



Paul Sullivan

River Music Notes

www.rivermusic.com

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Hello my friends,

Greetings from the coast of Maine!

I hope this little newsletter finds you flourishing and happy, or at the very least, surviving confidently. We have had a full and interesting year up here, as usual. I'll spare you the details about my sore leg and how much snow we had last winter, but I would like to tell you about some of the musical adventures I've had.

First up, I was thrilled to become a bona fide choral composer this year. I received commissions from the Bagaduce Chorale to write two compositions for them. The first was a major piece called *River*, which I completed in the Fall of last year. The second was a fun and surprising challenge. The director, Bronwyn Kortge, called me and asked me to write a "Fantasia" on *Row Row Row Your Boat*.



In my business, you never say no. So I wrote this piece, faithfully based on *Row Row Row Your Boat*, but quickly veering off into a maze of other folk songs like *This Old Man*, *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*, and *Frere Jacques*—along with 10 others. They intertwine,

overlap, weave in and out, with everyone singing different songs all at once. You would think it sounded like the Tower of Babel, but in fact, it sounds a bit like the rollicking last movement of a Handel Oratorio. At any rate, the singers and the audiences loved it, and I think you would too.

So if you know of a good chorus in your area, let me know and I'll send these pieces along to them. A good time is guaranteed for all.



Right after completing *Row Row Row Your Boat*, I got to work on another unusual commission. I wrote the score of a full-length musical to be performed by the students of an elementary school on an island not far from where I live. I collaborated with the performing arts



director there, who wrote the libretto and directed the show. It was an adaptation of the old European *Reynard the Fox* stories, and it required rousing choruses of chickens, pensive ballads sung by little bears, and novelty songs sung by a fatuous rooster. As I have often told you—music is a magic carpet and you never know where it's going to land next. *Reynard* turned out to be a blast, and I was very proud of what we produced.

On a slightly loftier plane, I also collaborated this year with the great choreographer Alison Chase, who was the seminal figure in the creation of the Pilobolus Dance Theater, and who is now in the process of founding her own company. I have written a few scores already this year for her, and we are still busy with a large new piece, which is full of absolutely dazzling and breathtaking moments. It is high tech modern theater at its most thrilling level, but it never loses the soul and emotion for which Alison is famous. We have done preview performances at "Mass MoCA" in Massachusetts and at the Maine Center for the Performing Arts. I'll keep you posted on further developments.

continued on page 3...



Just in time for Christmas...2 New CDs!

As I mentioned, I've been busy this year performing concerts and recording with two spectacular singers. In many ways they could not be more different, but they share the most important things—deep talent, beautiful voices and the power to move you.



The first is Theresa Thomason, with whom I have worked for many years with the Paul Winter Consort. Over those years I have watched her bring every single audience to an explosive standing ovation. Her singing is rooted in gospel and stretches way beyond to include jazz and pop. Some of you know her from my *Break Away* CD. This new album, *Favorite Duos - Vol. 1*, features just the two of us, and we do songs by Stevie Wonder, Aretha, and even Joni Mitchell. There are a couple of new compositions by yours truly as well.



When Theresa is singing she has such control and such an extraordinary ear that she can do absolutely anything—from powerful, driving soul to the most delicate turns and ornaments. She is a truly formidable singer at the

peak of her powers. If I do say so myself, this is very high level music making, and you probably have not heard a CD quite like this.



As if making music with Theresa weren't enough for anyone, I've had the great pleasure of working with Rosie Upton as well. I have worked with her for the past three years, and have mentioned her in past newsletters. You may recall that I met Rosie in an unlikely place, the local nursing home where she and I both volunteer. One

night we overlapped and an important chapter in each of our musical lives began. We have performed a lot together, including in an Off-Broadway show in NYC. I have written many songs for her—and did I mention that she is only 16 years old!



Our new CD, *Christmas Pure and Simple*, is her first professional CD, and I think it will become a collector's item. You will be astonished at the clarity, strength and range of her young soprano voice. And although she has all the vibrancy of youth, she also has the musical intuition and sophistication of a seasoned pro. I can honestly say that Rosie Upton's singing fills me with joy every time I hear it, and I am proud to be able to share that joy with you.

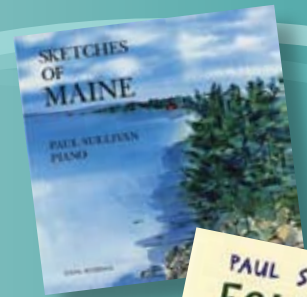
This album features many Christmas favorites along with some lesser known celtic and renaissance songs, and two new songs by me. I know you'll thank me for introducing you to Rosie Upton, a musician you will be hearing lots more of in years to come.

Since it would be impossible to recommend one of these CDs over the other we are offering a special discount if you purchase both. See the order form in this newsletter or our website for more information.



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