

## Rejoice

How do we rejoice in a time such as this? Has there been a time in your life where you did rejoice? Do you think it's still possible to rejoice? What is rejoicing? The song "Rejoice" attempted to touch a world of hope, a world of love, a world of peace. I tried to capture the exuberance of rejoicing. I thought a samba always makes me smile, always makes me move, always makes me want to dance so that's where I went.

The first iteration of this song was for a group that Joe, Larry and I were in a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away called the Joliet Junior College Wolfpack Guitar Ensemble. I wrote the song to start the concert because of its energy and its guitar oriented melody riffs. This song would engage the band and the audience right from the beginning.

[Here's a video of us rehearsing this song which is kind of fun.](#)

This was shot during a rehearsal. All three of us are in this video, a kind of a where's Waldo moment for you.

In the new version I wanted to feature Joe's agile bronco agility and mastery of melody. Joe played amplified harmonica thru this awesome old little amp with just a volume control. Some listeners thought it was actually an electric guitar. When I was recording the drums, as soon as Larry started playing, he made me smile. He caught the joy of samba. I couldn't stop smiling. It was a beautiful moment when he was nailing it right from the beginning.

It was a tricky song to mix because it went from this light samba to a thrashing rock song. When I played the first mix for Larry he said, "The bass drum is too loud." Imagine a drummer saying that. Then he said, "Let the bass drive the flow." "Okeydokey, I will." Since our ensemble is just harmonica, drums, bass and acoustic guitar, I decided to try a rhythm guitar solo for fun. I thought it would be unique using 16th notes with the melody on top. I always envisioned doing a timbale solo in the song. Larry had a lot of fun breaking a lot of sticks, but it was worth it. Joe's didgeridoo drones on his low harmonica made it extra fun to play over.

I hope the song touches the possibility of rejoicing for you, touching something greater than us. We were definitely reaching for it. It was a challenge but I guess rejoicing is always a challenge. That's the cool thing about music: it expresses the inexpressible. If rejoicing is possible, I think it would feel like this.

## The Wind

The song "The Wind" came from the thought that the wind just is there. You feel it and watch it move things echoing Jesus' words, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." Sometimes it's gentle, sometimes it's a storm. I tried to capture the presence of the wind mainly in its gentleness and its refreshing and calming effect on our lives. But it evolved into the wind's unpredictability and fury, erupting into a storm, and then returning to tranquility.

I tried writing words for this song but the only lyrics I was settled with were words for the chorus, which are;

When the wind blows all these pieces sail,  
Swirling changing thru you,  
This reeling waiting heart begins to wail,  
With a whisper new.

The chorus melody returns a number of times played by the guitar and harmonica and also played by the bass once. It's the grounding of the song. The interesting thing about composing the verses was since I didn't have lyrics, I had fun singing different phrases over the progression. Joe learned them perfectly. They were not easy melodies to play on the harmonica. It took some rehearsing and negotiating. But Joe is a trooper, submitting to my goofiness and insanity for which I am extremely thankful. Since the melody of the chorus is in a higher register I wanted to contrast it with a low register harmonica solo. [Joe's trademark Hohner Thunderbird harmonica](#) that Joe designed for Hohner captured perfectly what I was shooting for. It sounds like a ship has arrived in the harbor.

I love the beauty of the simplicity of Larry's strong, firm, tight, harnessed beat. In the breakdown section, Larry perfectly executes the coming of the storm. As the guitar widens in its presence, the storm is upon us. The turbulence is captured by Joe's remarkable solo and then the storm passes. I was blessed to use my son's bass on this song. It is a beautiful Spector bass. All the notes rang with clarity, fullness and balance. It is a great slap bass, which made it extra fun to play. And I've never played a bass that I could play chords on and have them sound so good and also have the harmonics ring out so well on. May the presence of the wind fill you with mystery and awe.

## **Song For The Princess**

I wrote this song when I was a senior in college. I just became acquainted with alternate tunings on the guitar and I fell in love with this tuning, DADF#AD, a very common alternate tuning. It was at the time I was graduating from college. I met this remarkable girl and I knew there was great potential here because she loved the *Chronicles of Narnia*, which was my gauge if there was a possibility of a relationship. The first time I remember playing this song for her was at a state park. I called it "Song for the Princess". But she was young and she had things to work through, so for a short time I called it "Song for Friends". But a few years later she had a change of heart. She started paying attention to me. She started smiling more. I didn't want to get dumped again. She affirmed she was ready for a relationship, so the song went back to "Song For The Princess". A year later we got married.

I always wanted to capture this song in the fullest possible way I could. I tried recording it with different guitars in the early days of this project. It was good, but it wasn't great. So Joe and I were on a quest. We wanted to make the recordings as competitive as we could when we compared them to other recordings. After much research, we were able to get some very good mics, Neumann KM54s, using V-72 mic preamps, into a Manley EMU compressor, going into an Avid 192 interface.

But the most remarkable thing was the guitars we were using. Joe had a friend in Philadelphia who knew a person who built guitars. It was the renowned John Zeidler. When we went out to meet him in his shop in Philadelphia I immediately fell in love with his work. John was setting up a guitar he had built for someone, doing a few little tweaks on it. He let me play it. I didn't know it was someone else's guitar. I fell in love with the guitar and I asked him "Is this one for sale?" And he said, "Don't you think I could build another one like this?" So I said, "OK build me one like this one." He built my guitar with an Adirondack spruce top which he used on all his guitars and used Koa for the back and sides with an ebony neck. But the guitar I used for "Song for the Princess" was a bit bigger guitar he made for Joe. It was made out of gorgeous curly maple with an Adirondack spruce top. It gave the fullness the song needed. I've never played guitars that sounded better than John Zeidler guitars. Sadly John passed away 15 years ago. We tip our hats to him. His guitar was the source that we needed to capture the exuberance of that song.

When I originally recorded the "Song for the Princess" I just programmed the midi drums. I liked them, so when we started recording it took us a bit of time to get the pocket of the congas right.

I said, "Larry I'm not settled with it yet, I actually like what I programmed better than what we have at the moment." We listened and slept on it. The next recording moment, Larry suggested adding a bongo part mimicking the congas but tuning the bongos way high. After we recorded it we said, "That's it!" It gave it a finger snap sound. There are lots of different shakers, a ride cymbal and a kick and a swish cymbal. . I was picturing playing this song around a campfire with all these percussionists in an arc playing along with me and smiling. There was no bass in this song. The Zeidler guitar provided enough bass. You might ask where is the harmonica? Well, maybe we will do a version another time with harmonica? I envisioned this one as a duet with between guitar and percussion. Joe added the percussion at the end. He played the finger cymbal splendidly.

This song drove my recording career. The question that was always in the forefront was "How do I get this to sound awesome?" In the process of trying to make it sound breathtaking I learned a ton about recording, editing, balance, mixing and mastering. It's amazing what happens when you pursue excellence on these different levels. There are many spinoff benefits, which I could elaborate on for a long time. It sounds exquisite to me now and the Princess Julie still loves the song, which is truly excellent.

[Here's an example of the recording from it's infancy from a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away with Larry and I and our friend Oscar](#)

## **Big Skies, Majestic Lands**

“Big Skies, Majestic Lands” is about driving through Arizona and New Mexico with its open, bold beauty and its glorious skies. I wanted to write a song that was in the vein of [Carlos Nakai](#) with his simple, very beautiful melodies. Musically speaking, there are intervals of fifths and double fifth chords in the guitar chords, for example, G to D to A which are rooted in the inherent harmonic series of music. These intervals portray the picture of the openness of the vistas and landscapes. I wanted people to sense the hugeness of those spaces and the rich, vibrant colorful of these southwest skies. This song was written in the mid 90s when we had more visits to Arizona.

As the song progresses it moves on into a bit more pensive or contemplative view of the surroundings. I envisioned Joe’s harp like a keyboard sequencer creating a subtle bed for my only lead acoustic guitar solo where I use my Guild D55 guitar. It then bursts into a joyful fun fretless bass solo. I love samba! For this I used my Status fretless bass made by a company called Trace Elliott. Anytime you hear the fretless bass it is this instrument. I love the lyricalness of the fretless bass, which I strove to be reminiscent of Michael Hedges’ work with Michael Manring and of course the fretless master, Jaco Pastorius.

The master Larry Ortega played the entire song with brushes. To re-create the eruptive exuberance of being out west, he did a pass of cymbal swells with sticks and then he effervescently danced out one of the best samba grooves I’ve ever heard during the bass solo. Once again, the Zeidler guitar was gorgeous sounding doing the accompaniment chords and harmonics. The harmonica then re-enters again with the melody over the bed of these beautiful instruments and you’re back on the drive continuing in the glorious surroundings of the southwest ending in the calm tones inherent in nature.

May you be blessed with a road trip in the southwest.

## **Bisbee Rain**

The melody for “Bisbee Rain” was written in Bisbee, Arizona, a very amazing city. It’s roots were an old mining town, one of the first mining towns in Arizona, at the turn of the 19th century. It was a copper mine with one of its side finds, Bisbee blue turquoise. Bisbee is now an historic site.

The artist [for the album and my merch](#), Cindie Blessing and her husband Chris Blessing, who was the best man in my wedding, live in Bisbee. When Joe and I were visiting them in the mid 90s, their apartment was in Old Bisbee. Since Bisbee is a historic site the residents have to maintain the old mining look of the city on the outside features. Many of the miner’s shacks had tin roofs. It was lightly raining when we were there, kind of a gentle rain. The way the rain hit the tin roof was rhythmic. I grabbed a guitar. The rain inspired the melody. When melodies come you’ve got to be ready for them, you go with them. I tried to capture the ambience of being in an old miner’s shack apartment hearing this rain. Since we were visiting and having fun, it added to the memorable moment, one of the first times of actually spending some time in Bisbee.

When we got back home and I was writing the melody where the harmonica and the bass played together at the end of the guitar solo, we had a funny moment. As the idea was coming to me, I was starting to sing it to myself, getting it into my system. Joe came up the stairs in the studio, playing his harmonica. I was trying to get this melody cemented as it was just coming to me and I just started yelling “stop, stop, stop!” Luckily, he smiled and he stopped. I was able to actually capture that last melody which is one of my favorite little parts, a little bit reminiscent of Bela Fleck and the Flecktones, echoing lines by Victor Wooten and Howard Leavy. I always envisioned this song as a kind of a Flecktones esque song.

I played this song using a Martin classical guitar that I borrowed from a student named Dan Kallan. I doubled the melody with the harp, then went off on my classical guitar chord solo.

The rain sounds were all done with rain sticks, which is not so easy to do to get them to sound like just drizzles and not just one giant storm. It took a little bit of practice and editing to make it sound like authentic rain. But Larry, the amazing, made it happen on all fronts, also knocking out of the park an incredibly responsive conga and shaker part.

Old Bisbee is quite the place with its steep stairsteps and contours, a very art filled and Bohemian type town. We actually buy our coffee from Seth at Old Bisbee roasters even now.

## **Even In Their Sleep**

This song was inspired by the first two verses in Psalm 127,

Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain those who build it.  
Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late,  
to eat the bread of painful labors,  
For he gives to His beloved even in their sleep,

and the last two verses from Psalm 120,

Our help is in the name, of the Lord who made  
heaven and earth, heaven and earth, heaven and earth.

This is my oldest song on the CD. Originally, the melody was sung with these words. I wrote it in college for a composition class. I was experimenting with this haunting melody that only encompasses the tri-tone A-Eb and uses all the notes in between the tri-tone. It is obviously very chromatic. I actually could sing this song full voice back in the day in the registers that we played it, which made it a strong song.

I was inspired by the idea that it was vain to get up early and to go to bed late, since that's what I do day in and day out. Doing things and eating the bread of painful labors is my life. It's a way a musician has to live as you keep working. So the idea that the Lord gives to his beloved even in their sleep was astounding to me. I'd like that to happen more.

This song worked well with Joe's low harmonicas, his precursor to his famous Thunderbird low tuned harmonica, which is used in the song "The Wind" amazingly. It was used on the first and last sections of the song. The second and fourth sections of the song were some of the most orchestrated parts on the album. I had two high-strung guitars, along with the main guitar, with two pad synths and deep bass drum along with a kit. The second and fourth sections used the "it is vain for you to rise up early..." lyrics.

The middle section is the dream section of the song. To capture the idea of sleep the guitar solo danced with the harmonica in the distance. The guitar is not playing in time and the harmonicas' response to it is kind of a dreamlike, subconscious shadow. I was going for the randomness and spontaneity of dreams.

