adventurer. The Consort gave him the forum to explore that side of himself, and he revelled in all of it, both onstage and off. He was a fountain waiting for a green light.

David had deep classical training as a cellist. During high school years he had attended the famous summer school in Hancock, Maine, for orchestral musicians and conductors, led by Pierre Monteux, one of the most distinguished conductors of the 20th century. (Monteux had conducted the historic world premieres of Stravinsky’s “The Rite of Spring” and “Petroushka,” as well as Ravel’s “Daphnis and Chloe,” in Paris, between 1911 and 1914.)

David also had some experience on “the other side of the fence,” playing sax in a dance band during junior high school. I recall him telling me that this little band only knew the bridge to one song – “September Song” – so they played that bridge with every tune in their repertoire.

Personally, David and I felt an immediate kinship, as kids who had grown up in middle-America towns: David in Elkhart and myself in Altoona (and this extended as well to Paul McCandless, who grew up in Meadville).

## **The FcUX Album**

Our 1970 summer tour was to begin in California and come East. Our concerts had become so dynamic that we felt it would be great to make a live album. And we had acquired a new producer: Phil Ramone. Noel Paul Stookey, who had produced the “early Consort’s” first two albums – *The Winter Consort*, in 1968; and *Something in the Wind*, in ’69 – passed the baton to Phil, the long-time recording engineer for Peter, Paul and Mary. I had enjoyed working with Phil when the Consort made our first-ever recording in 1967, backing Noel on his “House Song,” on Peter, Paul and Mary’s *Album 1700*.

We had a remote recording truck at three gigs: Royce Hall at UCLA; the Whiskey-a-Go-Go club on Sunset Strip in Hollywood; and Kilburn Hall, at the Eastman School of Music.

One of the unusual pieces we had been doing in all these concerts was a structured free-form group improvisation that David had imagined as a requiem for a friend who had been killed in Vietnam. It included brooding, dark, low cello lines, waves of low-drum rumbles, intense double-stop cello churning, David’s falsetto voice crying out, then screaming; gun shots from the snare drum, and then sax and oboe playing in unison the melody of “Onward Christian Soldiers” in minor, as a dirge.

This was not a piece that any record company would have agreed to include on an album, but fortunately our contract gave us final say, and we felt this was an important statement to make. Over the years, many people have told me that they always skip this track when they listen to the *Road* album. It was, and still is, disturbing.

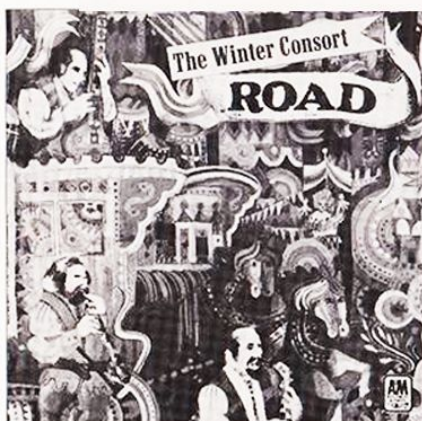
The *Road* album was released that fall. Here is an ad done by A&M Records that is probably the best one we've ever had for any album.

## Paul Winter Consort/Road

*Paul Winter is my Consort; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to listen to fine music;  
He leadeth me among great arrangements,  
He restoreth my eardrums;  
He guideth me into Requiems for my stereo's sake.  
Yea, though it soundeth like Muzak as it wandereth  
through the valley of criticism  
It shall not be so compared, It can be no evil,*

*For Art, thou be with it;  
The Consort's classical guitar and sax, they comfort me.  
They preparrest music before me in the presence of  
Grand Funk, mine enemies;  
They annointeth my head with Bach Fugues; my delight  
runneth over  
Surely I shall wander this ROAD all the days of my life;  
And the Lp shall dwell in my record library forever*

- Bob Chorush  
Coast Magazine



For free 4-color poster, clip this coupon out and mail to:

Paul Winter  
c/o A&M Records  
1416 N. La Brea Ave.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90028

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Allow 6 weeks for delivery.

A&M Records had by now released three albums of the Paul Winter Consort, and they were increasingly frustrated at how to market this totally eclectic and acoustic band.

We were an anomaly in the rock era.

The sales of *Road* were not significant enough to encourage either us or the record company to continue our relationship, so we amicably parted company.

We had never had a manager, but for years I had aspired to becoming part of Albert Grossman's stable of artists, that included Peter, Paul and Mary, and other notable folk artists. Albert was the Dean of managers. I had known of him since I was in college near Chicago in 1960 when he ran a prominent folk club there, the Gate of Horn. I had

connected with him several times since the mid-60s, but our genre was “outside the pale,” and he didn’t sense much commercial potential.

The Consort played several gigs that fall at Baruch College in New York, with our friend Richie Havens, who was one of Albert’s artists. I finally convinced Albert’s new partner, Bennett Glotzer, to come hear us, and he sensed that we might have some promise, so we finally signed with Albert’s management, now named Grossman-Glotzer Management. However, Albert, at that point, was retiring from active duty.

Bennett wanted to get us a new producer and a new record company. He started at the top. George Martin seemed an interesting possibility, as the Beatles had ended earlier that year, so Bennett got in touch with him. He first proposed that George produce a new rock band they had signed called Sea Train, to which George agreed. Bennett convinced George to come to New York in December to hear Sea Train at Carnegie Hall, then persuaded George to have lunch with me the next day, so I could tell him about the Consort.

George had, of course, never heard of us, but he was curious about this strange group that included cello, saxophone, and, above all, the oboe. For George had been an oboe player with the Sadler Wells Ballet Orchestra in London before becoming a record producer. So the oboe got us a foot in the door. And something clicked between George and I during that lunch; we had some good laughs, though I don’t recall about what. And he agreed to produce us, even though he hadn’t yet heard a note!

The plan was that George and his family would come to Marblehead Massachusetts, a seaside town, the next August, for three weeks, and have a kind of working vacation, at the beach, first producing Sea Train’s album, and then the Consort’s.

That spring, Bennett got us a deal with Capitol Records that included a sizable advance for the production of the album. (Having the ex-producer of the Beatles didn’t hurt.)

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### **FcUX to the Moon**

The first months of 1971 saw the Consort touring again around the States, with lots of new music astir, as we were looking forward to our upcoming adventure with George Martin.

Another adventure, however, was brewing, about which we didn’t learn until later in the summer.

David’s sister happened to be married to an astronaut, Joseph Allen, and Joe had become a great enthusiast of the Consort’s music. Each astronaut had their own jet, which they were required to fly every day, so Joe would often fly around the country to our gigs.

Joe was a scientist-astronaut, and was a key member of the team that was training the three astronauts who were scheduled to go to the Moon on the Apollo 15 mission, in August of '71, David Scott, Alfred Worden, and Jim Irwin. Joe turned the three of them onto our music, and they took a cassette of *Road* with them to listen to en route to the Moon. The Moon astronauts had the privilege of naming new craters they discovered, and they named two of them for pieces they especially liked on the *Road* album: "Icarus" and "Ghost Beads."

The scuttle-butt later was that they left the cassette up there, but we've never been sure. I think perhaps they were not allowed to say much about it. But I've told friends, "If you ever do go out to the Moon, don't forget to take your cassette player."

### **The Making of the ~~U~~fi g Album**

Marblehead, Massachusetts: early August, 1971

George Martin and his family were happily ensconced in a beach-front house Bennett Glotzer had rented for them. Bennett had rented another house nearby for our studio, with recording gear from the Fedco Audio Truck moved into the dining room, and the Consort set up in the living room. We made a hand-painted sign for the front lawn that said "Seaweed Studio."

