

# For Love of Music

Bill Douglas

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## Early Life

I was born in London, Ontario, Canada on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1944. My earliest memory is of myself playing in a one-man band when I was three. I remember playing toy instruments: a gold saxophone, a silver trumpet, and a red piano. My parents set up a small drum on the floor so I could keep time with my feet. My father played trombone and sang in a big band in the 40's, and my mother played organ in church. My father was playing with a big band called The Johnny Downs Orchestra the night I was born, and sixteen years later when we moved back to London, I played with the same band. My father introduced me to many old standards and my mother introduced me to many hymns. I remember singing 'This is my Father's World' when I was quite young, with my mother accompanying me on the piano.

When I was four, we moved to Hamilton, Ontario. My grandfather, a minister in the United Church of Canada, lived with us, and I remember thinking that maybe I would become a minister when I grew up. I started piano lessons when I was four and a half. At age six, I developed a crush on a girl in my class when she sang 'Breathe on Me, Breath of God' in a school assembly. I think this was the first time that I was really moved by music. She sat beside me in school, and we would often sing 'I Love You, a Bushel and a Peck' to each other.

When I was seven, we moved to Sudbury, Ontario, about three hundred miles north of Toronto. My parents bought me a ukulele when I was eight and I taught myself to play with an instruction book. I learned several folk songs that were in the book. I remember being particularly moved by 'Betsy from Pike'.

My Dad and I used to listen to the Hit Parade on the radio every Sunday afternoon (these were the days before television). There were several old-standard-type songs in the early 50's that I liked ('Secret Love' and 'Hey There', for instance), but the first records that I actually bought (78 RPM records with one song on each side) were by the black singers Fats Domino ('Blueberry Hill') and Little Richard ('Tutti Frutti' and 'Long Tall Sally'). At that time, this style of music was called 'Rhythm and Blues' and there was a separate Billboard

chart for it. Later a DJ from Cleveland by the name of Alan Freed started calling it 'Rock and Roll' and that name stuck.

We finally bought a television and I first saw Elvis Presley on the Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey program called 'Stage Show'. I think that was the beginning of my lifelong passion for music. I bought every Elvis single and his first few LP's. I learned to sing several of his songs ('Hound Dog', 'Don't be Cruel', 'Blue Suede Shoes', etc.), accompanying myself on ukulele and trying to move like him. My parents eventually bought guitars for my brother Bob (two years older than me) and myself, and we started singing Elvis songs and other hit tunes from the 50's (the Everly Brothers' 'Bye, Bye Love' and Danny and the Juniors' 'Let's go to the Hop', for instance). Later my brother Jim (two years younger than me) joined us playing drums. Sometimes my father played washtub bass with us. 'Les Douglas and his Boys' was printed in large letters on the washtub.

One day when I was about ten I sat down at the piano and wrote my first song, 'Please be Mine'. It was in Gb major because our guitars were tuned a half step flat, so when my brother played a G chord, it corresponded to a Gb chord on the piano. This became a Douglas Brothers' hit, and we played it many times around Sudbury. Here are the words to the first verse: "Please be mine, oh please be mine, oh yes indeed, please be mine!" Soon after this, I wrote a second song, using the same chord progression as 'Please be Mine'. The words for this one were a little more sophisticated: "I'll never, never let you go, even though you hate me so. I'll love you forever, please don't go, well, I'll never let you go." We performed this song on the Sudbury local television station, along with a song from the pop charts entitled 'Silhouettes'. The station made a 78 recording of both songs, which I still have.

## High School

I entered high school at age twelve (this was because I started kindergarten at age four and skipped grade two). By this time, I knew I would make a career out of music. I still played rock and roll songs with the Douglas Brothers, but I was also starting to play old standards by ear on the piano. The first standards I learned were 'Stardust' and 'Deep Purple'. I started to learn clarinet in high school, but I soon moved to bassoon because the high school band needed a bassoonist.

In tenth grade, two significant events occurred that changed the course of my musical journey. A friend gave me a record that he had bought that he didn't like. It was Stan Kenton's *New Concepts in Artistry in Rhythm*. This was the first jazz that I had ever heard and I fell in love with it, particularly the playing of alto saxophonist Lee Konitz. His playing on this record and on another record called *Conception*, which I was given shortly after that, is still some of the best jazz that I have ever heard. The other important event that occurred that year was another friend playing me a recording of Vaughan Williams' Fourth Symphony. I immediately purchased my own copy (the first classical record that I bought) and played it many times. This was Vaughan Williams' most modernistic symphony, and it is quite amazing that just two years earlier I had been mostly listening to Elvis and Little Richard.

During the summer after tenth grade, when I was fourteen, I went to Tally-Ho Music Camp just south of Rochester, New York. There I played bassoon in an orchestra for the first time. Two of the pieces we played were Mozart's Jupiter Symphony and Beethoven's Eroica Symphony. Early in the session, we all gathered in the dining hall and listened to Toscanini's recording of the Eroica. This was the first time I really felt the power of Beethoven's music.

My camp counselor was a trumpet player and composer by the name of Tim Sullivan. I consider him to be the most influential music teacher in my life. He taught me how to really listen precisely to music, how to hear the subtleties of rhythm, intonation, phrasing and tone color. We listened, for instance, to Miles Davis playing 'Bye, Bye, Blackbird' from his 'Round About Midnight' album. He asked me to listen to how Miles phrased, sometimes a little behind the beat, and sometimes right on top of the beat. Then he asked me to listen to how Miles would use a subtle vibrato to bring poignancy to certain notes. We then listened to Richter playing the Mozart D minor piano concerto, and Tim would point out the subtle changes of color that Richter made throughout. He told me that the most important thing I should do as a music student was to listen repeatedly to the greatest music I could find, the greatest composers, performers and improvisers, and absorb this music into my consciousness. This has been the basis of my own music education and my teaching ever since. It was the beginning of my life-long project to collect recordings of all the major works of the great composers and the recordings of all the great jazz improvisers. I found that the best

way to listen was to be on the needlepoint of nowness with the flow of the music, and what really helped with this was to sing or play along with the music (either singing externally with the voice or singing internally).

While I was at Tally-Ho Music camp, I wrote my first jazz ballad, 'Theme for Jean', named after a girl I really liked. The chord progression, melody and lyrics were quite a far cry from the world of 'Please be Mine'. When I returned to Sudbury, I wrote my first up-tempo jazz tunes, 'Some Like it Cool', and 'It Might As Well be Swing'. I also wrote a short, almost atonal piece influenced by Vaughan Williams' Fourth Symphony.

Among the records I bought in eleventh grade were Dave Brubeck's 'Gone With the Wind', Miles Davis's 'Milestones' and a record with Stravinsky's 'Petrouchka' on one side and his 'The Rite of Spring' on the other. The latter was pretty shocking at first, but I listened to little sections of it repeatedly and gradually began to like it a lot. As for 'Milestones', John Coltrane's and Cannonball Adderly's tone struck me as much too harsh and grating at first (I was used to Lee Konitz and Paul Desmond), but after many listens, I began to like their playing.

My best friend at the time was a tall, lanky red-haired fellow by the name of Tom Fulton. We read philosophy (Will Durant's 'The Story of Philosophy') and poetry together (a favorite poem of ours was T.S. Eliot's 'Ash Wednesday'), and eventually we started writing songs together (one was called 'Zina, a Personification of Blue'). Reading poetry with Tom initiated my life-long love of poetry.

One night Tom and I went to a performance of Gian Carlo Menotti's opera 'Amahl and the Night Visitors'. We both loved it, and for the next few weeks, we would communicate by singing operatically to each other. I still play a video of this opera for my family every year at Christmas. We've heard it so many times that we just about have the whole opera memorized.

In the summer after eleventh grade, I attended a 7-week summer program at the Berklee School of Jazz in Boston. During my first week there, I spent most of the money my parents had given me on 'fake books' (books with the melody and chord progressions of hundreds of standards), so I had to limit myself to \$2.00 a day for food for the rest of the session. When people left food on their plates when they exited

restaurants, I would stealthily move over and sneak the food unto my plate.

At Berklee, I learned mostly from listening to music with my fellow students. They introduced me to the recordings of Bill Evans, my biggest influence in the jazz world. For many years, Bill was a hero of mine, not only for his exquisitely structured and rhythmically engaging solos, but also for the intelligence he displayed in interviews. He spoke eloquently about music and also expressed his love of the poetry of William Blake and his interest in Zen Buddhism. This was the first time I had heard anyone talk about Buddhism, and it aroused my curiosity.

In the middle of twelfth grade, when I was sixteen, my family and I moved back to London, Ontario. My English teacher at the high school there, Marion Woodman, introduced me to the beauty and profundity of the English Romantic poets, particularly Blake, Wordsworth and Keats. I wrote a paper for her on Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'. I spent much time contemplating the closing lines of that poem:

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,- that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

Mrs. Woodman and I had several discussions about poetry and music and life. She made a list of book recommendations for me and I read every one. I was most affected by Joyce's 'Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man', Dostoevsky's 'The Brothers Karamazov', and Hemingway's 'For Whom the Bell Tolls'. Later Mrs. Woodman became a famous Jungian analyst and one of the most widely read authors on feminine psychology.

As soon as we moved back to London, I started playing piano with the Johnny Downs big band. I gradually began to learn how to swing, helped in part by listening and playing along with the first Junior Mance record with Ray Brown on bass. I was also studying classical piano, preparing for the important Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto exam that I was planning to take the following year.

In the summer after twelfth grade, I practiced piano about four hours a day. I practiced classical music for the first three hours and jazz for the last hour. In the fall, when I entered grade thirteen (there were five years of high school in Canada at that time), I sometimes practiced ten or eleven hours on the weekend days. I remember that a

couple of times, maybe because of the intense sustained concentration, I hallucinated near the end of the practice time. I felt as though I was moving through space with the piano, and the piano was getting smaller and smaller.

Around this time, I read Leonard Bernstein's 'The Joy of Music'. The chapter on Bach in this book started my life-long love of his music. I bought a recording of his 'St. Matthew Passion' and spent a few days listening to each aria before moving on to the next one. In the jazz world, I was most inspired by Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Bill Evans, and I bought all their classic albums of the late 50's and early 60's. I remember being moved to tears by Miles's 'Sketches of Spain' album.

## The University of Toronto

In the fall of 1962, I started a four-year Bachelor of Music program in music education at the University of Toronto. I really wanted to be a jazz pianist and a composer, but with a music education degree, I could always resort to teaching. I wanted to major in piano, but my advisor learned that I used to play bassoon (I hadn't played it since I left Sudbury), and strongly recommended that I take it up again. I began to study with Nicholas Kilburn, first bassoonist in the Toronto Symphony. I soon bought a Conn 8R series bassoon for \$600. It turned out to be a great instrument, and I played it for my whole forty-year professional career as a bassoonist.

My biggest influence at the University of Toronto was my theory professor, Dr. Richard Johnston. He said there was more truth in certain measures of Bach and Mozart than in thousands of pages of philosophy. The only textbook we used in theory classes was a book of 371 Bach chorales, which we sang repeatedly and studied in depth. Dr. Johnston encouraged me to get a recording and score of Bach's B Minor Mass. It became one of the most important pieces in my life. I especially like the second Kyrie, the Crucifixus and the Dona Nobis Pacem. I also purchased a new DGG Archiv recording of the St. Matthew Passion, with Karl Richter conducting. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's performance of the aria 'Mache Dich, Mein Herze, Rein' from this recording became a major influence on my bassoon playing. The short choral excerpt 'Truly This Was the Son of God', as sung on this

record, is for me the most beautiful music ever written. Listening to it, and the chorale 'Wenn Ich Einmal Soll Scheiden', which comes shortly after, has always filled me with a sense of tremendous awe.

During my first year of university, I continued to expand my record collection. I bought the nine Beethoven symphonies, the late Mozart symphonies and piano concerti, the Bartok string quartets and the major works of Stravinsky. The first recording of Benjamin Britten's War Requiem came out that year and that became one of my favorite pieces. I also continued to buy many recordings of the great jazz improvisers and composers. I knew that ultimately I wanted to be a composer, but I felt that first I must study and absorb all this music, so I composed only a small amount of music in my undergraduate years.

In the summer after my first year of university, I toured western Canada playing second bassoon in the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, conducted by Walter Susskind. One of the pieces we played was Brahms' first symphony. Susskind was a very inspiring conductor, and every night I was moved to tears during certain parts of the symphony. Glenn Gould heard us play it in Stratford, Ontario, and he said it was the best performance he had ever heard of that symphony.

After the youth orchestra summer session was over, I got a job playing standards on solo organ six nights a week at the Mermaid Lounge of the Valhalla Inn, close to where we lived in Toronto. They had a sunken swimming pool in the middle of the bar where women swam in the summer and seals swam in the winter. I had to play requests from the audience so I had to learn hundreds of new tunes. When the school year started again in September, I continued to play there three nights a week.

In my second year at the University of Toronto I took a good history of music class that introduced me to much new great music. When the teacher played a recording of the Agnus Dei from Josquin's Missa Pange Lingua, my life changed. This was the beginning of my love affair with Renaissance sacred choral music, particularly the music of Josquin des Prez, William Byrd and Thomas Tallis. The Missa Pange Lingua by Josquin, especially as performed by the Tallis Scholars, is still one of my all-time favorite pieces of music.

At the same time as my appreciation of early music increased, so did my appreciation of very modernistic twentieth century music. I bought



a box set of recordings of the complete works of Anton Webern and recordings of the major works of Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg. Another favorite of mine was the American composer Elliott Carter. I bought the first recording of his first string quartet and listened to it hundreds of times. Listening to these pieces was similar to learning a new language. I found that the best way to develop an appreciation for atonal music was to listen to certain works over and over and to learn to sing parts of them. For this purpose, I bought the printed music for many of these compositions.

I was also listening to a lot of atonal jazz at this time. My favorite performer in this language was pianist Paul Bley. I loved his improvisations with Bill Evans on George Russell's 'Jazz in the Space Age', his work with Jimmy Guiffre and Steve Swallow, and his classic, very influential album 'Footloose' (one of the records that most influenced Keith Jarrett).

While I was still playing at the Mermaid Lounge, I began to get jobs playing fourth bassoon with the Toronto Symphony. The first piece I played with them was Benjamin Britten's 'War Requiem', conducted by Walter Susskind. Shortly after that I played Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring' with them. It was a frightening but thrilling experience. For the rest of my time at the University of Toronto, I played many concerts and radio broadcasts with them, under such great conductors as Pierre Boulez, Seiji Ozawa, and Karl Bohm. I also sometimes played with the National Ballet Orchestra and the Canadian Opera Orchestra.

During my third and fourth years at the University of Toronto, I continued to become more interested in twentieth century classical music. I organized a concert series that presented regular concerts of twentieth century masterpieces. I learned to sing some Webern and Schoenberg songs and I conducted the Webern Symphony. For a conducting exam, I conducted a recording of the entire second half of Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring'.

In the summer after my third year of university (in 1965), I attended an 8-week training session at Tanglewood in Lennox, Massachusetts. I was there as a bassoonist, but I spent most of my time associating with the student composers. Gunther Schuller was the director of the Tanglewood contemporary music program, and he became a hero of mine. I felt a kinship with him because he was equally involved with jazz and classical music. With Gunther conducting, an ensemble that I

was in rehearsed the Elliott Carter Double Concerto for Piano and Harpsichord (with Paul Jacobs on harpsichord and Charles Rosen on piano) for the entire eight weeks, and performed it at the end of the session.

I was also the first bassoonist in the student orchestra, which was conducted by Eleazer de Carvalho. One of the first pieces we played was Schoenberg's 'Five Pieces for Orchestra'. I was having trouble with my reeds (one of the biggest sources of pain in my life), and at one point he stopped the orchestra and pointed at me and said, "Bassoon, ugly!" He kept trying to get me to play softer in the slow movement of the Schoenberg and I couldn't play any softer. The clarinet player next to me whispered "Sing it," so I sang the part, pretending I was playing it on the bassoon, and the conductor said, "Ah, very good, bassoon."

That summer at Tanglewood I became friends with percussionist John Bergamo and bassist Buell Neidlinger; both of them later taught with me at The California Institute of the Arts in the seventies. Another friend of mine that summer was the great saxophonist and oboist Andrew White III. Among Andrew's many accomplishments are transcriptions of almost every John Coltrane solo on record.

In my fourth year of the University of Toronto, I won a Woodrow Wilson fellowship and was accepted into the Master of Music program at Yale University as a bassoonist. I continued to sing and absorb many Webern, Schoenberg and Elliott Carter pieces, and I performed and conducted in the contemporary music concert series I started. A book I read that year that influenced my thinking about music was Deryck Cooke's 'The Language of Music'. Cooke's thesis was that each pitch interval in music (major third, minor third, diminished fifth, perfect fifth, etc.) and each scale or mode has its own feeling-tone, its own emotional flavor, and thus music is a language of feelings. Of course, many other factors, such as tempo, rhythm, register, instrumental color, etc., also contribute to the feeling of the music, but the central element in music that evokes emotion is pitch: the feeling-tone of intervals, scales, chords, chord progressions, etc.

While I was reading 'The Language of Music', I was listening to a lot of East Indian music, a type of music that exemplifies Cooke's ideas. In Indian music, there are thousands of different scales, or ragas, each one having its own particular rasa, or emotional quality,

and these ragas are associated with different colors, seasons, times of the day, etc.

## Yale

Yale was a time of major development for me, both musically and spiritually. I studied bassoon with Robert Bloom, a great oboist who had played in the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski and the NBC Symphony under Toscanini. He said that every note I played should have life and direction, and he introduced me to the noble beauty of long, expansive phrasing. We worked for several months on the Bach D Minor solo cello suite. I listened repeatedly to the Janos Starker recording for inspiration.

My first chamber music assignment at Yale was to play the Arnold Schoenberg 'Woodwind Quintet' and the Elliott Carter 'Eight Etudes and a Fantasy for Woodwind Quartet'. I was put in a woodwind quintet in which the oboist was Richard Kilmer, who later became one of America's best oboists and oboe teachers, and the clarinet player was Richard Stoltzman, with whom I toured and recorded for over thirty years. We rehearsed the very difficult Carter quartet and the Schoenberg quintet for three months and then performed them at Yale and in New York. Samuel Baron, the excellent flutist with the New York Woodwind Quintet, coached us.

In January, 1967, I received an offer to play three bassoon concerti with the Toronto Symphony in June of that year: the Bozza Concertino, the Vivaldi D minor Concerto, and the Haydn Sinfonia Concertante. The Bozza Concertino was particularly challenging. I had to practice at least five hours a day for six months. The concerts in June went well.

The most inspiring class I took during my first year at Yale was a class entitled 'Form and Music', taught by Mel Powell. Mel was a jazz pianist who had played with Benny Goodman, but he had mostly given up jazz to concentrate on composing in a very modernistic, post-Webern style. He was the most intelligent thinker about music that I had yet encountered.

In the summer after my first year at Yale (this was the summer of 1967), I attended the Yale Summer School of Music and Art in Norfolk, Connecticut. I mostly played bassoon there in chamber music groups and orchestra, but I also studied composition with Yehudi Wyner. Under his tutelage I wrote my first extended classical music composition, 'Improvisations I', a duet for bassoon and cello. This was written in a very dissonant and wild musical style influenced by Anton Webern, Elliott Carter, and the free jazz style of late John Coltrane and bassist Gary Peacock (particularly his playing on the Albert Ayler record 'Spiritual Unity'). At the top of the last page of the score I wrote: 'Both instruments should improvise as loudly, as wildly, and as chaotically as possible for about thirty seconds'. What a difference between this music and the music I have been writing in the last thirty-five years!

During my first year at Yale, a friend had played me the Beatles 'Revolver' album. I couldn't believe how good it was. This was the beginning of my interest in late 60's pop music. Soon after that, I explored the music of Simon and Garfunkel, Bob Dylan, The Cream, Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Frank Zappa and Crosby, Stills and Nash. In the summer of 1967, just before going to the Yale Summer School, I bought the Beatles 'Sergeant Pepper' album the day it was released. The song that moved me most the first time I listened to the album was 'She's Leaving Home'. The students in the art school section of the summer school played that album constantly, and many of them took LSD while listening to it.

In the fall of my second year at Yale, I played my graduate bassoon recital. This was probably the high point of my life as a bassoonist. I was practicing for many hours a day and I was really in shape. Important records for me at this time were Rostropovich's recording of Haydn's C Major Cello Concerto, with Benjamin Britten conducting, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's first recording of Schubert's 'Die Schone Mullerin' on the Angel label, and Robert Bloom's recording of Bach's 'Wedding Cantata' with the Bach Aria Group.

During this time, I started practicing a lot away from the bassoon. I would internally sing each piece over and over again, trying to shape the piece in the most beautiful way possible. I also solved a lot of technical problems this way, keeping my hands perfectly still, but working out the fingering difficulties with my mind. For me, the most beautiful piece on my recital was the slow movement of the

Weber Bassoon Concerto. I tried to sing it expressively with much poignancy and nobility.

That year I also studied composition with Yehudi Wyner. I wrote two big pieces for him, "Improvisations II for Flute and Piano" and "String Quartet #1". Looking at these compositions forty-five years after writing them, I am again amazed how different this music is from the music I currently write. It is wild and dissonant and completely atonal (not having any gravitational pull to any key center). There is some jazz influence, but no audible steady pulses. On April 21, 1968, I wrote in my diary: "I premiered my flute and piano piece tonight-huge success-this was my Yale debut as a pianist and a composer-very satisfied feeling." On April 30, 1968, I wrote about my string quartet, which I was currently composing: "The next section of the quartet should combine the steady state music with the narrative music, each of the instruments momentarily breaking away from the pizzicato music and 'saying' something: the first violin singing sad and wistful music, the second violin playing happy music flavored with melancholy, the viola foreboding and the cello angry." In this respect I was influenced by Elliott Carter's second string quartet, where each instrument is like a different character acting in a play. I was also influenced by the recordings in which Charles Mingus and Eric Dolphy improvised with each other using human speech patterns.

At this point in my life, I had resolved that henceforth composing would be my main musical activity, but I was still very much involved with performing on bassoon and piano. One of the most inspiring experiences of my life as an orchestra musician was playing the Beethoven Eroica Symphony in March, 1968 under the great conductor Gustav Meier. In May, I played the Mozart Bassoon Concerto with the Yale School of Music Orchestra. Four days before the performance I noticed some large bumps on my head and neck. I was convinced I had cancer. I went to the school doctor and was told that I had German measles and that I had to be quarantined in the university hospital. Luckily I was released on the day of the performance, just in time for one rehearsal and the performance that night. While I was in the hospital, I practiced constantly in my mind, and the performance went well.

I wrote a graduate thesis that year on new sound possibilities for the bassoon. I mostly described chords that could be played on the bassoon using alternate fingerings. A tape of me playing these new

sounds accompanied the thesis. In June, I received a Master of Music degree in performance, but I decided to stay another year to get my Master of Musical Arts degree in composition.

In the summer of 1968, I remained in New Haven in order to concentrate on composing. I spent the whole summer writing a four and a half minute piece for oboe and piano. I sometimes worked for days on one measure. In one extreme case, I worked eight hours a day for two weeks on just two measures of music. The reason that this process was so time-consuming was that writing satisfying atonal chord progressions was for me a completely intuitive process. I could not rely on any intellectual guidelines such as there are in tonal music. The twelve-tone system for writing atonal music, invented by Arnold Schoenberg, did not at all work for me. From my dairy at this time: "My oboe piece is related to Debussy, some of Boulez, and early Lee Konitz-liquid, flowing, lyrical, delicate, but with a calm intensity throughout, like a full moon behind gently swaying branches." I realized that the best parts of my flute and piano piece and my string quartet were the melodic sections (as opposed to the textural sections), so from that time on, I dedicated myself to writing the best melodies that I could.

I was staying at a friend's apartment that summer. One day something happened that had a profound effect on the rest of my life. I happened to open a book on yoga that my friend had left on the kitchen table. I opened to a passage that said that through meditation one could go beyond one's conditioned, habitual self and discover one's true, deepest self. Reading this one sentence was the beginning of my involvement in meditation, leading a year later to my becoming a devoted, serious practitioner of Buddhism. Soon after reading the yoga book, I bought a book by Richard Bucke entitled 'Cosmic Consciousness'. This book, first published in 1901, was about individuals in history like Walt Whitman, Swedenborg, William Blake, Jacob Boehme, Dante, etc., who had glimpses of a transcendent cosmic consciousness. After reading that book, Walt Whitman was a constant companion of mine for years.

During my last year at Yale, I studied composition with Mel Powell. The first piece we worked on together was my new oboe and piano piece, now called 'Intermezzo'. A new oboe student at Yale, Allan Vogel, became a good friend of mine, and we performed 'Intermezzo' several times that year. Allan later became one of the

best oboists and oboe teachers in the world. We have remained close friends since the Yale days, and we still perform together every few years.

I also wrote 'Improvisations III for Clarinet and Piano' that year. It was written at the request of clarinetist Benny Goodman. He phoned me one day and said that he had heard about my compositions and he wanted me to write a piece for him. This was the first of my atonal pieces to use a steady pulse. For the whole first section, I improvised in my mind melodic shapes and rhythms and wrote them down as quickly as possible. I indicated the melodic shapes by the placement of the notes on the page, without designating specific pitches. When I was satisfied with the rhythm and pacing of the gestures, I would then painstakingly work on putting in the right pitches. The melodies and harmonies were in a completely post-Webern atonal musical language (where any reference to tonality would sound out of place), so, as with the oboe and piano piece, I had to rely completely on intuition for choosing the right pitches. I think my intuition for composing in this language had been nourished by many years of singing and absorbing the great atonal pieces of Webern, Takemitsu, Carter, and Boulez (certain movements of 'Le Marteau Sans Maître'), and the great semi-atonal jazz solos of Paul Bley (particularly from the album 'Closer'). After I finished the clarinet and piano piece, I went to Benny Goodman's house in Connecticut and played the piece for him. He phoned me a few weeks later and said that he really liked the piece, but it was too difficult for him to play.

In the spring of 1969 at Yale, I played with a 'free jazz' group that tended to improvise in a very wild, atonal and dissonant style. Sometimes we improvised with our voices, combining theater with music, and sometimes we improvised with found objects, such as amplified rubber bands, which sounded somewhat like African drums.

For my graduate thesis that year, I transcribed five jazz piano solos, tracing the rise of atonality in jazz. To help with the transcribing process, I recorded all the solos on a reel to reel tape recorder and then played the tapes at half speed, making the music sound an octave lower and at exactly half the tempo of the original recording. I started with a completely tonal 'inside' solo, Bill Evans' solo on 'Autumn Leaves' from his 'Portrait in Jazz' album. Next came

his excellent solo on 'Solar' from 'Sunday at the Village Vanguard', in which he played a little outside of the basic harmonic structure. Then I moved to Paul Bley's famous classic solo on 'All the Things You Are' from the album 'Sonny Meets Hawk'. In this solo, Paul mostly improvises in keys outside of the harmonic structure. This is not really atonal, but bitonal. He carries on with this process in the next transcribed solo, 'Donkey', a blues from the Don Ellis album 'Essence'. The final solo, on 'Floater' from his 'Footloose' album, has no underlying chord progression, and is the most atonal of all the solos.

In April of that year (1969), Mel Powell asked me to teach at The California Institute of the Arts, a new school in Valencia, California, near Los Angeles. Mel had been chosen to be dean of the music school there. He asked me to recommend flute and oboe instructors, so I suggested Jill Shires, with whom I had been playing my flute and piano piece, for flute, and Allan Vogel for oboe. Mel had already chosen Dick Stoltzman to be the clarinet instructor. Cal Arts wasn't scheduled to open until the fall of 1970. Luckily I had already received a Canada Council grant to study composition in London, England for nine months starting in the fall of 1969.

That summer I attended the Tanglewood Summer Institute, but this time I went as a composer, not a bassoonist. My string quartet was performed there and won an award for the best composition of the summer. One evening I taught a class on improvisation to the other composers. I played them a tape of my improvisation group at Yale improvising weird sounds with our voices. One woman composer in the group became very agitated and ran out of the room. It took several people a long time to calm her down enough so that she could come back to the class.

## England

In the fall I flew to London, England on a Canada Council grant to study composition for nine months. I rented a small room in Shepherd's Bush in London and soon after that, I rented an upright piano, which took up most of the space in the room. There was no central heating, so I had to keep inserting shillings in a device which activated a room heater. My composition teacher at Tanglewood,



Alexander Goehr, had recommended that I study with Cornelius Cardew because he was very involved with improvisation. At that time, Cardew had a large improvisation group, consisting of mostly art students, that he called the Scratch Orchestra. I participated in a couple of their 'concerts', which consisted of about thirty to fifty people playing wild cacophonous improvisations for about an hour, without listening to each other or following any kind of form. Occasionally, somebody would organize a vague structure for the participants to follow. I wrote one myself. The only instructions were: "You have five minutes left to live: sing until you die."

After two concerts, I decided I was not interested in this approach anymore, nor was I interested in studying with Cardew. I had brought to England a box of records of my favorite composers and improvisers and pop songwriters and I decided to study with these musicians. I had with me the late piano concerti of Mozart, the Bach B Minor Mass and St. Matthew Passion, the complete works of Webern, the first two string quartets of Elliott Carter, 'A Love Supreme' and 'Impressions' by John Coltrane, Lee Konitz's 'Subconscious Lee', the Miles Davis Sextet recordings of 1958, two recordings by Ali Akbar Khan, the Beatles' 'Sergeant Pepper', the first two Leonard Cohen records, Judy Collins' 'Wildflowers', and the first Crosby, Stills and Nash record. While in England, I bought two records that came out that fall, the Beatles' 'Abbey Road' and the great early jazz-rock fusion record, Tony Williams' 'Emergency', with John McLaughlin and Larry Young. I listened to all of these records over and over again, trying to absorb all their melodies, rhythms and harmonic progressions.

I spent my whole time in England working on one seven-minute solo piano piece called 'Celebration'. For the first movement, I tried to write the most energetic and ferocious music that I could. I prefaced that movement with three words by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke: "Shatter me, music!" While writing this movement, I listened many times to Coltrane's solos on 'Impressions' from the album of the same name, and 'Pursuance', from the album 'A Love Supreme'. Some of the gestures from those solos found their way into this movement, although they were put into a completely atonal context. The second movement was the complete opposite. It was very spacious, lyrical, and poignant. It was also prefaced with three words from Rilke: "Breathing, invisible poem." Here's an excerpt from a

letter I wrote to my parents at this time: "I'm writing a piece in which I'm trying to evoke the feeling I get from certain Chinese landscape paintings – in the midst of lots of space, small delicate, beautiful, poignant gestures".

When I first arrived in England, I was lonely and often went out to try to meet women, but at one point I realized that I could use this time to be alone and really develop myself musically and spiritually. In October, I met and became a student of my first Buddhist teacher, a remarkable man by the name of Sangharakshita. Born in London as Dennis Lingwood, he realized at age sixteen, while reading a passage from the Diamond Sutra in a bookstore, that he was a Buddhist and had always been a Buddhist. He was conscripted into the army during the Second World War and sent to India. After the war, he stayed in India, became a Buddhist monk, and was given the name Sangharakshita. He became a student of some of the great Tibetan teachers, like Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and Dudjom Rinpoche, who had just escaped from India. In 1967, he returned to England to form the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (now known as the Triratna Buddhist Community).

He taught two basic meditation techniques. One was to lightly focus on the outgoing and ingoing breath in order to train the mind to be aware of the present moment. The other one, known as metta bhavana meditation, was a technique to help one develop compassion for oneself and all beings. As well as being completely committed to Buddhism, Sangharakshita was deeply interested in poetry, literature, art and music. He wrote a beautiful book entitled 'The Religion of Art'. He told me that some of the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke and William Butler Yeats resonated with the Buddhist teachings. Thus began my deep involvement with those two poets. While in England, I also read many poems by Federico Garcia Lorca, Leonard Cohen, and Dylan Thomas, and I became very interested in the art of Leonardo, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Bernini, and Rodin.

Before going to England, I ate meat almost every night. In England, thinking it would be helpful for my spiritual development, I decided to try a strict macrobiotic diet, eating only whole grains (mostly brown rice) and vegetables, with fish once or twice a week. I think my sense perceptions became more vivid because of the diet, but at one point I became very weak (I had been just eating brown rice for several days), and while crossing the street one day, I

looked the wrong way and was hit by the side of a car. I was thrown about six feet, but luckily I survived with only a bad bruise to my hip. After that, I decided to start eating more protein.

In May of that year (1970), I participated in a two-week retreat at Samye Ling, a Tibetan Buddhist Center in Scotland. This center had been founded by the Tibetan monk Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, but he was no longer there when I did the retreat. I meditated for about nine hours a day while I was there. Between meditation sessions, I took long walks on the sheep-covered hills surrounding the center. I was trying to decide whether to go back to the United States and teach at Cal Arts or stay in England and concentrate on Buddhist practice. While at Samye Ling, I had many dreams about my friends in America who would be teaching with me at Cal Arts. At the end of the retreat, I decided to go back to Canada and the United States and teach.

## Cal Arts

Cal Arts was located in Valencia, California, just northwest of Los Angeles. When I arrived in the fall of 1970, the new building was not ready for classes, so a temporary campus was set up in a nun's convent in Burbank. Cal Arts culture was not exactly compatible with the convent setting. Often in the mornings, the walls would be covered with sexual photos. They would be torn down, only to reappear the next morning. There was rampant drug use, and a lot of students liked to walk around the campus naked. There was one student band called the Looney Bonker Orchestra that always performed nude. They would sometimes march through the hallways, with everything flopping around (there were males and females in the band).

I had been hired as the bassoon teacher and at the beginning I had only two bassoon students, John Steinmetz and Eric Neufeld. I remain friends with both of them to this day, and John and I have played many concerts over the last forty-four years. We played together in three tours of Spain in the 1990's and in many concerts with the Boulder Bassoon Band. We still manage to get together every two or three years or so to play a concert. He is a brilliant person and one of the main musical associates of my life.

In my first year at Cal Arts, I also taught a class called 'Music and Feelings'. In this class, we would sing intervals and modes and ragas for a long time, trying to open to the feelings they evoked. We explored, for instance, the difference in feeling between the perfect and diminished fifth and the difference in feeling between the major and minor third. To examine the feelings of different registers and degrees of loudness, I sometimes would lead an exercise in which the class would drone at the lowest part of their range. When I raised my right hand, they would raise their pitch, and when I raised my left hand, they would raise their volume. Once when we did this exercise, one student became frightened and had to leave the room. He said it sounded like 'something coming from the other side'.

I played musical examples in this class from many different cultures. This would be typical of my classes for the next forty years. I would maybe play a Miles Davis solo, then analyze a Bach chorale, then play an African polyrhythm and an Indian raga, then maybe play some Tibetan or Japanese music.

There was an excellent Indian music department at Cal Arts led by Ravi Shankar, and an excellent African department led by Kobla and Alfred Ladzekpo. I sometimes sat in on their classes and went to many concerts and bought many recordings of Indian and African music. Ali Akbar Khan became my favorite Indian musician and I purchased all of his records on the Connoisseur label. My favorite African record was a Barenreiter Musicaphon Unesco Collection recording of Ba-benzele Pygmy music. I listened to this record repeatedly for about twenty years and it influenced many of my compositions.

I lived in a small apartment about a mile from Villa Cabrini, the nun's convent that housed Cal Arts. On February 9, 1971, at 6.00 in the morning. I was awakened suddenly by a loud, high-pitched sound and a violent shaking of the whole apartment. This was the famous 1971 Los Angeles earthquake that killed sixty-five people and caused billions of dollars in damage. The buildings at Villa Cabrini were severely damaged and condemned and we could no longer have classes there. We had a six-week hiatus and then moved to the permanent Cal Arts building in Valencia, California.

I decided to live in the Cal Arts dormitory for the rest of the year. I was given a room on the third floor with a full view of the outdoor swimming pool. Most people swam naked. It was sometimes a

challenge to sit in meditation in my room because I was often tempted to get up and look outside to see who was currently swimming or sunbathing by the pool.

Shortly after we arrived at the new Cal Arts building there was a faculty concert for all the faculty and students. I played bassoon in Stravinsky's 'L'Histoire du Soldat', along with Richard Stoltzman and my old friends from Tanglewood, Buell Neidlinger, bass, and John Bergamo, percussion. I also played my 'Improvisations II for flute and piano' with my old friend from Yale, Jill Shires. It was so much fun to be playing with my good musician friends. As I write this, in October of 2013, I just received the sad news of the sudden death of John Bergamo. He was a great musician and friend.

From 1970 on, I was trying to integrate my Buddhist practice with my music practice. The foundation of Buddhist practice is the development of awareness of the present moment – awareness of one's sense perceptions, one's thoughts and feelings, one's body, and other people. Doing so can result in a mind that is clear and calm, and it can increase appreciation of the world and compassion for others. Music practice doesn't go as far, but it is also concerned with developing precise awareness of the present moment. When practicing the piano, for instance, one must become aware of the finest subtleties of the different ways fingers can touch the keys in order to produce different gradations of color. This way, one can learn to sing beautifully on the piano.

Buddhists aspire to help the world. Music can also be helpful to the world. It can evoke such positive states of mind as joy, compassion, strength, upliftedness, tenderness, nobility, humor and peace. My desire to compose music that would have a positive effect on others gradually led me away from the dissonant post-Webern atonal language that I had used for composition for several years. I found this language to be limited in its expressive capability. I started to write simple tonal and modal tunes for my students. The first piece that I wrote in this style was a simple modal blues in Bb minor called 'Tara'. I wanted a piece that I could use when teaching beginning improvisation. I continued to use this tune in my teaching for another forty years. I recorded it four times and I still love to improvise on it in concerts.

There was no jazz department at Cal Arts at this time, but because of my involvement with jazz and jazz-rock fusion, students interested in these genres began to gravitate towards me. One day, early in my second year of teaching at Cal Arts, while listening to a Captain Beefheart record ('Spotlite Kid'), I decided to write an etude for my rock students. This became 'Rock Etude #1', the first in a series of twenty rock etudes that I was to write over the next ten years. The first etude was a piano solo in D blues scale in an equal sixteenth note rock groove. It began fairly simply, but soon the rhythms became quite complex. This was the piece that initiated a compositional approach that has stayed with me until the present day, particularly in my compositions influenced by jazz, rock, funk, and Indian, Brazilian and African music: I improvise for a while (on the piano or in my mind) on a scale or chord progression until I find a musical phrase that seems like a good way to start the piece. I write down that phrase, and then I play it repeatedly, continuing to improvise after it until I find the right next phrase to follow it. I then write down that phrase. When I'm at the twentieth measure, I still go back to the beginning and play what I've written and then continue to improvise after that until I find the right next one or two measures. What constitutes 'right'? Something that excites me or moves me that is fresh and rhythmically engaging, while still feeling natural and uncontrived. I like the lines from Yeats' poem 'Adam's Curse':

"A line will take us hours maybe, yet if it does not seem a moment's thought, our stitching and unstitching has been for naught."

I want the music to sound as though it is being improvised on the spot with a natural, organic flow with the right balance between unity and variety. I don't like new material being introduced all the time. I like sustained development of melodic motifs, giving rise to new motifs which are then developed. Two of my main mentors in this respect are J. S. Bach and Bill Evans.

Shortly after writing Rock Etude #1, I wrote Rock Etudes #2, 3 and 4, which were short solo piano pieces. Rock Etude #5, however, was quite different. It was written for four bassoons, had many complex rhythms influenced by Indian music, and was based on Raga Marwa, one of the most interesting of Indian ragas. In C, Raga Marwa would be C, C#, E, F#, A, B, C. There is a great recording of it called "The Forty Minute Raga", by Ali Akbar Khan. The premiere of Rock Etude #5 was played by a bassoon quartet consisting of John Steinmetz, Eric

Neufeld, Ken Munday (a new student that year) and me. This was the first of many bassoon ensembles that I led over the next twenty years.

In my second year at Cal Arts, my long performing and recording friendship with clarinetist Richard Stoltzman began. We read through my 'Improvisations III for Clarinet and Piano', the piece I had written for Benny Goodman while I was at Yale, and a new piece of mine called 'Vajra', and he decided to record both of them for his first record album. 'Vajra' had the long, angular chromatic lines characteristic of Elliott Carter's first string quartet, but a lot of the rhythms were influenced by Indian music and complex jazz-rock fusion (Miles Davis's "Live-Evil" was a big influence), and most of the time, a D-A drone was present in the piano. In the middle section, we improvised on the scale D, Eb, F#, Ab A, C, D (Ab major triad over D major triad). Dick and I recorded these pieces in the Cal Arts recital hall, and the record, called 'A Gift of Music' was released shortly after that on the Orion label. Then I played with Dick in his New York debut recital at the Metropolitan Museum Concert Hall. That was the beginning of our thirty years of playing concerts together all over the world.

Another crucial connection was made that year (1972). I went to hear a talk in Los Angeles by the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche ('Rinpoche' is term given to teachers held in high regard among Tibetan Buddhists). I knew right away that he would be my new principal Buddhist teacher. I have had many fortunate circumstances in my life. I was fortunate to meet and study with Sangharakshita, to get the job at Cal Arts, to meet my wife Caroline and have two wonderful children with her, to play with Dick Stoltzman and many other great musicians for so many years, and to meet and study with Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

In the summer of 1972, instead of going back to England to attend a retreat with Sangharakshita, as I had done the previous summer, I went to Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, north of Boulder, to participate in a seminar with Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. This was the beginning of my long involvement, up to the present day, with Trungpa's sangha (spiritual community).

One day at the seminar, after one of Rinpoche's great talks, I started singing some vocal rhythms to myself. I was inspired by the rhythms, and I thought they would make a great etude for my students. I took a sheet of paper and immediately wrote down almost all of an etude that

I named Rock Etude #6, the first of many rock etudes that would use vocal rhythms without specific pitches. I later compiled these as a set of twelve Vocal Rhythm Etudes. They are similar to a practice of vocal rhythms in Indian music called solkattu. Solkattu often uses vocal sounds that imitate the sounds that Indian drums make. With the rock etudes, I often used vocal sounds that imitate the sounds of the Western drum set. Many of these etudes can be heard on YouTube.

In my third year of teaching, I moved to a small town called Val Verde, about ten miles from Cal Arts. I had many parties there for my students; we sometimes danced to John McLaughlin songs in 6 2/3, 11/8, and other unusual meters. I was now teaching a class at Cal Arts called 'Contemporary Musicianship', which met Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 to 10 in the morning. In that class, I developed many of the rhythmic exercises that I would use in my teaching over the next thirty-seven years. I would usually start the class with an imitation exercise. I would sing a rhythm of four beats and the class would have to imitate me. This would tend to wake up and energize the students and pull them out of their thought patterns into 'the needlepoint of nowness'. I would usually start with simple patterns and gradually move to more complex rhythms. Then we would do polyrhythmic exercises, rhythmic dictation, rock etudes, and various Brazilian, African, and Afro-Cuban three and four part grooves. Then we would sing and analyze Bach chorales and Indian ragas.

That year, Dick Stoltzman and I started playing more concerts together. Sometimes we drove to Berkeley, California to play concerts organized by our photographer friend John Pearson. John would gather together some of his favorite writers, such as Anais Nin and Tom Robbins, for weekends of readings and music. John would show slides of his beautiful photographs, and Dick and I would improvise to them. We continued to do this in concerts for the next thirty years.

In my fourth year of teaching at Cal Arts (1973-74), besides continuing to teach Contemporary Musicianship, I taught an evening class one night a week called 'Jazz and Rock'. In this class, I would play and analyze many of the great jazz-rock fusion records of the period, such as the first two Mahavishnu Orchestra records, 'The Inner Mounting Flame', and 'Birds of Fire' (I transcribed many of the compositions from these records), the Miles Davis records 'Jack Johnson', 'Live-Evil', and 'On the Corner', the Herbie Hancock



Mwandishi Band records, early Weather Report, and the Chick Corea early 'Return to Forever' records.

Dick Stoltzman encouraged me to learn some of the major classical pieces for clarinet and piano, such as the Brahms F Minor Sonata, the Schumann Romances and Fantasiestucke, the Poulenc and St. Saens Sonatas, and the Schubert Arpeggione Sonata, so that we could start playing classical concerts around the country. In our concerts we also played several Bach Inventions on bassoon and clarinet, arrangements of mine for bassoon and clarinet of Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk pieces, and pieces of mine that included lyrical modal tunes, rock etudes, and jazz and Latin pieces.

Around this time, I started writing a series of bebop etudes, and Dick and I began to include these in our concerts. The bebop etudes were written-out improvisations on chord progressions of standard songs that were often played by jazz musicians. Bebop Etude #1, for instance, was based on the chord progression of 'All the things You Are', #2 was based on 'There Will Never be Another You', #3 on 'Someday My Prince Will Come', #4 on 'Autumn Leaves', etc. I composed these the same way as I composed the Rock Etudes, improvising and then writing down the best of my improvisations.

In the summer of 1974, Trungpa Rinpoche and his students started Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, and I attended the first five-week session. I drove there with a girlfriend with the intention of sharing an apartment with her in Boulder. While driving through Arizona, a big burst of musical inspiration came to me and I told my girlfriend to take the wheel while I quickly wrote down the beginning of what was to become Rock Etude #8, a pitched rock etude in G minor pentatonic. Shortly after we arrived in Boulder, I introduced my girlfriend to my best friend in Boulder, and a couple of days later, they were together and I was rejected. Rather than let our breakup get me down, I put all my energy into writing a new rock etude, number 9, a funky F minor tune heavily influenced by a piece called 'Go Ahead, John' (for John McLaughlin) from the then new Miles Davis album 'Big Fun'.

The highlights of the Naropa summer session were the evening talks: on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Ram Dass taught, and on Tuesday and Thursday, Trungpa Rinpoche taught. I had my first long personal encounter with Trungpa Rinpoche at the end of the first five-

week session, when he invited me to his house for dinner. We had a good discussion about music, and the next night he came to a concert I played.

Each summer I wrote several pieces for clarinet and piano for Dick and I to play in our concerts. In the summer of 1974, I wrote *Sky, Morning Song, It's Here, and Playtime*, pieces which Dick and I played for many years. Every fall we played a concert at Cal Arts introducing my new pieces. After each concert, a keg of beer was brought in for a party.

Many of my students at Cal Arts at this time became life-long friends of mine: Jeff Franzel, a wonderful jazz pianist and pop songwriter, Gregg Johnson, a great tabla player, Michael Fink, an excellent composer, Steve Braunstein, who later became one of the best contrabassoon players in the country (he now plays with the San Francisco Symphony), Ken Munday, bassoonist with the Los Angeles Chamber orchestra for over forty years, and Jeremy Wall, composer and pianist on the early Spyrogyra records and producer in the 1980's and 90's of the best-selling Dick Stoltzman 'crossover' records that featured a lot of my compositions.

I was now living in the Cal Arts dorm, and every two weeks I had a 'listening session' in my room. Listening to music is one of my favorite activities in life, and I really enjoy sharing this with other people. In those days, at Cal Arts in the 70's, we would listen to the latest Miles Davis, Weather Report, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, or Keith Jarrett records, among others. When Herbie's funky *Headhunters* record came out, we had what was for me a very ecstatic dance party, dancing for hours to this great funky music.

In the summer of 1975, at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, about eighty miles northwest of Boulder, I participated in a dathun, a month of meditating about nine to ten hours a day. We alternated between sitting and walking meditation. Meditation is training the mind to be present – watching thoughts and feelings arise and cease, noticing habitual patterns, allowing space in the mind where one can be less caught up by thoughts and emotions, where one can see them as passing clouds in the sky of mind. This lessens our tendency to react impulsively and habitually to stimuli, and it brings peace of mind and a deep sense of well-being.

During this period of my life, I was mostly composing music for Dick and I to play in our concerts. Usually the written music for these pieces would consist of just the melody plus the chord progressions. When we performed them, I would improvise the piano parts; in the faster pieces, after the written music was played, Dick and I would improvise on the chord progressions. These pieces could be played on any instrument, so I often played them with my bassoon and piano students and with students on other instruments. In 1977, after I had moved to Boulder, I put together a book of all the fifty-three pieces I had written from 1971 to 1978. From the preface to that book: "These pieces were originally written to help my students develop a lyrical, sustained, expressive singing style, to expand their rhythmic horizons, and to give them ideas for improvising in various modes and styles and through various chord progressions. They can be played on any instrument or group of instruments." Several of these pieces (Dawn, Karuna, Morning Song, Tara, Flower, Clouds, Home, Begin Sweet World, Child, Lullaby, It's Here, and Sky) were later recorded and became part of my record albums and the albums that Dick and I made together.

There was an excellent student Irish band at Cal Arts, and I went to many of their concerts. In 1976, I wrote a piece called 'Jig', the first of many pieces that I have written influenced by Irish music. Many of these pieces are in 6/8 or 12/8 and also use rhythms that come from traditional West African music.

During my last two years at Cal Arts, I put a lot of energy into my bassoon ensemble, which was now called the Val Verde Bassoon Sextet (five students plus myself). I wrote pieces specifically for this group, such as 'Rock Etude #10' and 'Tower', and also arranged some of my favorite music (Bach chorales, the second Agnus Dei from Josquin's 'Missa Pange Lingua', etc.) for the ensemble. John Steinmetz arranged my piece 'Home' and some Mozart canons, and we often played my very difficult piece 'Vajra'.

In early 1976, I flew to Berkley, California to take my Bodhisattva vow (vow to help others to the best of one's abilities) with Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. The next day, I happened to get on a plane back to Los Angeles with the group Weather Report. Jaco Pastorius was sitting right in front of me, and Joe Zawinul, Wayne Shorter, and Alex Acuna were sitting across the aisle from me. 'Black Market', the first Weather Report album on which Jaco had played, had just come out and I was

in awe of his playing, particularly his lyrical solo at the beginning of the tune 'Cannonball'. There was an empty seat beside Jaco, so I asked him if I could move up and sit beside him. He said yes, so I moved up and we had a very intense conversation for the rest of the flight. We talked about Elliott Carter and he told me he used to play bass along with recordings of the Carter String Quartets. He loved Stravinsky, particularly his Symphony of Psalms. He told me to check out a Mongo Santamaria record called 'Yerba', which I immediately bought when I got back to Los Angeles. He said he never took drugs, just a couple of beers now and then. That would change in years to come. He started drinking a lot and taking cocaine, and this exacerbated his manic-depressive tendencies.

The great classical pianist Peter Serkin visited Cal Arts in the spring of 1976, and we read through the Mozart Quintet for Piano and Winds with Allan Vogel, oboe, Dick Stoltzman, clarinet, Robert Rouch, horn, and me on bassoon. Peter liked what he heard and decided to have us record the Mozart and Beethoven quintets and the Stravinsky Septet the following summer in the RCA studios in New York. Before the recording sessions, we spent a week rehearsing at the Marlboro Music festival in Brattleboro, Vermont. There we were coached by the great flute player Marcel Moyse. He was very old and feeble, but when we started to play he came alive and began to sing and gesture with his arms. He often told us to 'get *inside* the sound!' When I played the famous bassoon solo in the second movement of the Beethoven quintet that begins with an ascending Bb major scale going up to a high F, he told me I had to 'love the high F more'. He had me play it repeatedly until he could really feel my love for the high F.

Recording the pieces was very stressful. I was having trouble with my reeds (one of the biggest sources of pain in my life, as I mentioned before), and this made it difficult to play quietly. Max Wilcox, the engineer, kept saying, "Bill, can you play softer?" I eventually worked out the reed problems, and the performances turned out to be quite good. They were released by RCA on three separate records: 'Tashi plays Mozart', 'Tashi Plays Beethoven', and 'Tashi Plays Stravinsky'. They have recently been re-released as part of a 40-CD Richard Stoltzman compilation.

In my last year at Cal Arts, I formed a group called 'The Rock Etude Supergroup' consisting of my best rhythm students: John Steinmetz, Tom Souza, Leonice Shinneman, and Gregg Johnson. We memorized

all the vocal Rock Etudes I had written up to that time. We often performed them dramatically, as though different characters were conversing with each other. This gave me the idea to present a whole opera based on the rock etudes. This we did in the spring of 1977. Since Stravinsky's opera 'The Rake's Progress' was playing at the same time in the Cal Arts opera theatre, we decided to name our opera 'The Rock's Progress'. There was no overall plot to this 'opera'; we created little dramatic vignettes out of several rock etudes. We also performed new arrangements of some rock etudes; e.g., Rock Etude #6, a vocal etude, was accompanied by two drum sets playing the exact rhythm as the etude; Rock Etude #8 was accompanied by steel drums, vibes and tabla and many other percussion instruments.

Also in the spring of 1977, the 16<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, the head of the Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, visited Los Angeles, and I was asked to be one of his attendants. The night he arrived in Los Angeles there was a reception for him at the home of Elke Sommer, a famous movie actress. Many Hollywood stars were there, but I was most interested in two people that were there, Leonard Cohen and Joni Mitchell. I had a very heartfelt talk with Leonard Cohen, telling him how much he had influenced me, and how his poems and songs had led me toward Buddhism. At this point in his life, he was living at Sasaki Roshi's Zen Center at Mount Baldy in California, and he was a very serious Buddhist practitioner. He was very interested in the fact that I played bassoon and he said that he might want to use me on one of his records. I also wanted to talk to Joni Mitchell, but all evening she was talking intently to some person, and I thought it would be rude to interrupt her.

## Boulder

In early 1977, I decided to move to Boulder to help start the music program at Naropa Institute. In June of that year, I packed all my belongings (mostly hundreds of L.P. records) and drove to Boulder. I moved into the basement of a house where some Buddhist friends lived, and I immediately bought a piano. As soon as I arrived, I received a Canada Council award to write a piece for a Canadian group called the Lyric Arts Trio (flute, piano and soprano voice). This was the first 'classical' piece I had written since the solo piano piece I wrote in England in 1969-70 called 'Celebration'. In the first movement, I

returned to the musical language I had not used in seven years: a completely chromatic, post-Webern atonality. In the second movement, I used a musical language I had not used before. It had many minor-major sevenths (1,b3,5,7 of the major scale) moving around non-functionally (having no central tonal center). I later used this semi-atonal language in several other pieces. The last movement was in G minor, had a G drone throughout, and used rock etude-like rhythms and syllables for the vocal part.

During the summer I moved to Boulder, a new Boulder summer orchestra was formed, and coincidentally Dick Stoltzman was hired to play with them. He came to Boulder with his wife Lucy and his newborn son Peter John and we played a duo concert as part of the orchestra's chamber music series. We played our usual mix of classical music (Schumann's Three Romances, the Poulenc clarinet sonata, and Bach Inventions on clarinet and bassoon) and my pieces (a bebop etude, a rock etude, 'Sky', 'Jig' and others). This was the first of several concerts we would play in Boulder.

In the fall, I started attending Naropa faculty meetings. I didn't teach any classes, but I had a few private students. I took a couple of Buddhist classes and sat in meditation a lot at the Buddhist center in Boulder known as Karma Dzong. I was very happy to be in Boulder. It felt like home, and I thought I would probably be a Boulder resident for the rest of my life.

In March of 1978, I attended a three-month Buddhist Seminary in New Hampshire. The format for each month was two weeks of sitting and walking meditation for about ten hours a day followed by two weeks of meditation combined with classes and nightly talks by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. During the first week of sitting, I started improvising in my mind on the chord progression Eb to Bb13 (flat 9). Those two chords would keep repeating over and over again. Almost every time I sat for the next month, the improvisation on those two chords would continue in the back of my mind. I often tried to internally sing other songs to stop that improvisation. It would work for a while, but the improvisation on those two chords would usually soon creep back into my mind. After a month, we had our first day off. There was a grand piano in the lobby outside the meditation hall (the seminary was held in a large hotel), and I spent six hours that day playing the piano. All the sitting meditation I had done made me very sensitive, and playing music that day was a moving, ecstatic

experience. After that, the improvisation on the two chords left my mind, but as soon as I returned to Boulder, I wrote a song based on the two chords. I called it 'Love Song' and it appeared on my 'Cantilena' CD.

In the last section of seminary, we were introduced to Vajrayana Buddhism. The fundamental practice of this type of Buddhism is still awareness of the mind of the present moment, but new meditation techniques such as visualization are also used. With visualization practice we are still practicing being completely present, but we are also evoking and bringing to the surface our own intrinsic positive qualities, such as compassion, uplifted strength, clear intelligence, etc.

When I returned to Boulder after seminary, I taught my first classes at Naropa during their 1978 summer program. During the first five-week session, I taught a class called 'Opening to music'. In this class, I used various ways to open students to the power of music. All of the methods involved being completely present with the music. Conducting the music, aligning one's body movements to the movement of the music, was one method. A conductor should be able to invoke the feeling of the music with his or her arms, hands, eyes, facial expressions, and whole body. I asked the students to do this while listening to music. Three pieces I used for this were the last movement of Mozart's Haffner Symphony, the Air from Handel's water music, and the beginning of the Ode to Joy section of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Another way to align oneself with music is to sing along inwardly with it. One of my favorite vocal performances on record is the last movement of Mahler's Ruckert Songs, 'Ich Bin Der Welt Abhanded Gekommen', sung by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, with Karl Bohm conducting. I had my students lip-synch with the music, moving their mouths as though they were singing it. Doing this seemed to help them experience the richness of Fischer-Dieskau's voice and the nobility of his expansive phrasing.

In the second session of the summer program, I taught my first music theory class, the study of basic harmonic progressions. Since none of the students were involved with classical music, I used mostly examples from popular music. I have found throughout my whole teaching career that no matter what generation students come from, they all know Beatles' songs and the famous Bob Dylan songs, and

well-known songs from previous decades such as 'Over the Rainbow', 'Summertime', 'Georgia on My Mind', etc., and these are the songs I use as examples of certain types of chord progressions. For more advanced students, I sometimes use examples from classical and jazz composers.

That summer I also played the first movement of the Mozart Bassoon Concerto with a Denver orchestra for a birthday celebration for Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and a group of former students of mine from Cal Arts formed the Boulder Bassoon Band. We played the first of many concerts we would play for the next thirteen years in the Boulder-Denver area. This concert took place at a large, resonant church in central Boulder. We began the concert with my piece 'Flower'. Steve Braunstein played the tune accompanied by me at the piano. Then from the four corners of the church, the other four bassoonists began to improvise on the C minor pentatonic scale (C, Eb, F, G, Bb). It was quite a gorgeous sound. Then Steve and I played 'Flower' again while the improvisation of the bassoonists continued. In this concert, we also played the only performance ever of my Rock Etude #15 for multiple bassoons, the only minimalist piece I have written. I didn't know it at the time, but Caroline, the woman who was to become my wife, was at that concert. We didn't meet until three and a half years later.

In the fall of 1978, Jerry Granelli, the great jazz drummer, and I started a year-round music program at Naropa Institute. We began with a one-year certificate program and moved to a B.A. program in 1981. Jerry left in 1982 to teach at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, and I continued on as director of the music program until 1991. At that point, because I was so busy touring and performing, I gave up my administrative duties and became an adjunct professor.

In the early years of Naropa, I taught two classes each quarter, 'Basic Musicianship' and 'Developing Performance Skills'. 'Basic Musicianship' soon spawned levels II, III, and IV, and I deleted the word 'basic' from the name of the class. The beginning of an article on me by Bill Sutton in an early Naropa newspaper gives some of the flavor of my musicianship classes:

"If you were to walk around the Naropa campus at about 6.00 pm on a Monday or Wednesday night, you might pick up the strains of a Bach chorale, followed suddenly by a group of African pygmies chanting to



complex drum patterns. After a few minutes more, a wild cathartic Coltrane sax solo might writhe down the hall, followed perhaps by a song from the new 'Police' album. Indeed, you might wonder what type of place you were in, and what exactly was going on there.

If your curiosity got the best of you, you could follow your ear to the music room, there to see a happily laid-back little man leading a whole classroom of people in some of the most funkily grooved scat licks you will ever hear anywhere. If you haven't guessed already, the class is Basic Musicianship and the little man is Bill Douglas.

To study music with Bill is wonderful. In classes he is always warm, jovial, and extremely keen and perky. His patience with students is immense. He will explain things over and over until he feels the majority of the class has a good feeling for whatever he is presenting. Somehow he manages to lead the less accomplished along, while still challenging the more advanced. But, as one of his students, I can tell he loves what he is doing and really wants nothing more than for us to connect with this beautiful world of sound, to explore and to create along with him."

In the 'Developing Performance Skills' class, we usually began each class with a group improvisation on a particular scale or Indian raga, allowing ourselves to open to the feeling of that scale. Then we would play pieces that I arranged for the ensemble, sometimes classical pieces like Bach inventions or chorales, but more often pieces of mine or well-known jazz tunes. Each student would also regularly play solos for the class so that they could acquire experience in performing for others and working with nervousness.

My suggestion for working with nervousness was to develop relaxed presence, to move from now to fresh now so that thoughts that create nervousness couldn't stick, to be so present and focused with one's body and the flow of the music that there could be no room for thoughts that cause stage fright and playing anxiety. Nervousness is caused by a big sense of 'me-ness': "I'm going to mess up." "What will so and so in the audience think of my playing?" This strong sense of 'me-ness' can be somewhat lessened by orienting oneself to the well-being of others by saying to oneself before the performance, "May *others* be happy. May the audience members be helped and have their lives enriched by this music." Needless to say, sometimes these prescriptions for avoiding nervousness are easier said than done.

Performers, particularly classical music performers, have to work with nervousness during their whole careers.

In the summer of 1979, I wrote a piece called 'Celebration II for Clarinet and Strings' based on my C minor pentatonic piece 'Playtime'. Over the next few years, Dick played it with many orchestras in the United States and Canada. He also played it many times with the Tashi String Quartet. He recorded it with them in 1984 for RCA Records. Near the end of the piece, Dick and the whole quartet performed my vocal etude 'Rock Etude #11'. The Korean viola player in the quartet had to write out the syllables of the etude in Korean.

Summer was always the busiest time of the year at Naropa in the early years. In those days we brought in many famous musicians for the summer program: guitarists John Abercrombie and Robben Ford, bassists Charlie Haden and Gary Peacock, the group Oregon, pianist Art Lande, trumpeter Don Cherry, African musician Kobla Ladzekpo, and many others. I was very busy doing administrative work and trying to keep everything running smoothly and teaching a lot. In those early summers I taught a class called 'The Music of Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Bill Evans and Charlie Parker'. I spent many weeks preparing for that class. Each student who took the class acquired four cassettes that I put together containing the best improvised solos of all these players, plus transcriptions of almost all the solos (all of these transcriptions except for two Bill Evans solos and one Miles Davis solo were made by others).

In 1980 I received an Ontario Arts Council award to write a woodwind quintet for a Toronto group, the York Winds. The first movement was written in the completely atonal post-Webern language that I composed with in the 1960's. This was the last time I was to write in this language. The second movement, which I still like a lot, used a chord progression that I have subsequently used in many compositions, right up to the present day: a Gb minor-major 7<sup>th</sup> (Gb, A, Db, F) alternating with a Db major 7<sup>th</sup> (#5) (Db, F, A C). The melodies over the chord progression are in F Phrygian (F, Gb, Ab, A, Bb, C, Db, Eb) with a major or minor third. The language of the last movement I have also used in several subsequent pieces: chromatic, almost atonal melodic lines over parallel open fifths moving around chromatically in a rock groove.

In 1980, I formed a Naropa chorus which I conducted for almost twenty years. During that time, I was constantly searching for new music for the choir. I bought many choral records, spent countless hours in libraries, and wrote and arranged many pieces for the chorus. In the 1980's, the early Kings Singers recordings of Renaissance music were a big inspiration and a source for much good music. Much of this music could be played by the Boulder Bassoon Band because the bassoon range is quite close to the Renaissance choral range. The chorus sang and the Boulder Bassoon Band played a lot of beautiful sacred music by Josquin, Tallis, and Byrd (my three favorite Renaissance composers) and also many delightful and fun English madrigals and French chansons.

I continued to play concerts with Richard Stoltzman in the United States, Canada and Europe. Our first European concert was at the Edinburgh festival in 1981. There I heard two of the greatest concerts in my life: Janet Baker singing Faure and Schubert songs, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Claudio Abbado playing Mahler's Fifth Symphony.

Around this time I played one of the most nerve-racking concerts of my life. During a performance in Alice Tully Hall in New York, while Dick and I were playing Schumann's Three Romances, I started emoting too much and I began to hyper-ventilate. My whole body began to tingle, my lips pursed, and my hands started stiffening. I had to stop playing with my left hand for a few measures. Finally I was able to relax a bit and my hands returned to normal. A friend in the audience told me after that he couldn't tell anything was wrong. The next day, the reviewer for the New York Times wrote, "Bill Douglas moved around so much when he played that he made Glenn Gould look staid and reserved". After this performance, I tried to avoid getting so caught up in the emotion of the music when I played. I didn't always succeed, and the tingling and stiffening of my body and hands sometimes reoccurred.

In 1981, I organized and taught a history of music class at Naropa, a course I was to teach for almost twenty-five years. The class met twice a week, and between classes during the first year I taught it, I spent at least ten hours a day preparing for the next class. The class focused on the history of western classical music and the history of jazz, but I also presented music from many countries around the world, such as Africa, Tibet, India, Bulgaria, and Japan. I made eight

cassettes (later transferred to CD) for all the students, presenting highlights from the history of classical music and jazz, plus many beautiful examples of world music. The intention of the class was to increase the students' appreciation of great classical music, jazz and world music. For their midterm and final exams, I played excerpts from all the cassettes and the students had to identify them. To do well on these tests, the students had to listen to the cassettes many times. Often it takes several listens to develop an appreciation of certain music, so listening to these cassettes repeatedly was one of the main reasons that many of the students learned to love this music.

After teaching this class for a few years, I decided to have a section of each class where a great woman musician was featured, because there are so few women in the history of music. All of the women I featured, except for Hildegard Von Bingen, were from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: Joni Mitchell, Billie Holiday, Maria Schneider, Eliane Elias, Sarah Vaughn, Bjork, Martha Argerich, Lakshmi Shankar, Ella Fitzgerald, Carla Bley, Diana Krall, Nadia Boulanger, Angela Hewitt, and many more.

In the spring of 1981, the Buddhist community in Boulder decided to stage a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta 'The Mikado', and I was chosen to be the musical director. I had to coach the singers for many months, and then work with the staging for weeks, and finally rehearse everything with a hired orchestra. Although the rehearsals were usually fun, I often couldn't sleep at night because the songs repeated themselves over and over in my mind. Finally the performances came. They were successful, and 'The Mikado' episode of my life ended.

Near the end of 1981, I had a very painful breakup with a woman. I was determined, however, not to give in to depression. I thought that the best way to do this was to go out as soon as possible with another woman. I looked at the list of chorus members and tried to determine who the cute alto was who had just joined. I took a guess and invited Caroline Starnes out to dinner. That was the beginning of a year and a half of dating, followed by (as of this writing), thirty-two great years of marriage. I have been very lucky in my life. I have had many fortunate circumstances. Certainly one of the most fortunate has been meeting and marrying Caroline and having a wonderful family with her. She is a brilliant visual artist who creates beautiful clay sculptures, paintings and jewelry.

Our wedding took place on August 27, 1983. The Buddhist ceremony was held in the shrine room of the Boulder Shambhala Center. As part of the ceremony, we expressed our aspiration to develop the six Paramitas (transcendental virtues): generosity, patience, joyful exertion, awareness of the present moment, and wisdom. The shrine room was packed. Caroline's parents and brothers and aunts were there. My parents and my good friends Dick Stoltzman and Gregg Johnson were there. A chorus of my students sang and the Boulder Bassoon Band played. At an outdoor reception after, I mostly played piano, jamming with Dick Stoltzman and the Boulder Bassoon Band. The next morning, Caroline and I drove to Taos and Santa Fe for our honeymoon. A week later, we flew to Asheville, North Carolina, for a Christian wedding for Caroline's parents and other relatives. A few days after that, we flew to Toronto for another wedding at my parent's house.

The 1980's were the most active time for the Boulder Bassoon Band. Our core members at this time were Bruce Orr, Dan Young, Jim Cochrane, and myself. Cynde Iverson and Kent Townsend were involved for a few years. In the summers, John Steinmetz and sometimes Steve Braunstein came from California to play with us. At one point we were playing two or three times a week in Boulder clubs and at weddings, dances and concerts. I arranged Beatles songs, other pop tunes, traditional folk songs like Danny Boy, Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes, and Scarborough Fair, jazz standards like Naima, Con Alma, Some Day My Prince Will Come, Take the A Train, Satin Doll and Mood Indigo, and many classical pieces for the group. Among the latter category were Bach fugues, the slow movement of the Bach D Minor Concerto for Two Violins, a movement from Bach's Magnificat, several Bach chorales, and many beautiful Renaissance pieces by Josquin, William Byrd, Tallis and others. Some of these arrangements have recently been published by TrevCo Music. Among our most memorable concerts were a sold-out concert in Denver sponsored by radio station KCFR, three concerts at the Denver Botanical Gardens (each attended by about three thousand people), and several concerts at Naropa Institute.

I think the best concert we ever played was our concert at the 1985 International Double Reed Society conference in Boulder. Some of the music from this concert can be heard on YouTube, including 'The Monster Who Devoured Cleveland', one of several humorous pieces

that John Steinmetz wrote for the group, The Bach E major fugue from 'The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book II', many beautiful Renaissance pieces, and some pieces of mine. Around this time, we also recorded a Boulder Bassoon Band's greatest hits cassette. Our last concerts took place in the summer of 1991.

By 1983, I had created a format for my musicianship classes that seemed to work well for the students. First we would do the rhythmic exercises and rock etudes that I had started to develop at Cal Arts. These would tend to invigorate and cheer up the students and make them alert and precisely present. Then we worked a lot with rhythmic dictation. I wanted the students to develop the ability to immediately write down whatever rhythms came to their minds. This skill is particularly helpful for composers so that they can quickly notate rhythms and not have to interrupt their compositional flow. Next I would point to notes of a scale on a blackboard and have the students sing them. Then I would play random notes of a scale on the piano and the students would have to identify the scale degree by number; i.e., F is number 4 in the scale of C. Then the students would sing familiar tunes, naming the scale degree of each note: e.g., the first six notes of 'Happy Birthday' are 5,5,6,5,1,7. I was helping them develop the ability to sing a melody internally while simultaneously playing that melody on an instrument. This is especially important for improvising. Then I played chord progressions of familiar songs and the students had to identify the chords. I wanted the students to be able to hear and feel everything that we learned in music theory, so that the theory wasn't abstract but was integrated into their musical consciousness.

Part of each class would be devoted to precise listening. I played examples from various tapes I made for the students. One was a 'play along tape'. All the pieces on this tape used only one scale throughout, so that the students could more easily play along with the music. On that tape were Keith Jarrett, Miles Davis, Hindustani flute music, Jan Garbarek, some great funk music with Stevie Wonder and Herbie Hancock playing together, John Scofield, Zapmama, and much more. Another tape I made for the students contained examples of great singing - both vocal singing and instrumental singing. It began with Jaco Pastorius's introduction to the Weather Report song 'Cannonball'. This is a good example of musical 'soaring' - stretching the musical line to create a gorgeous expansive feeling. Next was Billie Holiday singing 'Lover Come Back to Me' very much behind the beat at a fast

tempo, but with a relaxed feeling, then Miles Davis playing 'Bye, Bye Blackbird', then Tibetan overtone singing, Robert Johnson singing the essence of the blues on 'Preaching Blues', Deitrich Fischer-Dieskau singing Mahler, Paco de Lucia playing the guitar with tremendous presence, Martha Argerich beautifully playing Chopin, Pavarotti soaring on Puccini's 'Nessun Dorma', Lakshmi Shankar singing a raga with profound feeling, Richter conducting 'Truly This Was the Son of God' from Bach's 'St. Matthew Passion', Kings College Choir singing William Byrd's 'Agnus Dei' from his four-part mass, etc.

Early in 1983, Dick and I played his arrangement of 'Amazing Grace' on the Johnny Carson Show in Los Angeles. A few months later, Dick phoned from Paris to say that his accompanist in Europe had become sick. He asked if I could fly to Europe that night to rehearse with him there and play some concerts with him in Germany. I flew to Paris and we rehearsed all the next day at John McLaughlin's home in the center of Paris. John is a famous great jazz guitarist who was living in Paris at the time with the classical pianist Katia Labeque. That night we walked through the streets of Paris, past Notre Dame Cathedral, to a recording studio where John was recording his album 'Belo Horizonte'. The next day we flew to Germany and played two concerts there.

Back home, I continued to listen to recorded music for at least two hours every night. In 1984, I discovered the great jazz pianist and composer Clare Fischer and I subsequently bought all of his albums, many of them difficult to find on obscure record labels. In those days there was no internet and I had to search in big record stores in New York and Toronto. I was impressed by his rhythmic creativity, which was influenced by early Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh, who were also two of my heroes, and Brazilian and Afro-Cuban music. He was also one of the most creative harmonic players in the history of jazz. I transcribed many of his compositions, and we played them in my performance classes. During this time, I was also listening a lot to the Wynton Marsalis group (with Branford Marsalis, Kenny Kirkland, Jeff Watts, and Robert Hurst), the late-period Bill Evans trio with Marc Johnson and Joe Labarbera, the King's College Choir conducted by David Willcocks singing Byrd Masses (one of my all-time favorite records), and some tracks from Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'.

In early 1985, Caroline surprised me with the amazing news that she was pregnant. I was ecstatic and immediately began to tell everyone about it, even clerks in stores and people on the street. On November

30<sup>th</sup> at 2 am, after about 18 hours of labor in an attempted home birth, we rushed to the hospital on a very snowy night and Caroline had a caesarean operation. When Catherine was born at about 3.30 am, I sang a song that I had recently written for her, 'Song for Catherine'. The first two lines were 'Hello dear Catherine, welcome to life, we greet you with this song; you are our friend, our little one, you've come to share earth and sky.' We named her Catherine Karuna Douglas. 'Karuna' is a Sanskrit word which means 'compassion'.

Soon after Catherine was born, 'Begin Sweet World', an album that I had made with Dick, was released on RCA Records. It featured six of my lyrical pieces along with pieces by Bach, Debussy, and Faure. It was beautifully produced by Jeremy Wall, a former student of mine at Cal Arts, and Dick's playing throughout was gorgeous. The record was a big seller, spending a lot of time in the top ten of the Billboard classical charts. Shortly after that, we made another record called 'New York Counterpoint' which also became a big seller. 'Song for Catherine' was on that record, along with elaborate arrangements of two of my most popular up tempo pieces, "Sky" and "Feast".

The great jazz bassist, Eddie Gomez (who had been in the Bill Evans trio for eleven years), played on these records. Soon after recording them, Eddie, Dick and I began to play concerts together. Often we were joined by our photographer friend, John Pearson, who showed his beautiful slides during some of the pieces we played. Since these concerts required more technical setup than our usual concerts, we recruited my old friend and rock etude enthusiast, Gregg Johnson, to be our road manager. Gregg and I often had parties in our hotel rooms after the concerts, improvising rock etude-like rhythms and planning another rock etude opera. Gregg was a serious student of Indian music and frequently sang inspiring traditional Indian rhythmic pieces for me.

My Buddhist practice continued to be the central ongoing discipline of my life. As I have mentioned before, the essence of this practice is to develop an effortless, vividly clear present awareness. This brings spaciousness to our minds, contentment, and a greater appreciation of the world. One also cultivates friendliness, compassion and kindness to others. As the Dalai Lama has often said, "My religion is kindness".



## My Recording Career

Sometime in 1986, my friend John Pearson sent a copy of the CD 'Begin Sweet World' to Stephen Hill, the producer of the popular NPR show 'Music from the Hearts of Space' and the owner of the Hearts of Space record label. Stephen liked the record a lot and phoned to ask me to make a record for his label. This was another example of extreme good luck in my life. I went on to make eleven best-selling records for Stephen's Hearts of Space label. Shortly after receiving the initial call from Stephen, I bought my first synthesizers, a Yamaha DX7 and a Roland D50. I spent many hours with these synthesizers, trying to find sounds that would be good for my first record. I also had to write a lot of new music. I wanted to write the most beautiful melodies that I could, and have them played by the best classical musicians I could find.

My biggest inspiration for the music on my Hearts of Space albums came from Renaissance choral music, particularly the music of Byrd, Josquin, and Tallis. Another big influence was British Isles folk music, particularly as it manifested in the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, and other British composers. I bought almost every available recording of Vaughan Williams' music. In February of 1986, while on tour with Dick in Italy, I wrote 'Angelico', the piece that opens 'Jewel Lake', my first Hearts of Space album. This was influenced by some of the pieces in the Vaughan Williams Christmas oratorio 'Hodie'. Shortly after that, I discovered the text for a beautiful ancient Gaelic blessing entitled 'Deep Peace' that I immediately set to music. This became my most well-known composition.

Deep peace of the running wave to you,  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,  
Deep peace of the gentle night to you,  
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you,  
Deep peace to you.

A friend of mine, Jane Grimes (now Jane Condon), sang it beautifully on the 'Jewel Lake' album. I sent this record to my father as a seventy-first birthday present. 'Deep Peace' became his favorite piece of music, and he played it over and over again. He died of a heart

attack shortly after that, and 'Deep Peace' was played at his funeral. I then wrote a piece called 'Elegy' for him which appeared on my next album 'Cantilena'.

'Jewel Lake' sold well, particularly in Spain. This was because a Spanish radio announcer there played pieces from it almost daily on his national radio show. This led to a Bill Douglas trio national concert tour of Spain in early 1990. In the trio with me were my long-time friends John Steinmetz on bassoon (John was my first bassoon student at Cal Arts), and Geoff Johns, the percussion instructor at Naropa Institute. We played eighteen concerts throughout Spain in three weeks. I was amazed at the public response we received. We had to play at least three encores every night (in Madrid, we played six encores). In 1992 and 1994 we played two more national tours of Spain, with Mark Miller added on sax and flute. In 1993, Geoff Johns moved to Washington State so we used Ty Burhoe as the percussionist on the 1994 tour.

The company that distributed my CDs in Spain wanted me to make a CD exclusively for them, so in 1990 I made a CD of duets all recorded live in the studio with no overdubbing. The album was titled 'Everywhere', but ironically it was only released in Spain.

