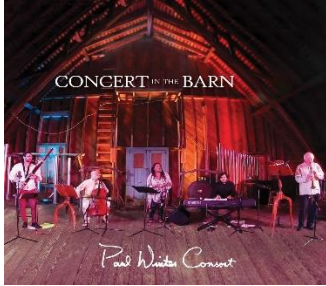


Paul Winter Consort

Concert in the Barn



There are cathedrals of all sizes, shapes, and locations. Sometimes when you can't get the towering majestic edifices of the past, you settle for the huge spaces that conditions allow. That's why when the pandemic closed the cathedral doors to the **Paul Winter Consort** usual venue, namely the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, they found a new location. A humble barn on a hill in Connecticut. Thus, the annual celebration of the Summer Solstice was held uninterrupted by a group of musicians who have done so and in fine mettle for over twenty-six years. Welcome to the **Concert in the Barn**. Here are some of the highlights.

Paul's trademark solo song **Sun Singer** is his opening to all his concerts. It greets the listener like the planet was just created and the first miracle, that of light, which fills the senses. The echoing tune has a beautiful eeriness to it representing the power of light while demonstrating an otherworldly sound. Somber piano from Henrique Eisenmann and Winter's stylistic soprano sax make up the next tune **Lamento de Aiocá**. A sometimes unsyncopated tune just this side of a Brazilian jazz strain, the exquisite combination of soaring rhythms and estranged melody make for a complex, highly emotional refrain.

With long time member Eugene Freisen on cello, the compelling vocal by Theresa Thomason sings a lament called **Silence of a Candle**. The evocative lyrics are, "*The silence of a candle burning in my room, speaks softly of a peaceful balance to be found just beyond. The road within without a right or wrong*" offers a promise of hope every time the light is witnessed. A beautiful song with a powerful message. **Sarabande** has Henrique Eisenmann on solo piano and although the music originates from the Baroque period in Spain, this modern rendition lives on the edge of avant garde and jazz. It is a thought provoking and engrossing piece that bears repeated listenings.

A hymn from the late 1800's makes its mark on the recording as a passionate paean sung by Thomason. **How Can I Keep from Singing**, a song that many from the previous generation were introduced to by Enya, and which my generation knew as a tune by Pete Seeger, has been contemporized into a soaring vocal by Theresa and benefits by a complex piano score by Eisenmann. It is a song that stirs deep in the spirit of humankind.

Johan Sebastian Bach would be honored to know one of his most famous pieces, namely *Air on the G String* is given the Bossa Nova treatment by Oscar Castro-Neves and reborn as the Consort's tune **Air**. The reimagined song has Freisen and Eisenmann creating this low key, serpentine improvisation that sings of nostalgia. For a light and whimsical touch Winter and friends offer up the tune **Moro Na Roça - Lapinha**, a lively work reminiscent of carnival days. Winter's happy horn leads in a samba of primary colors and high spirits.

The album finalizes with the tune **Icarus**, the band's theme song for over five decades. It is a transitional piece, a contemporary foray into the heavens on a fateful, sunny day. What Winter imparts in this fanciful tune is a freeform sense of joy. But freedom has its costs.

Joining the band on this album is Jeff Boratko on bassoon and Conor Ryan on surdo, a bass samba drum. Concert in the Barn is fourteen tracks of absorbing contemporary/jazz/world fare that will have you listening and celebrating over and over again. The Paul Winter Consort formed in 1968. It has been wowing audiences with the international message of preserving our planet for more than fifty years. Although the members have changed over time, the message of peace and preservation of the earth remains the same. Using multiple genres of music such as jazz, world, and Winter's signature "Earth Music" hopefully, the Paul Winter Consort will be the voice of the planet for generations to come. Excellent.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews