

*[Please note: Rhonda Larson & Ventus is always written using the ampersand]*

## **Rhonda Larson & Ventus**

*Ventus*, Latin for "wind", expresses the essence of Larson's vision and artistic approach in creating music that soars beyond industry labels or boundaries. It is a merging of the most soulful elements of world, jazz, classical, and Celtic music led by the blonde multi-flutist from Montana. Grammy award winning flutist **Rhonda Larson** is joined by pianist **Tim Ray** (of Lyle Lovett fame); **Chris Rosser** on guitar and a variety of exotic middle-eastern stringed instruments; **River Guerguerian** on world hand percussion; and Grammy winner **Eliot Wadopian** on bass. Their music is a celebration of the shared experiences of the human spirit, and is accessible to all audiences.

### **Rhonda Larson & Ventus member highlights:**

**Collaborative efforts with** :Tan Dun, Omar Faruk Tekbilek, Tibetan Singing Bowl Ensemble, Talujon Percussion Quartet, Yo Yo Ma, BBC Concert Orchestra, Ziggy Marley/Gipsy Kings project; Paul Winter Consort, Milladoiro, Eileen Ivers, Chuck Berry, Lyle Lovett; Pete Seeger, Bonnie Raitt, Aretha Franklin, Lou Reed, Rickie Lee Jones, Willie Nelson, kd lang, Soul Asylum, Nickel Creek, John Mayer, Shawn Mullins, John Gorka, David Wilcox, Tom Rush; Eugene Friesen, Paul Halley, Donald Harrison, Jon Faddis, Glen Velez, Mark Lavine, Gene Bertoncini, Paul Sullivan, Oscar Castro-Neves, Judy Collins, Gil Shaham, the Cab Calloway big band, Jane Siberry; Davy Spillane.

**Television performances:** Survivor, The Restaurant, The Tonight Show (Johnny Carson, Jay Leno), Late Night with David Letterman, The Conan O'Brien Show, Austin City Limits and various other national TV and radio broadcasts.

**Performance venues:** Carnegie Hall, Madison Square Garden, the White House, the Kennedy Center, 1992 Presidential Inauguration and over 100 countries.

**Discography:** Collectively the group members have contributed to over 400 recordings.



### **Rhonda Larson & Ventus BIOGRAPHIES**

Flutist, composer, and bandleader **Rhonda Larson** entered the national music scene from her native Montana by winning first prize in the National Flute Association's Young Artist Competition in 1985, including a Carnegie Hall debut. Shortly thereafter, Rhonda joined forces with the Paul Winter Consort, initiating her journey of combining diverse musical styles in addition to her classical training. Rhonda won a Grammy Award during her last year with the Consort, departing the group at that time to embark on her individual cross-cultural/multi-genre music path.

Rhonda's diversity, combined with her musical and technical wizardry, has begun a new generation for the flute as a leading voice in the music world. Composing much of her own repertoire, Larson continues to be recognized as a visionary force creating a refreshing hybrid music for the flute, including her versatility on an array of ethnic flutes from around the world. Larson journeyed to South Africa as a musical ambassador for the United States to perform for the Parliament of the World's Religions, sharing the stage with such luminaries as Nelson Mandela and the Dalai Lama. In addition to South Africa, Rhonda has toured in Russia, Japan, Europe, Central America and throughout North America. She has recently performed in Ireland, Italy, and Spain. In Spain she recorded with the Celtic Galician group "Milladoiro" from the Santiago de Compostela region, and performed as a guest soloist with this stellar bunch along with guest soloist Eileen Ivers, famed celtic fiddle player of the original "Riverdance" troupe.

Rhonda has a discography of over 19 commercial recordings from label/distributors such as Windham Hill and American Gramophone, among others. She has recorded a variety of flute music for the CBS television series, "Survivor" and "The Restaurant", and performed on the Live CBS finale episode of "Survivor" from Madison Square Gardens, seen by over 40 million viewers.

Rhonda has two solo recordings, *Free as a Bird*, and her newly released second solo CD, *Distant Mirrors*. The latter is an eclectic musical reflection on world cultures and ancient traditions, and was listed in the top ten of the "25 Essential CD's for 2003" nationally syndicated Public Radio program, *Echoes*. Rhonda is featured in the 2003 "Flute Stories--101 Inspirational Stories from the World's Best Flute Players", Windplayers publication. Ms. Larson has served on the Board of Directors for the National Flute Association.

From October 2006 through June 2007 Rhonda lived in Ramallah, Palestine (West Bank), where she taught flute at the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music.

Rhonda and her husband Lee deLisle live in Southwestern Michigan, where Rhonda continues her creative work and practice of the flute in her studio which is an historical 1878 one-room schoolhouse located on their property, alongside a replica of a 1630's Williamsburg cabin. They also live part-time at their second home in the Lazio region of Italy.