In 1986, another interview with me was published in a Naropa magazine. In it, I expressed some of my thoughts on teaching. The interviewer was Sheldon Sands. Here is an excerpt:

"Sheldon: Many people attending your recent performances with students here at Naropa have been dazzled, elated and bewildered by a phenomenon known as 'rock etudes'. Could you talk a little about these, how they developed and the value they have as a teaching technique.

Bill: The original inspiration for the rock etudes came from the Indian music tradition where they often first teach rhythm vocally before using instruments. They have a different syllable for each sound that the drums make. There are some wonderful recordings of Indian drummers vocalizing these rhythms, and I used to listen to these a lot. In 1971, I decided to write similar etudes for my students to expand their rhythmic horizons. Each of the rock etudes uses a different rhythmic style. Some are influenced by contemporary classical music; number 7, for instance, is influenced by the rhythms of Stravinsky. Number 11 is influenced by African music, number 20 is a waltz, and

number 19 is influenced by funk. Some of them have pitches so that they can be played on instruments, but most of them are just vocalized without specific pitches. Instead of using the sounds of Indian drums, a lot of the syllables that I use come from the sounds of the western drum set. These etudes seem to be good exercises not just for introducing students to new rhythms but also for waking them up and getting them focused, alert, precise and open. They are a good way to begin classes. The students learn how to read music and how to listen precisely to rhythms, and this expands their conception of rhythmic possibilities.

Sheldon: Could you reflect on your development personally as a teacher: how you got involved in teaching music, and how you developed the unique approach that you have to teaching?

Bill: Even when I was a student at the University of Toronto and at Yale, I used to invite my friends over to spend evenings listening to records. I love music and I love to share it with people. This naturally carries over into my approach to teaching. I want to kindle the students' own love of music so they will be inspired to explore music for themselves and develop a musical discipline. I also try to inspire them to appreciate the value and joy of *nowness*, not only in music but in life. In 1969 and 1970, I had the opportunity to study for a year in England on a Canada Council grant. While I was there, I came in contact with my first Buddhist teacher, Sangharakshita, who greatly inspired me. I practiced sitting meditation a lot and I ended up at Samye-Ling Buddhist monastery in Scotland. The following year I went to California to teach and there began exploring various ways of relating Buddhism to music. The experience of *nowness*, of actually being right on the spot, is very important to both disciplines, so I really emphasize that aspect of music-making: synchronizing body and mind, *being* with your instrument; with a violin, for instance, being with the bow, being with your body, making sure there are no unnecessary tensions, being with the sound of each note. That's what I mean by synchronizing body and mind and being completely present. And then beyond that, I emphasize the expressive power of music to move people and affect them in a positive way. This is related to the intention to help others that is cultivated in Mahayana Buddhism. You can play a concert and touch people in their hearts – beyond their conceptual, habitual patterns; you can move and inspire them; you

can evoke such qualities as joy, compassion, strength, nobility and humor.”

I continued to record and tour around the world (USA, Canada, Europe, Australia and Japan) with Dick. Sometimes we played as a duo and sometimes as a trio with Eddie Gomez, or a quartet with Eddie and vibraphonist Gary Burton. In 1989, we recorded an album called ‘Innervisions’ with Judy Collins. She sang my ‘Deep Peace’ on it, as well as ‘For Free’ by Joni Mitchell. My pieces ‘Innisfree’, ‘Golden Rain’, and “Flower” were also on the album. In 1991, we recorded a CD called ‘Brasil’ with Gary Burton. On this album, we played my songs ‘It’s Here’ (with Rock Etude #19 in the middle), ‘Premiera Luz’, and ‘Dawn’. In 1994, we recorded ‘Infant Dreams’, ‘Open Sky’, ‘Azure’, and ‘Lullaby’ on the CD ‘Dreams’, and in 1996, we recorded ‘Earth Prayer’ on the CD ‘Spirits’. In 1998, RCA put together a compilation CD of my pieces entitled ‘Open Sky: Richard Stoltzman Plays the Music of Bill Douglas’.

In 1990, Caroline surprised me with the amazing news that she was pregnant again. On January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1991, we went to the hospital in the evening and, after a long and difficult labor, our son Willy was born the next day at noon. I immediately wrote ‘Song for Willy’ for him. It appeared on my next album, ‘Kaleidoscope’, as ‘Cradle Song’. A week after the birth, I had to fly to Hong Kong and Tokyo for ten days of concerts. Caroline’s parents came to help while I was gone. Willy had tested positive for cystic fibrosis, so I was very concerned and phoned everyday. Caroline’s father drove Caroline and Willy to Denver for a more thorough and accurate test and it turned out that Willy didn’t have cystic fibrosis after all. She phoned me in Tokyo to tell me the news and I was overjoyed.

In the 1980’s and the 1990’s, my love of English poetry bloomed. My favorites were W.B. Yeats, Shakespeare, William Blake, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge and Dylan Thomas. For my recording ‘Cantilena’, I set to music Yeats’ famous early poem ‘The Lake Isle of Innisfree’, and Jane Condon sang it on the record. This was the first of many settings I did of classic English poems. My compositional process was always the same. I read the poem repeatedly until a natural rhythm for the words emerged that would work well within a folk-song-like musical setting. Then I sang the words until a melody arose that moved me and enhanced the beauty of the words and satisfied me formally.

I have a recording of Yeats in his seventies reading 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree'. In the last verse, he beautifully extends the vowels:

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

For my next album 'Kaleidoscope', I composed a three-part setting of another early Yeats poem, 'The Song of Wandering Aengus', and Therese Schroeder-Sheker sang all three parts on the record. The last verse of that poem often brings tears to my eyes:

Though I am old with wandering  
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,  
I will find out where she has gone,  
And kiss her lips and take her hands;  
And walk among long dappled grass,  
And pluck till time and times are done  
The silver apples of the moon,  
The golden apples of the sun.

I always tried to find texts that resonated with the Buddhist teachings. For my next CD, 'Circle of Moons', I set two stanzas by William Blake:

To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And Heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour.  
He who binds himself to a joy  
Does the winged life destroy;  
He who kisses the joy as it flies  
Lives in eternity's sunrise.

This was a full four-part choral setting, and the Ars Nova Singers, conducted by Tom Morgan, sang it on the recording. This was the beginning of a long fruitful relationship with the Ars Nova Singers.

They sang beautifully on my next six CDs, which were primarily choral. My biggest inspiration for my choral music was Renaissance sacred choral music, where every part has its own melodic integrity and is satisfying to sing.

My next CD 'Deep Peace' became my most popular CD. It begins and ends with an extended choral version of my song 'Deep Peace'. This has been sung by hundreds of choruses around the world. It has been performed at countless weddings and funerals (including the funerals of both my parents). One person wrote to me that his father requested that 'Deep Peace' be played through headphones while he was dying. He asked that the music continue to play even after he was dead.

On the CD jacket for Deep Peace, I wrote: "I love poetry almost as much as music, and it is particularly satisfying for me to present these musical settings of some of my favorite poems. For me, these poems express the utmost tenderness, purity, joy, and poignancy." Besides 'Deep Peace', I wrote choral settings for Robbie Burns' 'Flow Gently, Sweet Afton', William Blake's 'Piping Down the Valleys Wild', 'O Earth, O Earth Return', and 'The Voices of Children', and W.B. Yeats' 'Red Rose, Sad Rose's. One day, I discovered a beautiful poem by a little known Irish poet by the name of Alfred Graves. Here is the first verse:

I'd rock my own sweet child to rest in a cradle of  
gold on a bough of the willow,  
To the shoheen ho of the wind of the west and  
the lulla lo of the soft sea billow.  
Sleep, baby dear,  
Sleep without fear.  
Mother is here beside your pillow.

For the next three days, I was in a state of continuous inspiration as I wrote a choral setting of the poem. I think this turned out to be one of the most beautiful pieces on the Deep Peace album.

When Caroline became pregnant with Willy, I gave up my job as administrator of the music program at Naropa University and became an adjunct professor. Now I only had to go to Naropa four times a week to teach two classes each semester. The 1990's were my most enjoyable years as a teacher. I had many parties with my students and many of them became close friends of mine. I especially enjoyed

teaching Musicianship III, which was a performance class. In this class, we formed a band with whatever instrumentalists and singers signed up for the class. We rehearsed in each class and performed in a concert for the public at the end of the semester. Each student wrote a piece for the ensemble and we also performed pieces of mine. Some of these pieces were quite difficult and required a lot of practicing, so I made several suggestions about practicing:

Feel your whole body as a unit and relax it. Upright posture with relaxation is conducive to alertness. Begin each practice session with slow practice. If you are a wind or string player or a vocalist, begin each practice session with long tones. As Marcel Moyse used to say, "Get inside the sound". Be with the tone as it moves through time. Practice enriching the sound through opening the throat and chest cavities, or by making subtle changes in the bowing arm. When practicing a difficult passage, make it easy by playing it very slowly. Gradually increase the speed, and be aware of any tension that creeps into your body and mind while doing this. If tension arises, play the passage slower until the tension disappears. Then continue to gradually increase the speed so that you can eventually play it up to tempo with ease and relaxation.

I made four more CDs with the Ars Nova Singers. In each of them, I alternated choral settings of some of my favorite poems with instrumental pieces. I am still very much moved by these poems. I will share one short poem from each of these CDs.

From 'Songs of Earth and Sky', a poem by Emily Dickinson:

If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain;  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Unto his nest again,  
I shall not love in vain.

From "Earth Prayer", a poem by Yeats:

### The Minstrel's Wish

All the words that I utter,  
And all the words that I write,  
Must spread out their wings untiring,  
And never rest in their flight,  
Till they come where your sad, sad heart is,  
And sing to you in the night,  
Beyond where the waters are moving,  
Storm-darkened or starry bright.

From "A Place Called Morning", a section from 'Song of Songs':

Rise up, my love, my fair one, my dove,  
And come away, come away,  
For lo, the winter is past,  
The rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear upon the Earth,  
The time of the singing of birds is come.  
Rise up, my love, my fair one, my dove,  
And come away, come away.

From "Homeland, A Prayer for Peace", a stanza from Wordsworth:

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears,  
To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that often lie too deep for tears.

Sometimes I combined lines from poems with lines from other poems: From "A Place Called Morning":

The rainbow comes and goes,  
And Lovely is the rose, (Wordsworth)  
All things hang like a drop of dew



Upon a blade of grass.  
While still I may, I write for you  
The love I lived, the dream I knew.  
From our birthday, until we die,  
Is but the winking of an eye. (Yeats)

I am very grateful to the instrumentalists who played beautifully on my CDs, especially those who played on several of them: Bil Jackson, clarinet, Peter Cooper, oboe, Anne Stackpole-Cuellar, flute, Judith Glyde, cello, Ty Burhoe and Geoff Johns, percussion.

## Dream Interlude

I often have interesting, colorful dreams. My family suggested that I describe a few of them in this book:

1 – In my dream, I was auditioning on bassoon for an orchestra position along with a lot of good young bassoonists. When I opened my case, my bassoon was filled with cooked chicken. I frantically tried to get it out of my bassoon. Then I tried my reed and it sounded terrible. I started to play the Mozart bassoon concerto, but I sounded like a buzzsaw. I told the conductor, "I don't have to audition because this is just a dream". He said, "No, this is not a dream. It is reality. You have to audition." We argued for a while and then I woke up.

2 - Earlier in the day in which I had my dream, I had been rehearsing a piece in 5/4 with some Naropa students. That night I dreamed I was visiting Sarah Lawrence College (my daughter was visiting there at the time) where everybody always spoke in 5/4; e.g. 'Wélcóme to Sárach Láwrénce. We're véry glád to sée yóu.'

3 – A world-wide plague was started by a diminished scale. My job was to go into the scale (it was three-dimensional) and determine what was causing the problem.

4 – I was on another planet where all beings were green. I was trying to develop an enlightened society there.

5 – I was waiting in line to talk with Khyentse Rinpoche, a great Buddhist teacher. When it was my turn, I went up to him and held his

hand and told him how much I appreciated his teachings. When I walked away, his hand came with me.

6 – I had a cup of coffee in my dream and I felt really wide awake and energetic, but then I tried to have a nap in my dream and I couldn't, so I decided not to have coffee again.

7 – In a dream within my dream, I dreamt I sang Leonard Cohen's 'Suzanne' to Trungpa Rinpoche. Then I was awakened in the dream and I went to a gathering with Rinpoche. He asked me to sing something and I told him I was going to sing for him what I had just sung for him in my dream. He said, in his high voice, "Oh lovely!"

8 – I was having dinner with a friend who suddenly turned into Trungpa Rinpoche. Because I knew Rinpoche was dead, I told him that this must be a dream.

9 – I was with Willy and Catherine and some of their friends. A caption appeared at the top of the dream that said 'This is just a dream'.

10 – I was a caveman playing a primitive flute with a beautiful tone. As I gradually woke up, I realized the whistle tone of the flute came from the whistling of my nose.

11 – I was singing with Crosby, Stills and Nash. The band was now called 'Crosby, Stills, Nash and Douglas'.

## Becoming a 'Classical' Composer

In 1996, the excellent percussion group Nexus asked me to write a percussion concerto for them. I wrote a concerto for African percussion ensemble and orchestra. The percussionists improvise throughout in 12/8 around a West African rhythmic structure called agbekor. The orchestra music is based on two Irish sounding pieces that I had previously written, "Jubilation" and "Leap". For one section of the concerto, two of the percussionists move to marimbas. The piece was premiered by Nexus and the Rochester Symphony in 1997. In 2008, I arranged it for solo darabuka and piano and orchestra and played it with the Boulder Philharmonic with Ronny Barak on darabuka.