I had Larry use all these percussion instruments that I purchased over the years from places all over the world, mostly from Green Lake

Wisconsin Retreat Center. They had a store at the complex that missionaries sent percussion instruments to that the people in the villages made. They were very authentic shells, beads and shakers. It was a way for the villagers to earn money by making these original instruments. Big music stores did not have access to these awesome instruments. It was win/win in action. How cool is that? So when I would go to the beautiful retreat center once a year, I would always buy a number of percussion instruments because I loved the sounds and I loved supporting people around the world who made them. I used many of these percussion instruments in that dream section.

Anyway, I thought it was a great idea to explore being blessed even in your sleep. I pray that that would be the case for mankind.

## **Sprouting Joy**

CS Lewis talked about a concept that every relationship has a fatal flaw. And when a couple is faced with that fatal flaw, the choice is to love in spite of and work through those flaws or separate. The inspiration for this song came from one of those moments when my wife and I were working through one of those rough spots in our relationship.

As it was being worked through, joy started showing itself. The idea of the melody was the wrestling inwardly with reconciliation. Restoration and becoming new is where the joy comes from, becoming a new person so we can live and love again, a fleshing out of the saying 'love bears all things, love forgives all things'. It takes a lot of love to repair all things. And that's what had to happen to make it through one of our rough spots.

One of the things I experimented with was to mirror Joe's melody with a complementary shadow. I was able to achieve that with a plug-in called Melodyne. I used Melodyne to capture his solo turn it into midi notes. Then I found just a haunting sound called African sunrise in a program called Iris that perfectly added another layer of melodic shadow, text painting the internal rebuilding of myself once again.

I wanted to have drum solo in one our songs and I always envisioned this is the one, another text painting of the internal struggle. It is a phenomenal solo, very unique, classic Larry. We recorded about five or six solos. He really wanted to be the one to decide which solo we would use. He was pretty busy still, so I chose the solo. When I sent him the solo I chose, he said, "Yeah I can't believe it, I love it." He then got the idea to add a responsive component to the solo. He did an amazing job adding extra percussion to his solo. I'm thrilled with his solo. Larry is an amazing composer and it was an honor to work with him on this project, a lifelong dream. His responsive mini solos throughout the song are amazing and fun to listen to as well.

The song is a wrestling match with glimmers of hope that this could be worked through. At the end there's a release of joy and release of hope. Joe's solo definitely captures that breakthrough. May it be an inspiration.

## **Dance Of The Elves**

The inspiration for this song came from a cross-country skiing trip my wife Julie and I took when we were first married, in Wisconsin, at a park called John Muir Memorial Park. A friend of ours told us about this beautiful place to cross country ski.

The snow was just OK, but there were places where it was amazing. There was a secluded area in the park where there were thick pine trees with reddish bark, backdropped against the white snow with grey clouds in the sky. In the beauty of that moment I just said to myself, "I bet Elves live here." I imagined this to be a place where they would sneak out and dance, the "Dance Of The Elves" that would go on and on.

I came up with a rhythmic ostinato guitar pattern in 7/4, that seemed to capture the uniqueness of the Elven dance. The extended harmony chords of the ostinato made this one of jazzier pieces of the album. I layered the guitar part with three different guitars, my Zeidler guitar, the Martin classical guitar, and my Guild guitar with a plug-in called Enigma, which basically gave it some kind of weird sound artifacts. I pictured this as the main group of elves doing an elegant dance together.

I originally recorded the melody on guitar. Again, I used Melodyne to turn the melody into midi. It felt like it needed a more ethereal sound. I found a great harp sample library called Elysium harp, by a company called Sound Iron, the best harp library I have ever heard. Actually I'm a big fan of the harpist Andreas Vollenweider. This was a tipping of the hat to his music. [Here's my favorite album Caverna Magica.](#)

I love Joe's lyrical harp solo, which enters in the middle, contrasting the more complex melody and adds another elven soul to the dance.

When Larry and I talked about this song, I told him I wanted him to think like Jack DeJohnette, a famous jazz drummer. How would Jack approach and play in 7/4? Larry's drumming was so responsive, effortlessly flowing like an improvisatory elven dancer over this intricate time signature.

On the bass parts I used my fretless bass and again used Melodyne to capture the bass part I played and used it to double with a plug-in called Massive, to get the extra big enveloping bass sound.