This proved to be the most idyllic recording experience we had ever had. Everyone would go to the beach in the morning, and we'd come into the studio around 2pm, and record till 10. There was none of the usual pressure – no clock on the wall to remind us of how much it all was costing. We had all the time in the world.

We were afforded the great privilege of exploring, for the first time, how a studio can be used in creating music for an album. George, of course, was the past master of this.

Above all, we had a great time. George was the ultimate mentor. I described him as a cross between Stan Kenton and Prince Philip: a tall, noble guy, whose sense of humor was always lurking under the surface.

We had made one instrumental change in the Consort for this album: electric bass. George and I had talked about this, when I went to London in June to brainstorm about our production plans. George loved our piece "Icarus," and he thought it could possibly be a hit if we produced it with a more contemporary rhythm section, using electric bass and a rock drummer. And I was intrigued to try electric bass on other pieces as well. I had come to like the sound of "fuzz bass," and had fooled with this as a melodic voice, on a Fender-Rhodes keyboard bass I had at home.

I revered the playing of Glen Moore, the Consort's bassist; but he played only upright acoustic bass, not electric. Through word-of-mouth we found Herb Bushler, a highly-regarded electric bassist in New York.



It was a revelation, for me, to then realize what a totally different animal electric bass is from the acoustic. The agility, and inventiveness, and rhythmic power of Herb's playing was (and still is) astonishing to me. I believe to this day that Herb is the greatest player of this instrument on the planet.

There were a couple pieces we weren't able to finish in Marblehead, so we reconvened in September at Electric Ladyland Studio in New York, where we were joined by drummer Billy Cobham.

Mixing the *Icarus* album was a bit of a saga.

I went to England in October to mix with George at his Air London Studio. When I then brought home the master, Ralph wasn't happy with the mixes. So I called George and asked if I could come back to London, this time with Ralph, to remix the album, and he generously agreed.

It was November before I could give Bennett Glotzer the final master, and he flew to L.A. to present it to Capitol.

Then came the big surprise. One afternoon I got a call from Bennett. "Are you sitting down?" I said yes. "We don't have a label! Capitol doesn't want the album."

Bennett had gone into the Capitol Tower in Hollywood, walked into the office of the chief of A&R, and put the master on his desk, saying: "Here's your album." "What album?" the man said. "It's your artist – the Paul Winter Consort." "Consort?" the man exclaimed. "We don't want this. There are no consorts on the charts!"

This man was the new A&R chief at Capitol, not the one with whom Bennett had made the deal that spring. That guy had been purged, and the new guy had never heard of us. He refused to even listen to the album, in spite of the fact that the man who produced it had already sold a quarter of a billion albums for Capitol.

Bennett was furious. He made Capitol eat the entire advance they had given us to produce the album: \$65,000, which was a lot of money (the equivalent of \$419,000 today).

(This was typical of the thinking in the record industry. They'd rather write off an advance than spend money promoting something they thought would not sell.)

The capper came the week before Christmas. I received a notice from a shipping company in Danbury, the town near where I lived, informing me they had a box for me. I went there to get it. It was a case of champagne, and inside was a printed card that read:

TO ALL OF YOU  
FROM ALL OF US AT CAPITOL RECORDS:  
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

## **End of the Road**

As the year of 1971 wound down, I had to face the reality that this Consort was winding down, as well. The writing was on the wall. Our concert bookings had been declining, and we had put great hope in this new album as a way to turn that around. We had what we felt was a great album, but no label to release it. It was a white elephant.

It was becoming increasingly clear that the Consort was not an idea whose time had come.

Bennett had no prospects for another label, and seemed to have little interest in spending time pursuing one. Big-time managers thought the same way as the record labels: if an artist didn't look like they were going to sell, you dropped them and moved on. Music wasn't part of the equation.

But more significantly than those realities, the fact was that diverse musical currents had been arising within the Consort. A band like the Consort is a fertile garden: it's an intense growth experience for the players in it. Everyone grows fast, but not always in the same direction. We each grow according to our nature.

Our aesthetic inclinations were headed in two directions: Ralph, Glen, Collin and McC were drawn more toward the adventures of improvising, while David and I were still committed to the ensemble context, and the "little big band" concept of my original aural-vision for the Consort, that of a balance between ensemble and soloing. David and I totally supported the aspirations of our beloved colleagues, virtuoso players who deserved a more unfettered field of play.

It didn't take us all long to embrace these realities. The Consort had only a handful of gigs booked for early '72, and these were ending in the spring. It seemed that would be a logical time for us all to call it quits.

We played our final gig together on March 15<sup>th</sup>, in Manchester, New Hampshire, and with sadness and affection, wished each other well, and said goodbye.

## **Oregon**

The esthetic kinship that had evolved among our four compatriots during these two years in the Consort was genuine, as evidenced by the fact that they continued together, under the name Oregon, for the next 40 years. They became the longest-running quartet in the history of jazz.

I have always regarded Oregon as the Consort's sister band (perhaps "brother band" is more apt).

Oregon has left an amazing legacy of music.

### **The Limbo Years**

There was no question that David and I would continue together. We were aligned on most all fronts, and both still enthusiastic about the whole idea of being in a band.

But the years from 1972 to 1977 turned out to be kind of a limbo period, in the evolution of the Consort. David and I would not again have the good fortune to be part of a “creative crucible.” He and I were the core of a series of ensembles, but none of them spawned significant new music that I felt should be recorded. So after the making of the *Icarus* album, it would be six years before another Consort album came forth (which was *Common Ground* in '77).

We had an array of wonderful players and new instruments in these various configurations, but it was the musical partnership of David and I that was the common thread. One time during the middle of those years I did a consultation with a psychic, who had been highly recommended to me by a friend. This man knew nothing about me, but said: “You work with a group of people, and one of them is your partner. He was your brother in a past life.”

### **Summer of 1972**

It was time to start over again. I felt propelled by a quest to find ways to create my own music. I had been blessed with composing genius in each of my first “creative crucibles” -- Warren Bernhardt, pianist in our early jazz sextet, and Ralph Towner, guitarist/pianist in the recent Consort. I am not a composer, in the fullest sense. As the player of a melodic instrument, I never developed the harmonic DNA that keyboard and guitar players often have. A keyboard player can be a complete musical organism, but a horn player is incomplete: he needs to be in a group.

The bandleader in me didn't stay dormant for long. I began to think about a new kind of ensemble. I couldn't imagine finding any guitar player on the planet to fill Ralph Towner's shoes, so I decided to retire his jersey, and look for a different kind of continuo instrument.

I recalled listening to a harp player warm-up, before a rehearsal for a gig we had done with a symphony, and been fascinated with the beauty and richness of its sound. And I happened to have an album by a harpist from California named Joel Andrews, playing Bach, and a diversity of other music. I tracked him down, and we had a great phone conversation. I found he had a strong sense of adventure, musically and otherwise, and he accepted my invitation to join the Consort.

Joel came east, with his harp in a station wagon, and I rented a unique, funky 30-room log mansion, called “Logarithms,” near Great Barrington Massachusetts, and we all moved in for the summer: David, with his wife Anne and their beautiful 2-year old daughter Jessica; Joel and his wife; and myself.

### **The Release of *Icarus***

The *Icarus* album, after its rejection by Capitol Records, had been in my lap. Bennett Glotzer had no prospects, so it was incumbent upon me to search for a label that might be interested in releasing it.