Around the turn of the millennium, CD sales began to slow down, so I started to look for other sources of income. In 2001, Mika Yoshida, a marimba player from Japan, commissioned me to write a solo marimba piece for her. I wrote a three-movement piece called 'Mikarimba'. In May of that year, I toured Japan with her along with percussionists John Wyre and Bill Cahn from the group Nexus. I subsequently wrote several other pieces for her, including one entitled 'Irish Spirit' for marimba and clarinet, which she now frequently performs with her husband Richard Stoltzman (after Dick's marriage of thirty years dissolved in 2006, he and Mika began a relationship which led to their marriage in 2011).

I recorded my last Hearts of Space CD in 2002. It was a solo piano album entitled 'Stepping Stones'. Because of drastically reduced CD sales, I couldn't afford to make any more. Fortunately, a new career opportunity arose at this time. I began to get a lot of composition commissions from classical musicians. In 2003, Chris Potter, a Boulder flute player, commissioned me to write a flute sonata (Celebration IV), Allan Vogel commissioned me to write an oboe sonata, and Peter Cooper, first oboist with the Colorado Symphony, commissioned me to write a piece for oboe and strings. In 2004, Steve Dibner, co-principal bassoonist with the San Francisco Symphony commissioned me to write a piece for bassoon and strings (Celebration V).

After I played a concert with John Steinmetz at Cal Arts in 2004, I told him that I would really like to write a big piece for bassoon and piano. The next morning he sent an email to his bassoonist friends asking them if they would like to join a group commission for a bassoon and piano piece. Twenty-nine bassoonists signed up, and they each sent me \$150 when I finished the piece, which I named Partita for Bassoon and Piano. Their names were on the title page, and they each had exclusive performance rights for a year. As of this writing, I've written fifteen compositions for group commissions (averaging about seventy people per piece), and many more 'classical' pieces that were not commissioned.

So here I was again writing 'contemporary classical music'. To hear what was currently happening in this genre, I listened to many pieces by all the prominent contemporary composers. Of the atonal modernists, I still found the music of Elliott Carter the most interesting, although I could only listen to it in small segments. I was moved by certain pieces by Arvo Part, John Tavener, Toru Takemitsu,

Peter Lieberson, Valentin Silvestrov, and John Adams. But the contemporary music that I found the most vital, engaging, and moving was the music of the great jazz improvisers. I was also inspired by some of the offshoots of jazz, such as funk and Afro-Cuban and Brazilian music.

In most of the 'classical' pieces I write, one or more of the movements are based on the chord progressions of jazz standards. The third movement of the flute sonata, for instance, is based on the chord progression of 'Some Day My Prince Will Come' (although I changed the time signature from 3/4 to 12/8), the first movement of the oboe sonata is based on the chord progression of 'Autumn Leaves', and the first movement of the piece for bassoon and strings is based on the chord progression of 'All the Things You Are'. In these movements, I usually use the basic jazz form; i.e., a unison theme followed by an improvisation on the chord progression of that theme, and then a return to the theme with variations. The 'improvised' sections are completely written out. In spite of the jazz influence, I usually ask that the players not swing the music, but sing expressively as though they were playing Brahms or Mozart. I have found that when classical musicians try to swing, they usually overdo the swing, and they usually lose their expressivity.

Often the slow movements are based on Indian ragas or Middle Eastern scales combined with semi-atonal harmonies (often using parallel minor-major sevenths or major sevenths with sharp fifths), or sometimes I arrange pieces from my Hearts of Space records for the slow movements (such as 'Azure' for the oboe sonata). For the other movements, I sometimes write funk pieces based on unusual scales, or 12/8 pieces with African rhythms, or Afro-Cuban-influenced pieces.

The most important element in my music is the long continuous melody that goes from the beginning of each movement to the end, so I always write that complete melody first, and then I add all the accompanying harmonies and supplementary melodies. To write the principal melody, I essentially use the same method that I described on page 23 for writing Rock Etude #1. I improvise on a chord progression or scale until I come up with a phrase that moves or excites me and that works as a good opening gesture for the piece. I write that down and continue to improvise from there until I find the next right phrase. This process continues throughout the entire piece. The melodies in my 'classical' pieces are much longer than those in my

etudes and other short pieces, so I have to create a long form that is satisfying to me. The pacing has to feel right, everything has to be in the proper proportion, and there must be the right balance between unity and variety.

Trevor Cramer of TrevCo Music contacted me in 2004 and offered to publish all of my music for double reeds. Later Luyben Music began to publish all my music for clarinet, and a company called Really Good Music began to publish my music for other instruments. My choral music is published by musicnotes.com.

In 2005, my good friend Ty Burhoe started a record company (Tala Records) and asked me to make a record with him on tabla, Kai Eckhardt on bass, and Steve Smith on drums. This was a chance for me to record some of my more jazz-oriented pieces, including a medley of my Vocal Rhythm Etudes with bass and tabla accompaniment. The CD was called 'Sky', and I'm very happy with it.

In December, 2010, I retired from Naropa University after thirty-three years of teaching there and seven years of teaching at Cal Arts. I now have more time for composing, listening, reading, and Buddhist practice and study. I still love to listen to music, and I do so for at least two hours every evening. I'm constantly searching for new beautiful music, and I buy at least one new CD every week. Many of these CDs spark new compositions from me. There are certain older recordings that I have had for decades that continue to inspire me. Here is a list of some of these:

The three masses by William Byrd. There are several good recordings of these pieces, but my favorite, because of the expressive singing, is the first recording I bought by the King's College Choir, conducted by Sir David Willcocks. I also like the two recordings of Byrd motets by the Sarum Consort and the recording of Byrd motets called 'Ave Verum Corpus' by the Cambridge Singers.

The Pange Lingua Mass and the Missa La Sol Fa Re Mi by Josquin Des Pres, recorded by the Tallis Scholars conducted by Peter Phillips.

Bill Evans – The Complete Sunday at the Village Vanguard, with the added tracks that were not on the original release. Close behind these are the Bill Evans albums 'Portrait in Jazz', 'Explorations' and 'New Conceptions in Jazz'.

The lyrical solos of Miles Davis and John Coltrane from about 1957 to 1964. Some recent Miles Davis favorites of mine are his solos on 'I Fall in Love too Easily' and 'Basin Street Blues' from 'Seven Steps to Heaven' and 'Stella by Starlight' and 'All of You' from 'My Funny Valentine'.

All Lee Konitz albums from 1949 to 1959, particularly 'The Real Lee Konitz'. I also like many Warne Marsh albums from 1949 up to his death in 1987.

The early albums of Joni Mitchell – they contain superb songwriting and exquisite singing.

I continually find inspiration in the Brahms' symphonies and serenades, the slow movements of the Mahler symphonies, and the orchestral music of Debussy and Ravel.

Often the last music I listen to at night before I go to bed is the keyboard music of J.S. Bach. I like Ivo Pogorelich playing the English Suites in A minor and G minor, Martha Argerich playing the C minor Partita and the A minor English Suite, Sviatoslav Richter, Till Fellner and Edwin Fischer playing the Well-tempered Clavier, Piotr Anderszewski playing three of the English suites, Glenn Gould and Richard Goode playing the partitas, Angela Hewitt playing arrangements of chorale preludes and the Goldberg Variations. Lately I've been listening a lot to the Bach violin and keyboard sonatas played by Rachel Podger and Trevor Pinnock.

What do I like in a classical music performance? Most importantly, the written notes on the page must come alive. They must be imbued with feeling and character. Every note should have life and direction. The instrumental and/or the vocal sounds should be rich, warm and expressive, and there should be proper balance between the melodic lines.

Many tracks by Chick Corea and Keith Jarrett have inspired me over the years, and both artists just keep getting better. As I write this, Chick is 73, and his new album 'Trilogy', with Christian McBride and Brian Blade, was just released. Tracks such as 'It Could Happen to You', 'Armando's Rhumba', and 'Spain', are superb, full of melodic, rhythmic and harmonic vitality and creativity. Keith's last two CDs of duets with Charlie Haden have several great pieces: 'Body and Soul' and 'I'm Gonna Laugh You Right Out Of My Life' from 'Jasmine', and

'Everything Happens to Me', 'It Might As Well Be Spring', 'My Old Flame', and 'Round Midnight' from 'Last Dance'. There are also many superb performances, too many to mention here, on Keith's trio recordings with Gary Peacock and Jack DeJohnette. The best of Keith's improvising in this trio and in his solo recordings has what I'm looking for in music: fresh, rhythmically creative and well-constructed melodies that touch the heart.

Other musicians who have inspired me in recent years are the pianists Stefano Bollani, Brad Mehldau, Thomas Clausen, Enrico Pieranunzi, Shai Maestro, Bobo Stenson, Stefano Battaglia, Leszek Mozdzer, Eric Reed, Danilo Perez, Nitai HersHKovits, and Lennie Tristano, tenor saxophonists Chris Cheek and Dayna Stephens, bassist-composer-pianist Avishai Cohen, singer-songwriter Becca Stevens, singer-pianist Eliane Elias, and bassist-composer Steve Swallow. A new discovery is cellist Anja Lechner, who plays on several recent ECM recordings. I find her playing profoundly beautiful on certain pieces, such as Valentin Silvestrov's Postlude #3.

I also read about two hours every day. In 2003, I started reading fiction again, after a hiatus of about forty years. The first novel I read at this time was Ian McEwan's 'Saturday'. The main character is a brilliant brain surgeon who likes to listen, during surgery, to Angela Hewitt or Martha Argerich playing Bach, or jazz by Bill Evans, Miles Davis, or John Coltrane. Never have I had such an affinity for a fictional character! I have enjoyed McEwan's other novels, particularly 'Atonement', which made me cry, but 'Saturday' remains my favorite. Here are some other novels, or sections of novels, that for me express the sad and joyous poignancy of the human condition:

The last few pages of James Joyce's story 'The Dead' contain some of the most beautiful prose that I have ever read. Some sections of Joyce's 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man' are inspiring, particularly the parts about poetic discovery. Similarly, the chapters on writing poetry near the end of Boris Pasternak's 'Dr. Zhivago' are beautiful. I love the concluding chapter of Tolstoy's 'Anna Karenina'. One of the main characters, Levin, has been searching all his life for the meaning of life and he finally finds it: the basic goodness of the world and humanity. Tolstoy's 'War and Peace' also has many beautiful passages. I reread his 'The Death of Ivan Ilyich' every few years. No book has made me cry as much as Victor Hugo's 'Les Miserables'. The best novels about music that I have read are Richard Powers' 'Orfeo'

and 'The Time of Our Singing'. The latter, which is also about race relations in America from the 1940's through the 1990's, is one of my favorite contemporary novels.

## The Cosmos

I've been very interested in cosmology and quantum physics for about thirty years. I'll close this book with some revelations from current science and some quotes:

For every grain of sand on the entire planet Earth, there are at least a million stars.

Each star is at least 13 trillion miles apart from its nearest neighbor star.

One light year (the distance that light travels in one year) is 5.88 trillion miles (the closest star to us is over 4 light years away).

Astronomers recently discovered a new galaxy 13.4 billion light years away.

If a single atom were enlarged to the size of a baseball field, and the nucleus was at second base, the orbiting electrons would be the size of tiny gnats flying around in the farthest bleachers. Every atom is mostly space.

If you took out all of the space in all the atoms in the human body and had only the particles left, it would be smaller than the tiniest grain of sand. We are mostly space. The notion of solidity is simply an illusion of our limited eyesight and our mental constructs. It's not reality. In reality we are completely in motion and fluid at all times.

The earth turns at the speed of 1,600 kilometers an hour. The earth orbits the sun at 108,000 kilometers an hour. The sun moves throughout the galaxy at 700,000 kilometers an hour. The milky way moves through the universe at 212 million kilometers an hour.



Look at your hand-do you claim it as your own? Every element was forged in temperatures a million times hotter than molten rock, each atom fashioned in the blazing heat of a star. Your eyes, your brain, your bones, all of you is composed of that star's creations. You *are* that star, brought into a form of life that enables life to reflect on itself. (Brian Swimme)

The universe is a single multiform event. There is no such thing as a disconnected thing. Each thing emerged from the primeval fireball (the 'big bang' that started the universe), and nothing can remove the primordial link this establishes with every other thing in the universe, no matter how distant. You and everything you do and become are further articulations of the primal fireball. (Brian Swimme)

I'm speaking here of something that has recently been encountered empirically. In the language of physics, we call it quantum fluctuation. Elementary particles fluctuate in and out of existence. What a strange realization! Don't think that physicists have any easier time of it than you! Elementary particles leap into existence, then disappear. A proton emerges suddenly-where did it come from? How did it sneak into reality all of a sudden? We say it simply leapt out of no-thing-ness. The universe emerges out of the all-nourishing abyss not only 14 billion years ago but in every moment. Each instant, protons and antiprotons are flashing out of, and are as suddenly absorbed back into, the all-nourishing abyss. (Brian Swimme)

A human being is part of a whole, called by us the 'Universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest-a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. (Albert Einstein)