In the second melody I wanted Joe to be another voice. I envisioned a guitarist using a volume pedal, answering the melody and responding to

the drums. As the elves continued in their dance, other elements would come in and join in this elegant flit together.

This is the only song I faded out. I wanted to portray the idea that this dance just kept going and kept developing, and this was in a place that time wasn't much of a concern, like the world of elves.

The beauty of that environment, of that place, was a great inspiration. So when you hear this song, think of a secluded snowy pine forest of red bark with a white gray sky and these hidden ones sneaking out and doing their timeless dance.

[John Muir Memorial Park](#)

## **Going To Philadelphia**

“Going to Philadelphia” is a song of exuberance about going to pick up the custom made guitars that we used on this album by John Zeidler, the master craftsman we met through Joe’s friend Wade who lived in Philadelphia. As mentioned in the “Song For The Princess” description, our guitars were made by John. “Going to Philadelphia” was about the excitement of a creation, a beautiful thing, very rare and wonderful. Being with Joe to actually get these guitars was also wondrous.

The song in many ways is a feature of the bass, a duet between the melody that the guitar and the harmonica play together and the bass response. The guitar is featured more in the middle section. Again, I was drawn to the 7/4 time signature for that section. I wanted to have a Gipsy Kings like sound in the middle section. We used a tambourine I made from three tambourines, (Joe and I are not really all that fond of tambourines, some funny stories about that someday.) One of the tambourines I got at Green Lake came from India. I duck taped it together with a couple tambourines that I owned, kind of gluing them together to create one tambourine sound.

We also had the honor of playing one of my good friend Kevin Comfort’s cajons that he builds, called the Comfort Cajons. They are smaller ones, built to be portable, which you can connect a strap on and play. We used the cajon for the sixteenth note pattern throughout the song. It’s a super fast part to keep the momentum of being on a road trip, the movement of the vehicle towards Philadelphia. It created a nice contrast with our melody.

In the middle section we had the cajon play this fast 7 pattern TaKa TaKa TaKeTa (Say this quickly and you have 7). I learned this way of representing 7 from a Don Ellis clinic, a jazz trumpeter who was famous for writing in odd meters. He spoke of how the musicians of India represented odd meters phonically. The Gipsy Kings handclaps mimicked the TaKa TaKa TaKeTa pattern. Then Larry also did the upbeats at a pretty brutal speed. There were lots of layers of handclaps doing that pattern, a testament to the brilliance of Larry.

The guitar was featured in that middle section. It really brought out the beauty of that guitar. I was really thrashing on that section. It was a duet with the percussion with the bass beautifully filling the bottom and the harp doing an obbligato over the top leading us back into the melody.

I wanted the harp sound to be like a concertina, a Cajun like accordion sound. It sounded great with the arrangement. Joe once again did a great job locking in with me playing the melody and playing the harmonica in octaves.

I wanted to increase the energy at the end of the song. I couldn't resist adding the B-3 organ part in there and eventually have it join in on the 16th notes to make the picture that we had arrived at our destination, John Zeidler's home.

We had been there before to order the guitars. It was super exciting to be able to pick them up. What a great trip and what great instruments. It was a truly sad moment when John passed away from leukemia at the age of 44. He made a handful of guitars and mandolins. He also made cellos. He was definitely a master luthier and as you can hear by the quality of those guitars sounds. You can see why we were excited to actually own them. I always wanted to do them justice. It was truly an honor to play these guitars on this album. So "Going to Philadelphia" is a song of thankful exuberance and tribute to a sensei.

## **Innermost Being**

I came up with the chord progression first on “Innermost Being”. I wanted this song to be very percussive. I wanted it to stir up, express and explore the inner world that we all live in, our innermost core or innermost thoughts and desires, and mostly, the universe of the inner part of us that is so powerful and shapes our actions and thoughts and experiences. Our innermost being can be a dark and vulnerable place where we are alone with ourselves. It also could be a place where a spark of hope and peace that we don’t understand resides, maybe even be a place of spirit, interaction, connection and fellowship, a source of life.

I wanted to capture the power of our innermost life and our inner being, and how it guides and frames who we are and then forms us in our outermost being. Our outermost being impacts our innermost being with maladies, flaws, heartaches, failures, wrongs done to us, sorrows, loss, sicknesses, injuries, pains and aging to name a few. Our innermost being is a place we need to quietly visit and be at times so we can open ourselves up so that we can endure, maybe become new, retool and rethink, be rewritten and re-molded, recover and be re-built. These are tough and challenging ideas. I wanted the song to mirror the challenge.