Early in 1972 I had been fortunate to connect with a rare-bird A&R man at Epic Records, named Don Ellis (not the trumpet player by that name). He had also signed Maynard Ferguson’s band and was interested in the possibility that some instrumental music might cross the bridge to a broader public. He decided to “take a flyer” on *Icarus*, and Bennett handled the contract negotiation.

Epic scheduled it for a fall, 1972 release.

With the band now gone, it was clear that Bennett no longer had much interest in representing us. So that summer I asked to be released from our management contract, and he agreed. We parted amicably.

The release of the album was a non-event. The band that made it no longer existed, and the music of the album didn’t work with the instrumentation of the “harp” Consort, so there was no way we could promote the album on the road. It seemed to me just another in a long line of noble failures, which by now numbered about ten.

### **The Harp Consort (1972/1973)**

We much enjoyed our summer weeks of exploring how to make music with harp. Joel was an amazing player; I imagined that he might quite possibly be the most versatile virtuoso in the history of the instrument. Both David and I loved the soulful and intimate sound of the harp (which seemed much more personal than piano). The beautiful resonant low strings convinced us that we wouldn’t need to have bass in this new iteration of the Consort.

Hand percussion, once again, would be most appropriate with our relatively quiet acoustic instruments (cello, harp, oboe and sax). We thought it might be interesting to consider having two percussionists.

For some years, I had been fascinated with an extraordinary percussion ensemble called Nexus, which had six players, each of whom brought their own extensive menagerie of percussion instruments “to the table.” Their stage set looked like a Moroccan percussion bazaar, with hundreds of bells, chimes, gongs, xylophones, and

magical sound-making instruments from around the world. David and I went to their gigs, and became friends with these master percussionists. We invited two of them – Bob Becker and Russ Hartenburger – to join the Consort.

Our first concerts with this “Harp Consort” were at colleges during the fall. Joel’s solos were well-received, and the wonderfully inventive and dynamic percussion duets by Bob and Russ always got fervent audience responses. But I was concerned that we hadn’t yet developed repertoire that was both organic and rhythmic.

January 1973, offered a diversity of adventures.

### **Cincinnati Symphony**

The first was a concert with the Cincinnati Symphony. I had selected a variety of Consort pieces from over the years, and done orchestral arrangements.

We arrived there the day before the gig in order to do our own extensive set-up that night, prior to the rehearsal the next morning. During this casual set-up evening, Bob and Russ at one point were sitting on the edge of the stage, in this beautiful, empty symphony hall, practicing one of their duet exercises.

This duet adventure begins with the two of them playing in unison a two-tone, two-bar syncopated African pattern, which in the traditional music is repeated continually as part of a percussion ensemble. But in this exercise, one player starts to very gradually shift ahead of the other, who stays constant, until they eventually arrive back at unison. It takes great rhythmic presence to maintain your own tempo, all the while the contrapuntal relationship with your partner is constantly changing. It’s fascinating to hear this adventure, if you can allow yourself into the listening zone.

During this time, the librarian of the symphony, an older German man, kept coming on and off stage taking folders of music out to the various music stands of the orchestra. Each time he went past Bob and Russ playing this bizarre duet, he would stop and look at them in bewilderment, then shake his head and walk off. Finally, after about the fourth time, he shook his head and as he walked off I heard him mutter: “They must have a hell of a life.”

Well, the next morning this poor man dropped dead.

So our rehearsal with the symphony began with a kind of pall over it.

Then that afternoon there was a heavy snowstorm, which ensured that we wouldn’t have much of an audience that night.

And then, just before the concert, the orchestra got word that the wife of their principal conductor, Thomas Schippers, had passed away.

I couldn’t imagine beginning a concert where the morale could be any lower.

But actually it hadn't yet hit bottom. Our opening piece was a disaster.

The Consort, with our entire menagerie of percussion, was set up on the apron stage, which was on an elevator. Our conductor, Erich Kunzel, thought it would be dramatic to have us rise from the pit as he introduced us. The plan was that when we reached stage level, a sound tech would plug in the cable for the pick-up on the harp.

I can still hear Kunzel's final words to the audience: "Wait till it wonders your ears, as it wonders your eyes."

During the welcoming applause, they plugged-in the harp, but as we were ready to begin, it didn't work. No sound from the harp. More sound technicians ran out onstage, then there was yelling to our sound engineer who was out in the back of the house. Chaos.

When we finally got underway, the piece fell flat. And it was all downhill from there.

How we made it through that concert I can't recall, but we somehow did.

### **My Father's Place**

We were booked to play in mid-January at a club in Long Island called "My Father's Place." It wasn't a jazz club, but more like a folk and pop club. The day before the gig I got a call from the club owner, telling me that we would have an opening act.

A powerful agent had twisted his arm to book a new rock band he represented – Bruce "somebody," from New Jersey. I had never been much of a fan of rock, and wasn't thrilled about our performing time truncated with an opening band, but there was nothing I could do about it.

I recall having a friendly chat with Bruce in the tiny back-stage area, during set-up that afternoon. All I remember is that he exuded a strong sense of self-confidence.

That night, we listened to their first tune, but then when Bruce started talking about New Jersey, David and I decided it was time to go out for dinner. People sometimes since then have asked me what I thought about his music, but I had never heard enough to comment. But regardless of my feelings about the genre, his fledgling band was far more together and clear about their identity than we were in the Consort at that time.

Our music, I think, was at its lowest ebb ever. Our rhythmic repertoire was limited, since harp doesn't lend itself to providing a grooving continuo; too much of our music was overly contemplative for a club gig. And, at the last minute, Paul McCandless had been unable to make it, so we had a new oboist, who was a superb player, but had never improvised; and he was sight-reading the charts.

As awkward as it was for us to follow a roaring bar-band, I can only imagine how strange it must have been for Bruce to be on a bill with a group that featured cello, harp, oboe and sax.

The meteoric fame Bruce achieved in the following years was no surprise to me. He had known where he was going.

### **Village East**

Our next gig was opening for Miles Davis at the Village East in New York.

This theatre on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue had previously been Bill Graham's Fillmore East, where the Consort had played in the spring of '71, opening for Procol Harum. Prior to that, our first-ever gig in a rock emporium had been at the original Fillmore, in San Francisco, in August of '69 (on my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday), where we had opened for the bands Spirit and Savoy Brown. Bill Graham personally liked our music, even though we were from left field.

Bill had closed Fillmore East in '72, and some promoters bought the theatre to reopen it as Village East. Miles was to be the headliner for this two-night grand opening.

As we arrived at the theatre, however, we were told that Miles never liked to have anybody open for him. So Miles opened for us.

Miles had not played for a year, recuperating from an auto accident, and he was still on crutches and could barely walk. His new "band" was about as new as you can get; we got the impression that the players had actually never met each other before. They had had no rehearsal, and there were no charts. It was simply a free-for-all, in the midst of which you could occasionally hear snippets from that golden horn.

Miles' pop-rock rhythm section was like that on the *Bitches Brew* album, with electric keyboard, guitar and bass, and a power-drummer; and he had Badal Roy on tabla and Dave Liebman on sax. (Dave told me years later that Miles had just called him, but he was still part of Elvin Jones' quartet and they were booked those nights at the Village Vanguard. So Dave commuted back and forth to the Vanguard between sets.)

Our gig was for two nights. The following day Village East declared bankruptcy. When a building is in bankruptcy no-one is allowed to touch anything, so for the next two years the marquee over the theatre entrance read:

MILES DAVIS  
PAUL WINTER CONSORT

Throughout those two years I would often run into friends who would say: "Hey, I see you're playing with Miles down at Village East."