You can learn more about Rhonda from her website at: [www.RhondaLarson.com](http://www.RhondaLarson.com)

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Perhaps best known as pianist for Lyle Lovett and Jane Siberry, **Tim Ray's** wide-ranging skills as a soloist and accompanist have afforded him the opportunity to perform with legendary performers from all walks of music. Appearing on over 60 recordings to date, Tim has performed in concert with an extensive list of pop music icons, notably Bonnie Raitt, Aretha Franklin, Lou Reed, Rickie Lee Jones, Willie Nelson, kd lang and Soul Asylum. He regularly performs with leading figures in the jazz world, among them Gary Burton, Scott Hamilton, Eddie Daniels, Bucky Pizzarelli, Lewis Nash and Rufus Reid, and his classical credits include solo performances and concerts with Gunther Schuller, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project and the Boston Classical Orchestra.

Tim frequently tours throughout the Americas, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, including performances at Carnegie Hall, the White House, the Kennedy Center and the 1992 Presidential Inauguration. Tim has also performed repeatedly on "*The Tonight Show*" (Johnny Carson, Jay Leno), "*Late Night with David Letterman*," "*The Conan O'Brien Show*," "*Austin City Limits*" and various other national TV and radio broadcasts.

A sought-after arranger and composer, Tim has penned numerous original works for his trio Tre Corda, for solo piano, big band, string orchestra, and an extensive body of writing for jazz trio and quartet, some of which appear on Tim's own *Ideas & Opinions*, released in 1997 on Gunther Schuller's GM Recordings label. He received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and taught jazz piano and improvisation for 8 years while on the faculty of the Berklee College of Music. Tim is currently on the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music, and conducts workshops and clinics at colleges and high schools throughout the U.S. and Canada.

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**Chris Rosser** is a multi-instrumentalist, singer-songwriter, composer and producer. As a solo performer, he tours nationally and has shared stages with folk and pop luminaries such as Nickel Creek, John Mayer, Shawn Mullins, John Gorka, David Wilcox, Tom Rush and more. Chris has released three recordings, *Hidden Everywhere* (2006), *The Holy Fool* (2000), and *Archaeology* (1997), and has won

songwriting contests at the Rocky Mountain Folks and Merle Watson festivals. With the help of a 1999 WNC Regional Artists grant, he continued his studies of Hindustani classical music and the sarod (a 25-string fretless Indian lute) with world famous Indian musician Ali Akbar Khan in San Rafael, CA. Rosser earned a Bachelor of Music from the University of Miami School of Music where he studied jazz piano and studio recording on a full scholarship. He owns Hollow Reed Studio in Asheville and was awarded a songwriter/composer fellowship from the North Carolina Arts Council. He has also begun touring as the keyboardist in the ensemble of master Turkish musician Omar Faruk Tekbilek. Chris' website is [www.chrisrosser.com](http://www.chrisrosser.com).

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Multi-percussionist, composer and educator **River Guerguerian** was born in Montreal, Canada to Armenian-Egyptian parents and received his Bachelor of Music from the Manhattan School of Music Conservatory. For over 25 years, he has been performing internationally with such groups as the BBC Concert Orchestra, New Music Consort, Grammy and Oscar winning composer Tan Dun, Omar Faruk Tekbilek, Tibetan Singing Bowl Ensemble, Talujon Percussion Quartet, Chuck Berry, and Ziggy Marley/Gipsy Kings project. His compositions have been commissioned and performed by chamber ensembles, universities, modern dance companies, and new music festivals throughout the U.S. Guerguerian has performed in concert halls in New York, Berlin, Moscow, Edinburgh, Rome, Sydney, Hong Kong, Barcelona, Athens, Istanbul, London, and has recorded on over 100 albums and film soundtracks. In 1994, River sold all possessions, left civilization, and lived in a wildlife sanctuary in the Himalaya Mountains. River conducts rhythm and sound exploration workshops throughout the country. His website is: [www.ShareTheDrum.com](http://www.ShareTheDrum.com).

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Grammy Award–winning bassist **Eliot Wadopian** has been a professional musician for more than twenty seven years. He began his studies at the Berklee College of Music and has performed extensively throughout the United States, Europe and the Orient with many professional ensembles. Eliot has performed with such artists as Paul Winter and the Paul Winter Consort, David Wilcox, Eugene Friesen and Paul Halley, Donald Harrison, Jon Faddis, Glen Velez, Mark Lavine, Gene Bertoncini, Paul Sullivan, Oscar Castro-Neves, Judy Collins, Yo Yo Ma, Gil Shaham, the Cab Calloway big band, and Davy Spillane, to name a few. As an educator, Eliot teaches privately, as well as on the current faculties of Western Carolina University and Mars Hill College. He also performs regularly in several bass sections of many regional mid-Atlantic symphony Orchestras. His website is: [www.eliotwadopian.com](http://www.eliotwadopian.com).