I recorded that song by singing the melody to the recorded chord changes in the mid 90s when my voice was pretty good and I could hit the notes. It was funny—when I first came up with the song, I had all these different ideas and phrases and then Joe said, “Would you just pick the ones you want?” I replied, “You are right, sorry.” Joe, being the expert transcriber learned my phrases flawlessly. We used his little distortion amp to get the tone.

I saturated my voice in reverb to kind of denote the innermost place. I wanted the vocal to be a shadow of what the harmonica was doing. This was a difficult melody to sing and for Joe to perform exactly, which again is a testament to Joe’s agility and expertise, as you many who follow Joe know. He is a master transcriber.

The bass part made me smile too because it was a full slap style. I used my Fender Jaguar on that one. I was shooting for Louis Johnson light. I strove for a strong foundation for the soul of this interaction throughout the song. For the bass solo I was inspired by Paul Simon song’s *You Can Call Me Al* fast bass solo. I’ve always loved that solo. It was a great target to have in my sites.

I also had a vision of having percussion solos in this song. Larry did an outstanding job on everything percussion, the timbales, the congas, the drums and shakers in this song. I jumped out of my chair when he played that first timbale solo. Honestly, it was one of the most rhythmically expressive timbale solos I've ever heard. I was going for the Afro Cuban vibe at the end with the beautiful interaction of the timbales and the congas soloing over the groove and the melody. They were talking with each other and I think we captured it well. We had a lot of broken sticks and blisters from that moment. (I have some pictures.)

I feel like I captured the angst of inner life, our inner universe.

## The Cup

“The Cup” came from the turmoil of the garden of Gethsemane, the mystery, the hope, the reconciling of man to the Creator of the universe, to be children of God, forgiven and loved. This was on the shoulders of Jesus, permeating his entire being. He knew what was before him. Even writing this, it is astounding and incredible that one person could bear all of the sin, wrong, evil, harm, sorrow, loss and pain of humanity. In Mel Gibson’s movie, *Passion of the Christ*, the devil asks, “Do you really believe that one man can bear the full burden of sin? No one can carry this burden, I tell you. It is far too heavy. Saving their souls is too costly. No one. Ever. No. Never. Who is your father? Who are you?” It is and will always be a leap of faith. Only one who was man and God, only one sinless could accomplish this. That’s why Jesus is the stumbling block. And yet it is a possibility that what happened at Calvary is true. The only way it could be true is if God resurrected Jesus after this ferocious death, a human history changing moment.

In the passion of the Christ, the focus is the sacrifice. The anguish for Jesus was that he knew this moment his death would be severe, abusive, vicious, saturated with anguish and pain, and ending in separation from His father. But it was being done for the good and restoration of mankind.

But still, the words: “Oh Lord, take this, cup from me,” and his resolve “I’ll drink the cup,” rang true, the tearing apart of his soul. Yes, this is too hard and yes, this is what needs to be done.

When I wrote the song, those words, the battle within, what was at hand, was my goal to capture. I pursued text painting this agony in the garden.

The guitar is tuned in a way that I could accomplish the fullness of the tension that moment. It tuned to E F# C# F# B E. I was able to get some very interesting harmonics from that tuning and also the pounding drive I needed to color that moment.

The song was basically a duet between Joe playing “Oh Lord, take this, cup from me” and the bass expressing “I’ll drink the cup.” A musical fleshing out of the dynamic that Christ was going through. I was knocked out with all of Joe’s solos. Joe’s first solo expressed the excruciatingly contemplation of what’s before him, of what’s coming. Which was interspersed with the bass solo, manifesting the throes of the struggle that felt like it was coming from the foundation of the

universe. Concluding with Joe completely musically capturing the cross like no other instrument I believe ever has. I was extremely happy with these solos. They captured that moment musically as dramatically and as vividly as I could create. It was an honor to do this song.

In April 2020, a month after Covid started rampaging our world, a friend asked, "Do you have a video or something I could use for good for Good Friday service?" I had just finished recording the drums a week or two before and I said, "Yeah I think I do." I reviewed the movie *The Passion of the Christ* and remixed it into six minutes using my song as the guide. It was tricky. I had Jesus envision the coming evening and day in the garden. [I'm happy with the video remix which you can see at this link.](#) It manifests the target I was shooting for. Maybe someday I'll have videos for all my songs.