## **The “Power Band”**

By the last part of 1973, David and I were feeling we had gone as far as we could with the instrumentation of the “Harp Consort.” So we started thinking in an almost polar opposite direction, toward a kind of “power band.”

## **New Instrumentation**

All my life I’ve been fascinated with the world of musical instruments, and each new band has given me an opportunity to try more of them.

The continuo instrument, which gives the harmonic underpinning for an ensemble, has always been for me a primary consideration. It defines the landscape, in terms of the relative power context of the ensemble. With a quiet continuo like acoustic guitar, or harp, for example, drum-set doesn’t integrate well.

Piano had been the continuo in my jazz sextet in the early ‘60s, and our pianist, Warren Bernhardt, was a giant. I revered his playing, in both jazz and classical genres, and couldn’t imagine anyone replacing him. So my aural vision for this Consort, later in the ‘60s, was based on acoustic guitar that I’d come to love in Brazil. Ralph Towner, in that first era of the Consort, was, in my mind, the ultimate guitarist I could ever hope to find.

So now we’d had our fling with harp, and it was time for something new. It turned out that what we chose next was not a single instrument, but a brace of them.

I had begun thinking about the “alternative” keyboards, beside piano. I already owned a few of them:

Harmonium: Noel Stookey had found this “bush organ” on a tour of Australia in the ‘60s, and had it shipped to me. It’s a small but spunky pedal-powered reed organ, the kind used for generations by missionaries “in the field.” It folds up into a case.

Harpsichord: I found in a catalog of the Arnold Dolmetsch company, maker of early European instruments, what they called their “flying harpsichord,” and when I visited England to meet with George Martin in 1971, I went to their factory down in Surrey and purchased one.

Regal: This is a petulant-sounding little double-reed pipe organ that I’d first heard on an album of early music. I found a wonderful organ builder in Massachusetts, Fritz Noack, who built me a reproduction of one. (We used this on the *Icarus* album.) We called it our “keyboard duck.”

Fender Rhodes Piano Bass: This was the first electric instrument I ever purchased. I had been using it at home as a writing keyboard, indulging in my allurements to the sound of fuzz-bass.



But the piece-de-resistance turned out to be something hugely new. Our booking manager at the time was Richard Torrence, who also managed renowned organist Virgil Fox. Virgil was then touring the country with a huge electronic Rodgers Organ, a rock sound system, and Joe's Lights, doing a show called "Heavy Organ." He was awakening audiences of young people to the music of Bach in a glorious way, and I found it thrilling. Hearing his show in New York, I got the irresponsible notion of acquiring a Rodgers Organ for us to tour with.

I flew out to Hillsboro, Oregon, to the Rodgers factory, and checked-out their various models. The model I chose wasn't the one-of-a-kind five manual "Royal Five" that Virgil played, but it had three manuals, and that was good enough for us.

Imagining having a "power continuo" for the first time, this gave me license to consider incorporating the large drums I had gathered. There was a set of seven Brazilian "surdos," large samba drums I'd brought back from Rio in 1965; and a full set of five Hinger timpani we had purchased for Collin to play in 1970, but rarely used. We rigged a portable framework that suspended all the surdos over the semi-circle of timpani, and called it our "superset."

And for the first time, the Consort would be able to have drum-set played live with us, in our concerts, instead of only in the studio.

David had been interested for some time in electrifying the cello, with a pick-up on the instrument that enabled him to use volume, wah-wah, and other kinds of pedals.

I also tried the electric route briefly, with pick-ups on both my soprano and alto saxes, but I never much liked the sound.

Looking then at the complexity of this whole menagerie of instruments, we realized we should have our own sound system for the road, to enable everything to work together consistently well.

And then of course, there was another big question: how would we transport all this gear?

I did a bit of research, at truck-stops during our travels, and asked drivers of the "big rigs" about the various kinds of trailers and tractors. We found a used 40-foot trailer, for only \$2,000; and decided to invest in a new Kenworth tractor (for considerably more).

### **New Players**

In early 1974, we played at the Mecca of college jazz departments: North Texas State, in Denton, Texas. There we met two great young percussionists, John Bryant and Robert Chappell. We soon learned that Robert was also an exceptional keyboard player, so I invited them both to be part of this evolving new group. Robert became

enthusiastic about shepherding this gaggle of five keyboards, arranging them in a tight semi-circle around him, and before long was quite at home in his “keyboard cockpit.”

With John playing drum-set, we needed one more percussionist to play our “superset,” preferably someone who had deep experience playing timpani. I called Fred Hinger, the builder of this exquisite set of timpani I’d bought (and who was the timpanist with the Met Opera Orchestra). He recommended a stellar student of his, Ben Carriel. Ben was a six-foot-four titan, with the right condor-sized wing-span to be able to play up a storm on our superset.

In June, John Bryant got a call from Ray Charles to join his band. At the University of Illinois we had met another “young Turk” all-round drummer/percussionist, Tigger Benford, who was just finishing college. Tigger joined us then and was with us for the next three years.

For our new tractor-trailer rig, we needed a driver. Through word-of-mouth we found a great guy in nearby Torrington, Connecticut, named Nat McIntire, who became our intrepid driver for the duration.

We criss-crossed the country with this entourage during the next three years. Nat once drove all the way to Puebla, in eastern Mexico, for a one-niter.

I recall seeing our long white rig parked at the curbside in front of the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco, taking up half the block. It seemed incongruous to see painted on the door of the cab:

Paul Winter Consort  
Litchfield, Connecticut

### **The Charles Ives Show**

In June of 1967 I found a cottage to rent on a farm in Redding, Connecticut. The day I moved in my landlady said: “Oh, there was another musician who lived on this road – his name was Charles Ives.”

I certainly knew of Ives, but knew little then about his music. Over the next seven years that I lived on Umpawaug Road, I learned a lot about Ives’ music, and his amazing life. And I fell in love with this beautiful land that he had loved so well.

Each morning I jogged down this road past the mailbox that said “Ives,” by the long straight driveway that led up to the handsome brown-shingled house Ives had built in 1912, at the top of Umpawaug Hill. Ives had passed away in 1954, but his son-in-law still lived in the house.

Early in 1973, I began to hear about various concerts that were being planned, in prestigious halls around the country, in celebration of his centennial in 1974. Having

learned enough about Ives to know that he likely wouldn't have enjoyed any one of these events, I began to imagine a more grass-roots kind of celebration, in the vein of the old camp meetings Charlie remembered from his boyhood, where his father, George Ives, the Danbury town band-master, would lead the singing with one hand while he played his cornet with the other.

From then on, on my daily jogs past the mailbox, I'd look across the rock wall into the meadow that sloped up to the house, and imagine a musical celebration there, with the stage at the bottom of the hill by the pond, and the audience sitting on the hillside amphitheatre-style. My aural vision for it grew daily.

I called John Kirkpatrick, curator of the Ives Collection at Yale, and asked if I could meet with him to talk about my idea. He liked it and was encouraging, and introduced me to a graduate student working there in the Collection – Ken Singleton, who knew a great deal about Ives' music.

Ken was a superb tuba player and arranger, and he got very enthusiastic about the idea of a home-grown Ives celebration.

Ken and I began working together that spring, selecting 26 pieces of Ives', from songs to orchestral, arranging them for an "expanded Consort" of 17 players. Ken found all the "auxiliary" players from a pool of superb musicians in the Yale community, and we had a trial rehearsal in a church somewhere around Wilton. It soon became clear that we needed a conductor, so Ken brought to the next rehearsal a fellow grad student in the Ives Collection, Jim Sinclair, who happened to be a brilliant conductor. Jim jumped in, and everything came together. A "creative crucible" was born.

