



Free as a Bird

Liner Notes

Adoro Te 3:22

Gregorian Chant/Paul Halley (Back Alley Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Trinity Church; Milton, CT

Rhonda Larson--flute

Paul Halley--pipe organ

Peregrine 6:19

Paul Halley (Back Alley Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Battell Chapel, Norfolk, CT

Rhonda Larson--bansuri flute

Paul Halley--piano

Jordan Rudess--Kurzweil synthesizer

Kenny Mazur--guitar

Russ Landau--bass

Glen Velez--percussion

Jamey Haddad--percussion

I love this sexy piece, and the sound of this bamboo flute (bansuri) from India. The bansuri has such an earthy quality to it, and is played here in a bit of a Montana style, rather than that of India.

I am taken outdoors by this sound, standing on the mountain ridge behind my folks' house in Montana. The air is crystal clean, the sky is intensely blue, and there is, as far as the eye can see, open space for the 'wandering' of my own spirit to let itself, as one might say, "get the stink blown off it."

Vocalise 4:01

Sergei Rachmininoff; arr. Larson

Recorded at Shaker Village, Enfield, NH

Rhonda Larson--flute

Paul Halley--pipe organ

Rachmaninoff has always been one of my favorite composers, as I have a special affinity for the Russian classical music of the 1900's. This piece is originally written for solo voice with orchestra. The flute works here together with the pipe organ to give it a pining, ethereal quality, since for me it is a beautiful love song.

Maskell's Harbor 6:23

Trad. Irish/Paul Halley (Back Alley Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Battell Chapel, Norfolk, CT

Rhonda Larson--crystal flute; wooden whistle; flute

Paul Halley--piano; vocals

Marcy Larson--trumpet/flugelhorn

Jordan Rudess--Kurzweil synthesizer

Kenny Mazur--guitar

Russ Landau--bass

There's no feeling in the world quite like the one created when wind is blowing and shifting itself around your being, bright sun is kissing and possessing your face, ears vibrating from the sound of the water as it parts itself for your entrance in to

total freedom, all by a miraculous activity called sailing.

Sailing escapades have been some of the best times I've had, and all in the Bras D'Or Lakes of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. There is such an openness of heart created by leaving the "shore" behind, and with it, all that pulls down on the soul in everyday life. This first night of having set sail is usually spent in Maskell's Harbor, where there often rests a heavy, magical fog.

Nova Scotia (New Scotland), as its name implies, has a Celtic musical heritage, which has its roots in Spain. I fell in love with this music's inherent happiness and innocence, and haven't stopped pursuing this 'celtic' spirit since. I found the opening Irish melody in a hymn book, and sang it once for PH, and it made him start to cry. Assuming the reaction to be from the beauty of the melody and not the lack of it in my voice, I knew we had to use it. The purity of it lent itself perfectly to my little crystal flute, and Paul added his own beautiful harmonies. He then came up with this whimsical, slightly drunken jig, as well as the rest of the piece.

For me, it is as if the notes of my crystal flute were that mystical fog skimming over the surface of the water at Maskells, setting into motion a world not far from fantasy, where beneath the surface the sirens must be singing, and a world where we would never have to come back to the shore.

Movin' On 2:44

Rhonda Larson (Wood Nymph Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Trinity Church, Milton, CT

Rhonda Larson--flute

Movin' On was completed just in time for us to record and include here, and is only the second piece I've ever written (LAMENT being the first, a few months earlier).

This piece celebrates a new beginning for me, of which primary significance has been a heavenly little church in which to practice, granted by the gentle people who belong to this Trinity Church Milton. This special church seems to be poised in air upon a tiny village suspended in time, where the encircling silence is absolutely halting.

Inside Trinity's walls, my very heart is caused to incline itself upwards while playing my flute, producing an overwhelming desire in me for a goodness that is surely God Himself. This piece evolved from the joyful effect of all these mystical elements.