## **Two dreamers**

I dedicated this song to Joe my partner and our madness. If it weren't for Joe, none of this would've come together. We've been friends since 1984, studying music, (BTW Joe is a terrific guitarist) being an integral part of the Wolfpack guitar ensemble as a player, and later the Wolfpacks' soundman. Joe helped me build both studios and generously invested in the microphones, the mic-preamps, the outboard gear and the monitoring speakers. We both purchased guitars from John Zeidler, which I used throughout the album. Joe was and is a constant encouragement and friend. In fact, Joe and his wife Michelle actually got married in our kitchen at our new place. We piped out the ceremony into our nice size yard. It was an unbelievable day of love, friends and music people from all over the country, eating, drinking and playing music all day long. There have been many good times here together since.

"Two Dreamers" was written as a guitar solo featuring the awesome John Zeilder guitar. It is in DADGAD tuning. As a super fan of Michael Hedges, I wanted to write a song in his style that incorporated some of his revolutionary guitar, slap technique. The beauty of the guitar is that it is such a multi faceted instrument that can generate melody, harmony and rhythm simultaneously. My goal was draw out the harmonic chords in the percussive section, something unique to guitar. It took much practice executing these slaps and recording them without clipping and capturing the tone of this great guitar in the fullest way possible.

This recording is a testament to my friendship with Joe. It wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for our friendship and commitment to trying to do something well. "Two Dreamers" is completely dedicated to our long-time friendship with all of its ebbs and flows. We've truly been two dreamers for a long time.

## Delight

The lyrics for this song came from excerpts from Psalm 51. The backdrop for this psalm was King David being confronted by the prophet Nathan for committing adultery and murder. Even though David repented, things didn't go as well for him after that moment. There were more difficulties, losses, betrayals, and battles. David reflected on his failure as he penned Psalm 51. These are the verses I used:

Create in me a clean heart O God and renew  
Renew a steadfast spirit within me

Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
And sustain me with a willing spirit  
You delight in a broken spirit  
A broken and contrite heart

Have mercy on me my sin is ever before me  
Wash me cleanse me for I've done what is evil  
In your sight

O Lord open my lips  
That my mouth may declare your praise  
You delight in truth and wisdom  
In my secret heart

What is a broken and contrite heart? Why would it be the Lord's delight? It's a worthy idea to meditate on for a moment. Here are some thoughts.

We've all fallen short. We've all made mistakes, some small, some severe. We've broken things, hurt and damaged others and created havoc in this broken and messed up world. We've all sinned.

We need to be restored. To have this happen we need to have a deep humility, a humility before the Lord. In this psalm, David openly admits his sin and failures, he confesses the Lord's mercy is not something that he deserves, but desires. He desires renewal.

When our desire to be cleansed from our transgressions is so consuming, our hearts ache with sorrow and we yearn to feel at peace with our Creator, completely open, recognizing our dependence to the Spirit of God for all that we have and all that we are. The brokenhearted can be molded and shaped in the hands of the Master. A contrite heart

means not just sorrow but the determination to not continue in our wrongdoing, using and abusing others, a determination to truly love others, no matter who they are or how truly difficult it is. I believe it's the Lord's delight to restore and create connection.

The second verse of the song is truly a confession: I can't get away from the wrong I've done, it's as ever before me, it's mine. I wanted to express the truly sorrowful, repentant heart and plead for restoration and for God's Spirit to truly reside so truth and wisdom would be in my most fundamental place, my secret heart, a twinkling that cuts through the darkness like a morning star, a way back to love and acceptance, a pinhole of light that is the pathway to mercy.

This song started from a dream. I dreamt the middle section of the song. I woke up hearing the drum groove in my head. It was a joyful dance, a dance of being set free, a dance of life, a dance of a new home. When I created the guitar part, I wasn't settled until it made me move like I envisioned in the dream. Larry captured the groove perfectly, this dance of release.

This song is not only a text painting of that moment in King David's life, it's a prayer of confession in my own life in all that I failed in and failed to do. This might be only song I ever sing on a recording. I hope this prayer of mine ministers to you and your secret heart.