On Saturday morning, August 17, 1974, at the Ives home, we presented our "Charles Ives Show" in celebration of Ives' 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, with our 17-piece ensemble, two singers, a Civil War band, a Fife-and-Drum Corps, and a Jews Harp Sextet. We billed it as a "Musical Town Meeting," free to everyone, and we had lines of hay-bales across the hillside for people to sit on. It was one of the most enjoyable and inspiring events of my lifetime.

We presented the show again that October in the magnificent Woolsey Hall at Yale, Ives' alma mater, and performed it numerous times around the country during the next several months.

In the summer of 1975, the Ives Show was selected to represent Connecticut in the Bicentennial Parade of American Music, in Washington DC, a two-year long sequence of musical events from all 50 states. That July we presented it at the Kennedy Center, and we tore it up. Following is the review from *The Washington Post*, by well-known critic Paul Hume (who was famous for, among other things, having panned the singing of Margaret Truman, and made President Truman so mad he said he wanted to punch that critic in the nose).

# "THE CHARLES IVES SHOW"

PAUL WINTER & THE WINTER CONSORT  
with Guest Artists

THE WASHINGTON POST Tuesday, June 17, 1975

THE ARTS

## Bedlam and Beauty

By Paul Hume

Charlie Ives would have loved it last night. Oh, he might have wondered how come all that music of his was being played and sung in that fancy concert hall in the Kennedy Center instead of outdoors at a camp meeting or around a village bandstand.

But he would have liked the way the Connecticut Rebels of '76 Fife and Drum Corps came into the hall through one door playing in B flat major, while the Danbury Civil War Band marched in through another, playing in G major, with the band on the stage roaring away in D major. Oh, Ives would have known all about that.

And he would not have been the least bit surprised when the West Redding Jews-Harp Sextet took a hand in his barn dance music. The marvelous bedlam that went on through lots of last night's "Charles Ives Show" at the center was right out of Ives' dreams.

So was the way Jane Bryden sang some of Ives' most appealing songs and the expressiveness of Arthur Burrows in others. Ives would probably be pleased with John Kirkpatrick's new edition of the Three-Page Sonata, which Larry Wolf whaled the tar out of, coming up with that incredible C major chord at the end after what lots of people used

to think was sheer chaos. After all, Ives himself said the piece was "made mostly as a joke to knock the mollycoddles out of their boxes and to kick out the softy ears!"

The program added up to the greatest show yet seen in the concert hall. And no wonder. There were Paul Winter and his Consort, and the Yale Theater Orchestra, which specializes in Ives; Joel Andrews on harp, David Darling doing the unbelievable on the cello, and a revolving timpanist who lit up the world during improvisations on Ives' idea of a "Universal Symphony."

The same improvs had two of the percussionists doing sensational work on a huge marimba-like wooden instrument that rested, like a trestle bridge, near the floor.

The show was by no means all loud. Some of the most moving moments came in the great quiet when Ives was making music out of Thoreau. Sounds from offstage and from distant parts of the hall added to the spell. The choir of Southern Connecticut State College put on the necessary choral touches.

James Sinclair of the Yale Orchestra, an Ives expert, conducted the whole program with a perfect touch. To him, his arrangers and Winter goes one of the biggest hands in years.

The program added up to the greatest show yet seen in the Kennedy Center concert hall.

## The Washington Star

### Aves for Ives

By Wendell Margrave  
Special to The Washington Star

Charles Ives came to life last night at the Kennedy Center, when the Paul Winter Concert, with lots of help, presented a panorama of Ives music so varied, so representative, so well-timed and so beautifully performed that the audience was enthralled from first to last.

The attention was captured by the Opening

### Music Review

Suite, a stirring three-some of marches, which had the Danbury Civil War Band and the Connecticut Rebels of '76 Fife and Drum Corps marching up the aisles.

THEN, the show displayed every aspect of the creative genius of this most original and unorthodox of composers who absorbed the whole culture of his generation and wove into his music the most astounding quota-

tions from everything.

There were songs, improvisations, set pieces for orchestra, jokes, tender and sentimental pieces, and so on. One of the most astounding was the "Barn Dance from Washington's Birthday," which successfully takes off a dance orchestra (with the bass a fraction of beat late) competing with half a dozen other musical events.

The central figure of the performers was conductor James Sinclair, a Washingtonian who is deeply involved with Ives and his music, and who has developed the technique to keep it all together and to trigger astounding ensemble playing.

SOLO SINGING was in the capable hands of Jane Bryden and Arthur Burrows. Miss Bryden was especially effective in projecting the words and the ideas. Outstanding instrumentalists included Paul Winter, saxophone, David Darling, cello, and Larry Wolf, piano.

We had recorded the premiere performance in West Redding, but the album of the Ives Show has never been released. It was stopped by a publisher of one of the pieces, who claimed that he had an exclusive right to arrange that piece, which happened to be our finale.

Ives, who never wanted to copyright any of his music, would have rolled over in his grave.

I didn't have the means to fight a lawsuit, so I put the album on the shelf. Now, as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event approaches, I am determined to put it out, along with a DVD of the film of the event made by CPTV. I'm confident we can release it now with impunity, as that gentleman is no longer an issue. And I think we may now have the audience for it.

### **Consorting with Whales**

Whales have been part of my world since I attended a lecture on humpback whale-songs by Dr. Roger Payne at Rockefeller University in New York in the spring of 1968. I got in touch with Roger sometime after that and asked if he could give me some whale recordings so I could explore weaving them into a piece of music. Roger happens to be a cellist, and he immediately took an interest in the Consort's music. We became instant friends.

Having the voices of the whales in our concert performances led to the Consort being invited to be part of various benefit concerts for organizations dedicated to protecting whales and the sea. One of these groups was Greenpeace, who asked us to play a benefit concert in Vancouver in 1973. After the concert, the Greenpeace organizers asked me if I'd like to go with them the next day on a training run in the Pacific, where they felt sure we would see whales.

I of course wanted to play my horn to the whales, but knowing that the salt water would ruin the mechanism, I went to a pawn shop and bought an old alto sax for \$50.

When we sighted whales, the crew put me and a photographer into a zodiac raft, and we motored out among the whales. These were grey whales, and this was their seasonal feeding area. They would alternately surface, to spout and breathe, and then dive.

Sitting in a tiny raft on a rolling ocean amidst these giant sea-creatures was not some feat of bravery. We knew that the grey whales are extremely gentle, and that with their sonar, they knew where our raft was at all times, and would not accidentally swamp us.

Just seeing whales for the first time was epiphanic for me. To have one of these 60-foot locomotive-sized creatures surface a few feet from your raft is unforgettable. Trying to play sax to them here was naïve, as there was no way to project my sound through the air/water interface so they could hear it underwater, and I doubted they could hear me in air when they surfaced, with all the ambient ocean and wind sound. But it proved to be a great excuse for getting me close to the whales.

My lingering impression of the whales was of their slow-motion grace, as they moved through the water.

During these years, we became familiar with many of the people working for and with whales, and in 1976 we were invited to take part in the biggest whale conclave ever. California Governor Jerry Brown had declared November 24<sup>th</sup> as "Whale Day," and he hosted a weekend event in Sacramento Memorial Auditorium which drew and featured whale aficionados of many stripes.