Ekkaleo 6:56

Paul Halley (Back Alley Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Battell Chapel, Norfolk, CT

Rhonda Larson--flute

Paul Halley--piano

Marcy Larson--flugelhorn

Jordan Rudess--Kurzweil synthesizer

Kenny Mazur--guitar

Russ Landau--bass

Glen Velez--percussion

Jamey Haddad--percussion

Ekkaleo is a Greek word meaning both to call out, and to be called out. A great word describing a circular, never-ending process of God's workings in my own life, if you don't mind my saying so. I see Him as having called me out, to whisper words of Life into my ears, and I in response find myself calling back to Him for increased presence in my life. Pretty amazing!

Music is one of the ways I have been given to then carry forward these intimate whisperings, and call them out 'from the rooftops' (I prefer mountain-tops). This whole circular process is of endless fascination to me.

Loner Song 3:17

Paul Halley (Back Alley Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Trinity Church, Milton, CT

Rhonda Larson--alto flute

Paul Halley--piano; pipe organ

This tune is from a musical that PH wrote for children's choir. One child sings of always feeling last, overlooked by all his peers. I chose it because I love this music; Paul's consistently great gift for simple, beautiful melodies.

Bach in a Minute 1:00

J.S. Bach; Paul Halley (Back Alley Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Trinity Church; Milton, CT

This is from one of Bach's flute sonatas in C. I kept asking PH to put his own harmonies to it, since he is particularly well-endowed in this area, but he kept resisting the idea. But on the day we went to record this, he had forgotten his music; so lucky for me, he had to make it up.

Rhuah Returns 5:43

Paul Halley (Back Alley Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Battell Chapel; Norfolk, CT

Rhonda Larson--flute

Paul Halley--piano

Jordan Rudess--Kurzweil synthesizer

William Purvis--French Horn

Glen Velez--Riq; tamborim

Gordon Gottlieb--percussion

Russ Landau--bass

Rhuah is a Hebrew word meaning wind, or spirit. Its pronunciation has the delicate sound of a sighing, warm breath. Several years ago, the Consort travelled to Israel to perform, and on a break in the tour, we took a side trip to Mt. Tabor. The effect of this mountain is enormous due to how it rises straight up from an otherwise flat terrain. I will never forget the wind up there: the way it invaded every cell of mine with such an aliveness, changing me. I felt an overwhelming freedom from this wind, a feeling that must be similar had I actually flown. Wind always stands me firmly in awe of itself.

In this tune, the will of the wind shifts direction here and there throughout, with the flute flying joyously above, as Jonathan Livingston Seagull, free as a bird.

Lament 4:52

Rhonda Larson (Wood Nymph Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at the Shaker Village, Enfield, NH

For Pily, whom I lament. And now I walk slowly away, in the other direction.

Alleluias 6:53

Paul Halley (Back Alley Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Battell Chapel; Norfolk, CT

Rhonda Larson—flute; bansuri; crystal flute; alto flute

Paul Halley--piano; celeste synth; pipe organ

Jordan Rudess--Kurzweil synthesizer

David Darling--cello

Kenny Mazur--guitar

Russ Landau--bass

Gordon Gottlieb--drums

Glen Velez--percussion

Bits and pieces of this composition have been following PH around for a few years, and finally get to rest here in their completed form. On one of our Consort tours to Spain, it was called "La Sopa d'Espagna" (soup of Spain), though we ended up never getting to perform it. Through time, it has earned the much more dignified and celebrative title of Alleluias, or 'song of praise'. But maybe it should really be called Halley-looyeahs!

Hodie Christus 2:14

Gregorian chant; Paul Halley

Recorded at Shaker Village Chapel; Enfield, NH

Rhonda Larson--flute

Paul Halley--pipe organ

Hodie Christus Natus Est (Today Christ is born)

Paganini 1:36

Niccolo Paganini, arr. Larson

(Wood Nymph Music, ASCAP)

Recorded at Trinity Church; Milton, CT

A little encore, from Paganini's violin caprices.

--R. L.

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