A highlight of the experience for us was meeting Gary Snyder, and getting to improvise with a poet for the first time. It was an amazing event. Here is an article that tells the story:

### **Breaking The Species Barrier**

California Celebrates The Whales

by Sam Silver and Adi Gevins

Berkeley Barb

November 25, 1976

*"If you want to save something, you have to celebrate it," said young Governor Brown to the jam-packed Sacramento Memorial Auditorium last Saturday night. It was California Celebrates the Whale Day, highlighted by a series of events in the state capitol that was put together in such haste that public service announcements couldn't reach the radio stations on time.*

*It was one hell of a party, with every major cetacean lover, from Dr. John Lilly to Joni Mitchell, doing what they could to help save whales from extinction. Not inadvertently, the proceedings helped polish the image of one Jerry Brown, so recently tarnished by the defeat of Proposition 14 earlier this month.*

*It was an all day, all night affair. The day session was free, and consisted of exhibits from 37 environmental and conservation groups. General Whale, the life sized ferro-cement likeness of the earth's largest creature, was used as a slide by children, while their parents listened to speakers pontificate on the reasons why humans must organize to preserve and protect whales, dolphins and porpoises. Other groups promoted the interests of the California sea otter, baby seals and the diminutive Tomales Bay Herring.*

*The high point for the inquiring mind was a rare address by Dr. John Lilly, author of Mind of the Dolphin and originator of the compassionate approach to cetacean research. Lilly spoke of his belief that dolphins "gossip like we do, have their history and sagas, and have their cultures, many cultures, in the sea." He has recently founded the Human/Dolphin Foundation, which has as its motto "Interdependence Through Communication" and is dedicated to breaking the barrier to higher dolphin/human communications. ...*

*The evening program was the real money raiser. Those fortunate enough to obtain a \$4.00 ticket were treated to six hours of entertainment which included a beautiful color documentary of whales narrated in person by researcher Dr. Roger Payne. In addition there was the kick-ass music of Country Joe McDonald,*

*the spirited Paul Winter Consort, John Sebastian, the lamentable Fred Neil, and the headliner, Joni Mitchell.*

*It was also an opportunity to witness the remarkable spectacle of Jerry Brown's New Age politics in action. The chief executive was introduced by long-haired, leather-jerkined Stewart Brand, of Whole Earth Catalogue fame. Gary Snyder (Brown appointee to the California Arts Council) read some of his Pulitzer Prize-winning beatnik poetry to the enlightening strands of the Paul Winter Consort. Winter, incidentally, has played his saxophone for whales as well as humans. On two occasions the entire assembly practiced vocalizing whale sounds in hopes of improving their ability to communicate with those beings.*

## **Baja California**

A film-maker we met in Sacramento, Will Janis, invited us to go to Magdalena Bay, in Baja California, where each winter the grey whales come to calve and to mate. In resonance with the growing enthusiasm to explore ways to communicate with cetaceans, Will had in mind to film musicians, dancers, and other performers interacting with the whales.

That February, David and I, along with double-reed player Nancy Rumbel, went to Baja to spend a week among a diverse community of folks, living in a tent village on Magdalena Island.

Whales were everywhere, in the quiet waters of this Bay. Each day Will would set up different scenarios for us to play to them, from small boats, rafts, or on a floating deck anchored near the shore.

We loved the whole adventure. It was deeply nourishing to spend all this leisurely time in the company of the whales. The unexpected boon, however, was our experience among the people.

When we are living outdoors together, our expressive instincts come alive. Each night, after supper, we had nothing to do but sit around the fire and talk. People would take turns telling their stories, and this seemed to draw everyone out.

David and I began to think that this could be a great context for the “make-your-own-music” workshops he and I had been conducting for years, in conjunction with our concerts. We discussed the idea with Tim Means, the head of Baja Expeditions, who were handling all the logistics for the film project. He thought it was a great idea, and we made a plan.

The following February, in 1978, we returned to Baja with about 30 folks for our first “Music-making Whale-watching Expedition.” This proved to be so exhilarating for

everyone that one night around the campfire the question arose: "Where else can we go and do this?" To which someone responded: "Let's go to the Galapagos."

The clue for our next destination came forth when Tim Means mentioned that he had once led an expedition through the Grand Canyon. This was the ticket! Playing in the Canyon had been a long-time dream of mine.

In June of 1980, we embarked on a "Music-making River-rafting Expedition" with 45 folks, spending three weeks traveling the 280 miles of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.

### **Japan Celebrates the Whale and Dolphin**

At the Sacramento whale event there had been a shared resolve from the dialogues among the many whale aficionados to counter the "Boycott Japan" campaigns that had become prevalent because of Japan's refusal to stop whaling. People in California felt it was awakening old prejudices, from the days of the internment of Japanese-Americans there during the Second World War. The new rallying cry was: "Let's communicate with the people of Japan why we celebrate the whales!"

This resolve became an initiative, and in April, 1977, an entourage of musicians and whale activists flew from San Francisco to Tokyo for a week of concerts under the theme: "Japan Celebrates the Whale and Dolphin." This troupe, dubbed "The Rolling Coconut Revue" (since it included the trainers of "Flipper" and some musicians who all came from Florida), featured Richie Havens, Odetta, John Sebastian, Mimi Farina, Jackson Browne, Wavy Gravy, and the Consort. Governor Brown flew in to speak at the final concert.

These were the first-ever environmental concerts in Japan.

### **Two Gigs in Washington D.C.**

On July 4, 1976, during the nation's Bicentennial Celebration, we played in a concert on the steps of the Capitol. I can't recall much about it, other than having yelled at David in the middle of our set to turn down his amp; and that Jane Fonda was one of the speakers.

Then on January 20, 1977, as part of the festivities surrounding Jimmy Carter's inaugurations, we played a concert at the National Science Center in Washington.

### **Finale of the Power Band**



*[Note: This term “Power Band” is something I’ve come up with quite recently, as I reflect on the different chapters in the saga of the Consort. I never used it back then. It was simply the Consort of the moment.]*

There was a lot of great playing in this band, and amazing collective improvising. I have two-track recordings of many of our concerts, and someday I’d like to have them digitized. I’m sure there is a lot of magic.

But I didn’t feel we were generating music that was authentic, in terms of my own “song,” and my original aural-vision for the Consort. I never thought any of the music made sense for an album. In those days you had to convince a label to record and release your music. I felt strongly that my next album needed to be quite unique, and have a good deal of my musical voice in the writing and the playing.

I always had a lot of dreams percolating, and one that I was harboring independently was that of making a masterpiece of an album.

### **Common Ground**

Recalling the “creative crucibles” of the *Icarus* Consort and my jazz Sextet of the ‘60s, I was imagining a fertile context where diverse musicians could come together and spend enough time collectively exploring so that synergy would come forth.

Our experience that February in Baja California gave me the clue: we’d create an album in an outdoor environment. And my farm would be a perfect setting. So I began making plans for that summer of ‘77, thinking of my favorite players from the musical realms I loved most.

This was the first time I was approaching an album not as the documentary of a particular band, but as a project in itself. It would also be the first time I was producing an album on my own, on all fronts - the organizing, the funding, and the recording.

I wanted to have a musical co-producer who had deep experience in recording, and was a totally kindred spirit. I enlisted my long-time Brazilian brother, guitarist Oscar Castro-Neves.

The album came to be called *Common Ground*. The liner notes from the back of the original LP tell the story.

*“In a tent village summered on a creek in the New England countryside, a remarkable gathering of musicians found common ground to experiment in living and co-creating, to weave diverse traditions and roots into a celebration of the unity of all life, and to translate into music the vision of the man who had brought them together – Paul Winter. Common Ground is the product of these*

*adventures...born of the shared experience, nurtured in the open air, and recorded in the hayloft of a barn.*

*Paul invited twenty friends to spend the summer at his farm, creating a living music-village of drummers, singers, instrumentalists, cooks, healers, poets, and neighbors, that included cellist David Darling and oboist Paul McCandless, both among the original members of Winter Consort; guitarist/arranger Oscar Castro-Neves; mbira-players Paul Berliner; singers Susan Osborn and Janet Johnson; Brazilian percussionist Laudir de Oliveira; drummer Steve Gadd; and as teacher/arrangers, African master-drummer Kwaku Dadey, folk-singer Paul Stookey, and Sufi-choir director Alaudin Mathieu. The village became a forum for the fertile intermingling of life-streams and teachings, myths and folklore, stories and song...a mini-university in the woods, in which we were students and teachers both...dedicated equally to collective improvising and good volleyball, to the democratic spirit of African drumming and the New England Town Meeting.*

*Paul Winter's vision embraces a trilogy of creatures he has encountered in the world – the whale, the wolf, and the eagle – and his experience of participating with them through music. And his dream included a contemporary tribe of people, living together outdoors, learning from Nature and each other in the shared processes of music-making.*

*For a decade, Paul Winter has led groups he has called by the name "Consort," ensembles of kindred musicians who have sought the crossroads in the network of earth's music. "Common Ground" is a milestone in this continuing search. It is the story of a day...a summer...or a lifetime...in the quest for the common ground among all beings; and it is a celebration of ourselves and of creatures from whose song we can learn and take heart."*

-- Peter Barry Chowka

## **Graduation**

By the end of our *Common Ground* summer, David's time with the Consort was winding down. During these seven years with the Consort, both of his "true callings" had emerged, and evolved: as player and as educator. (I will talk of the latter in the next chapter.)

David had developed great abilities in each of these realms, and as he thought about his future, it made perfect sense to embrace them both fully: to explore the possibilities for a solo path as a performer, and to expand the range of his work in sharing the magic of music-making with the world.

He let me know that it was coming time for him to officially “graduate” from the Consort, and that our concerts that fall would be his final ones.

### **Music Making for All**

During the summer of 1971, the Consort was engaged to present a week-long residency of “master classes” at the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut. There were around 40 students who had signed up. We had never done anything like this before, so the first day we began by simply playing pieces from our repertoire, and talking about what we did.

It dawned on us fairly quickly, however, that this was not the most valuable experience we could offer these kids. First of all, few of them would be likely to follow a path like ours, since it was unlikely that any of them would have had a similar broad spectrum of musical experience to that of our Consort players, all of whom had backgrounds in jazz, or some ethnic traditions, as well as in classical music (all the players except myself had degrees in music). The point was not to have them try to do what we did, but to awaken their own expression and creativity toward their own unique paths.

Jamming was not an option, since this had not been billed as a jazz improvising workshop, and we knew that many of these students had training only in classical music. However there was one tradition in the Consort’s realm that was accessible for every one of these students, and this proved to be the key to making the residency a triumph.

### **The Koto Piece**

THE KOTO PIECE: How a Japanese stringed-instrument unlocked the door to a whole world of liberated music-making.

In early 1968, as the Consort was about to be launched, we were working toward our first album. Our producer, Noel Paul Stookey, had come home from a Peter, Paul & Mary tour of Japan with a stringed-instrument called a koto. Noel was fascinated with musical instruments, but he had no idea what to do with it. He brought it to a rehearsal and said: “Why don’t you guys see what you can do with this.”

Plucking the strings, we found they were tuned in a lovely-sounding, unique pentatonic scale -- like a minor scale without the 4th or 7th. Hearing this scale, I said to my colleagues, “why don’t we just improvise on those five notes?”

Our cellist, Richard Bock, was from a straight classical background, and he was a wunderkind. At 19, he was first cellist in Leopold Stokowski’s American Symphony. He

had been the only cellist I found, among the dozens I had called in the New York area, who had enough sense of adventure to be willing to play with our strange ensemble.

Richard had never played on anything in his life that wasn't written on a page, and he was perplexed by my proposal. "What would I play?" he asked.

"Just play anything you want, with any of these five notes," I replied.

"But what would I play?" he asked again. He couldn't imagine not being sure about what he was going to play.

At that point in our rehearsal, the guitar, bass and the alto flute had left, and there were just the four of us: the alto flute player and I (who both had jazz experience); and Richard and the English horn player, neither of them had ever improvised.

So I said to everyone: "Each of you just choose one of those five notes, and let's play them together."

We did that, and it sounded lovely.

Then I said: "OK - choose another note, and let's do it again."

Again, a rich-sounding chord. Nothing sounded "wrong."

I then said: "Why don't we just begin with these long notes, and move on from there...anywhere...and see where it leads us."

We embarked shyly, furtively, into our first-ever "free piece." And it picked-up energy, got a little bit rhythmic at a couple points, but mainly after a few minutes, it just ended.

I looked over at Richard, and his jaw was hanging down by his knee. "Why?" he said. "Why?" (Meaning -- why did it sound good? Why didn't it sound "bad"? WE didn't know what we were doing!)

It took us awhile, but we found the answer. When you play those five notes together, on a piano, they make a lovely chord— a modernistic chord, with two minor-seconds in it, but a perfectly "acceptable" chord, in the Euro-American esthetic tradition. So it stands to reason that any one of those five notes, played with any other of the five, will "work" (i.e. will sound "ok"). So that, if you stick with those five notes, there is no danger of playing a "wrong" note, the bane of classical musicians.

We began playing free-pieces in each of our rehearsals, and before long all the players were more comfortable with it. So I then proposed to my colleagues that we try on in our next concert. I had the thought that we could program it after intermission, early in the second half of the concert, and that we would ask to have all the lights turned off, so it

would make us feel less self-conscious, and perhaps also enable the audience to have a deeper listening experience.

The whole thing was a gamble; I had never tried anything this daring in a concert. But I was confident we could get away with it.

The whole experience was a milestone. Everyone played very creatively. And when the last sounds faded away and the lights slowly came up, the audience was fervent. They loved it. Clearly they had participated, through their listening, in this adventure into the unknown.

From then on, our “Koto Piece” was integral to every one of our concerts, and it often was the high point. And our own creative sensibilities grew with every performance.

As we became at home with this adventuring, sometimes other non-scalar notes would slip into the mix. And we realized that they all sounded fine, as well. (And there were no musicriminology police there to arrest us after the concert.) We found that any notes whatever would “work,” in this free-form context, and from then on our collective improvising became totally free. (We could “retire” the pentatonic koto scale, with deep gratitude to it for having opened the door to this realm.)

And why was this so? How could all kinds of notes and sounds “work” together, and produce an enjoyable musical experience?

I think it is because something momentous seems to happen in the context of these free musical adventures in the dark. And it’s something I feel can be transformational.

My sense is there are two things happening:

### 1. The Physical Aspect

In the context of darkness, our visual faculty is temporarily disengaged from its usual dominance of our lives; and this allows the aural faculty to awaken fully and take center-stage. And this aural for me is rarely-visited deep-listening realm we discover, that vastly transcends that of the cerebral cortex which runs our lives 99% of the time.

### 2. The Aesthetic Dimension

The audience expectations are quite different, in these adventures, than for the other pieces which are in the usual mode of concert performances, since the listeners know that the players really don’t know what they’re doing. So it’s a kind of drama that is contagious, like watching a high-wire artist perform without a net. The whole thing becomes a real-life experience.

All of this shifts us, players and listeners, into a larger realm of our human nature.

We are, as creatures of nature, able to embrace easily the multi-faceted complexity of the natural world. When we walk in the woods, we are hearing a multiplicity of sounds –

the leaves underfoot, the wind, trees rustling, distant airplanes, voices of different creatures. Our senses embrace all of this, moment by moment. Have you ever had a companion complain that a bird sang at the wrong moment? We're at home, within all of it. Our instincts have lived among complex sound environments for 99.99% of our species' history; and all these instincts are still accessible within each of us.

However, in the indoor realms in which we mostly live, our Euro-American aesthetic heritage has led us to value sounds packaged in neat boxes. And these are right notes and wrong notes.

So what we're doing, when we offer these free-form adventures in the dark, is simply awakening our "outdoor nature" indoors.

In my humble opinion, these experiences make us more human.

The free pieces became an integral part of the Consort's musical spectrum from the very beginning, and we included one in every concert and in each of the first three Consort albums. On our first album *The Winter Consort*, it was "Koto Piece"; on the second, *Something in the Wind*, it was "Poorvi," an improvisation on a raga by that name; and on the *Road* album, a totally free journey we titled "Lose Your Mind and Come to Your Senses."

Another great boon of this path was that cellist Richard Bock became an extraordinary improviser.

### **The Hartt Residency, continued**

We introduced this process of free collective improvising on the second day of the Hartt Residency, and this became our path for the rest of the week, exploring the many possibilities for free-play. We first tried it in small groups of four, with one of the Consort players in each foursome, beginning with the "safe" pentatonic-scale context (either using the familiar one of the black keys of the piano, or trying the more unique five-scale of the koto).

We tried many different foursomes among the 40-some players, with all sorts of diverse combinations of instruments and voices.

As the week progressed, the fertile thought-garden that was awakened through these adventures in free-playing and in deep listening, led us to other innovations.

We soon were able to graduate from the fixed-notes of the pentatonic scales, and allow any notes whatever into the mix.

Then, during an evening session, we decided to try having the groups play in the dark, and this proved to be revelatory. For in darkness, any self-consciousness among the players quickly disappears, and the listening experience for everyone deepens. After

the sounds ended, we would turn up the light a bit, and people were free to share anything about their experience of it—the players first, and then the listeners. There was no judging about anything; everyone had long since let go of any considerations about “right” or “wrong” notes. It was all about “yes.”

Many of these kids were having their first-ever experience of improvising, and we came to realize we should shelve that loaded word “improvise,” which awakens fear in the hearts of classical musicians, and just substitute the word “noodle.”

Above all, it was fun, for everyone.

By the end of the week, the kids were ecstatic, and we in the Consort felt very gratified. We had found our own meaning for this idea of “master class.” That our greatest contribution was not to show how we were “masters,” but to share processes by which each participant might find a path toward becoming masterful at their own expression, given their own unique nature, propensities, and dreams.

The whole experience awakened for David, and for me, a kind of new calling, tangential to but complementary to our callings as players. This work would become a primary path for David in future years. He had been an educator, in the traditional pathway, prior to 1970; he had now a new field of play, with a new trail to blaze.

### **Music-Making Workshops**

Following our breakthrough experience at Hartt, David and I began thinking about offering workshops of this music-making adventure to the universities where we were booked to play concerts. We were confident we could present a comprehensive experience of the whole process in a three-hour session. Our idea was to announce it during our concerts, and invite students to attend the workshop the next morning.

The university presenters were enthusiastic about this educational corollary to our concerts, and we soon were doing workshops at many of our gigs. Often in college towns our workshops would be advertised to the public, and people of all ages would come.

We found that most everywhere there was a hunger for this kind of liberating experience. A common story people shared was they had been told as kids they didn’t have “talent,” or that they “couldn’t carry a tune in a paper bag,” and they had shut down, but that they had for years harbored the dream to make music in some way. They would bravely attend our workshop, and find they were able to participate in music-making, and that it was fun, and safe. And they would be exhilarated. It was a context in which anybody from any background, with any level of musical experience (including none), could experience the joy of making music with others.

As this work grew, David and I often talked about how great it would be if there were some kind of directory of all the folks who had participated in these workshops, a

network through which people could find kindred spirits, to keep their music-making going.

David took that ball and ran with it. From 1978, after leaving the Consort, he developed his own constituency, and did workshops all over the U.S., and eventually in Europe, in countries where the Consort had never had the opportunity to play.

David put forth his manifesto, “The Bill of Musical Rights,” and, based on this, co-founded in 1985 Music for People, an organization to train facilitators and to organize workshops. 36 years later, Music for People is still going strong.

<https://www.musicforpeople.org/wp/>

David was a revolutionary music educator. I regret that he never wrote a book about this work. But then, perhaps the essence of this process needs to be learned from a living sound experience, and not from a book.

### **Post-Script**

Although David no longer went on the road with the Consort, we stayed in close touch, and I loved it when unique projects would bring us back together.

In June of 1978, he rejoined us for a concert in New York with poet Gary Snyder, in which we interwove improvisations in Gary’s narration of poems from his Pulitzer-prize winning book “Turtle Island.” Things really clicked in this event. Amyas, who was board chairman of the New York Philharmonic, and a patron of the organization presenting us, said it was the most moving concert he’d ever experienced. We recorded it, but released it only on cassette (of which I still have quite a few). I’m intending to have it put forth on CD in the near future.

In June of 1980, David agreed to come on our first “river-rafting/recording expedition” down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, out of which some memorable recordings came forth (which will be on the companion playlist).

In June of 1982, the Consort presented a Living Music Festival concert with Pete Seeger, at the Mohawk Mountain Ski Resort, in Cornwall Connecticut, where David was living at the time. It was a wonderful reunion of players who had been part of the *Common Ground* album.

And in July of 1985, David rejoined us for the recording of our album *Canyon*, a summing-up of what had by then been four expeditions in the Grand Canyon. This was our final collaboration.

### **Epilogue**

I consider myself extremely lucky to have crossed paths with David and that he became part of our musical odyssey.



Seven years! During that time, we played several hundred concerts together, travelling to most all of the states. It was a great way to see America, especially being then in our 20s and 30s.

The amount of fun we all had would be hard to quantify. We laughed enough for several lifetimes (when musicians are together, especially on the road, laughter is our lingua franca).

Our concerts were designed to be celebrations, so most every night was like New Year's Eve.

An ensemble like the Consort can be a kind of little university, in which the musical quest is our common cause. Each of us was riding the learning curve, in a context where everyone around—your fellow players, and our audiences—was cheering you on.

It's been very moving for me to look back from this vantage point of several decades, and remember our aspirations, and realize all we did.

It is a measure of how much my relationship with David has meant in my life that I have felt inspired to devote as much time as necessary to tell this story. I'm grateful for such a mandate.

My wish is that his smiling spirit will live on, through the timeless music he has bequeathed to us.

### **The Saga of the ~~W~~fi g Album**

During that first year after Epic released it in the fall of 1972, the *Icarus* album sold only 25,000 copies. This was negligible for a major label then. Our contract had given Epic the option to sign us, if sales warranted it, but I never heard from them again.

In the record business, in those days, sales seemed to be the only thing that mattered. During the years that followed, I came to have a sense of embarrassment about the project, imagining that for George Martin, the most successful record producer of all time, it must have been a bring-down to have such a dud.

I had had no contact with George at all, since the final day of our mix sessions in London in the fall of 1971.

One day in 1979 I was in Edinburgh, en route to a gig at the Findhorn Community in northern Scotland, and I happened to walk past a bookstore and see in the window a smiling photograph of George, on the cover of a new book, his autobiography, entitled "All You Need is Ears." I was curious to know whether he even mentioned our album in the book, so I went into the store and asked to see a copy. Checking the index, I did find

